



Finding balance

Actor Taapsee Pannu reflects on hard work, and the need for relaxation after a decade of constant momentum

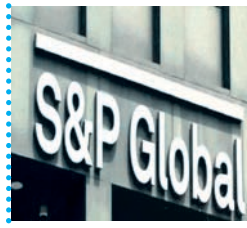
LEISURE | P2



Musk in China

Elon Musk is visiting Beijing with media reports saying he aims to discuss enabling autonomous driving mode on Tesla cars in China

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Slow loan growth

Indian banks may be compelled to slow down their loan growth, says S&P Global Ratings

BUSINESS | P11



Terrific trio

Recurve archers Dhiraj Bommadevara, Tarundeep Rai and Pravin Jadhav create history with World Cup team gold

SPORTS | P12

SHORT TAKES

Cong names 2 LS, 8 Assembly picks

Bhubaneswar: The Congress Sunday released the names of two LS candidates and eight nominees for the Assembly elections in state. While the party made former MP Nagendra Pradhan the new candidate for the Sambalpur LS seat in place of Dulal Chandra Pradhan, it fielded former minister Suresh Mohapatra in the Cuttack LS seat. Denying ticket to Barabati-Cuttack MLA Md Moquim, the Congress has fielded his daughter Sofia Firdous. Former MLA Debi Prasad Chand will contest from Jaleswar, Monalisa Lenka from Balasore, Ajay Samal from Badachana, Dakir Samal from Pallahara and Pratima Mallick from Jagatsinghpur Assembly segments. The Congress also changed the candidate in two Assembly seats - Pramod Kumar Hembram will contest from Baripada in place of Badal Hembram, and Baijayantimala Mohanty will fight from Khandapara instead of Manoj Kumar Pradhan.

Delhi Cong chief steps down over AAP tie-up

New Delhi: In a setback to the Congress ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, senior leader Arvinder Singh Lovely has resigned as the party's Delhi unit chief, citing the alliance with the AAP as one of the reasons. He said the Delhi Congress unit was against the alliance but the party high command went ahead with it. In his resignation letter sent to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge Saturday, Lovely also said that he found himself handicapped as all unanimous decisions taken by senior Delhi unit leaders have been unilaterally vetoed by AICC Delhi in-charge Deepak Babria. This comes days after former Delhi minister and AICC member Rajkumar Chauhan resigned from the party following an altercation with Babria.

Heroin worth ₹600cr seized from Pak boat

Ahmedabad: The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has seized 86 kg of drugs worth ₹600 crore from a Pakistani boat and arrested 14 persons on board the vessel off the Gujarat coast, the maritime security agency said Sunday. The overnight operation in the Arabian Sea was carried out in coordination with the Gujarat Anti-terrorism Squad (ATS) and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), it said in a release. This was the 11th such successful joint operation in the past three years involving the Coast Guard and the ATS, it said, seeking to underscore the synergy between the two agencies. A top Gujarat police official said heroin was seized from the boat.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



As the wealthiest political party, how can we advocate for wealth redistribution?!

WEATHER	
BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	43.2°C / 43.7°C
Min Temp	27.6°C / 27.0°C
Humidity	71% / 74%
Rainfall	Nil / Nil
FORECAST	
LIKELY TO RISE BY 2 DEGREES CELSIUS IN THE NEXT 2 DAYS	



MATTER OF FAITH: Hindu devotees walk toward a mud volcano to start rituals for an annual festival in an ancient cave temple of Hinglaj Mata in Pakistan's Baluchistan province

PTI PHOTO

Puri new stn roof caves in

4 INJURED WORKERS OUT OF DANGER; ECoR ORDERS PROBE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, April 28: At least four workers were injured, three of them critically, when a portion of an under-construction building of Puri new railway station collapsed Sunday, officials said.

When the incident occurred, six labourers were working at the site, out of whom four suffered injuries. The injured workers were identified as Bisu Mandal, Shankar Bera and Shambhu Bera from Midnapore district of West Bengal, and Kunu Goud, a native of Ganjam district. On being informed, Government Railway Police (GRP), Railway Protection Force (RPF), fire and police personnel rushed to the spot and launched a rescue operation. All the injured labourers were rescued and admitted to the Puri district headquarters hospital, the East Coast Railway (ECoR) said in a statement.

There the doctors administered treatment to the injured labourers while the three critically injured were shifted to Cuttack. All injured labourers are currently out of danger, the ECoR statement read.

The mishap has occurred at a



time when efforts are on to turn the Puri Railway Station into a world class railway station. The three-storied building was under construction in front of the Puri Railway Station as part of the development project, which is scheduled for completion by January, 2025. The development works of the railway station has been undertaken at a plan outlay of ₹392 crore.

It is suspected that the mishap occurred after the centering which had been put up for laying the roof collapsed. Sources said the ECoR has ordered an investigation into the incident.

GRP Officer Santosh Bahinipati said that the mishap

occurred around 9.30am Sunday. On being informed, a team reached the spot and rescued the injured labourers, he said while adding that a special team from the Railways and the GRP will conduct a probe into the mishap.

On being informed, Sub-Collector Gopinath Kuamr reached the spot and took stock of the situation. He termed the incident as quite unfortunate and said recovery of the injured labourers by providing them with good treatment is the priority. RPF DIG Bani Shankar Nath said that the issue will be discussed in a review meeting, then RPF will register a case and undertake a probe.

SC to hear Kejriwal's plea today

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 28: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear Monday a plea by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal challenging his arrest in a money laundering case stemming from the alleged excise policy scam.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta is likely to hear the matter. Kejriwal

had earlier told the apex court that his illegal arrest in the case constitutes an unprecedented assault on the tenets of democracy based on free and fair elections and federalism.

Kejriwal claimed it is a classical case of how the Centre has misused the ED and its wide powers under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act to crush the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and its leaders.

Rahul, Nadda campaign in state

Modi runs govt for billionaires, Patnaik for select few: Rahul

Cuttack: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Sunday alleged that while PM Narendra Modi runs a government for billionaires from Delhi, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik leads a dispensation that works for "select people" in Odisha.

Addressing an election rally in Cuttack's Salipur, Gandhi claimed that though the BJD and BJP were fighting the electoral battle against each other, in reality, they were working together. "Call it a partnership or marriage, both BJD and BJP are together," he claimed.

Taking a dig at Patnaik, Gandhi said that though he was the chief minister, the BJD government in the state was being run by his aide VK Pandian.

In an apparent reference to the PM, Gandhi said, "Uncle-ji and Naveen-babu have given Odisha PAANN, meaning Pandian, Amit Shah, Narendra Modi, Naveen Patnaik. They have looted your wealth."

Unseat BJD govt to usher in development, says Nadda

Berhampur: BJP president JP Nadda Sunday asserted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has changed the culture, nature and definition of politics in India, as he exhorted the people of Odisha to unseat the BJD government to usher in development.

Nadda, while addressing an election rally at Ambapua here, said the BJP has ensured prosperity on all fronts and in every aspect during its tenure at the Centre in the last 15 years.

"Earlier, politics was about caste and religion, but PM Modi made sure that it is based on development... Misrule has been prevailing under the BJD government in Odisha. It is establishing a 'babu raj' in the state," he alleged.

"Is there no son of the soil to run the government in Odisha that we have to import people from other states," Nadda asked, in an apparent dig at Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's close aide VK Pandian.

Ukrainian 'Grandpa' leads over-60s unit fighting Russian forces

REUTERS

Zaporizhzhia (Ukraine), April 28: Oleksandr Taran's mobile artillery unit isn't officially part of Ukraine's military, but that hasn't stopped his men from destroying Russian targets on their own dime.

"We ... get by thanks to the pension fund," the 68-year-old commander - whose call sign is 'Grandpa' - said with a chuckle.

Taran's all-volunteer unit, the Steppe Wolves, is comprised of dozens of Ukrainian men mostly over 60 years old who are considered too old to be drafted but still want to fight.

Roving behind the front line with truck-mounted rocket

launchers, they take orders from field commanders and work with other troops, contributing to the war effort despite lacking official support from the military.

The unit is funded by donations and stocked with faulty rounds they repair themselves as well as weapons captured from the enemy. Both are delivered to them by front-line troops.

When Reuters recently visited their base in the south-eastern Zaporizhzhia region, they were preparing 122mm Grad rocket rounds that were later fired by troops from another unit.

"The commanders that provide us with targets are happy," said a 63-year-old fighter with



the call sign 'Zorro'. "They give us more targets (and) help

us with ammunition however they can."

Taran, the commander, said his unit has been attempting to officially join Ukraine's armed forces to directly receive ammunition - and salaries - but has been unsuccessful.

The unit also includes younger men who have been ruled unfit to fight.

WILLING AND ABLE

More than two years into Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine's mobilisation effort is struggling amid flagging enthusiasm.

Russian troops have been advancing in the east, and analysts say Ukraine's shortage of manpower needs to be addressed.

Some prominent Ukrainian and foreign supporters of the

war effort have urged Zelenskyy to significantly reduce the mobilisation age.

Earlier this month, Zelenskyy approved new measures allowing the military to call up more troops and tighten punishment for evasion. He also reduced the mobilisation age from 27 to 25.

Taran, who has been fighting since Moscow launched its war in 2014, said coercion would be unlikely to replace genuine enthusiasm from a potential recruit.

"Beat him with a stick if you want, but he won't fight," he said. "If a person wants to, he can go on for 100 years to fulfil his tasks and destroy the enemy."

leisure



HATHAWAY ADMITS BEING A CHRONICALLY STRESSED WOMAN

Actress Anne Hathaway has opened up about experiencing constant stress during her younger years as an actress and taking life for granted. "As a formerly chronically stressed young woman, I remember thinking one day, 'You are taking your life for granted,'" she shared.

BON JOVI WASN'T IMPRESSED WITH SONG *LIVIN' ON A PRAYER*

Livin' on a Prayer could very well be one of the most loved songs but its creator, Jon Bon Jovi wasn't impressed with the song initially. The rock icon recently opened up about his four-decades-long career and recalled that he didn't initially connect with the band's chart-topping 1986 hit, reports *People magazine*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You may be impetuous today, which may lead to unforeseen results. You may be in a hurry and complete work which has been pending for a long time. You will find the time to make long-term plans. Ganesh says you will rectify your past mistakes.

TAURUS
Ganesh is pleased to see that you have a bright day ahead. Your efforts are due to give the results you expect. If you are in a mood to achieve something more than usual, this is the day for it. You are not likely to be disappointed. You will be getting increasingly popular socially as well as professionally, and gaining the trust and support of one and all.

GEMINI
A day of conflicting emotions awaits you. Your personal and professional life will both be important. Hence you will experience anxious moments as you try to balance the demands made by both. However, the good news is you will succeed in your attempts and will do justice to all your duties, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will love to stroll in a world of fantasy. Religious impact will prevail over you. You will charter your fantasy to a mysterious level. You will have communion with God at a temple, mosque or church. you will try to draw lessons from your experience.

LEO
You will exercise your will today and will be in the mood to soar like a free bird today. You will not be in the mood to listen to anyone. Work related travel will be beneficial. Guard against ego clashes in personal relationships, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Contemplating on past successes will help you gather the resources for achieving more of it in the near future. New contacts will help you make considerable headway on the road to success. Ganesh says your amiable nature will help you in getting along easily with people.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that you need to be more careful in your work field as your enemies or your competitors will try to pull you down today. You will have to be very careful in making business agreements or negotiations regarding give and take in the business. You will see your beloved grow distant from you today.

SCORPIO
Long pending task of getting your home renovated may begin today. There are a couple of object de art that have caught your eyes and you wish to decorate your home with those artefacts. You may even plan a small celebration to share your home's new look! A great day indeed.

SAGITTARIUS
Beauty therapies or a new hair do, pick one; makeover and personal grooming is on your mind. Once you decide to shop, nothing in the world can stop you. You have decided to de-stress yourself with shopping. Clothes and jewellery is what your wardrobe is awaiting for, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
Generally, it is difficult for you to maintain a cool head over your shoulders, especially during the stressful times. But, to everyone's surprise, you will display remarkable composure while dealing with challenges today, feels Ganesh. Family life will be smooth and it will enable you to fully concentrate on your career and increasing your efficiency level.

AQUARIUS
With no major highs or lows, you will have a balanced day today. You will handle everything with great efficiency and Ganesh gives you a pat on your back for that. Continue to work hard for the day as your efforts will get noticed and not only that, you will also understand the value of your hardships.

PISCES
Today will not find you in the best of spirits. You need to guard against being sad for the smallest of reasons. Pessimistic thoughts could creep in, owing to some external influences. You need to keep your will-power strong to remain positive.

My success is not a fluke: Taapsee



Mumbai: Actress Taapsee Pannu, who was last seen in *Dunki*, has opened up about her Bollywood journey. From doing action-packed thrillers to complex character roles, the actress said that she has come a long way. She also stressed the importance of balance in her career and said that she needs to relax now. During a chat with a news agency, the actress said, "I'm in a position where I feel I've done quite a bit; I worked really hard and did everything on my own merit, so my success is not a fluke. I consistently pushed myself, so it's a very happy and satisfied place." Reflecting on her decade in the Hindi film industry, she acknowledged the on-

going stream of projects she has been involved in, moving from one film to another. She said, "I need to sit back, enjoy the time, relax and rejuvenate, and then come back with something that's going to challenge me further. That's because I've been in that momentum of just pushing myself every single day. And when you suddenly put that stop on me, it is very difficult to come to terms with it."

On the work front, Tapsee has *Woh Ladki Hai Kahaan*, *Phir Aayi Haseen Dillruba*, and *Khel Khel Mein* in her kitty. AGENCIES

Nayanthara on playing empowered women



Chennai: Actress Nayanthara, who has made a career out of starring in films where she's the hero, spoke to a publication about her choice of roles. From her recent Bollywood debut in Atlee's *Jawan* to her 75th film, *Annappoorani: The Goddess of Food*, she has consistently chosen roles that empower women.

In a conversation with a magazine, she shared her belief that it's not just a creative choice but a personal commitment to amplify voices often overlooked

or silenced. Talking to the publication at the Most Influential Young Indians Awards, she said, "Portraying empowered women who choose to defy social stigmas is not just a creative choice but also a personal commitment to amplifying voices that are often overlooked or silenced."

On the work front, Nayanthara will be seen next in *Test* and *Mannangatti Since 1960*. AGENCIES

Elnaaz opens up on playing dual roles

Mumbai: Actress Elnaaz Norouzi, who plays dual roles in the recently released streaming series *Ranneeti: Balakot & Beyond*, has opened up about portraying two distinct characters in her web shows. In *Ranneeti: Balakot & Beyond*, she plays Netra, who goes undercover in Pakistan as Fahima. The actress is receiving praise for her command over the Urdu language and the action sequences. Talking about her relationship with dual roles, the actress said, "Playing two characters in the same series is a thrilling challenge. As an actor, you always want a challenging role with layers, so you delve deeper into the psychol-

ogy of each character. It may look seamless on the screen, but a lot of effort goes into it." She further mentioned, "From the language to your looks to how you move, everything needs to be prepped well so that the audiences can see the difference between the characters and can connect with each one differently." *Ranneeti: Balakot & Beyond* currently streams on JioCinema. IANS

Diljit talks about film industry's uncertainty

Mumbai: Popular actor-musician Diljit Dosanjh emphasised that the success of a film or song cannot be guaranteed solely based on the presence of a specific individual. Asked the singer, who has given blockbusters including his recent release *Chamkila* and chartbuster hit songs, if he feels that it is his golden period since everything he does turns into gold.

Diljit responded to IANS, stating: "Nobody can declare that if someone's film or a song will be a sure-shot hit, it is God's grace. No actor or director can say, 'I am there; that is why the film is a hit'. There is nothing like that; it is all because of God."

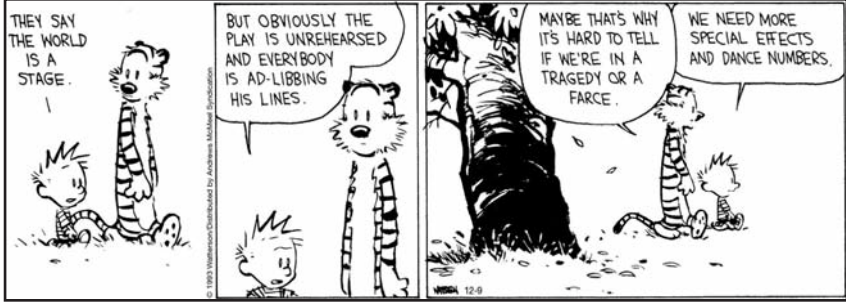
He said, "I think like this too. Sometimes people say that the audience would like it, but I feel that I am the audience myself. If I like it, then the audience will like it too. I feel like I am the audience too. I always see films and songs from the perspective of



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

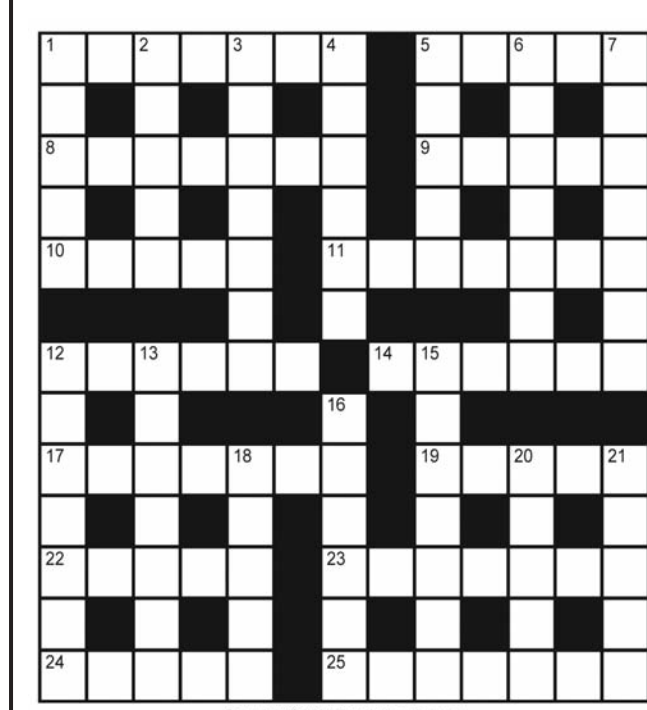


BREVITY



FUN post

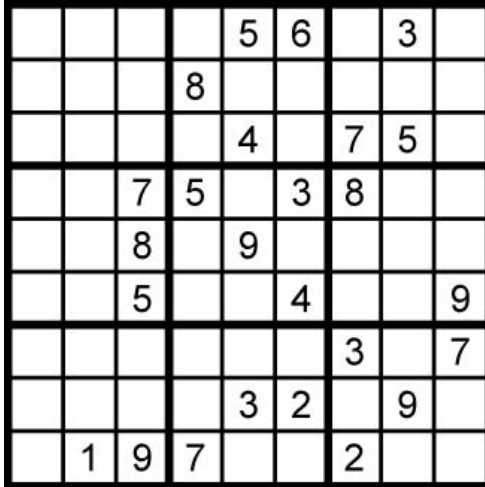
CROSSWORD



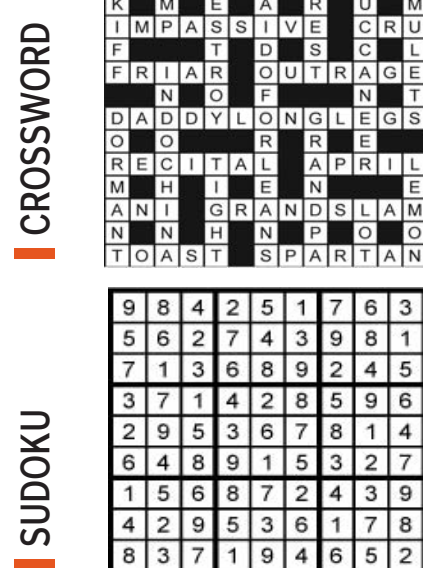
- Across**
- 1 Adult
 - 5 Camera setting
 - 8 Cargo
 - 9 Brief tussle (3-2)
 - 10 Barrel part
 - 11 Kitty (4,3)
 - 12 Leave
 - 14 Ravine
 - 17 Military man
 - 19 Fable writer
 - 22 Boot out
 - 23 Inspires
 - 24 To-do list
 - 25 Calms
- Down**
- 1 Fishing tackle
 - 2 Alpha's opposite
 - 3 Leave something undone
 - 4 Packing a wallop
 - 5 Diets
 - 6 Tableware
 - 7 Sweet liqueur (4,3)
 - 12 Trigger-happy
 - 13 Valuables storage
 - 15 Chagrined
 - 16 Vinegar holders
 - 18 Pigeon shelters
 - 20 Herring
 - 21 Assignments

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

REMEMBERING THE GREAT

Chief Justice Chakradhari Saran Singh and other judges of the Orissa High Court offer tributes to Utkal Gourav Madhusudan Das on his birth anniversary by garlanding his statue on the court premises in Cuttack, Sunday



OP PHOTO

Rahul promises 4 'revolutionary works' if Cong voted to power



AGENCIES

Cuttack, April 28: Launching a scathing attack on BJP for 'running a pro-rich government at the Centre' and the BJD in the state 'indulging in favoritism', Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said Congress will do five revolutionary works in the event the party comes to power at the Centre.

"While Naveen-babu has given you Pandian, I will tell you what Congress will give you. If we come to power at the Centre, we will do five revolutionary works. We will make a list of all the poor families, and one woman from a family will be selected and we will transfer ₹1 lakh annually to her bank account. It is ₹8,500 per month," Rahul said while addressing a rally at Salipur, here.

"We will bring a scheme -- 'pehli naukri pakki'. All the unemployed youths with degrees and diplomas will get apprenticeships, we will give you the guarantee of your first job for a year. It will be in the public sec-

WHAT IF CONG FORMS GOVT IN STATE

- ₹2,000 per month to women
- ₹3,000 per month to unemployed youths
- 200 units of free electricity, LPG at ₹500 per cylinder

tor, private sector, government hospitals and offices," he added.

Gandhi said that if Congress formed the government in Odisha, it would provide ₹2,000 per month to women, ₹3,000 per month to unemployed youths, 200 units of free electricity and LPG at ₹500 per cylinder.

"While Uncle-ji (Modi) has worked for 22 billionaires, we are going to create crores of lakhpatis," he said.

He alleged that BJP refers to tribals as 'banabasi' or forest-dwellers instead of 'adibasi' or indigenous people.

"The tribals are not 'banabasi', they are the 'adibasi', meaning they have the first right to the

HOMAGE TO MADHU BABU

Cuttack: Earlier, the Congress leader paid tributes to Madhusudan Das, popularly known as Madhu Babu, on his 176th birth anniversary. Soon after arriving at Bhubaneswar airport, Rahul visited the birthplace of Madhu Babu near Satyabhamapur in the district. He paid floral tributes to the statue of Madhu Babu and interacted with girl students before leaving for Salipur where he launched the party's campaigning for the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly polls.

land, forest and water. Modi has taken away tribal rights and given them to industries. Congress will give tribals their rights back," Gandhi said.

He said that if Congress returns to power, it will waive off farm loans.

"Whenever there is a need, Congress will waive off crop loans," he said, adding that a legal framework for MSP for all crops will also be ensured.

"The salary of Anganwadi and ASHA workers will be doubled, while MGNREGA wage will be hiked to ₹400 per day," he said.

Odisha will vote in the Lok Sabha elections and Assembly polls simultaneously in four phases, starting May 13.

There are 21 Lok Sabha seats in the state and a 147-member Assembly.



HEAT REMEDIES: Commuters covering their head with towel and bare hands to get respite from the blistering heat in Bhubaneswar where temperatures soared to 43.2 degrees Celsius, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Don't involve children in elections: CEO to parties

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 28: The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), Odisha Sunday urged all political parties in the state to not involve children in election-related activities of any form.

This CEO's direction assumes considerable significance in the backdrop of a series of complaints recently filed by the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) recently against BJP MP candidate from Bhubaneswar, Ararajita Sarangi, and party Sambalpur MLA candidate Jaynarayan Mishra Sarangi alleging them of violating the model code of conduct by using infants in their election campaigns. Even Sunday, the BJD alleged BJP, Berhampur candidate Pradip Panigrahy of engaging children in campaigning activities.



CHILDREN NOT ALLOWED

- Election campaign
- Canvassing
- Rallies
- Distribution of posters/pamphlets
- Participation in sloganeering
- Campaign rallies
- Election meetings

In a communication to various political parties, N Thirumala Naik, Additional Chief Electoral Officer said, "Election Commission of India (ECI) in its instructions directed all the political parties not to engage children in any kind of election activity. However, this office has been receiving series of complaints on using children in rallies/campaigning by

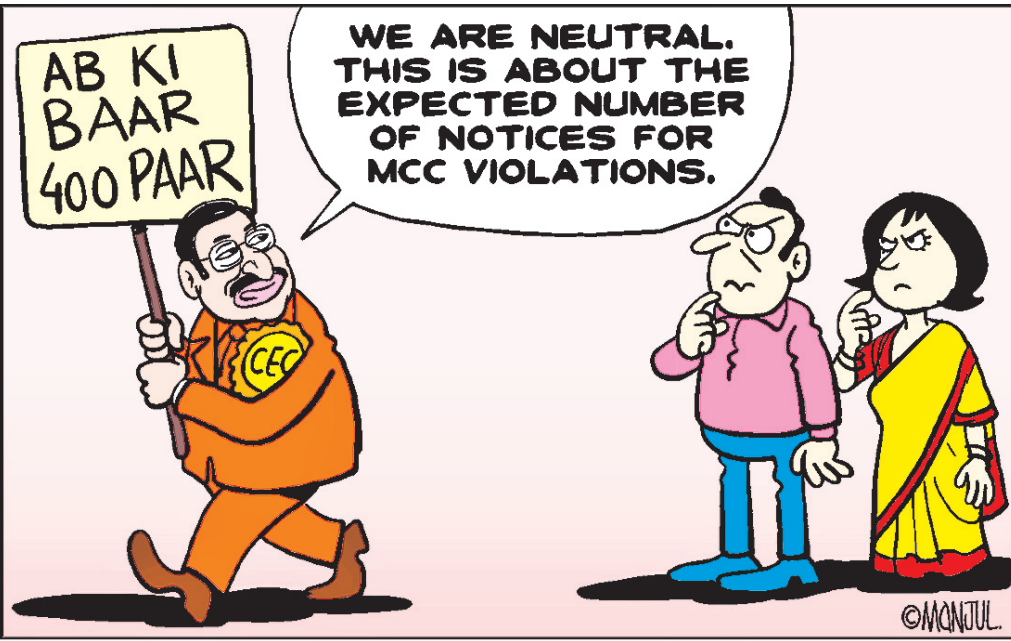
political parties." Citing a 2014 order of the Bombay High Court prohibiting use of children in election activities, Naik stressed the need to ensure that political parties in Odisha did not allow participation of minor children in any election related activities. He instructed to all the political parties/candidates to refrain from involving child labour

in any election related work/activities and ensure that there is no violation of any provision of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act.

He instructed that political parties should not use children in election campaign/canvassing/ rallies/ yatras in any form whatsoever including distribution of posters/pamphlets to participate in slogan shouting, campaign rallies, election meeting etc.

However, mere presence of a child accompanied by his/her mother/father/guardian or a child in arms of his/her mother/father/guardian in proximity of a political leader and 'who is not involved in any activity relating to election campaigning by the political party', will not be construed as violation of the above said guidelines.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



'Private players to make space more accessible'

Bengaluru: Private players in space technology will certainly help speed up the research in the field, Indian Space Research Organisation chairman S Somanath said while interacting with space enthusiasts, through the official Instagram page of ISRO. Replying to an observation that SpaceX, a private entity, has contributed more to space technology than most countries, Somanath Saturday said America's tradition of encouraging private companies to involve themselves in building rocket engines and, in the case of SpaceX, to explore human flight vehicles can be replicated by India. He said these companies are playing a crucial role in advancing technology, reducing costs and making space more accessible. It is possible for even private companies in India to develop these kinds of capabilities, he added. However, he said this is only possible if the government supports the private entity. "For instance, some of the technology that is owned by NASA is transferred to SpaceX so that they could develop faster. This is why SpaceX has made such strides, it had nearly 45 launches this year," said Somanath.

LS polls: Just 8% women candidates in first 2 phases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 28: Women constituted only eight per cent of the total 2,823 candidates in the first two phases of the Lok Sabha polls, with political activists saying it reflects a deeper issue of gender bias and that the talk of empowering them rings hollow.

In the first phase of the Lok Sabha polls, there were 135 women candidates while in the second phase, there were 100 women candidates, bringing the combined total for the first two phases to 235 women candidates.

Of the 135 women candidates in phase I, Tamil Nadu had the highest share at 76, but they account for just 8 per cent of the candidates in the state, while Kerala has the maximum women candidates at 24 in phase II.

Party-wise, the Congress has fielded 44 women till now while 69 women have been fielded by the BJP in the first two phases.

This significant gender imbalance has sparked criticism from political analysts and activists, who ask why parties are waiting for the Women's Reservation Bill to be implemented instead of proactively issuing tickets to women.

Dr Sushila Ramaswamy, Associate Professor at Delhi University's Jesus and Mary College, said political parties should take concrete steps to promote women's candidacy.

With women constituting nearly half of India's electorate, their under representation in the candidate pool raises broader questions about the barriers hindering women's full participation in the political sphere. Dr Iftekhar Ahmad Ansari, Associate Professor at the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), said.

Beyond the symbolic gestures and promises, he stressed the



Of the 135 women candidates in phase I, Tamil Nadu had the highest share at 76

BJD is the only party, which as a policy, gives 33 per cent tickets to female candidates

importance of structural reforms to ensure equal opportunities for women in politics.

The issue of women's political representation extends beyond numerical quotas to encompass systemic changes in party dynamics and electoral processes. Farhat Jahan, a retired faculty member at the Abdullah Women's College at the AMU said while emphasising the need for gender-sensitive policies that address challenges faced by women in politics.

The BJD is the only party, which as a policy, gives 33 per cent tickets to female candidates.

Meera Parida, state vice president of the Biju Mahila Dal of the BJD, stressed the need for substantive action in women's empowerment and praised her party's initiative of reserving 33 per cent of seats for women.

"Reserving seats alone is not enough. We need a cultural shift where women are seen as leaders and decision-makers," she emphasised, advocating for comprehensive reforms.

Accelerated warming of Indian ocean predicted

THE FUTURE INCREASE IN HEAT CONTENT IS COMPARABLE TO ADDING THE ENERGY EQUIVALENT OF ONE HIROSHIMA ATOMIC BOMB DETONATION EVERY SECOND, ALL DAY, EVERY DAY, FOR A DECADE, SAYS STUDY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 28: The Indian Ocean is expected to experience surface warming of 1.4 degrees Celsius to 3 degrees Celsius between 2020 and 2100, which will push it into a near-permanent heatwave state, intensify cyclones, affect the monsoon, and lead to a rise in sea levels, according to a new study.

The study, led by Roxy Mathew Koll, a climate scientist at the Pune-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), showed that marine heatwaves (periods of abnormally high ocean temperatures) are projected to increase from 20 days per year (during 1970-2000) to 220-250 days per year, pushing the tropical Indian Ocean into a basin-wide near-permanent heatwave state by the end of the 21st century.

Marine heatwaves cause habitat destruction due to coral bleaching, seagrass destruction, and loss of kelp forests, affecting the fisheries sector adversely.

They also lead to the rapid intensification of cyclones.

The rapid warming in the Indian Ocean is not limited to the surface. The heat content of the Indian Ocean, from the surface to a depth of 2,000 meters, is currently increasing at the rate of 4.5 zetta-joules per decade and is predicted to increase at a rate of 16-22 zetta-joules per decade in the future, the study titled 'Future projection for the tropical Indian Ocean' said.

"The future increase in heat content is comparable to adding the energy equivalent of one Hiroshima atomic bomb detonation every second, all day, every day, for a decade," Koll said.

The maximum warming will occur in the northwestern Indian Ocean, including the Arabian Sea, while there will be reduced warming off the Sumatra and Java coasts.

Amid the accelerated ocean warming, the seasonal cycle of surface temperatures is projected to shift, which could in-



crease extreme weather events over the Indo-Pacific region.

While the maximum basin-average temperatures in the Indian Ocean ranged from 26 degrees Celsius to 28 degrees Celsius throughout the year during 1980-2020, the minimum temperatures by the end of the 21st century will be between 28.5 degrees Celsius and 30.7 degrees Celsius year-round, under a high emission scenario.

Sea surface temperatures above 28 degrees Celsius are generally conducive to deep convection and cyclogenesis. Heavy rainfall events and extremely severe cyclones have already in-

creased since the 1950s and are projected to increase further with increasing ocean temperatures, the authors said.

The increased ocean heat could also lead to a rise in sea level. Thermal expansion of water contributes to more than half of the sea level rise in the Indian Ocean, which is larger than the contribution from glacier and sea-ice melting.

The Indian Ocean Dipole, a phenomenon that affects the monsoon and cyclone formation, is also predicted to change. The frequency of extreme dipole events is predicted to increase by 66 per cent whereas the

frequency of moderate events is to decrease by 52 per cent by the end of the 21st century.

The authors of the study predicted that ocean acidification will intensify, with surface pH decreasing from a pH above 8.1 to below 7.7 by the end of the century. Surface chlorophyll and net primary productivity are also predicted to decline, with the strongest decrease of about 8-10 per cent in the western Arabian Sea.

"The projected changes in pH may be detrimental to the marine ecosystem since many marine organisms, particularly corals and organisms that depend on calcification to build and maintain their shells, are sensitive to the change in ocean acidity. The change may be easier to fathom when we realise that a 0.1 fall in human blood pH can result in rather profound health consequences and multiple-organ failure," Koll said.

Bordered by 40 countries, and home to a third of the global population, changes to climate in the Indian Ocean region have major societal and economic impacts. Currently, the Indian Ocean and its surrounding countries stand out globally as the region with the highest risk of natural hazards, with coastal communities vulnerable to weather and climate extremes.

IMD issues red alert for today

According to IMD, maximum temperature to be above normal by four to six degrees Celsius at many places across the state till May 2



maximum day temperature of 43.2 degrees Celsius, while Cuttack recorded 43.7 degrees Celsius.

The maximum temperature would be above normal by four to six degrees Celsius at many places across the state till May 2, the IMD centre forecast said.

Similarly, an orange warning has been issued for the districts of Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Ganjam, Gajapati, Puri, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Bhadrak, Balasore, Rayagada, Malkangiri, Koraput, Deogarh and Bargarh.

The MeT office has advised people to take precautionary measures for hot weather while going outside between 11am to 3 pm.

According to MeT Centre, heatwave conditions are very likely to prevail in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Angul, Dhenkanal, Deogarh, Khurda, Cuttack, Jajpur, Boudh in the next week.

Also, heatwave conditions are likely to prevail in Nuapada, Bolangir, Subarnapur, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Kendrapara, Bhadrak, Balasore, Jagatsinghpur, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Koraput, Puri, Sundargarh and Sambalpur.

Thunderstorm with lightning accompanied with gusty surface wind speed reaching 30-40kmph very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Gajapati, Ganjam, Rayagada, Kandhamal and Koraput.

The temperature was 44.1 degrees Celsius at Boudh, followed by Baripada (44), Nayagarh, Dhenkanal (43.6), Talcher and Malkangiri (43.5), Bolangir (43.3) and Bhawanipatna (43).

Bhubaneswar recorded the



DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE: Road expansion work under way at Khannagar Ring Road along Kathajodi river in Cuttack, Sunday

OP PHOTO

WSC students return from S'pore after 6-month stint

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 28: After completing a six-month paid internship programme in Singapore, 24 students from World Skill Center (WSC) returned to the state Sunday.

Following their arrival at the Bhubaneswar International Airport from a direct flight from Singapore, students were received by WSC officials.

Under WSC's 'Student Internship Programme', 2022-23 batch students from the 'School of Engineering' and 'School of Services' departments, had gone to Singapore last October to get global work exposure.

The elated students shared their experience of working in



A student of Mechanical and Electrical Services, Sonalika Sethy, shared her joy, stating, "With my first salary from Goodwood Park Hotel, I purchased a new phone. My father, a farmer, has toiled tirelessly to

support our family. Being able to contribute financially is my greatest achievement, and I am grateful to World Skill Center for this opportunity."

"My aspiration of pursuing internship in a foreign city like Singapore has been fulfilled, thanks to World Skill Center. Within six months of paid internship at YTL PowerSeraya, I gained valuable insights into modern technology," said Ajaya Mangraj, a student of Mechatronics.

WSC at Mancheswar industrial area in Bhubaneswar is the country's premier skill development institution as it imparts global-standard skill training to the youth of Odisha, an official said.

States, UTs urged to link ABHA IDs with health portals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 28: The Union Health Secretary has urged states and union territories (UTs) to take necessary action to link Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA) with various health portals, such as Reproductive Child Health (RCH), National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NIKSHAY), among others.

As per the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) dashboard, total ABHA IDs created in the country as on April 3 is 5,894.60 lakh, Health Secretary Apurva Chandra said.

However, total beneficiaries linked with ABHA under Non-communicable diseases (NCD), Sickle cell, RCH, NIKSHAY, National Viral Hepatitis Control Program (NVHCP) and Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme (PMNDP) are only 827.99 lakh, 0.89 lakh, 15.78 lakh, 2.46 lakh, 0.056 lakh and 0.17 lakh, respectively, he said.

"This shows that though the states have taken huge interest in creation of the IDs but non-linking of health records with these IDs is not allowing the stakeholders, including the patients, from reaping the benefits of digital health records," the health secretary said.

"You are, therefore, requested to kindly take necessary action for linkage of existing benefi-

ciaries with ABHA in the various portals and do regular review of the progress at your level," he stated in a letter to all the state and UT governments.

Chandra said the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 27, 2021 and all the health facilities in the country are to take part in this mission.

Further, via Health Facility Registry and Health Professional Registry, the ABDM platform has to be utilised to the optimum extent, he said in the letter.

"In this regard, all states and UTs have been requested in the past through a letter on June 13, 2023 for the 100 per cent compliance in ABHA seeding on various portals. Some states and UTs have shown impressive progress in the creation of ABHA IDs," he said.

Chandra said currently, beneficiaries are being linked with ABHA under various health portals like NCD, Sickle Cell, Reproductive and Child Health (RCH), NIKSHAY, NVHCP and PMNDP.

Additionally, states and UTs have to link the beneficiaries under the IDSP-IHIP (Integrated Health Information Platform) portal, the health secretary said in the letter.

Three arrested for hitting cops

Bhubaneswar: The police arrested three men for allegedly creating ruckus and hitting cops, during the night blocking and checking drive, Saturday night. Prima facie, the miscreants breached the police barricades while the cops tried to stop them, said a senior cop at Kharvelnagar police station, and added that they were found to be in an inebriated state. IIC of Kharvela Nagar police station, Rajanikant Mishra identified the accused men as Himanshu Sekhar Khuntia, 30, Ashutosh Khuntia, 25 and T Ankit Kumar, 30. While cops were deployed near Master Canteen square, late Saturday night, a speeding white car approached the barricades. As the cops intercepted the car, Himanshu and Ashutosh came out and abused in foul language. In response, when the cops attempted to pacify them, Himanshu slapped the cops, Mishra added. The police have booked the trio under Sections 279 and 341 of IPC and produced them before a local court for remand.

DEBADURLLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 28: In yet another case of cyber fraud, the Commissionerate Police Sunday busted a fake online job racket and arrested three men who allegedly duped a man to the extent of ₹2.5 lakh. The accused men lured the victims into their trap through offering money, in exchange for five-star ratings to hotels and restaurants, said ACP Anjana Tudu.

The accused men were identified as Balgopal Barik, 28, Debendra Kumar Sethi, 28 and Sandip Kumar Rout, 23. Prima facie, the cops have found that the men used Telegram application to swindle money from victims' mule accounts.

Tudu said the complainant,



Ajay Kumar Panda, 40, a resident of Patia area, alleged that he was contacted by the trio over Whatsapp application to give online positive ratings to hotels for money. Agreeing this, Ajay rated five-stars to several hotels and received the money

COMPLAINANT, AJAY KUMAR PANDA, A RESIDENT OF PATIA AREA, ALLEGED THAT HE WAS CONTACTED BY BALGOPAL BARIK, DEBENDRA KUMAR SETHI AND SANDIP KUMAR ROUT TO GIVE ONLINE POSITIVE RATINGS TO HOTELS FOR MONEY

Following this, the trio asked Ajay to join a Telegram group, VIP 5000, and make an investment of ₹5,000 to earn high returns. Later, he received the money and was again asked by the miscreants

to make investments in lakhs. This time, too, Ajay made a transaction of ₹2.5 lakh. However, a few days after the transaction, Ajay was removed from the group and trio went incommunicado, Tudu added.

According to the preliminary investigations, the money was debited to a bank account registered by the name, Acadify Technology. In order to swindle money, the miscreants had opened 10 bank accounts in several bank branches of Bhubaneswar.

The Cyber police station at VSS Nagar booked the miscreants under Sections 419 and 420 of IPC, along with Sections 66 and 67 of IT Act. The accused were produced before a local court for remand.

Primary immune deficiency rising amongst children

Undiagnosed immune deficiency is significantly rising among children under the age of five in India, said doctors here Sunday, as part of the World Primary Immunodeficiency Week.

Every year, April 22 to 29 is observed as World Primary Immunodeficiency Week. It aims to raise awareness about Primary immunodeficiencies (PIs), also known as inborn errors of immunity (IEI) -- a group of 450 rare and chronic conditions where a part of the body's immune system is missing or does not function correctly.

Gaurav Kharya, Director, Department of Bone Marrow Transplant and Cellular Therapy, Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, New Delhi, told IANS that the prevalence of primary immunodeficiency disorders (PIDs) is rising in India.

"These are potentially fatal genetic conditions that affect a child's immune system, mak-

ing them more susceptible to infections, autoimmunity, and malignancies," he explained.

While there is no nationwide data on the prevalence of PIDs in India, statistical projections claim that there could be more than one million patients with PIDs in the country.

Sagar Bhattad, Consultant - Paediatric Immunology and Rheumatology, Aster CMI Hospital, Bangalore, told IANS that over the past seven years, the hospital has identified more than 450 children suffering from rare and complex immune deficiency diseases.

"Whereas, a decade ago, the number was limited to 1-2 cases per month, which has now increased to 10-12 every month -- a significant five-fold increase. In the past year alone, over 125 diagnoses were made, and experts predict this number to rise substantially in the coming years."

"It is estimated that before 2004, less than 50 cases of im-



mune deficiency were identified nationally. This number has risen dramatically, with estimated 300-500 cases diagnosed in 2014 and a further increase to 2,500-3,000 cases projected in 2024. This represents a staggering 300-400 per cent increase over the past decade," Sagar said.

The doctors blame lack of

awareness about the conditions as well as treatment facilities to be a major reason for the rise in PIDs.

"These genetic conditions are more common in communities that practise consanguineous marriages. Many cases of immunodeficiency go undi-

agnosed due to a lack of facilities and awareness, especially in rural areas," Gaurav said.

"The lack of awareness and diagnostic facilities are often the reasons why these patients do not reach tertiary care centres where they can be treated for these disorders," he explained.

The doctors stressed the need for recognising the signs and symptoms that can help in early diagnosis, as well as better outcomes.

Genetic testing during pregnancy can be key to identifying potential problems and preventing recurrence in future pregnancies.

According to Gaurav, bone

marrow transplant (BMT), which replaces the defective immune cells of the patient with healthy cells from a compatible donor, has emerged as a potentially curative treatment for several types of primary immunodeficiencies.

"If a child falls ill repeatedly and requires frequent antibiotics, it could be a sign of a serious genetic immune problem. These conditions can affect multiple children in the same family," Sagar said.

"By identifying these conditions at early stages, children can receive the targeted treatment they need to avoid frequent infections and the overuse of antibiotics," he said, calling for a wider availability of affordable genetic testing to enable earlier diagnoses and improve treatment outcomes.

"By working together, we can ensure that no child misses out on a healthy life due to an undiagnosed immune deficiency," the doctor said.

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Fake doctors thriving in Nayagarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, April 28: Quacks and fake doctors are ruling the roost in this district as proper punitive action is not being taken against them by either the Health department or the police, sources said Sunday. This however, is not a problem which has cropped up suddenly. It has been there for close to two decades now.

The district hit the headlines in cases of illegal abortions after six under-developed foetuses were recovered from the foothills of Duburi in this district, July 14, 2007.

It has been alleged that these fake doctors are thriving due to their political connections. Sources also said that these doctors have managed to remain in business due to a section of the district administration. Two such fake doctors were running illegal abortion clinics at Jharpada in Ranpur block in the district without any fear of getting caught. Only after media reported on the issue, action



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

was taken.

There are many other such clinics operating in many parts of this district. Dental surgeries, treatment of various other diseases are being carried out by people who do not have the necessary expertise, sources informed.

Sources said there are around 15 private clinics in this town. These clinics are registered with the state government, but the proprietors of a majority of them are fake doctors. However, till

date no action has been taken against such clinics. At times, these quacks and fake doctors even conduct important surgeries putting the lives of patients at risk.

A proprietor of one of the clinics was arrested long back. However, once he came out on bail, the clinic started functioning again.

Locals pointed out that there are many clinics that conduct illegal abortions without having permission under the 'Medical

Termination of Pregnancy Act'. However, despite the allegations, they continue to operate unabated.

The 'Aditya Hospital and Clinic' which was functioning from a building named 'Anand Bhawan' here was raided, August 30, 2021, after news of illegal abortions surfaced. Five persons including the proprietor, two nurses, a middleman and another person were arrested in this connection and all are currently behind bars.

It was then expected that there would be a crackdown on such clinics and nursing homes. However, nothing really materialized. There are allegations that the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994 (PC and PNDT Act, 1994) are not being properly implemented in this district.

When contacted, chief district medical officer (CDMO) Ramakant Panda said that raids are being conducted on illegal clinics and hospitals and will continue in future also.



LOCKING HORNS: Two deer lock horns in a playful mood as they take shelter under trees to escape the scorching heatwave at Sambalpur zoo, Sunday
OP PHOTO

Three killed, one critical in separate road mishaps

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur/Patana, April 28: Three persons were killed while another sustained critical injuries in separate road mishaps in Subarnapur and Keonjhar districts Saturday.

In the first incident, the driver and the helper of a passenger bus were killed after the bus hit an unknown truck from behind near Haradkhol village on NH-57, under Sonepur police station limits in Subarnapur district, late Saturday night.

The deceased driver was identified as Damarudhara Swain, 53, a resident of Dumuduma area in Bhubaneswar and the deceased helper as Shibaram Gouda, 32, a resident of Badangi village in Ganjam district.

As per the reports, the passenger bus 'Pradhan' carrying more than 40 passengers was on its way to Cuttack from Jeypore when the mishap occurred. However, fortunately all the passengers of the bus had a close shave. On being informed, police personnel from Haradkhol police outpost reached the spot, seized the bodies and sent them to Sonepur district headquarters hospital for post-mortem. Police also seized the bus and launched an investigation after registering a case at Sonepur police station. In a separate incident, a woman died and her son sustained critical injuries in a road mishap at Baunsuli Hanuman Chhak on Baunsuli Ukhunda road under Patana block in Keonjhar district, Saturday night.

The deceased was identified as Shankari Munda, 45, and the critically injured as her son Bijay Munda.

As per reports, the mother son duo was returning home on a bike. A speeding SUV hit the bike from behind and fled the spot towards Ukhunda. Locals rescued them in a critical condition and rushed them to the Keonjhar district headquarters hospital in an ambulance where doctors pronounced Shankari dead.

On being informed, Turumunga police reached the spot and initiated an investigation into the incident.

Locals in Keonjhar join hands to protect trees

People allege that government land has been illegally transferred to an 'influential' person

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 28: Residents of Gobindpur locality in this town are vehemently opposing the move to cut 12 very old mango trees by an 'influential' person of Ward No-11. They are angry that the Forest department has given him the permission to mow down the trees. They asserted that the need of the hour is to plant trees and not to cut them.

The locals have filed a written complaint in this regard with District Collector Vishal Singh in which they have opposed the cutting of trees allegedly on government land. A total of 60 persons have signed the letter.



They have also alleged that the government land has been illegally transferred to the 'influential' individual. Singh has ordered the tehsildar to conduct an investigation into the charges and submit a report to him, the locals informed.

Kalia Munda, a local resident said that the mango orchard is spread over government land. He asked how could a land which belongs to the state, be registered in the name of an individual. "We want proper inves-

tigation of this fraud," Munda demanded.

Sources alleged that in the past also such irregularities have taken place when government land has been illegally transferred in the name of individuals. Other residents of the locality expressed surprise and shock at the Forest department's decision to allow the 12 trees to be cut. They pointed out that there are many trees that are 'unsafe' but the Forest department doesn't take any precau-

tionary measures.

Environmentalist Bhakta Batshal Mohanty said that the world is getting hotter by the day. In these circumstances, more and more trees should be planted and not cut. He blamed the Forest department officials for the current fiasco.

Locals however, have one demand. They want all government land deals examined thoroughly to uncover the dubious transactions and the trees protected at any cost.

12 labourers hurt as borewell drilling vehicle overturns

POST NEWS NETWORK

Ganjam, April 28: In a tragic road mishap, 12 labourers were rendered hurt after a borewell drilling vehicle overturned on Taaptapani ghati road in Ganjam district Sunday morning.

Among them, five persons sustained critical injuries and currently undergoing treatment at the Digapahandi hospital.

Reports said, the borewell-drilling vehicle carrying 12 labourers was heading towards Berhampur from Katama village under Adaba police limits in Gajapati district.

The mishap occurred after its driver lost control over the wheels while negotiating a curve and overturned. Sources said two persons were reportedly trapped under the heavy vehicle.

On being informed, police personnel from Pattapur police station and two fire brigades from Mohana and Sanakhemundi reached the spot and launched a rescue operation. All the injured persons have been admitted to Digapahandi hospital where they are undergoing treatment.

Meanwhile, police launched an investigation to ascertain the reason behind the mishap.



LEARNING THE TRICKS: Participants release balls at the start of a Lawn Ball summer camp held at the RN Singhdeo Sports Complex in Bolangir, Sunday
OP PHOTO

2-year-old boy drowns in pond

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baliapal, April 28: In a tragic incident, a two-year-old child drowned in a pond at Sunarui village under this block of Balasore district Sunday morning. The deceased has been identified as Anshuman Panigrahi, the only son of Kunjabihari Panigrahi of the village.

As per reports, when the family members were busy doing household chores Sunday morning, Anshuman went to a nearby pond and drowned. When the family members did not find him at home for long, they launched a frantic search for him and finally recovered the kid in an unconscious state from the nearby pond. The family members rushed

him to Baliapal community health centre where the doctors pronounced him dead. On being informed, Baliapal police reached the spot and registered a case (19/24) of unnatural death. They handed over the body to his family members after conducting an autopsy.

A pall of gloom descended on the area after the news spread.

Innovative prog to celebrate 'Gurudev's' 163rd birthday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, April 28: Members of 'Geetimalya', an organisation dedicated to music in this town, especially 'Rabindra Sangeet', has decided to celebrate the 163rd birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore in an innovative manner this year. Tagore's birthday is on May 7, but the programme will be held May 12. To celebrate the occasion, members of 'Geetimalya' will sing 20 famous Rabindra Sangeet songs at the same time spread over the country.

"This is an indeed a very unique event. Earlier, we were participating in functions every four years at Kolkata. However, this time the birthday of 'Gurudev' will be celebrated in 11 states. In each place there will be 100 singers. They will render 20 of the most famous songs of Tagore at the same time," said Mana Chakraborty of 'Geetimalya'.

Susmita Naskar will be coordinating the Odisha part of the event. She informed that 103



singers from Odisha would take part in the programme. "The programme will be spread over 11 states including Odisha. Among the other states and Union Territories participating in the function are Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Telangana. A total of 1,100 artists will sing 20

selected songs of Gurudev including 'Ekla chalo re', sharp at 10.30 AM," Naskar informed. Koyena Dastidar, another coordinator of the programme said, "We will sing on track mode and there will be no accompanying musicians. We will adhere to the timing so that all the 1,100 artists will sing at one go and finish the songs in around one hour and 30 minutes."

In this city there will be 83 artists who are going to participate in the mass singing. "Another 20 are coming from Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. They are undergoing training now," informed Naskar.

The mediapersons were given a glimpse of the practice sessions Saturday evening at the Rourkela Club. "Even though the majority of the singers are Bengalis, there are a number of Odias who are also learning Rabindra Sangeet," stated Naskar. The practice sessions are being held at different venues here like Civil Township, Basanti Colony, Koel Nagar and other areas. "The strategy is to practice five songs at a time. Once we master those then we go to the next five," Naskar said.

"The final rehearsals will be held May 11 once the other singers arrive from Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. We will also sync the songs on track mode so that there will be no glitches technically or otherwise," added Koyena.

कार्यालय उप महानिरीक्षक, गुप केन्द्र केन्द्रीय रिजर्व पुलिस बल, भुवनेश्वर (ओडिशा)
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सं.एफ.चार- 29/2024-25 मां. स्कूल-गु.के.मु. दिनांक: 20.04.2024

विज्ञापन
सर्व साधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि गुप केन्द्र, के.रि.पु.बल, भुवनेश्वर (ओडिशा) के मान्देसरी स्कूल में नर्सरी, एल.के.जी. एवं यू.के.जी. की कक्षाओं के बच्चों को शिक्षा प्रदान करने हेतु 11 माह के लिये 01 मुख्यध्यापिका, 08 अध्यापिका एवं 04 आया पद के लिये साक्षात्कार के आधार पर अस्थायी नियुक्ति की जाएगी। उपरोक्त पद पर नियुक्ति अवधि के दौरान मुख्यध्यापिका को राशि रुपये 15,000/- प्रतिमाह, अध्यापिका को राशि रुपये 11,000/- प्रतिमाह एवं आया को राशि रुपये 8,000/- प्रतिमाह की दर से मान्देय राशि का भुगतान किया जाएगा। आवेदन फार्म गुप केन्द्र के.रि.पु.बल, भुवनेश्वर के कन्ट्रोल रूम से किसी भी कार्यदिवस में प्राप्त किये जा सकते हैं। इच्छुक योग्य उम्मीदवार योग्यता के अनुसार उक्त पदों पर नियुक्ति के लिए अपना आवेदन फार्म दिनांक 20.05.2024 को 1730 बजे तक गुप केन्द्र, के.रि.पु.बल, भुवनेश्वर के कार्यालय में जमा कर सकते हैं। मुख्यध्यापिका पद हेतु आवेदन प्रस्तुत करने वाले उम्मीदवारों को दिनांक 27.05.2024 को 1100 बजे एवं अध्यापिका और आया के पद हेतु आवेदन प्रस्तुत करने वाले उम्मीदवारों को दिनांक 03.06.2024 को 1100 बजे कार्यालय उप महानिरीक्षक, गुप केन्द्र के.रि.पु.बल, भुवनेश्वर में साक्षात्कार के लिए उपस्थित होना होगा। इसके लिये आवेदन करने वाले उम्मीदवारों को अलग से पत्राचार द्वारा कोई सूचना नहीं दी जाएगी।
नोट:- चयन प्रक्रिया निम्नलिखित प्रार्थमिकताओं के अनुरूप किया जाएगा:-
(1) नर्सरी प्रशिक्षित अध्यापकों, जोकि मैट्रिक तथा ज्यादा पेटे हुए हैं, अध्यापक ने नर्सरी प्रशिक्षण डिप्लोमा किसी मान्यता प्राप्त प्रशिक्षण संस्थान से प्राप्त किया हो तथा पूर्व अनुभव हो।
(2) दूसरी प्रार्थमिकता जे.बी.टी. / प्रशिक्षित स्नातकों / प्रशिक्षित स्नातकोत्तर तथा अन्य प्रतिभाओं को दी जाएगी जैसे ड्राईंग, संगीत आदि।
(3) चयन प्रक्रिया तिथि-समय प्रशासनिक कारणों से कभी भी रद्द व संशोधित की जा सकती है।
(4) चयन के पश्चात बिना कारण बताये नियुक्ति कभी भी रद्द की जा सकती है।
स्वा/- उप महानिरीक्षक
गुप केन्द्र केरिपुबल, भुवनेश्वर (ओडिशा)

PRESS RELEASE
ELECTION OBSERVERS' CONTACT DETAILS OF NABARANGPUR DISTRICT
Any Complaints or grievances relating to Simultaneous General Election, 2024 pertaining to 12 Nabarangpur (ST) PC and 73-Umerkote AC, 74-Jharigam AC, 75-Nabarangpur AC and 76-Dabugam AC may be lodged to the below mentioned Mobile No./Whatsapp No./Email ID

Sl. No.	Name of the Observer	Observer for PC/ AC	Contact No./ Whatsapp No.	Email ID	Address
1	Sri Pallav Gopal Jha, IAS General Observer	73-Umerkote AC/ AS, 74-Jharigam AC/AS, 75-Nabarangpur AC/AS 76-Dabugam AC/AS	9692916499	genobsnabarangpur@gmail.com	Room No. 10, Circuit House, Nabarangpur
2	Sri Arnab Mukherjee, IRS Expenditure Observer	12-Nabarangpur PC (73-Umerkote AC, 74-Jharigam AC, 75-Nabarangpur AC, 76-Dabugam AC, 142-Kotpad AC, 146-Malkangiri AC, 147-Chitrakonda AC)	7978513516	obsexppc@gmail.com	Room No. 9, Circuit House, Nabarangpur
3	Sri. TP salim Kumar, IRS Expenditure Observer	73-Umerkote AC, 74-Jharigam AC, 75-Nabarangpur AC, 76-Dabugam AC	8114978370	eonabarangpuracs@gmail.com	Room No. 4, Circuit House, Nabarangpur

District Election Officer & Collector, Nabarangpur

“The fly that touches honey cannot use its wings; so too the soul that clings to spiritual sweetness ruins its freedom and hinders contemplation”

SRI AUROBINDO



Teeth To NOTA

In a significant development amid a low voter turnout in the initial two phases of the ongoing general elections, the Supreme Court has sought a response from the Election Commission of India regarding protocol to be followed if NOTA (none of the above) option surpasses the number of votes received by the candidates in a constituency or in other words, if NOTA receives the maximum votes. The top court has served a notice to the poll panel based on a PIL submitted by author, activist, and motivational speaker Shiv Khhera. The petition called for establishment of regulations to invalidate an election and call for a fresh one in the event NOTA option garners more votes than any candidate.

It is pertinent to note that NOTA option is being provided to voters in all electronic voting machines (EVMs) in pursuance of a 2013 Supreme Court verdict that had held that “a provision of negative voting would be in the interest of promoting democracy as it would send clear signals to political parties and their candidates as to what the electorate thinks about them.”

In the current matter, a Bench comprising Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, at the outset, displayed hesitation to consider Khhera's PIL as they believed it fell within the realm of government policy. However, they eventually agreed to hear the case after senior advocate Gopal Shankaranarayanan, the petitioner's counsel, pointed out that a BJP candidate in Surat had won uncontested due to other candidates withdrawing their nominations. The counsel argued that if the BJP nominee had run against NOTA option as a symbolic candidate, the true choice of the people would have been revealed.

The petition referred to the 170th report of the Law Commission of India of 29 May, 1999. The report suggests a new method of election where a candidate must receive at least 50 per cent of votes cast to be declared elected. It also proposes the option of a 'negative vote' for voters who do not wish to support any candidate. The recommendation includes counting negative votes as part of the total votes cast when determining the 50 per cent threshold. If no candidate reaches the 50 per cent mark in the initial election, a run-off should be held. If no candidate still reaches the threshold in the run-off, a fresh election should be conducted for that constituency.

Supporting the argument for re-election in the event of NOTA emerging as the winner, the plea stated that candidates should be disqualified from the electoral process if they receive fewer votes than NOTA. The PIL highlighted that since 2013, the introduction of NOTA has failed to serve its intended purpose of boosting voter turnout in elections. Furthermore, the PIL pointed out that NOTA has not compelled political parties to nominate candidates with clean backgrounds as is evident from the high number of candidates with criminal charges contesting elections in the country.

The NOTA option empowers voters to express their dissatisfaction and lack of support for all candidates. It gives them the right to reject while still turning out to vote. However, over a decade after it was introduced with all good intentions, the number of voters going for the option still remains low, with experts dubbing it as a toothless tiger having no implications on the results. NOTA had secured around 1.06 per cent of votes in the last Lok Sabha elections, and among the states, the highest was when it received 1.98 per cent of the total votes polled in the 2018 Chhattisgarh Assembly polls. It's time the poll body gives more teeth to NOTA, a true weapon for electors who don't belong to any vote-bank and are often ignored by both the ruling and Opposition parties.

WISDOM CORNER

“Not only does God play dice, but... he sometimes throws them where they cannot be seen.”

STEPHEN HAWKING

“Great men are like eagles, and build their nest on some lofty solitude.”

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

“The world breaks everyone, and afterward, some are strong at the broken places.”

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1429:** French national heroine Joan of Arc and her troops entered the besieged city of Orléans during the Hundred Years' War.
- 1770:** British explorer James Cook made his first landing in Australia, at Botany Bay.
- 1916:** About 10,000 British troops surrendered to Ottoman Turks at Al-K t, Iraq, following a five-month siege during World War I.
- 1945:** The U.S. Seventh Army liberated tens of thousands of inmates at the Nazi concentration camp in Dachau, Germany.
- 1975:** Hubert van Es takes the famous picture of a helicopter airlift from a Saigon rooftop. The image shows South Vietnamese civilians employed by the U.S. trying to escape Saigon on the day before the city's fall. It came to symbolize the American defeat in Vietnam.

LOL

Settling a case

A big-city lawyer was representing the railroad in a lawsuit filed by an old rancher. The rancher's prize bull was missing from the section through which the railroad passed. The rancher only wanted to be paid the fair value of the bull. The case was scheduled to be tried before the justice of the peace in the back room of the general store. The attorney for the railroad immediately cornered the rancher and tried to get him to settle out of court. The lawyer did his best selling job, and finally the rancher agreed to take half of what he was asking. After the rancher had signed the release and took the check, the young



little over his success, telling the rancher, "You know, I hate to tell you this, old man, but I put one over on you in there. I couldn't have won the case. The engineer was asleep and the fireman was in the caboose when the train went through your ranch that morning. I didn't have one witness to put on the stand. I bluffed you!" The old rancher replied, "Well, I'll tell you, young feller, I was a little worried about winning that case myself, because that durned bull came home this morning."

lawyer couldn't resist gloating a

CASE FOR INHERITANCE TAX

FOCUS INEQUALITY

A political slugfest and fierce debate erupted on inheritance tax after Sam Pitroda, the Chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, spoke about a similar law in the United States. The Congress distanced itself from Pitroda's views, but the BJP mounted a strident attack, with PM Narendra Modi saying the grand old party "would loot people even after their death."



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

INDIA HAS MORE INEQUALITY THAN OTHER COUNTRIES AND REMARKABLY LESS EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY THAN ALMOST ANY OTHER COUNTRY

The inheritance tax proposal did not go down well with a host of economists, who believed such a move would hurt the Indian economy as investors would head for alternative places. Economist Sanjeev Sanyal tried to trash Pitroda's argument that wealth tax would bring down inequality and said the Left loves death duties - not because it redistributes wealth but because it feeds its ecosystem. Former Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said wealth redistribution and inheritance taxes are "lazy and regressive" policy choices.

However, Kaushik Basu who served as the Chief Economic Advisor under the Manmohan Singh government backed inheritance tax, saying it is needed to curb inequality in the society. He said the biggest inequalities in life occur at birth. "Some are born abysmally poor, some rich beyond imagination. This has nothing to do with their hard work and has no moral justification. This is the reason why an inheritance tax to curb inequality is a must in any civilized society," Basu said.

Prior to the Union Budget in 2013, P Chidambaram had said, "Non-debt revenue should be increased; therefore, the rich must be prepared to pay more tax to raise the tax-GDP ratio." He had questioned the accumulation of wealth by a few individuals while the majority languished. Similarly, in 2017, reports suggest



When tax-GDP ratio is low, India's tax system is regressive with the burden of tax falling on the poor as more revenue is generated through indirect taxes like GST, VAT, and excise duties

that then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley was planning to levy taxes on inherited wealth.

At present, there is no inheritance tax in India. Wealth tax has been abolished too by Arun Jaitley. However, you do need to pay taxes on any income or profit you make from inherited assets. Inheritance tax is a levy on assets inherited from a deceased. It is paid by the beneficiary. In many countries, when the property or assets of a deceased person get passed on to their legal heirs like children, siblings or spouse, a tax is levied on the value of the property.

The main difference between inheritance and estate taxes is the person who pays the tax. While inheritance tax is paid by the beneficiary, estate tax is paid by the deceased individual's estate before the money is transferred to the heir. Since an estate tax is calculated on the estate, it doesn't matter who the beneficiaries of the estate are, whereas for inheritance tax, the relationship between the person who died and the beneficiaries is of great importance.

In 1953, India's Parliament had passed the Estate Duty 'Death Tax' Act. It was a progressive

taxation system made to reduce economic inequality. As per the Act, tax/duty was imposed on the principal value of movable and immovable property, including agricultural land, passed on to any person after the death of the owner of such property.

After implementation, the death duty imposed peaked up to 85%, making it highly unpopular. In 1985, then Finance Minister VP Singh obliterated it as the income generated for the Centre via such taxes was much less than the cost incurred due to the administrative process in executing it.

In the US, the federal government does not levy any inheritance tax. It is collected by some states. However, the US federal government imposes estate tax. The number of federal estate tax payers is low because of the high threshold.

According to Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC), most European, American and even African nations levy inheritance tax. In Europe, the top nations levying tax on inherited properties are France (60%), Germany (50%), United Kingdom (40%), Spain (33%) and Hungary (18%). Other countries with high inheritance

taxes are Japan (55%), South Korea (50%), Ecuador (37%), Chile (25%), South Africa (25%) and Taiwan (20%).

The biggest obstacle to India's progress is the low tax-GDP ratio which is expected to be 11.7% of GDP in 2024-25. Combined with states, it will be around 17% only. It is still far lower than the average OECD ratio of 34%. When tax-GDP ratio is low, India's tax system is regressive with the burden of tax falling on the poor as more revenue is generated through indirect taxes like GST, VAT, and excise duties. This needs to be reversed.

A low tax-to-GDP ratio poses gigantic challenges for the government to spend money on health, education, welfare measures, creating necessary social infrastructure and raising investment.

In India, neo-liberalism has been taken over by crony capitalism while democracy is hijacked by oligarchy. India has more inequality than other countries and remarkably less equality of opportunity than almost any other country. India's income inequality is at 100-year high; worse than colonial era. What is distressing is that without any effort, ability, potentialities and talent, children of rich people and corporate behemoths are inheriting huge wealth which is perpetuating intergenerational inequality.

This inequality can arise from a range of factors, including economic, social, and political systems that perpetuate advantage or disadvantage over time. Hence to curb intergenerational inequality and raise resources for providing health and education free, there is need for wealth and inheritance and higher corporate taxes.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist. Views are personal.

SPECTRUM SOCIAL SECURITY

As families change, so must safety net

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the United Nations' International Year of the Family (IYF). In the decades since the IYF was proclaimed, demographic shifts, technological transformations, migration, urbanisation, and climate change have upended societies around the world. Responding effectively to these changes requires revisiting prevailing approaches to social protection and shifting the policy focus to strengthening intergenerational solidarity.

The International Labour Organization Convention 102, the first (and, so far, only) international treaty to address social security, sets minimum standards for the provision of family (or child) benefits in the form of periodic cash transfers, in-kind assistance (food, clothing, housing), or a combination of the two. Around the time of its adoption in 1952, many European countries began developing generous welfare systems. In 2020, expenditure on family/children benefits in the EU amounted to 8.3% of total expenditure on social benefits. It was as high as 16.2% in Poland and 15.7% in Luxembourg; Estonia, Germany, Lithuania, Romania, Hungary, Denmark, and Sweden also recorded double-digit shares. But they are not alone: more than 120 low- and middle-income



Neha Bansal

SOCIAL-PROTECTION PROGRAMMES SHOULD STRENGTHEN FAMILIES' AGENCY AND ABILITY TO ACT AS NATURAL BUFFERS AGAINST ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SHOCKS

countries have adopted cash-transfer programmes for poor families.

Most of these policies focus on reducing family poverty or offering family-sensitive social protection, such as conditional cash transfers or allowances for the birth of a child, medical care, and school tuition, as well as food rations for female-headed households. Such measures have helped families cope with the burden of caring for ill relatives, improved families' nutritional status, and reduced infant mortality, school absenteeism, and child labour.

In the future, however, a more holistic approach will be needed. The current policy framework conceptualises the family as falling within specific demographic categories or age groups, not as an integrated unit. Instead, social-protection programmes should strengthen families' agency and ability to act as natural buffers against economic and social shocks. This can be achieved through policies that promote solidarity between generations.

Research indicates that strong family ties contribute to economic resilience. For example, in countries with robust family connections, such as Italy and Spain, consumption losses are much lower during periods of unemployment, owing to the family safety net. People feel

freer to spend when they know that, in the event of a financial shock, their relatives will help them get back on their feet. Family ties are a form of insurance against income fluctuations, whether temporary or long term.

As climate change worsens and governments navigate the bumpy road to net-zero emissions, family solidarity becomes imperative. The family serves as a vital source of social cohesion, mediating between individuals and the state, as well as internalising social risk by pooling resources across generations. Intergenerational living, for example, is on the rise: even in developed countries like the United States, the share of the population living in multi-generational households has more than doubled over the past five decades as of 2022. Given a rapidly aging global population and soaring youth unemployment worldwide, such arrangements are likely to become more common.

Policymakers can encourage this type of generational integration and solidarity through tax benefits, paid family leave, and support for intergenerational care. This could include allowances for grandparents to care for their grandchildren – an initiative that embodies the concept of economies of scope, wherein a single intervention

has a positive effect on several issues and populations.

Housing interventions can also actively encourage multi-generational living. In Singapore, the Multi-Generation Priority Scheme favours extended families wanting to live near each other, while various grants are available for qualified buyers seeking to purchase an apartment with or near their parents or children.

As social norms evolve, it is essential to recognise the malleable definition of "family." The nuclear family is no longer the norm, owing to the rise of blended families, cohabitation, and other alternative household arrangements. Moreover, rapidly aging societies increase the likelihood of more family members residing under one roof. Given these shifts, the 30th anniversary of the IYF is an opportune time to re-evaluate our approach to social protection. By implementing policies that promote family solidarity and intergenerational integration, governments can foster economic stability and social cohesion at a time of increasing uncertainty.

The writer is Founder of the think tank Asianism Retold – Development Pathways from the Global South.

Building up a case

Sir, This refers to "Illegal arrest an assault on democracy: Kejriwal" (Orissa POST, April 28). Without holding brief for Delhi CM Kejriwal, I would like to comment that he has strongly argued his case in his rejoinder in reply to the affidavit filed by the ED hopelessly trying to build up a case against him. The most important aspect of the case as Kejriwal argued is that in a money-laundering case not a single penny has been recovered from him and nevertheless, the BJP-led Centre allegedly continued to harass him by their probe agencies at a time when his full-fledged participation in the election campaign was imperative. His arrest has no doubt helped the BJP to take an upper hand in the ongoing elections. In his affidavit, Kejriwal has successfully brought home the fact that the real motive of the ED is to procure and obtain some statements by alleged accomplices to justify his arrest. Since the apex court is the ultimate authority to decide his case, we have to patiently wait for the same. But in the event the apex court comes to the finding that Kejriwal's arrest is considered to be an assault on the tenets of democracy, the officers concerned of the ED should get a befitting punishment for their misdeeds.

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA

A greener future

Sir, Empowering youth with green skills is essential for addressing climate change and achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Green skills encompass knowledge and abilities related to renewable energy, waste management, and environmental protection, preparing young individuals to lead the transition to a greener future. Collaborative efforts are needed to equip youth adequately, including integrating green skills into education and exploring alternative avenues for skill acquisition. In India, there's a growing emphasis on upskilling for green job roles as the country moves towards its sustainability goals. By investing in youth and fostering green skills development, we pave the way for a brighter, more environmentally conscious future, where young people play a vital role in driving positive change across industries.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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K'taka CM holds protest over drought funds release

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 28: Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar along with several ministers and legislators Sunday staged a protest here alleging injustice to the state by the union government while releasing drought relief funds.

The state government has declared 226 out of the total 236 Taluks in the state as drought-hit and said there was a crop loss in 48 lakh hectares of land.

According to Siddaramaiah, against the demand for ₹18,171 crore for drought relief, the union government ordered release of only ₹3,454 crore that too after the state was driven to the Supreme Court to get its rights enforced. The sanction is 'woefully inadequate' and just a quarter of the state's demand, he noted.

Displaying 'Chombu', a water pot symbolising emptiness and



deception, the leaders charged the Centre with 'cheating' Karnataka by not releasing adequate relief to face acute drought, the kind of which was not witnessed in the past several decades.

They held the symbolic dharna in front of the Mahatma Gandhi statue on the premises of Vidhana Soudha, which houses the Legislature and Secretariat.

Holding placards and posters that read, "Modi government is betraying Kannadigas", "Cheating by the Modi government by not releasing adequate

grants," the leaders raised slogans condemning the Centre. They also shouted "Go back, go back, Modi go back", as the Prime Minister was on his way to holding four back-to-back public meetings in the state.

Addressing reporters, Siddaramaiah said Karnataka is witnessing an unprecedented drought in the state.

"We haven't seen a drought like this in 100 years. We had given a memorandum to the Centre in September last year. We were supposed to get the relief amount within a month of submitting the report but we did not get it until we approached the Supreme Court," the Chief Minister said.

The Congress general secretary and Karnataka in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala who too participated in the protest alleged that the Modi government is seeking 'revenge' against the people of Karnataka by not releasing the adequate relief amount.



A zookeeper sprinkles water on an ostrich at Sarthana Nature Park on a hot summer day, in Surat, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

India will never bow down, talks with China going on smoothly: Rajnath Singh



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, April 28: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Sunday said talks between India and China are going smoothly and in a good environment and India will never bow down.

Singh, who is in Ahmedabad to campaign for BJP candidates contesting the Lok Sabha elections, said India has become a powerful country from a military standpoint and wants to maintain good relations with its neighbours.

"India is no longer a weak India. India has also become a powerful country from a military point of view. We want to maintain good relations with our neighbouring countries," the minister said when asked

about Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's accusation against the Narendra Modi government over Chinese aggression.

"I understand that we should wait for the outcome of the talks. But I want to assure the countrymen that India has not bowed down anywhere, nor will it ever bow down," he said.

Singh also expressed confidence that India's defence exports, which crossed the ₹21,000 crore mark in the financial 2023-24, will increase going forward.

The minister said that the government is committed to ensuring defence items, whether missiles or other weapons, bombs or tanks, should be made in India and by Indians.

"Today, we have achieved defence production worth more than ₹1 lakh crore," he added.

Pak boat seized with heroin off Guj coast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, April 28: The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has seized 86 kg of drugs worth ₹600 crore from a Pakistani boat and arrested 14 persons on board the vessel off the Gujarat coast, the maritime security agency said Sunday.

A top Gujarat police official informed about heroin being seized from the boat.

The overnight operation in the Arabian Sea was carried out in coordination with the Gujarat Anti-terrorism Squad (ATS) and the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), it said in a release.

This was the 11th such successful joint operation in past three years involving the Coast Guard and the ATS, it said, seeking to underscore the synergy between the two agencies.

"In a breathtaking overnight operation, Indian Coast Guard undertook an intelligence-based anti-narcotics operation. Approx 86 kg of narcotics worth ₹600 crore has been apprehended along with 14 crew from the Pakistani boat," the agency said in a release.

Coast Guard ships and aircraft were deployed for the operation, it said, adding that ICG ship Rajratan was used to identify the suspect boat with the help of NCB and ATS officials on board.

"No amount of evasive manoeuvring tactics employed by the drug-laden boat could save it from the swift and strong ICG ship Rajratan. The ship's specialist team embarked on the suspect boat and, after thorough checks, confirmed the presence of a sizable amount of narcotics,"



the Coast Guard said.

The Pakistani boat along with its 14-member crew were apprehended and were being brought to Porbandar for further investigations, it added.

"The joint collaboration of ICG and ATS, which has led to eleven such successful law enforcement operations in the last three years, itself reaffirms the synergy for national objectives," it added.

A total of 78 packets weighing 86 kg were recovered from the Pakistani fishing boat, Gujarat Director General of Police Vikas Sahay said. The packets contained heroin, a powerful recreational opioid, he said, citing

13 held with ₹230cr mephedrone in Gujarat

Ahmedabad: Thirteen persons have been arrested after the seizure of mephedrone valued at ₹230 crore following raids at four drug manufacturing units in Gujarat and neighbouring Rajasthan, an official said. The raids were conducted by the Gujarat Anti Terrorism Squad and Narcotics Control Bureau jointly Friday after the ATS received a tip-off that Ahmedabad resident Manoharlal Enani and Kuldeep Singh Rajpurohit of Rajasthan had set up mephedrone manufacturing units, the official said Saturday. A watch was kept on the movements of Enani and Rajpurohit as well as their accomplices, following which the raids were conducted at the units in Sirohi and Jodhpur in Rajasthan and Piplaj village in Gandhinagar and Bhaktinagar industrial area of Amreli district in Gujarat, an ATS release said. "The ATS recovered 22.028 kilograms of mephedrone (in solid form) and 124 kilograms of liquid mephedrone, collectively valued at ₹230 crore. Rajpurohit was nabbed during the raid in Gandhinagar and Enani was held from Sirohi," it said. As per the probe, Enani was in jail for seven years after he was nabbed by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) in 2015 for his involvement in the production of mephedrone at an industrial unit in Rajasthan. All the accused were inter-connected and procuring the raw material from a company at Vapi industrial area in Valsad district, the release said.

In a breathtaking overnight operation, Indian Coast Guard undertook an intelligence-based anti-narcotics operation. Approx 86 kg of heroin worth ₹600 crore has been seized

the preliminary investigation. "Indian Coast Guard and ATS officials approached the Pakistani fishing boat and confronted it with bravery. An ICG official had to shoot, after which the crew members of the boat surrendered and the officials detained them," Sahay told media persons.

He said the head of the crew was injured in his right hand in the firing and was undergoing treatment.

After the boat was seized, a second ATS team left for the spot, he said. "All the crew members hail from Balochistan in Pakistan," he further added.

Last month, the Coast Guard, NCB and ATS had caught a boat carrying methamphetamine, a highly addictive psycho-stimulant drug, worth over ₹400 crore and its six Pakistani crew members off the Porbandar coast in Gujarat.

In February, the Indian Navy and the NCB had apprehended a dhow off the Gujarat coast with five crew members and seized 3,300 kg of drugs from it, the largest quantity of narcotics seized in recent times.

Both BJP, Cong feel 'good' voter turnout in polls favourable

WITH THE HIGH-PROFILE MANDYA SEAT SEEING A TURNOUT OF 81.67 PER CENT, BOTH NDA AND CONGRESS ARE CLAIMING THAT THE TREND SHOWED SUPPORT FOR THEM

AGENCIES

Bangalore, April 28: Both, the BJP and Congress, are confident that the 'good' voter turnout in Karnataka's 14 Lok Sabha seats, which went to the polls April 26, is favourable for them.

Karnataka has recorded 69.56 per cent turnout April 26, according to the Election Commission. Barring Bangalore's three parliamentary seats, all constituencies in the state witnessed over 70 per cent voting.

While state BJP President BY Vijayendra is claiming that the voting has been done in the favour of the BJP-JD(S) alliance, the Congress is saying that ground reports are suggesting that its seat tally will be greater than that of the BJP.

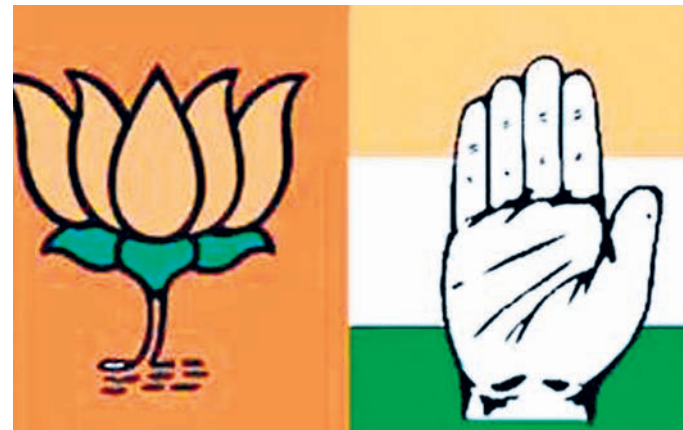
Chief Minister Siddaramaiah after the polling said that he had spoken to the candidates and district in-charges and all of them had given him a positive feedback.

Deputy Chief Minister and state Congress President DK Shivakumar thanked the voters and said that his party would surely win seats in double digits.

Shivakumar also claimed that JD(S) is saying that the BJP leaders have not cooperated in Mandya and Hassan Lok Sabha constituencies and dharna of alliance was not followed. In the Bangalore Rural seat as well, BJP leaders have not supported the JD(S).

Both BJP and Congress are confident about winning the Hassan Lok Sabha seat, where the contest was primarily between former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda's grandson Prajwal Revanna and Congress' Shreyas M Patel. The constituency witnessed a 77.68 per cent voter turnout.

The strengthen their claims, BJP and JD(S) sources claim that the Vokkaligas won't desert their 'unquestionable' leader Deve Gowda. In addition to this, they are sure that a large chunk of Lingayat votes in Kadur,



Sakleshpur, Belur and Arasikere assembly constituencies have come in support of the NDA candidate following the MCA student Neha Hiremath murder case.

On the other hand, the Congress says that Prajwal Revanna had lost his chance after a scandalous pen drive against him surfaced before the election.

In Dakshina Kannada Lok Sabha seat, the BJP is confident of retaining the seat while the Congress is hopeful that the caste card will divide votes and its candidate Padmaraj will create history. The parliamentary seat saw 77.56 per cent turnout.

The Udupi-Chikkamagaluru

Lok Sabha seat has registered a 77.15 per cent voter turnout and both the national parties are claiming to win the seat.

For the Chitradurga (reserved) Lok Sabha seat that registered 73.3 per cent polling, the Congress sources say their party will win the seat because of the overwhelming support of Dalits, backwards and minorities, who have a significant presence in the constituency. Also, they claim that the party is benefitted by the internal strife within the BJP. The BJP, on the other hand, is relying on the Lingayat vote bank and is hopeful that it will emerge victorious.

For the Tumakuru Lok Sabha

seat, BJP sources say that the charisma of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and reputation of BJP candidate V Somanna as a person who delivers will help the party to win. The Congress, on the other hand, is claiming that oppressed classes, minorities and Vokkaligas have voted for the party. The constituency witnessed a 78.05 per cent voter turnout.

With the high-profile Mandya seat seeing a turnout of 81.67 per cent, both NDA and Congress are claiming that the trend showed support for them.

Supporters of JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy say that the trend showed absolute support for him while the Congress claims that the Vokkaliga vote bank, which is decisive in the segment, is standing behind Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, and thus its candidate will win from the seat.

BJP and Congress insiders agree that there is a tough fight between the two parties in Chikkaballapur and Kolar Parliamentary seats, and the margin of victories will be low.

For Bangalore, the BJP claims that its dominance in three seats of the IT city will continue while the Congress says that results will surprise the rival party.

Admin launches larvae survey to fight dengue outbreak in Udupi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karnataka, April 28: After the recent rains, Udupi district has witnessed a concerning increase in dengue fever cases, prompting swift action from health authorities.

The district's health department has launched a comprehensive larvae survey aimed at combating the outbreak. With a focus on city areas where larvae infestation is suspected to be high, the department is spearheading an anti-larval and mosquito eradication programme across the district.

Since January this year, Udupi has already reported 47 cases of dengue. Last year's total number of cases was 635.

Prashanth Bhat, Udupi's district vector-borne disease control officer, emphasised the importance of maintaining clean surroundings and preventing water from stagnating, especially as the rainy season approaches.

"Larvae are commonly found in unused freshwater, air coolers and discarded tires. Early detection and elimination of these breeding grounds are crucial," Bhat stated.

Recalling last year's surge in dengue cases in Udupi city areas



- 47 cases reported since January this year
- Over the past few years, dengue cases in Udupi have fluctuated, with 513 cases reported in 2022, 380 cases in 2021, and 139 cases in 2020

during October, efforts were mobilised to control the mosquito population. Medical students from Kasturba Medical College in Manipal, collaborated with the department of Community Medicine, Udupi District Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (DVBDCP), and District Health and Family Welfare department to conduct mosquito control initiatives.

Notably, the presence of migrant worker accommodation units in the district necessitates extra vigilance, as migrant labourers are considered a high-risk group for dengue fever, the official said.



Hundreds of Congress and BJD workers join BJP at a merger meeting held at Madhapur in Angul district, Sunday



BJD's Bhubaneswar Lok Sabha candidate Manmath Routray and the party's Bhubaneswar-Central Assembly nominee Ananta Naryan Jena take out a rally in the City ahead of the elections

'Shehzada' insulted rajas but silent on nizams: Modi



AGENCIES

Bangalore, April 28: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday accused Congress leader Rahul Gandhi of insulting India's rajas and maharajas, but remaining silent on the atrocities committed by nawabs, nizams, sultans and badshahs for the sake of appeasement politics.

Addressing back-to-back rallies in Belagavi, Sirsi, Davangere and Hosapete, he also continued his attack against the Congress on the "inheritance tax" issue and targeted the party's government in Karnataka on law and order, corruption and development issues.

"The BJP is working on increasing the assets of the people, but Congress' shehzada (referring to Rahul Gandhi) and his sister (Priyanka Gandhi Vadra), both are announcing that if they come to power, they will do an 'X-ray' of the country," Modi said.

"They will X-ray your property, bank lockers, lands, vehicles, also 'streedhan' and ornaments of women, gold, the 'mangalsutra'. These people will raid every house and capture your assets. After capturing, they are talking about redistributing it, they want it to give it to their loved vote bank...will you allow this loot to happen?" he asked.

"I want to warn the Congress," Modi said. "Let go of this in-

Odia identity, language under threat: Modi

Bhubaneswar: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has claimed that Odisha's identity and its language are under threat and people of the state will not tolerate this any longer. Modi made this assertion in an interview with a news channel, a part of which was shared by the BJP on X. The BJP should get a chance to serve the people of Odisha, the PM said. "Odisha's identity, its language and literature are in crisis today. The BJD government has worsened the situation in the state. People will not tolerate this for much longer. This time there will be a change in Odisha," Modi said in the interview with CNBC TV18. The clipping of Modi's interview when the state observed 'Swabhiman (Self-esteem) Divas' on the occasion of the 176th birth anniversary of 'Utkal Gourav' Madhusudan Das, an icon of the state.

attention. Until Modi is alive, I will not allow it..."

Modi said, "Congress has ensured the writing of our history and our freedom struggle with an eye on appeasement and vote bank. Even today, the Congress' shehzada (prince) is carrying forward that sin. You might have

heard shehzada's recent statement -- he says Bharath's rajas and maharajas were atyachari (oppressive)."

"He (Gandhi) has accused them (rajas and maharajas) of usurping the lands and properties of people and poor... Congress' shehzada has insulted great personalities like Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Kittur Rani Chennamma, whose administration and patriotism inspires us even today," the prime minister said.

Recalling the contribution of the erstwhile Mysuru royal family, and saying they are respected across the country even today, Modi added, "The Congress' shehzada's statements were intentional, aimed at vote-bank politics and appeasement."

"Shehzada spoke ill about rajamaharajas, but his mouth was locked regarding the 'atyachar' that nawabs, nizams, sultans and badshahs committed in India's history. His mouth was shut on them, but on rajamaharajas he speaks ill and insults them," he said.

Alleging that Gandhi cannot remember Mughal emperor Aurangzeb's oppressions, Modi said, "He (Aurangzeb) made a number of our temples impure and destroyed them. Congress is happily making alliances with parties that praise Aurangzeb...they don't remember people who destroyed our religious places, indulged in killing, killing of cows. They don't remember the nawab, who played a role in the partition of India."

He recalled the contributions of the Raja of Banaras in setting up Banaras Hindu University and Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar in the reconstruction of temples.

Since the time Congress came to power in Karnataka, law and order in entire state has worsened.

Debapriya campaigns for Abhimanyu

POST NEWS NETWORK

Hatadihi, April 28: Political atmosphere in Anandapur Assembly constituency has assumed feverish pitch with all the three major political parties intensifying their campaign, and Ghasipura MLA Badri Narayan Patra and BJD's youth leader Debapriya Patra rallying behind party candidate Abhimanyu Sethi.

According to sources, Debapriya, who is also the director of Keonjhar Central Cooperative Bank, has proved himself as a disciplined worker of the party and started applying his strategies to get more votes for BJD.

Debapriya, whose role is crucial for Anandapur Assembly constituency that has been occupied by BJD for the last three terms, is appealing to the people in various meetings and rallies



to go for 'double conch' in the upcoming polls and ensure that Naveen Patnaik becomes the Chief Minister for the sixth term.

Political analysts say it is evident that Debapriya has the ability to persuade, unite and

organise the workers, and crush the opposition.

His role in the campaign as well as rapport with public has become a reason for worry for the rival candidates.

Debapriya, who has been active in politics since 1999, was

elected as a Samiti member of Anandapur block from Bailo panchayat in 2002 and as a Zilla Parishad member of Anandapur Zone III in 2007.

He served as the director of State Cooperative Bank from 2013 to 2018 and later became the director of Keonjhar Central Cooperative Bank.

He has also held the post of observer for Bijepur Assembly constituency in 2018, Balasore Assembly seat in 2020, Udala Assembly constituency from 2016 to 2019, and Pipli and Saraskana Assembly segments in 2021.

Since 2022, he has been holding the post of observer for Karanjia Assembly constituency and discharging his role as the director of Keonjhar Central Cooperative Bank. Political analysts said that Debapriya hitting the campaign trail will help in swinging the votes in BJD's favour.

Tukuni's remarks stir hornet's nest

POST NEWS NETWORK

Padmapur, April 28: At a time when parties cross swords against each other over several issues ahead of the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in Odisha, a statement by Water Resources Minister and Titilagarh MLA candidate of BJD Tukuni Sahu has sparked controversy.

According to sources, Tukuni, who was addressing an election meeting organised by senior citizens of this town recently, said that she would have submitted her resignation to BJD president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, had Padmapur been given district status before declaring Titilagarh as a district. This has created a political controversy in Padmapur of Bargharh district, especially after the video of Tukuni's speech went viral on several social media platforms.

Chatters are abuzz saying that declaration of Padmapur as a district by the state government might have been stalled due to Tukuni's warning. Now, people of Padmapur are openly discussing whether it is due to Tukuni's resignation threat which forced the CM to cancel the plan of according district status to Padmapur.

Notably, voters of Padmapur ensured a thumping victory for BJD candidate Barsha Singh Bariha in 2022 byelection after Patnaik announced that the subdivision would soon be designated as a district. However, the plan was put on the back burner later. The issue has again come to the limelight after Tukuni's remarks at the recent election meeting, said the sources.

Meanwhile, a censure motion against Tukuni's remarks was unanimously accepted at a meeting of all the organisations of Padmapur. The meeting held in the Bas Association office of the sub-division was headed by Padmapur Kriyanusthan Committee convenor Ajit Satpahty. This apart, an effigy of Tukuni Sahu was taken in a procession before it was burnt at Bheunria square in Padmapur.



Members of four families of BJD loyalists left the ruling party and joined Congress at a merger meeting held at the Congress office in Baliapal of Balasore district, Sunday

Hotels, hosps, multiplexes woo Raipur voters with discounts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, April 28: Prominent hotels, hospitals and multiplexes in Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur have offered discounts on their services to electors in a bid to enhance voter turnout in the ongoing Lok Sabha polls, officials said Sunday.

The offers will be applicable to voters for a few days from May 7, the date of polling in Raipur Lok Sabha constituency. They can avail the offers by showing the indelible ink mark on their index finger, a public relations department official said.

Several organisations and business establishments have been joining the 'Sab Kare Matdan' (everyone should vote) campaign of the district administration, he said.

Representatives of various establishments have given letters to Raipur Collector Gaurav

Singh, city civic chief Abinash Mishra and Zila Panchayat CEO Vishwadeep pertaining to their offers and discounts.

Hotel Babylon Inn has offered 30 per cent discount on room bookings, 25 per cent on mocktails, 20 per cent on food order and 15 per cent on buffet orders from May 7 to 12. It has also offered one free buffet on the order of three buffets, the official said.

Mayfair Lake resort has offered a 30 per cent discount and one free buffet on the order of three buffets, which will be applicable from May 7 to 12, he said.

Ramkrishna Care Hospital has announced 30 per cent discount on health checkup for voters and their family members and 30 per cent discount on OPD consultation for the electors voters from May 7 to 12, he said.

Sanjeevani hospital has offered 25 per cent discount to vot-



ers visiting the OPD for examination May 7 and 50 per cent discount on OPD consultation from May 8 to 12.

If a person is admitted to the hospital on the voting day, he/she will not have to pay the room rent for that day, the official said.

Balaji Hospital management has announced free OPD for voters May 7, 50 per cent discount in OPD consultation from May 8 to 12. There will be a 50 per cent discount in OPD check-ups from May 7 to 12, he said.

Other hotels, restaurants

Hotel Babylon Inn has offered 30 per cent discount on room bookings, 25 per cent on mocktails, 20 per cent on food order and 15 per cent on buffet orders from May 7 to 12. It has also offered one free buffet on the order of three buffets

Mayfair Lake resort has offered a 30 per cent discount and one free buffet on the order of three buffets, which will be applicable from May 7 to 12

Ramkrishna Care Hospital has announced 30 per cent discount on health checkup for voters and their family members and 30 per cent discount on OPD consultation for the electors voters from May 7 to 12

Besides, voters will get a 30 per cent discount on the show tickets of films screened at the PVR, he said.

Chhattisgarh Chamber of Commerce president Amar Parwani said the furniture association has announced a 10 per cent discount, cloth traders association 10 per cent, Raipur optical association 15 per cent and plywood association 5 per cent on their various products.

The Sarafa association has also offered voters a 15 per cent discount in gold making charges, he said.

Other trader associations have offered similar discounts on their products and services to be applicable from May 7 to 12, he said.

The Shri Ram Wholesale Market has also announced to distribute 3,000 packets of vegetables free of cost to voters from May 8 onwards, he added.

and hospitals have also announced various discounts, the official said.

national

of the day quote

BJP's policy is right, intentions are also right and leadership is also right

NAYAB SINGH SAINI | HARYANA CM

Earlier, people from Pakistan could easily come here and carry out terror attacks. The then prime minister would go to the US to complain about Pakistan, but nothing would happen. After Modi came to power, we retaliated by surgical strike and carried out airstrike to send out a strong message

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA DEPUTY CM

The RSS is today saying that they are not against reservations, but earlier they had said that they oppose reservations

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

4 killed, 2 missing in road accident

Srinagar: Four persons died while two others were missing after a passenger vehicle rolled down into Nallah Sindh in the Ganderbal district of Jammu and Kashmir Sunday, an official said here. A passenger vehicle with nine persons on board skidded off the road and fell into the fast-moving stream at Gagangri in Sonamarg area of Ganderbal, the official said. He said a rescue operation was launched by the SDRF and police.

Six killed, 10 hurt in road accident

Unnao (UP): Six persons were killed and ten others injured when a speeding truck collided head-on with a bus in Uttar Pradesh's Unnao district Sunday. All the injured have been sent to the district hospital for treatment and the bodies sent for a post-mortem examination. According to information, the bus was going from Unnao to Safipur. The collision was so strong that the truck turned into a mangled heap of metal. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has taken cognisance of the accident and has expressed condolences to the bereaved families of the deceased.

SCBA writes to CJI

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Bar Association has written a letter to the Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud to consider its request of erecting statues of the country's first president and CJI in the apex court's premises. SCBA secretary Rohit Pandey said the letter was to bring to the present CJI's notice the proposal for installing statues of first president Rajendra Prasad and the first CJI Justice H J Kania.



BJP people did not know the direction of the wind, so they kept saying 400 'paar' (winning over 400 seats) and when they realised the public sentiment after the two phases of the election, BJP forgot its slogan

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

3 POLICEMEN KILLED IN ROAD MISHAP

Three policemen were killed and around 12 others injured when the van they were on board was hit by a speeding container truck from the rear side in Bihar's Gopalganj district Sunday, the police said. The accident occurred near Barhima Bazar when the police team was going to Supaul on Lok Sabha election duty



U'KHAND: 8 FRESH FOREST FIRES IN 24 HOURS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, April 28: The fire-fighting operation in Uttarakhand's forests with the help of an Indian Air Force (IAF) helicopter continued for the second day Sunday with the blaze being brought under control in several areas, officials said.

The state reported eight fresh forest fires in the last 24 hours, gutting 11.75 hectares, compared to the 23 such incidents damaging 34.175 hectares from Friday evening to Saturday evening, the forest department said in its daily bulletin. Since November 1, 2023, Uttarakhand has so far

recorded 606 forest fires in which 735.815 hectares of forest land were gutted, the bulletin said. No major fire broke out in the forests over the past 24 hours, Kumaon's Chief Conservator of Forest Prasanna Kumar Patro said.

In the Kumaon region, fires are raging at two to three places in Nainital district and at one place each in Champawat, Almora, Pithoragarh and Bageshwar, Patro said.

The fire in the forests of Ladiyakata and Pines area on Nainital-Bhowali road have been extinguished with the help of the IAF helicopter that was deployed Saturday, he said. After the forest fire in Nainital reached



dangerously close to the High Court Colony and the Air Force base containing sensitive equipment Friday, an IAF helicopter was brought in to help quell the flames.

The forest blaze in Nainital and adjoining areas is gradually being brought under

control after the deployment of the IAF helicopter Saturday morning, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said after reviewing the situation in the Kumaon region Saturday night. Patro said efforts are on to extinguish the flames at other places and they will be brought

under control soon. He attributed the recent spike in forest fire incidents in Kumaon to increased dryness due to heat wave in the lower areas of Champawat and Nainital districts of Uttarakhand bordering Nepal.

Meanwhile, efforts were stepped up to extinguish ongoing forest fires and prevent fresh incidents in the worst-affected areas of Nainital, Haldwani and Ramnagar forest divisions, forest officials said.

The flames have already been doused in many areas, including Marora and Khanana civil areas in Maniknath range of the Narendranagar forest division, they said.

Village Defence Guard killed in encounter with terrorists in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 28: A Village Defence Guard (VDG) member was killed in a gunfight with recently infiltrated terrorists in a remote village in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district early Sunday, a senior police officer said.

Additional Director General of Police, Jammu zone, Anand Jain, who rushed to the area to supervise the anti-terrorist operation, said a massive search operation is on to track down and neutralize the terrorists who have infiltrated from Pakistan.

The ADGP said two groups of terrorists are believed to be present in the area after they recently infiltrated from across the border.

Jain led the wreath laying ceremony of slain VDG member Mohd Sharief at Basantgarh police station this evening and saluted his supreme sacrifice for the nation.

Deputy Inspector General of Police, Udhampur-Reasi range, Rayees Mohd Bhat and other officers from police and CRPF also paid floral tributes to the martyr.

"We got information about the presence of terrorists (in Panara village of Basantgarh) late Saturday night and activated police and VDG members. Because the information was not pin-pointed and we have a vast jungle area, the area domination patrols were launched," Jain told reporters after the Sharief's body was dispatched to his home at village Khaned for last rites. He said one of the parties came under fire while moving towards Chochru Gala heights around 7:45 am and in the ensuing encounter, the VDG member laid down his life.

Reinforcements from police, CRPF and Army were rushed and the whole area was cordoned off to track down the terrorists and neutralize them, the officer said. Officials said the army made two helicopter sorties to drop para-commandos deep inside the dense forest to eliminate the terrorists.

The ADGP said two groups of terrorists are believed to be present in the area after they recently infiltrated from across the border.

EC asks AAP to modify poll campaign song

Addressing a press conference, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) senior leader Atishi accused the Election Commission of becoming a "political weapon of the BJP" and turning a blind eye to its violations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 28: The Aam Aadmi Party Sunday claimed the Election Commission has "banned" its Lok Sabha campaign song 'Jail Ka Jawab, Vote Se Denge', but officials of the Delhi poll body said AAP was asked to modify the contents of the song since it violated EC's guidelines and advertising codes.

The over two-minute campaign song, penned and sung by AAP MLA Dilip Pandey, was released at the party headquarters here Thursday.

Sources from the Delhi Chief Electoral Office said the song was not banned but the party was asked to resubmit the proposal with certain modifications, in accordance with Advertising Codes prescribed under the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994 and ECI guideline/norms circulated through a letter dated August 24, 2023, for the certification.

The Delhi poll panel said certain images and phrases are "slanderous" remarks and "criticism of the ruling party on the basis of unverified facts" and also cast aspersions on the judiciary and police.

Addressing a press conference, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) senior leader Atishi accused the Election Commission of becoming a "political weapon of the BJP" and turning a blind eye to its violations.

She also asserted that the campaign song does not mention the BJP and does not violate the Model Code of Conduct.

"It includes factual videos and incidents, whether it is the picture of Arvind Kejriwal's arrest, whether it is the video of police's misbehaviour with Manish Sisodia in the Rouse Avenue Court, whether it is the brutal detention of our volunteers in



Sunita denied permission to meet Kejriwal in jail

New Delhi: The Tihar jail administration has denied permission for Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife Sunita to meet him on April 29, an AAP source said Sunday. There was no immediate reaction from the Tihar authorities. "Sunita Kejriwal was supposed to meet him tomorrow (Monday) but the Tihar administration has denied permission. The jail administration has not cited any reason for denying the permission," a party source said. According to jail manual, an inmate is allowed two meetings per week. Two people can meet a prisoner at a time and a maximum of four people are allowed in a week.

protests, everything is factual." "Does the EC want to suppress the truth? Does the poll agency want to hide the misconduct of the police or the political misuse of the probe agencies by the BJP?" she asked.

This is the "first time in the history of the country that the Election Commission of India has banned the campaign song of any party to stop the campaign", she alleged.

"This is the same Election Commission which sees nothing when the BJP is making fun of the Model Code of Conduct on a daily basis. But if the AAP leaders even breathe, they are served another notice."

"When the BJP misuses the ED and CBI to put the opposition leaders in jail during the Model Code of Conduct, the EC has no objection to it. But if the AAP even writes about it in a song, the EC raises various objections," she claimed. Atishi claimed that according to the poll panel, the song "Jail Ka Jawab Vote Se Denge" shows the "ruling party (BJP) and investigation agencies in a bad light".

"The most interesting thing is that throughout the campaign song, there is no mention of the Bharatiya Janata Party's name anywhere, but the Election Commission of India says that 'if you talk about dictatorship, this is a criticism of the ruling

party.' "That means the poll body itself believes that the BJP is running a dictatorial rule in this country," she added.

In its reply to AAP over the song, the Delhi Chief Electoral office said the phrase "jail ke jawaab me hum vote denge" contravenes provisions of ECI Guidelines and the Programme and Advertising Codes prescribed under the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994, sources told PTI. It said that images showing a crowd carrying Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's photo in which he is behind bars cast aspersions on the judiciary, sources said.

It also said some clips showing party workers clashing with police incite violence, while frames showing Manish Sisodia being escorted by police show the latter in a negative light, they said.

The Delhi poll panel said certain phrases are "slanderous" remarks and "criticism of the ruling party on the basis of unverified facts" and also cast aspersions on the judiciary.

Maintaining that her party has done no wrong, Atishi appealed to the poll body "to pay attention to the fact that the BJP is flouting the Model Code of Conduct every day and stop the work of stalling the election campaign of the Opposition".

Arvinder Lovely quits as Delhi Congress chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 28: In a setback to the Congress ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, senior leader Arvinder Singh Lovely has resigned as the party's Delhi unit chief, citing the alliance with the AAP as one of the reasons.

He said the Delhi Congress unit was against the alliance but the party high command went ahead with it. In his resignation letter sent to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge Saturday, Lovely also said that he found himself "handicapped" as all unanimous decisions taken by senior Delhi unit leaders have been "unilaterally vetoed" by AICC Delhi in-charge Deepak Babria.

This comes days after former Delhi minister and AICC member Rajkumar Chauhan resigned from the party following an altercation with Babria.

Reacting to the development, the Delhi BJP Sunday said this "explosion" was set in motion when the Congress started naming candidates for the Lok Sabha elections, while the AAP said this is an internal matter of the Congress.

In his letter to Kharge, Lovely said, "It is with a heavy heart that I write the present letter to you finding myself handicapped and unable to continue as the President of the Delhi party



unit." "I had gratefully accepted the role as the DPCC President with the sole objective of supporting the local Congress party workers with whom I have an extremely close connection and life-long association."

"However, since I cannot protect the interests of the party workers, I see no reason to continue in the said post. Therefore, with great regret and an extremely leaden heart, I, Arvinder Singh Lovely do hereby tender my resignation from the post of DPCC President," he said.

A minister in the Sheila Dikshit government, Lovely was appointed as the Delhi Congress chief in August last year.

Lovely said even though the Delhi Congress unit was against the alliance with the AAP, he publicly backed it and made sure that the entire unit "fell in line with the high command's final order".



Workers load an 18.5-foot-tall Goddess Kali idol, carved by sculptor Mukesh Bhardwaj, into a trailer for its transportation to Thiruvananthapuram's Pournamikavu Temple in Jaipur

Traffic noise can increase risk of cardiovascular disease: Study

Having found evidence linking traffic noise and the risk of developing heart and related conditions, researchers are calling for this type of noise pollution to be recognised as a risk factor for cardiovascular diseases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

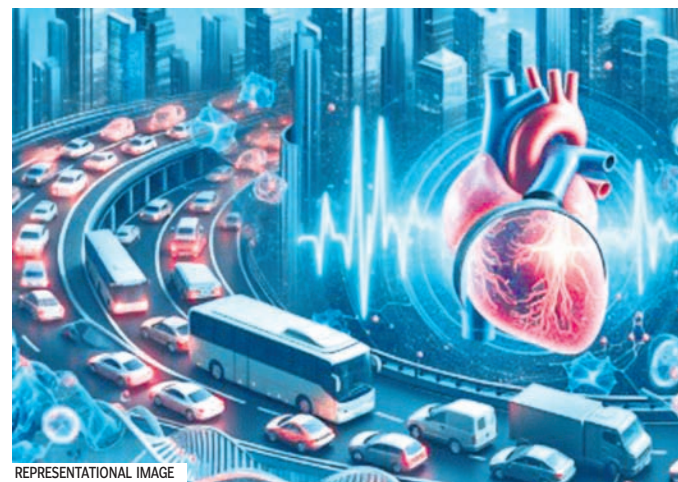
New Delhi, April 28: Spike in traffic noise can increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases, including heart attack, re-

searchers have found. Having found evidence linking traffic noise and the risk of developing heart and related conditions, researchers are calling for this type of noise pollution to be recognised as a risk factor for cardiovascular diseases.

The international team of researchers reviewed epidemiological data, which provides evidence for identifying risk factors of a certain disease.

In their review, the researchers found evidence that for every 10 decibel increase in noise coming from road traffic, the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, including heart attack, stroke and diabetes, heightened by 3.2 per cent.

In particular, they said, nighttime traffic noise that disrupts and shortens sleep time can in-



crease levels of stress hormones in the blood vessels, thereby promoting inflammation, high blood pressure and vascular diseases.

"It is also important for us that traffic noise is now finally recognised as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease due to the

strong evidence," Thomas Münzel, senior Professor at the University Medical Centre Mainz, Germany and lead author of the study published in the journal Circulation Research, said.

The researchers also suggested strategies for local authorities to mitigate noise from road, rail and air traffic. Erecting noise barriers along busy roads in densely populated areas can significantly reduce noise levels up to 10 decibels, they said.

Constructing roads using noise-reducing asphalt has been shown to reduce levels by 3-6 decibels, the authors said. Other strategies they suggested included limiting driving speed, and developing and promoting the use of low-noise tyres.

At the individual level, the researchers recommended using

bicycles, shared rides and public transport for lowering urban road traffic noise.

For reducing aircraft noise, strategies like optimising and planning air routes using GPS to direct them away from densely populated areas can be adopted. Imposing bans for take-offs and landings during nighttime can significantly reduce air traffic noise, the researchers advised. Regular maintenance of railways, including brake upgrades, was also suggested for lowering rail traffic noise.

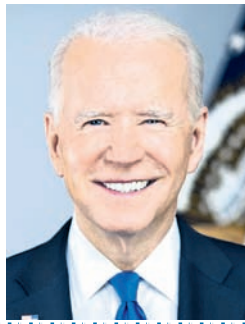
"With an increasing proportion of the population exposed to harmful traffic noise even after the Covid pandemic has ended, noise control efforts and noise reduction laws are of great importance for future public health," Münzel said.

MAHADEV BETTING APP CASE

Mumbai police arrest Sahil Khan

Mumbai: The Mumbai cyber cell's SIT Sunday arrested actor Sahil Khan in connection with the Mahadev betting app case, a police official here said. The actor was apprehended from Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh Saturday after the Bombay High Court rejected his pre-arrest bail plea, he said. He was subsequently brought to Mumbai and placed under arrest, the official said. Khan was recently questioned by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) formed in connection with the case. The Mumbai police had earlier arrested one person in connection with the case, the official said. Khan is the second person to be arrested by the city police in the case, he said. The SIT has been conducting a probe into the alleged illegal transactions between certain financial and real estate firms in the state and the promoters of the controversial Mahadev betting app.

international



Don't inject bleach. And don't vote for the guy who told you to inject bleach
 JOE BIDEN | US PRESIDENT

B'DESH REELS UNDER HEATWAVE

The authorities in Bangladesh have issued another heatwave alert for three more days from Sunday as the South Asian country is facing its longest heatwave in 75 years. Bangladesh reported the season's highest temperature at 42.7 degrees Celsius Friday in the south-western district of Chudanga



of the day quote

When it comes to a general election, I've been very clear about that multiple times, and again, I'm not going to say anything more than I've already said, I've been very clear about that

RISHI SUNAK | BRITISH PM

They [PTI] say they will negotiate with them [the establishment], but when it comes to blaming, they mud sling on us [the government] for everything

RANA SANAULLAH | PML-N LEADER

We need to weigh up the risks and benefits of cooperation even more carefully, especially in science and in universities. This includes reviewing existing cooperative relationships

BETTINA STARK-WATZINGER | GERMANY'S MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

MUSK VISITS CHINA

The SpaceX and Tesla chief travelled to China at the invitation of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, meeting with CCPIT president Ren Hongbin to discuss further cooperation with the country, official broadcaster CTGN reported



Musk said this month Tesla may make FSD available to customers in China "very soon", in response to a query on social media platform X

Rival Chinese automakers such as Xpeng have been seeking to gain an advantage over Tesla by rolling out similar software

Musk is looking to obtain approval to transfer data collected in the country abroad to train algorithms for its autonomous driving technologies, the person said

Beijing, April 28: On a surprise visit to Beijing amid speculation that he may unveil Tesla's autonomous driving technology in the burgeoning electric vehicle (EV) market in China, billionaire Elon Musk Sunday met Chinese Premier Li Qiang and discussed future expansion plans for his automobile.

Premier Li met with Musk, CEO of the US electric carmaker Tesla, in Beijing Sunday, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The SpaceX and Tesla chief travelled to China at the invitation of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, meeting with CCPIT president Ren Hongbin to discuss further cooperation with the country, official broadcaster CTGN reported.

Musk is expected to meet senior Chinese officials at the State Council and "old friends" in Beijing, Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* reported.

His Tesla has become a popular EV in China after he set up a \$7 billion factory in Shanghai which went into production in 2020. Musk, who recently skipped a scheduled visit to India to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi to firm up plans to open a Tesla factory in the country, is visiting Beijing when his Tesla market in China is threatened by the

local EVs increasing sales. The Austin-based (Texas) Tesla has faced fierce competition from Chinese EV makers in the past few years. It has cut the prices of its Shanghai-made vehicles by up to six per cent to maintain its leading position in China's premium EV segment.

Grace Tao, Tesla's vice-president of external relations in China, wrote a commentary piece in China's official newspaper People's Daily Friday, saying autonomous driving is a key growth driver for the country's new energy vehicle sector, arguing that the technology will hatch new business models such as robotaxis, a vision that Musk has embraced, the *Post* reported.

Musk's latest visit to China coincides with the 2024 Beijing Auto Show, which kicked off Thursday. As a strong backer of Beijing in the US despite concerns over China's rise across the political divide in Washington, Musk enjoys red-carpet treatment in China.

In 2019, Tesla was allowed to drive cars into the Zhongnanhai

compound, the living and working area of Chinese leaders, when former Premier Li Keqiang hosted the CEO, and during Musk's three-day visit to Beijing last June he was received by then foreign minister Qin Gang, according to the *Post* report.

The trip was warmly received by the Chinese public, with social-media posts focusing on the Chinese food Musk ate, and some referring to him as a "pioneer" and "brother Ma".

Tesla, the leader in China's premium EV segment, delivered 603,664 Model 3s and Model Ys made at its Shanghai Gigafactory to buyers in China last year, an increase of 37.3 per cent over 2022. The growth rate matched the 37 per cent rise in sales recorded in 2022 when it delivered about 440,000 vehicles.

Tesla has sold more than 1.7 million cars in China since it entered the market in 2012 and located its biggest factory in Shanghai, where Musk enjoys high levels of political support for the project.

Russian drones set hotel ablaze in Black Sea city

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, April 28: Russian drones early Sunday struck the Black Sea city of Mykolaiv, setting a hotel ablaze and damaging energy infrastructure, the local Ukrainian governor reported, while ammunition shortages continued to hobble Kyiv's troops in the more than 2-year-old war.

Vitaliy Kim, the governor of Ukraine's southern Mykolaiv province, said that Russian drones "seriously damaged" a hotel in its namesake capital, sparking a fire that was later extinguished. Kim also reported that the strike damaged heat-generating infrastructure in the city but gave no details. He added that there were no casualties.

Russian state agency RIA carried claims that the strike on Mykolaiv targeted a shipyard where naval drones are assembled, as well as a hotel housing "English-speaking mercenaries" who have fought for Kyiv. The RIA report cited Sergei Lebedev, described as a coordinator of local pro-Moscow guerrillas. His claim could not be independently verified.

Also Sunday morning, the Russian Defence Ministry said that 17 Ukrainian drones were downed overnight over four regions in the country's southwest.

Three drones were intercepted near an oil depot in Lyudinovo, an industrial town some 230 km (143 miles) north of the Ukrainian border, Gov Vladislav Shapsha said.

One of the Ukrainian drones damaged communications infrastructure in Russia's southern Belgorod province, which borders Ukraine, Gov Vyacheslav Gladkov said later Sunday.

There were no immediate reports of casualties.



meanwhile, claimed Sunday that its forces had destroyed ammunition depots and military equipment housed at three airports across Ukraine, including assault drones stored at Kamyanka Airfield in the country's east. The ministry's online update said the attacks took place over the last 24 hours. There was no immediate comment from Kyiv.

Russian shelling Saturday and overnight wounded at least seven civilians across Ukraine, according to Ukrainian officials. A 36-year-old woman was pulled alive from the rubble after Russian shells on Sunday morning destroyed her home in the northeastern Kharkiv region, the local administration reported. Her 52-year-old neighbour was also rushed to hospital with a stomach wound, the administration said.

The Donetsk and Kharkiv regions have seen fierce clashes in recent weeks as Russian forces seek to grind out gains along the more than 1,000-km (620-mile) front line, while ammunition shortages have increasingly hamstrung Ukraine's defences.

Russian troops "will likely make significant gains in the coming weeks" while Kyiv awaits much-needed arms from a huge US aid package to reach the front, a Washington-based think tank said.

5 dead, 33 injured after Tornado hits China's Guangzhou

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, April 28: Aerial photos posted by Chinese state media Sunday showed the wide devastation of a part of the southern city of Guangzhou after a tornado swept through the day before, killing five people, injuring dozens others and damaging over a hundred buildings.

As businesses and residents began cleaning debris, the images showed block upon block of devastation in the hardest hit areas with a few clusters of buildings standing amid the destruction, a truck overturned on its side and cars crushed by rubble. Some buildings had their sheet metal roofs torn off.

The tornado, which knocked out power in the area, also injured 33 people Saturday, officials said.

Guangzhou is the capital of Guangdong province and a man-



ufacturing hub near Hong Kong. The tornado which struck during an afternoon thunderstorm that also brought hail damaged 141 factory buildings, according to authorities.

They said no homes were destroyed, though a news website under the Southern Media Group reported that some had broken windows.

The tornado hit several villages in Guangzhou's Baiyun district. In one, packing material known as "pearl cotton" hung from buildings and trees, a report on the Southern Media website said.

SHORT TAKES

Rain batters Balochistan

Karachi: The death toll due to heavy rains and hailstorm in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province has increased to 22, the provincial disaster management cell said Sunday. Heavy rains and thunderstorm caused flash floods and urban flooding in many districts of Balochistan, including its capital city, Quetta Saturday. "So far the number of people killed due to rain, thunderstorm and hailstorm has touched 22. These deaths were reported in the last 48 hours," said the department in a statement.

Two Russian journalists jailed

London: Two Russian journalists were arrested by their government on "extremism" charges and ordered by courts there Saturday to remain in custody pending investigation and trial on accusations of working for a group founded by the late Russian Opposition politician Alexei Navalny. Konstantin Gabov and Sergey Karelin both denied the charges for which they will be detained for a minimum of two months before any trials begin. Each faces a minimum of two years in prison and a maximum of six years for alleged "participation in an extremist organisation," according to Russian courts.

Harvey Weinstein hospitalised

New York: Harvey Weinstein's lawyer said Saturday that the onetime movie mogul has been hospitalised for a battery of tests after his return to New York City following an appeals court ruling nullifying his 2020 rape conviction. Attorney Arthur Aidala said Weinstein was moved to Bellevue Hospital in Manhattan after his arrival Friday to city jails.

Pope visits Venice

Venice: Venice has always been a place of contrasts, of breathtaking beauty and devastating fragility, where history, religion, art and nature have collided over the centuries to produce an otherworldly gem of a city. But even for a place that prides itself on its culture of unusual encounters, Pope Francis' visit Sunday stood out. Francis travelled to the lagoon city to visit the Holy See's pavilion at the Biennale contemporary art show and meet with the people who created it. Venetian authorities last week launched a pilot programme to charge day-trippers 5 euros (\$5.35) apiece on peak travel days.

SNIPPETS

Ishaq Dar appointed as deputy PM of Pak

Islamabad: In a surprise move, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar was Sunday appointed as the country's Deputy Prime Minister. Dar, 73, a chartered accountant and a veteran politician, belongs to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party. According to a notification issued by the Cabinet Division, the appointment was made by Prime Minister Sharif "with immediate effect and until further orders". The announcement was made when both Prime Minister Sharif and Foreign Minister Dar were away in Saudi Arabia to attend a World Economic Forum's moot. It was clear what specific responsibilities Dar would perform as deputy Prime Minister as traditionally, all powers are concentrated in the Prime Minister, who is the head of the government. Dar is considered close to former premier Nawaz Sharif due to matrimonial links between the two families, as his son is the son-in-law of the elder Sharif.

23 civilian force members killed in Nigeria

Maiduguri, Nigeria: At least 23 members of Nigeria's civilian joint task force were killed Saturday in separate attacks by militants and an armed kidnapping gang in the north, two officials from the force said Sunday. In northeast Borno state, the heartland of an Islamist insurgency, suspected Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) fighters used an improvised explosive device (IED) to blow up a vehicle carrying the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) team, a local force chairman said. The CJTF was first formed in 2013 to protect communities in the northeast and help the military fight Boko Haram and later its offshoot ISWAP. The force has since been extended to other northern states that are grappling with armed kidnapping gangs. Tijanima Umar, CJTF chairman for Gomboru Ngala area near the border with Cameroon, said his team was travelling to Borno state capital Maiduguri when they drove over the IED.

Dozens of pro-Palestine protesters held

Los Angeles: A total of 69 protesters attending a pro-Palestine protest on Arizona State University's Tempe campus, the main campus of the public research university in the Phoenix metropolitan area, were arrested for "violating university policy." The protesters were arrested early Saturday "for trespassing after they set up an unauthorised encampment, in violation of university policy," said a statement released by the university, Xinhua news agency reported. Demonstrations against Israeli military action in Gaza are spreading on major university campuses across the US, with hundreds arrested, as the protracted conflict in Gaza has become a humanitarian catastrophe. At least 22 Palestinians Saturday, were killed and several others injured due to Israeli airstrikes on central and southern Gaza, according to Palestinian sources.



Revelers play with colours during a Festival of Colors procession at Bull Run Special Events Center, in Centerville. The festival features traditional Indian music, dancing, and a colour run

Biden roasts Trump at White House correspondents' dinner

AGENCIES

Washington, April 28: US President Joe Biden roasted his predecessor and political rival, Donald Trump and poked fun at his age at the annual dinner for Washington's political and media elites, saying "I am a grown man running against a six-year-old".

The White House Correspondents' Association (WHCA) dinner Saturday night provided the platform for Biden, 81, to continue his criticism of Trump, 77, with cutting humour.

The high-profile event came against the backdrop of growing protests over Biden's handling of the Israel-Hamas war. "Of course, the 2024 election's in full swing and, yes, age is an issue: I'm a grown man running against a 6-year-old," Biden said in a roughly 10-minute speech, referring to former President Trump, whom he called "Sleepy Don."

Speaking to an audience of nearly 3,000 journalists, celebrities and politicians, Biden added, "Age is the only thing we have in

common. My vice president actually endorses me."

"Donald has had a few tough days lately. You might call it 'stormy' weather," Biden said, an oblique reference to Stormy Daniels, a porn actress who claims she had an affair and received a hush-money payment in the days before the 2016 election, a deal at the centre of his New York trial.

The president went on to draw a contrast between his reelection campaign, which has ramped up since his State of the Union address last month, and that of Trump.

Biden and Trump have both secured the delegates they need to win their respective party nominations in the November 5 presidential race, setting a rematch of their 2020 election showdown.

After a slew of jokes targeting Trump, Biden then took a more sombre tone to talk about his 2024 rival to the room of journalists, lawmakers and celebrities.



"The defeated former President has made no secret of his attack on our democracy. He said he wants to be a dictator on day one, and so much more. He tells supporters he is their revenge and retribution. When in God's name [have] you ever heard another president say something like that?" Biden asked, referring to Trump's recent remarks. "We have to take this seriously. Eight years ago, you



could've written off [that] it was just Trump talk, but no longer. Not after January 6," Biden said, calling to the audience to "move past the horse race numbers" and "focus on what's actually at stake." Comedian Colin Jost fol-

lowed Biden's remarks at the dinner Saturday with a roast of the incumbent and other political figures in the room, offering comic relief against a backdrop of congressional tensions and conflict abroad.

Demonstrators protested media coverage of the Israel-Hamas war and the administration's handling of the conflict near the Washington Hilton event space - and Biden notably didn't make direct reference to the protests or the conflict during his speech.

As journalists and celebrities entered the Washington Hilton, protesters accused them of cosigning the President's handling of the Israel-Hamas war, shouting, "Shame on you!" while urging them to speak out against the killing of journalists in Gaza.

20 soldiers killed in ammunition explosion

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chbar Mon (Cambodia), April 28: A funeral was held Sunday for 20 soldiers who died at an army base in southwestern Cambodia in a huge explosion of stored munitions that also wounded several others and damaged nearby houses.

There has been no public explanation of what caused the Saturday afternoon blast at the base in Kompong Speu province, though there were no suggestions it was triggered deliberately.

Defence Minister Tea Seha, representing Prime Minister Hun Manet, presided over the Buddhist funeral ceremony, which was attended by relatives of the victims and fellow soldiers. Cambodian flags covered the wooden coffins.

A villager living nearby told The Associated Press Sunday that he trembled after hearing the blast because he had never before experienced such a loud explosion.

The high-profile event came against the backdrop of growing protests over Biden's handling of the Israel-Hamas war

of the day quote

Unemployment is highest for younger age brackets but it is transient...While they wait, they do informal work or take risks at entrepreneurship, where a few do very well

ASHIMA GOYAL | RBI MPC MEMBER

Early adoption of good governance practices helps startups gain tangible and intangible benefits including long-term value creation, stakeholders' trust, better access to finance from investors and banks, reduced reliance on promoters, effective organisational structures and improved chances of long-term survival of the business.

R DINESH | PRESIDENT, CII

We are targeting a growth of 25 per cent in the next three years and we should double the balance sheet size to Rs 2.5 lakh crore by the time we complete one decade of existence

SANJAY AGARWAL | AU SMALL FINANCE BANK MD



It would be a pity if the situation continues in the long run. We have to be watchful about imports

TV NARENDHAN | TATA STEEL CEO

TWO-DAY SUMMIT ON CRITICAL MINERALS

The government will hold a two-day summit on critical minerals beginning Monday to foster collaboration, share knowledge and drive innovation in the field of critical mineral beneficiation and processing.



Banks may have to slowdown loan growth in FY25: S&P



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 28: Indian banks' credit growth, profitability and asset quality would remain robust in current fiscal reflecting strong economic growth, but they may be compelled to slow down their loan growth as deposits are not growing at a similar pace, S&P Global Ratings has said.

In the Asia-Pacific 2Q 2024 Banking Update, S&P Global Ratings Director SSEA Nikita Anand said the agency expects the sector's strong credit growth

to moderate to 14 per cent in FY25, from 16 per cent in FY24, if deposit growth, especially retail deposits, remain tepid.

Anand said there is a deterioration in loan-to-deposit ratio is every bank, with loan growth being 2-3 percentage points higher than deposit growth.

"We expect banks to bring down their loan growth in FY25 and bring it in line with deposit growth. If banks do not do that, they would be paying higher to get wholesale funding, which will impact profitability," she said at a recent webinar of S&P

Global Ratings. Generally, loan growth has been led by private sector banks which see around 17-18 per cent growth, public sector banks on the other hand see loan growth in the range of 12-14 per cent.

Anand said Indian banks can support loan growth of as high as 15-20 per cent over three years without need for raising capital. The loan growth is 2-3 percentage points higher than deposit growth of the banking sector.

"For India, we expect credit growth, profitability and asset quality to remain robust reflecting strong economic growth. Loan growth is 1.5 times of nominal GDP growth, while deposit growth is in line with nominal GDP growth. Loan growth should come in line with deposits rather than outpacing deposits. If credit growth doesn't slow, banks will have to fund it from wholesale funding and higher cost of such funding could further strain margins and hurt profitability," Anand said.

M-cap of 6 most valued firms rises ₹1.30 lakh cr



AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 28: The combined market valuation of six of the top-10 most valued firms increased Rs 1,30,734.57 crore last week, with State Bank of India and ICICI Bank emerging as the biggest gainers in line with an overall positive trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark advanced 641.83 points or 0.87 per cent.

The valuation of the State Bank of India rallied Rs 45,158.54 crore to Rs 7,15,218.40 crore.

ICICI Bank's market valuation rose Rs 28,726.33 crore to Rs 7,77,750.22 crore.

Bharti Airtel added Rs 20,747.99 crore to Rs 7,51,406.35 crore, and that of ITC jumped Rs 18,914.35 crore to Rs 5,49,265.32 crore. The market capitalisation (m-

cap) of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) advanced by Rs 9,487.5 crore to Rs 6,24,941.40 crore, and that of Infosys went up by Rs 7,699.86 crore to Rs 5,93,636.31 crore.

However, the m-cap of Reliance Industries declined by Rs 26,115.56 crore to Rs 19,64,079.96 crore.

The valuation of HDFC Bank dipped by Rs 16,371.34 crore to Rs 11,46,943.59 crore.

The m-cap of Tata Consultancy Services went lower by Rs 5,282.41 crore to Rs 13,79,522.50 crore, and that of Hindustan Unilever Limited diminished by Rs 2,525.81 crore to Rs 5,21,961.70 crore.

Reliance Industries remained the most valued firm from the top-10 pack, followed by Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, LIC, Infosys, ITC and Hindustan Unilever.

AdaniConneX raises \$1.44bn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 28: AdaniConneX, a joint venture equally owned by Adani Enterprises and EdgeConneX that is building data centres, secured India's largest sustainability-linked financing arrangement, raising up to USD 1.44 billion (around Rs 11,520 crore), the company said Sunday.

Definitive agreements have been executed with ING Bank NV, Intesa Sanpaolo, KfW IPEX, MUFG Bank Ltd, Natixis, Standard Chartered Bank, Societe Generale, and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation

Adani Enterprises Ltd, the flagship of billionaire Gautam Adani-run conglomerate, is investing around USD 1.5 billion on its fledgling data centre business in the next three years. Its joint venture with EdgeConneX plans to build nine data centres with a total capacity of 1 gigawatt by 2030 to provide infrastructure for the booming digital services demand.

In a statement, the firm said the "financing has an initial commitment of USD 875 million, with an accordion feature to extend commitment up to USD 1.44 billion."

"The transaction elevates AdaniConneX's construction financing pool to USD 1.65 billion, building on the maiden construction facility of USD 213 million executed in June 2023," it said.

AdaniConneX, which has only one operational data centre in Chennai so far, has completed almost two-thirds of the construction in the Noida and Hyderabad facilities.

"The upcoming data centre facilities will employ state-of-the-art technologies and renewable energy solutions to minimise the ecological footprint while optimising operational efficiency."

"The sustainability-linked financing reinforces AdaniConneX's commitment towards driving a safety-first culture, delivering world-class Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) by adopting global best practices, and leveraging renewable energy resources," it added.

A key feature of the facility is the innovative solution of a syndicated guarantee-backed assurance programme in sync with the projects' procurement strategy.

Definitive agreements have been executed with eight international lenders -- ING Bank NV, Intesa Sanpaolo, KfW IPEX, MUFG Bank Ltd, Natixis, Standard Chartered Bank, Societe Generale, and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation.

Markets to consolidate in near term

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 28: Markets are expected to consolidate in the near term as investors focus on Q4 earnings season.

"We expect a consolidation in the near term, leading investors to seek refuge in bonds and gold," says Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Additionally, upcoming US Fed policy and US nonfarm payroll data will dictate the global market, while the ongoing Q4 earnings reports are poised to influence the domestic market dynamics, he said.

Relief from Middle East tensions, coupled with a correction in oil prices, and a bolstered Indian economic outlook fuelled by elevated composite PMI data from manufacturing and service sectors, propelled a market rally, Nair said.

However, the unexpected decline in US GDP and a surge in the US core PCE price index triggered a global stock market downturn on the last trading day, he added.

"The domestic market lagged its Asian peers as Q4 earnings remained largely subdued, with weak results from IT and a few index heavyweights also disappointing. The expectation of an improvement in asset quality and the RBI's regulatory ecosystem for private banks led the PSU banks to outperform," Nair said.

Nagaraj Shetti, Senior Technical Research Analyst, HDFC Securities, said the short-term trend of Nifty seems to have reversed down after a reasonable rise from the lows. Immediate support is placed at 22300 and the weakness below this support could trigger more declines ahead. Immediate resistance is at 22625 levels.



FPIs dump Indian equities on rise in US bond yields

FPIS MADE A NET OUTFLOW OF ₹6,304 CRORE TILL APRIL 26

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 28: Foreign investors pulled out domestic equities worth Rs 6,300 crore in April on concerns over tweaks in India's tax treaty with Mauritius and sustained rise in US bond yields.

This came following a whopping net investment of Rs 35,098 crore in March and Rs 1,539 crore in February, data with the depositors showed.

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) made a net outflow of Rs 6,304 crore in Indian equities this month (till April 26), the data showed.

"The trigger for this renewed FPI selling, in both equity and debt, is sustained rise in US bond yields. The 10-year bond yield now stands at around 4.7 per cent, which is hugely attractive for foreign investors," V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

While the tweak in India's tax treaty with Mauritius on investments made in India via the island nation continues to bother foreign investors, weak cues from the global markets with uncertain macro and interest rate outlook didn't augur well



for emerging market equities, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Research India, said.

Additionally, surge in commodity prices, especially oil and higher US retail inflation dashed hopes of an early rate cut by the US Fed thereby triggering a surge in the US 10-year yield. This would have possibly prompted foreign investors to adopt a wait and watch approach, he added.

The positive factor is that all FPI selling in the equity markets is getting absorbed by domestic institutional investors (DIIs), HNIs (High Net Worth Individuals) and retail investors. This is the only factor that may reign in FPI selling.

Apart from equities, FPIs with-

drew Rs 10,640 crore from the debt market during the period under review.

Before this, foreign investors invested Rs 13,602 crore in March, Rs 22,419 crore in February, Rs 19,836 crore in January. This inflow was driven by the upcoming inclusion of Indian government bonds in the JP Morgan Index.

JP Morgan Chase & Co. in September last year announced that it will add Indian government bonds to its benchmark emerging market index from June 2024.

This landmark inclusion is anticipated to benefit India by attracting around USD 20-40 billion in the subsequent 18 to 24 months.

Overall, the total inflow for this year so far stood at Rs 4,590 crore in equities and Rs 45,218 crore in the debt market.

China's share in India's industrial goods imports up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 28: With increasing India's dependence on Chinese industrial goods like telecom, machinery and electronics, Beijing's share in New Delhi's imports of such goods rose to 30 per cent from 21 per cent in the last 15 years, a report said.

According to the report by the economic think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI), the growing trade deficit with China is a cause of concern, and the strategic implications of this dependency are profound, affecting not only economic but also national security dimensions.

From 2019 to 2024, India's exports to China have stagnated at around USD 16 billion annually, while imports from China have surged from USD 70.3 billion in 2018-19 to over USD 101 billion in 2023-24, resulting in a cumulative trade deficit exceeding USD 387 billion over five years.

The Indian government and industries must evaluate and potentially recalibrate their import strategies, fostering more

ACCORDING TO GLOBAL TRADE RESEARCH INITIATIVE, THE GROWING TRADE DEFICIT WITH CHINA IS A CAUSE OF CONCERN, AND THE STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF THIS DEPENDENCY ARE PROFOUND

diversified and resilient supply chains, GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava said.

This is imperative not only to mitigate economic risks but also to bolster domestic industries and reduce dependency on single-country imports, especially from a geopolitical competitor like China, he added.

"Over the last 15 years, China's share in India's industrial product imports has increased significantly, from 21 per cent to 30 per cent. This growth in imports from China has been much faster than India's overall import growth, with China's exports to India growing 2.3 times faster than India's total imports from all other countries," the report said.

In 2023-24, India's total merchandise imports amounted to USD 677.2 billion, with USD 101.8 billion of that coming from China.

This means China accounted for 15 per cent of India's total imports. Out of these imports from



China, USD 100 billion or 98.5 per cent were in major industrial product categories.

"When compared to India's global imports of these industrial products, which total USD 337 billion, China's contribution is quite significant, representing 30 per cent of India's imports in this sector. Fifteen years ago, China's share was just 21 per cent," it added.

The key sectors, where New Delhi's dependence is rising sig-

nificantly, include electronics, telecom and electrical; machinery; chemicals and pharmaceuticals; products of iron, steel and base metal; plastics; textiles and clothing; automobiles; medical, leather, paper, glass, ships, aircraft and remaining categories.

During April-January 2023-24, the electronics, telecom and electrical products sectors had the highest import value at USD 67.8 billion, with China con-

tributing USD 26.1 billion. "This represents a substantial 38.4 per cent of the total imports in this category, indicating a heavy dependence on Chinese electronic goods and components," it said.

In the machinery sector, China accounts for USD 19 billion, which is 39.6 per cent of India's imports in the sector.

This underscores China's key role as a supplier of machinery to India, Srivastava said.

India's chemical and pharmaceutical imports during the period stood at USD 54.1 billion. Out of this, USD 15.8 billion came from China.

This resulted in a Chinese share of 29.2 per cent, highlighting the importance of Chinese chemical and pharmaceutical products in India. Similarly, the report said the total imports for plastics and related articles stand at USD 18.5 billion, with China providing articles worth USD 4.8 billion. This accounts for 25.8 per cent

of the total imports in this sector.

Srivastava also said that half of the imports from China consist of capital goods and machinery, indicating a critical need for focused research and development in this area.

Intermediate goods like organic chemicals, APIs (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients), and plastics, which represent 37 per cent of imports, show a pressing need for upgrading these industries, he said, adding that consumer goods make up 12 per cent of the imports, while raw materials are less than 1 per cent.

The report added that many products imported from China, such as textiles, apparel, glassware, furniture, paper, shoes and toys are from categories dominated by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and most of these items could potentially be produced domestically.

"Overall, India imports a broad array of products from China, from high to low technology items, highlighting significant gaps in India's industrial capabilities across various sectors," it added.

Recurve archers create history

WORLD CUP GOLD AFTER 14 YEARS AS TARUNDEEP, DHIRAJ AND PRAVIN STUN OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS KOREA



WINNING TRIO: Archers Dhiraj Bommadevara, Pravin Jadhav and Tarundeep Rai pose with their gold medals Sunday

AGENCIES

Shanghai, April 28: The Indian men's recurve team of Dhiraj Bommadevara, Tarundeep Rai and Pravin Jadhav shocked reigning Olympic champions South Korea in a historic win to bag an Archery World Cup gold medal after 14 years, here Sunday. This triumph over the archery powerhouse in well over a decade also comes as a boost to their chances of securing a berth in the upcoming Paris Olympics.

The trio of Dhiraj, Tarundeep and Pravin showed ice-cool composure to get the better of the mighty Koreans without dropping a set.

The 40-year-old Army man

Tarundeep was also a part of the gold medal-winning team in Shanghai World Cup Stage 4 in August 2010. Then the recurve team comprising Rahul Banerjee, Tarundeep and Jayanta defeated Japan.

In a battle between the top-two seeds of the competition, India won 5-1 (57-57, 57-55, 55-53), taking their gold medal count to five in the season-opening Stage 1 World Cup.

The success also rubbed on the recurve mixed team of Ankita Bhakat and Dhiraj who trounced Alejandra Valencia and Matias Grande of Mexico 6-0 (35-31, 38-35, 39-37) to win bronze.

On a comeback trail after missing the whole 2023 after becoming mother in December 2022,

Rai's anger helped in taming Koreans

Kolkata: Going strong at 40, top Indian archer Tarundeep Rai revealed Sunday that his exclusion from the Asian Games side last year left him 'boiling with anger' but that served a wake-up call also. "Mein gusse se fut raha tha (I was boiling with anger) and decided that I will give it one last shot," the three-time Olympian stated Sunday over the phone from Shanghai after winning a historic World Cup gold Sunday. "Some strange qualification rules meant that I was out of the Indian team for Hangzhou Asian Games despite doing well," added Rai.

Deepika Kumari faltered in the final hurdle to settle for a silver in the women's recurve individual session.

Deepika, a former World No. 1, who started from the bottom after qualifying as the 30th seed, eliminated two Koreans in the quarterfinals and semifinals. But in the final, Deepika lost to



Deepika Kumari had to be satisfied with a silver medal in her comeback tournament

PHOTOS: COURTESY AAI 'X'

members of the Tokyo Olympics gold medal winning team in Kim Woojin and Kim Je Deok. Lee Woo Seok was the third member.

But the Indian trio put up a brave front and drilled in three 10s that included two X (closer to the centre) and three 9s to match their rivals (57-all) in the opening set.

It put the pressure back on the Koreans who slipped twice into the eight-ring, while the Indians shot four perfect 10s including three Xs from six arrows to take the second set 57-55 and take 3-1 lead.

In the next set, the Koreans faltered and managed just 53 as the Indians held their nerves to close out the game with 55 en route to clinch the gold.

Mohun Bagan end Odisha FC's ISL run

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 28: Mohun Bagan kept themselves in the hunt for an unprecedented double in the ISL by storming into the final with a 3-2 aggregate win over Odisha FC here Sunday. Mohun Bagan had to win the second leg by a minimum margin of two goals as they had lost the first leg of the semifinals 1-2.

Mohun Bagan began on a dominant note and struck through Jason Cummings in the 22nd minute to bring the scores level on aggregate. After a flurry of attacks went abegging thanks to a resolute display by Amrinder Singh under the Odisha FC bar, Mohun Bagan finally struck the winning goal by comeback man Sahal Abdul Samad who came off the bench to strike from Manvir Singh's assist in the 90+3rd minute.

The victory came two weeks after Mohun Bagan won their maiden League Winners Shield at the same venue by defeating Mumbai City FC 2-1 to top the top-tier competition.

On a sultry evening, Mohun Bagan's former marksman Roy Krishna came close to scoring on

more than one occasion in the first half but the home team defence held on. They finally showed superb poaching skill to go 1-0 up in the contest and make it two-all on aggregate just before the half hour mark.

Liston Colaco skillfully set up Dimitri Petratos with a pass from the edge of the box. It led to a powerful shot that Amrinder Singh sloppily deflected into the danger area, where Cummings showed excellent instincts to score with a simple tap-in.

Making a comeback from injury, Sahal who was included in the 71st minute replacing Anirudh Thapa finally produced the magic moment after several of attempts were wasted.

Manvir, ran down the right flank to brilliantly set up the goal in the middle of the box, as Amrinder came off his line. Lurking inside, Sahal showed brilliant presence of mind by refraining from using his hand as the ball ricocheted off his body and crossed the goal line. Odisha FC got their best chance in the 45+5th minute but it was a fine goalline clearance by Hector Yuste that kept Mohun Bagan alive.



MEMORABLE MOMENT: Jason Cummings (left) celebrates with Dimitri Petratos after scoring the opening goal for Mohun Bagan against Odisha FC, Sunday

SHORT TAKES

Pak appoints Kirsten as white ball coach

Lahore: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) appointed Sunday World Cup-winning Gary Kirsten as their head coach for ODIs and T20Is, while former Australian pacer Jason Gillespie will take over that role in Test cricket. Along with them, former Pakistan all-rounder Azhar Mahmood has been appointed as the assistant coach across the formats. "The appointment of (Gary) Kirsten and (Jason) Gillespie who are high-profile coaches shows how much value is given to the Pakistan cricket team and how much potential foreign coaches see in our players," PCB chief Mohsin Naqvi said during a media conference here. "We want to give the team the best facilities and that is why we have gone for Kirsten and Gillespie," he added.

Messi shines

Massachusetts (US): Lionel Messi scored two goals to excite a New England Revolution-record crowd, leading Inter Miami CF to a 4-1 victory here Saturday night. Messi scored in the 32nd and 68th minutes and so far he has scored nine goals for Inter Miami this season. In fact, he made a little history, too. Messi posted on the social platform 'X' that he is the first player in MLS history to record 16 goal contributions in his first seven games of a season. "Obviously, he's done it his whole life. We expect it from him," said teammate Benjamin Cremaschi.

Senthil in final

New Delhi: National champion Velavan Senthilkumar brushed aside Hong Kong's Andes Ling to enter the final of the Batch Open squash tournament in Paris. Senthilkumar, who is ranked 58th in the world, won his semifinal match 11-2, 11-1, 11-6 in 22 minutes Saturday night. The Indian will face Frenchman Melvil Scianimanico for the title.

Ryan extends contract

Chennai: Defender Ryan Edwards has extended his contract with Chennaiyin FC and he will remain with the ISL club until 2025. Edwards was the CFC captain for the 2023-24 season and made an overall 25 appearances in all competitions along with two goals and one assist. "Ryan's extension is already one of the biggest signings for the upcoming season. It was important that we kept someone who knows what we're doing at this club and where we want to take it," head coach Owen Coyle said.

KIIT, KISS athletes shine at Asian meet



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 28: Students of KIIT and KISS have performed with distinction at the 21st Asian U-20 Athletics Championships which was held in Dubai April 24 to April 27. A number of them won medals in various disciplines that were part of the competitions, according to a release issued by KIIT.

DM Jayram, a student of KIIT and Mahendra Santa, a student of KISS were part of the Indian men's team that participated in the 4x100 metres relay event. The Indian team got the bronze medal clocking a time of 40.01 seconds. In the process, they also created a new national record in the U-20 category. The previous best timing was 40.56 seconds.

KISS student Sabita Topo cleared the Junior World Athletics Championships qualification mark in 100m hurdles. The competition will be held in Peru in August 2024.

In the men's shot put, KIIT's Siddharth Choudhary won the bronze medal hurling the iron ball to a distance of 19.02m.

Currently Jayram, Mahendra and Sabita are training at the Odisha Reliance HPC under the guidance of coach Rohit Mane. Siddharth on the other hand, has his own personal coach and trains separately with him.

All the athletes of KIIT thanked Prof Achyuta Samanta, Founder KIIT and KISS, for his constant support and encouragement. They said that without his support they would not have achieved success at the international level.

India eves trounce Bangla

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sylhet (Bangladesh), April 28: Pace duo of Renuka Singh (3/18) and Pooja Vastrakar (2/25) shared five wickets as India produced a clinical bowling display to outclass Bangladesh by 44 runs in the opening women's T20I here Sunday.

Opting to bat, skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (30) and Yastika Bhatia (36) provided solidity in the middle-order but India missed the late flourish and could manage only 145 for seven wickets. The hosts must have fancied their chances of chasing down the total but Indian bowlers led by Renuka delivered the goods to limit Bangladesh to 101 for eight.

Skipper Nigar Sultana (51)



Pacer Renuka Singh was the pick of the bowlers for India

waged a lonely battle with a but didn't get any support from the other end. Renuka was the leader of the Indian bowling unit as she trapped Dilara Akter (4) in her third ball before cleaning up Sobhana Mostary (6) in the fifth over. Experienced spinner Deepti Sharma (1/15) then removed Murshida Khatun (13), while Vastrakar dismissed Fahima Khatun (1) to leave the hosts reeling at 30 for four. They could never

recover from the early collapse.

Earlier, charismatic opener Smriti Mandhana departed for just nine runs but Shafali Verma (31) put up a gritty display on a pitch which had some life for the bowlers. Bangladesh leg-spinner Rabeya Khan (3/23) was the most successful bowler for the hosts.

Mandhana started in right earnest dispatching Sultan Khatun's consecutive deliveries in the second over to the ropes. But her stay was cut short as she tried to play a Fariha Trisna (1/23) ball across the line, only to find a thick inside edge uprooting her leg stump.

Brief scores: India 145 for 7 (Yastika Bhatia 36, Rabeya Khan 3/23) beat Bangladesh 101 for 8 (Nigar Sultana 51, Renuka Singh 3/18) by 44 runs.

AGENCIES

Ahmedabad, April 28: Will Jacks (100 n o, 41b, 5x4, 10x6) slammed a sensational hundred while Virat Kohli (70 n o, 44b, 6x4, 3x6) played the supporting role to perfection in the middle overs as Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) outplayed Gujarat Titans (GT) by nine wickets in a match of the IPL here Sunday. The two took RCB over the line with 24 balls to spare.

Jacks went berserk in what turned out to be the final over of the game, hammering as many as four sixes and a four off Rashid Khan to close out the game much sooner than expected.

Earlier put in to bat, Shahrukh Khan (58, 30b, 3x4, 5x6) made full use of his promotion in the batting order while Sai Sudharsan (84 n o, 49b, 8x4, 4x6) stayed till the end to guide Gujarat Titans to 200 for three.

Titans introduced spin very early and Kohli was up to the task, collecting back-to-back sixes off left-arm spinner Ravi Sai Kishore to make his intent crystal clear. He was particularly harsh towards another Afghan spinner Noor Ahmed, sweeping him at will before bringing up his half century. Thereafter, Kohli did not need to do much as Jacks put the Titans bowlers to the sword.

This was RCB's third win in 10 games, while GT suffered their sixth loss in 10 matches.

Earlier, batting at No. 4, Shahrukh teamed up with

Jacks, Kohli power RCB to victory

AGENCIES

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MATCH-WINNING KNOCK: Will Jacks of RCB plays a slog sweep during his entertaining knock against Gujarat Titans, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

Sudharsan to give Gujarat Titans a much needed push after a tepid start. The duo shared an 86-run stand off 45 balls.

Wriddhiman Saha (5) was dismissed in the first over while skipper Shubman Gill (16) was undone by the on-field brilliance from Cameron Green who ran towards his left to take a stunning catch at long-on off Glenn Maxwell.

Later David Miller (26 n o) joined Sudharsan in the middle and two shared an unbeaten 69 runs stand off 36 balls to push the team to a par score.

Brief scores: Gujarat Titans 200 for 3 (Sai Sudharsan 84 n o, M Shahrukh Khan 58) lost to RCB 206 for 1 in 16 overs (Will Jacks 100 n o, Virat Kohli 70 n o) by nine wickets.

Arsenal survive late fightback by Spurs

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, April 28: Arsenal kept up their push for the Premier League title with a 3-2 win at Tottenham, Sunday. Mikel Arteta's team raced to a 3-0 half time lead, but then had to resist a late fightback from Spurs at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Pierre-Emile Hojberg scored an own goal in the 15th minute to put Arsenal ahead and Bukayo Saka doubled the visitors' lead in the 27th. Kai Havertz added a third in the 38th.

With thoughts possibly turning to extending their goal difference advantage on second-place Manchester City, Arsenal were suddenly left holding on for the win.

Stalin felicitates Gukesh

AGENCIES

Chennai, April 28: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin felicitated Sunday champion of the Candidates Chess tournament D Gukesh. Stalin handed the 17-year-old Gukesh a cheque for ₹75 lakh, a citation, and a shawl.

The presentation in which Gukesh's parents - father, Dr Rajinikanth, an ENT specialist, and mother Dr Padmavathy, a microbiologist, and state Youth Welfare and Sports Development Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin and others were also present, was held at the CM's camp office here, a statement from the Chief Minister's Office said. The Tamil Nadu government had presented ₹15 lakh to Gukesh before he went to the tournament in Canada. The young chess sensation



will be contesting against defending champion, China's Ding Liren, in the World Chess Championship.

The venue and time of the tournament are yet to be finalised but it is slated to be held in the last quarter of this year. All India Chess Federation Secretary (AICF) Dev Patel has already said that India would bid for the World Chess Championship.

An elated Gukesh thanked the Tamil Nadu CM for the government's support.