



Candid talk

Shruti Hasaan shares her thoughts on the difficulties of menstruation faced by women in film industry

LEISURE | P2



Trump fined

US court charges Donald Trump with contempt and slaps fine of \$9,000 on him for repeatedly violating a gag order in the hush money trial

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Gold demand up

India's gold demand rises 8 per cent annually in March quarter despite prices touching historic highs

BUSINESS | P11



India squad announced

Sanju Samson and Yuzvendra Chahal have been named in India's 15-member provisional squad for the ICC T20 World Cup

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SHORT TAKES

10 Naxals killed in Chhattisgarh encounter

Narayanpur/ Raipur: Ten Naxalites including three women were killed in an encounter with security forces on the border of Narayanpur and Kanker districts of Chhattisgarh Tuesday morning, police said. This was a second major blow to the Naxalites within 15 days. The site of Tuesday's encounter was 30 km south of Kalper village in Kanker where 29 Naxalites were killed in a gunfight with security forces April 16, said a senior police official.

Man dies; wife cries custodial torture

Rourkela: A man died while undergoing treatment at RGH here, Tuesday. His family members alleged that he was beaten to death while he was in jail. According to information, Debanand Singh, 40, was arrested Saturday by Excise officials. He was later lodged in judicial custody. On Monday, his family moved a court for bail when his wife allegedly received a call from jail authorities asking her to arrange bail for Debanand as he was sick. In the evening, she was informed that Debanand had died. She alleged that Debanand was killed and demanded a thorough probe as well as arrest of the Excise officials.

Baripada hottest at 46.4°C

Bhubaneswar: Severe heatwave conditions sizzled Odisha Tuesday with the mercury rising to 45.4 degrees Celsius in the capital Bhubaneswar, officials said. Baripada town in Mayurbhanj district was the hottest place in the state, recording a temperature of 46.4 degrees Celsius, which was an all-time high for it as well, they said. Balasore recorded 46 degrees Celsius. Bhubaneswar's 45.4 degrees Celsius was its second-highest April temperature on record. P3

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The offices of **Orissa POST** will remain closed May 1 (Wednesday) on account of May Day. Therefore, there will be no edition of the paper May 2 (Thursday). -EDITOR

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



We can always ask them to develop a vaccine for the vaccine side effects with your photo on the vials

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VIATION
SENSEX	74482.78	↓ 188.50
NIFTY	22604.85	↓ 38.55
DOLLAR	83.42	↑ ₹0.04
EURO	89.20	↓ ₹0.20
GOLD	₹70,521	↓ ₹1,081
SILVER	₹79,578	↓ ₹1,274

WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	45.4°C	44.2°C
Min Temp	27.0°C	27.5°C
Humidity	55%	53%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Heatwave conditions most likely



DELUGE IN PARADISE: A woman removes standing water from her partially submerged house as flood water recedes at Chogal Handwara, in Kupwara district of North Kashmir, Tuesday. PFI PHOTO

Parties neglect health

In what came as a severe beating to the tom-tommings of the BJP-led Union government about revving up public health and wellness of citizens through a slew of schemes ahead of the elections, the chief of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) Dr RV Asokan Tuesday termed the flagship Ayushman Bharat health insurance programme as 'poorly structured and underfunded'. He said the pompous scheme, structured by NITI Aayog and bureaucrats, failed to give anything 'new' to the patients. He also took a dig at the political spectrum for their 'all is well' attitude, and relegating 'health' to the state of an 'orphan' in their scheme of things, despite the lessons taught by Covid pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 30: Terming health an 'orphan', Indian Medical Association chief Dr RV Asokan says no lessons have been learnt after the Covid crisis and it doesn't figure as a top priority for political parties with everyone in the 'all is well' zone. In an interaction with PTI editors, Asokan also described the government's flagship Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme as 'poorly structured and underfunded' and called for increasing investments in the health sector. "Health is an orphan. Nobody wants to talk about health even after the Covid pandemic, where it was acutely felt even as a matter of internal security. We have



not learnt any lessons. We continue to be in the same 'all is well' zone," he said. "Health sadly does not figure among the top priorities of political parties," Asokan said in response to a question on attention to the sector during the ongoing elections. Dwelling at length on the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-JMAY), Asokan said it had 'great vision' and there were great expectations from it. "But it was structured poorly and underfunded to the extent that it will collapse. Why I say this is because it was envisioned by the prime minister for people below the poverty line but perhaps it was structured by the NITI Aayog and bureaucrats," Asokan said. "The care in government hospitals is already free. So what is the new that the patient gets? Whether it is routed through the government hospital or through Ayushman Bharat, the patient does not get anything new. So the goodwill that had to be generated in the public did not develop. That political dividend didn't occur," Asokan added. "As per the calculations that

they themselves have given before the nation, we need at least Rs 1.6 lakh crore annually to run that scheme. It started with Rs 6,800 crore. And it is now Rs 12,000 crore," he stated. The IMA president said they would like the government to be in charge of health, invest in public hospitals, and in public infrastructure and public human resources. "Whatever has been invested in health is too inadequate. The people spend around 3.9 per cent of the GDP on health. The Central and state governments put together spend 1.1 to 1.3 per cent of the GDP, which is inadequate," he said. He cited a 2011 high level expert group report on Universal Health Coverage for India by the erstwhile Planning Commission to say that the government has to ensure a basic package for all citizens, whether poor or rich. "Beyond that, they can buy care," Asokan explained. The same document stated that the government should buy strategically from the private sector for people below the poverty line. "And the 2021 report titled Health Insurance for India's Missing Middle by NITI Aayog said 10 per cent of Indians can pay for themselves, 25 per cent will be taken care of by the Ayushman Bharat scheme and the rest of them, which amounts to around 90 crore, are being thrown to private health insurance," he said. He added, "After 10 years of the Planning Commission document, throwing us to the insurance industry is not acceptable."

Australia examines possible toxicity of Indian spices

REUTERS

Hyderabad/New Delhi, April 30: Australia's food safety agency is collecting information on the possible contamination of spice mixes sold by Indian companies MDH and Everest to decide if a food recall is required, it said, Tuesday, the latest regulator to step up scrutiny.

Hong Kong suspended sales this month of three MDH spice blends and an Everest mix for fish curry Singapore ordered a recall of the same Everest mix as well, flagging high levels of ethylene oxide, which is unfit for human consumption and a cancer risk over long exposure.

"We are working with international counterparts to understand the issue and with federal, state and territory food enforcement agencies to determine if further action is required in Australia," Food Standards Australia New Zealand said in a statement.

Such action could include a recall, it said, adding, "Ethylene oxide is not permitted to be used as a treatment for foods sold in Australia."

MDH and Everest did not immediately respond to Reuters' requests for comment. They have previously said their products are safe for consumption.

Their spice brands, among the most popular in India, are also sold in Europe, Asia and North America.

SC questions ED on timing of Kejriwal's arrest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 30: Terming life and liberty as 'exceedingly important', the Supreme Court Tuesday questioned the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on the timing of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's arrest ahead of the general elections in the excise policy-linked money laundering case.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta, which continued hearing on the Kejriwal's plea challenging his arrest for the consecutive day, posed several queries to Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the ED, and sought his reply, Friday.

"Life and liberty are exceedingly important. You can't deny that," the bench told Raju and sought his reply, saying, "The last question is with regard to the timing of the arrest, which they have pointed out, the timing of the arrest, soon before the general elections."

The bench also flagged the long time gap between initiation of adjudication proceedings in the case and the action of arrest, saying the Section 8 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) provides a maximum limit of 365 days. The apex court is likely to continue hearing on Kejriwal's plea on Friday as the two judges will be sitting in different com-

NAVEEN FILES NOMINATION FROM HINJILI



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, April 30: Ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday filed his nomination papers for the Odisha Assembly elections from Hinjili seat in Ganjam district.

Accompanied by ministers and party leaders including his close aide VK Pandian, the chief minister reached the sub-Collector's office at Chhatrapur and submitted his papers for the sixth time seeking re-election from the Hinjili Assembly segment.

Patnaik has earlier been elected as a legislator from the Hinjili Assembly segment five times in a row since 2000. Hinjili comes under the Aska Lok Sabha seat and will go to polls, May 20. Along with Hinjili, Patnaik, this time will also contest from the Kantabanji Assembly segment in Bolangir district. P3

Jumanji: Zebras run wild in Washington neighbourhood

AGENCIES

North Bend (Washington), April 30: It was an unusual wildlife sighting Sunday when four zebras escaped from their trailer and galloped into a Washington neighborhood.

Three of the four black-and-white striped animals were quickly captured, but the fate of the fourth wasn't immediately known, Monday Washington State Patrol Trooper Rick Johnson said. The zebras were being trans-

ported from Washington to Montana when the driver took the Interstate 90 exit for North Bend, located about 30 miles (48 kilometers) southeast of Seattle, to secure the trailer.

That's when the zebras bolted.

Witness Dan Barnett of North Bend told KING-TV of Seattle that he was in 'disbelief,' when he saw the zebras eating grass off the side of the offramp.

He and other drivers helped protect the zebras from the busy nearby interstate, as drivers on



the offramp pulled over to 'make a makeshift fence' to block the animals from the highway, Barnett said.

The zebras then began heading toward town, trotting past brunch patrons at a restaurant near the interstate exit. Soon after, three of the AWOL zebras were in Whitney Blomquist's backyard.

"I called someone and was like, So I found the missing zebras, they're in my yard. Yeah—not sure what to do," Blomquist said.

The zebras then ran to a neighboring yard, where two were captured with the help of rodeo professionals. The third, the baby of the herd, was corralled later.

Johnson posted photos of the loose zebras on the social platform X. "This is a first for me and all @wastatepatrol troopers involved," he wrote.

Meanwhile, another resident, Campo, said while laughing that April 28, 2024, will forever be known as "the day the zebras came into North Bend."



Officials, including district Collector Siddharth Shankar and SP Pinak Mishra, hold a review meeting ahead of the elections in Puri, Tuesday

downtown

City boils at 45.4°C

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 30: Severe heatwave conditions sizzled state Tuesday with the mercury rising to 45.4 degrees Celsius in the capital City here, officials said. Baripada town in Mayurbhanj district was the hottest place in the state, recording a temperature of 46.4 degrees Celsius, which was an all-time high for it as well, they said.

Balasure recorded 46 degrees Celsius. Bhubaneswar's 45.4 degrees Celsius was its second-highest April temperature on record. The City had recorded 45.8 degrees Celsius April 11, 2016, they added. The maximum temperature in Angul was 44.7 degrees

Celsius, followed by Talcher, Dhenkanal and Jajpur at 44.5 degrees Celsius. Boudh was at 44.3 degrees Celsius, while Jharsuguda, Cuttack and Kendrapara were at 44.2 degrees Celsius. The weather office issued a red alert for Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Angul, Dhenkanal, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Cuttack and Boudh districts for May 1. Amid the heat, campaigning is in full swing for the elections in the state.

Odisha will vote in the Lok Sabha elections and Assembly polls simultaneously in four phases, starting on May 13. There are 21 Lok Sabha seats in the state and a 147-member Assembly.



COURTESY CALL: Odisha in-charge of Congress Ajoy Kumar (L) during a courtesy visit to Dharitri office in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday. The leading Odia daily's Editor Tathagata Satpathy and Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy are seen

Naveen files nomination from home turf Hinjili

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, April 30: Ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik filed his nomination papers for the Assembly elections from Hinjili seat in Ganjam district, Tuesday.

Accompanied by ministers and party leaders, including his close aide Kartik Pandian, Patnaik reached the sub-collector's office at Chhatrapur and submitted his papers for the sixth time seeking re-election from the Hinjili Assembly segment.

Patnaik had earlier been elected as a legislator from the Hinjili Assembly seat five times in a row since 2000.

Hinjili will go to the polls May 20. Along with Hinjili, Patnaik, this time will also contest from Kantabanji in Bolangir district.

Patnaik had won the Hinjili seat for the first time in 2000 by a margin of 29,826 votes. In 2004, his winning margin increased to 42,642 and in the 2009 and 2014 elections, it went up to 61,773 and 76,586, respectively.

In 2019, he won the seat by a margin of 60,160 votes. In all these elections, Patnaik's vote



share has never dropped below 65 per cent, official sources said.

Earlier, Patnaik sought blessings at Maa Tara Tarini, the presiding deity of the locality ahead of filing nominations for the election. Meanwhile, BJD candidate from Sambalpur Lok Sabha seat Pranab Prakash Das, who is also the organisational secretary of the BJD, also filed his nomination paper for the Lok Sabha elections from Sambalpur seat.

Patnaik wished Pranab Prakash Das, who is popularly called 'Bobby'.

"All the best Bobby. I am sure you will win," the BJD chief said in a video message to Das, who has been pitted by the ruling party against BJP leader and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in Sambalpur.

BJD vice-president Debi Prasad Mishra also filed his nomination papers from the Badamba Assembly segment in Cuttack district.

Former India Hockey captain Dilip Tirkey also filed his nomination papers from the Sundargarh Lok Sabha seat as a BJD candidate.

Puri rly stn to showcase chariot wheels

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 30: Indian Railways will procure three wheels, one each from the three chariots that represent the famous Rath Yatra, to place them at the centre of the concourse of Puri railway station that is being redeveloped under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme.

"Every year when Rath Yatra ends, the three chariots are dismantled and the timber is used in the temple kitchen to cook 'Kotha Bhoga' (dishes for the gods)," said Manojaya Rath, one of the principal architects from Rath Architectonic that has designed the new station.

He added, "However, the Indian Railways, in accordance with our design, will procure one wheel from each of the three chariots from the upcoming Rath Yatra to be held in late June or early July this year and these will be placed in the world-class railway station at Puri."

Puri railway station is one of the 1,321 stations of the country which is being redeveloped to offer world-class passenger amenities under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, and it is expected to be ready by July 2024.

As per the approved design plan, the three wheels would be placed at the centre of the concourse at the Puri railway station.

"This installation will serve as a gateway to the holy city of



Puri for all devotees and tourists arriving at the station. Not only will it reflect the history and traditions of the city, it will also invoke a religious and spiritual feeling in the mind of the devotees even before visiting the Jagannath Temple," said Manojaya.

Prateek Rath, another principal architect, said that the Puri station has been conceptualised by taking the local culture into consideration and the 'Three Chariot Wheel' concept has been integrated into the concourse of the railway station.

Rath Yatra, also called 'Ratha Jatra' in local Odia language, is considered the oldest and largest Hindu chariot festival celebrated annually.

"During the festival, three deities (Jagannath, his brother

Railway officials said that the station is being rebuilt in accordance with the Kalinga architecture that originated in the fourth century BC and since the iconic Jagannath Temple is a living example of Kalinga style of architecture, the exterior of the station will reflect that.

The Indian Railways awarded the station redevelopment contract to Rath Architectonic in July 2022 and the construction work was started in January 2023.

According to Prateek, the station is being redeveloped keeping in mind the passenger footfall 40 to 50 years from now.

"At present, around 6,000 to 7,000 passengers arrive at the station daily. The redevelopment will enhance the capacity to 40,000, which is the projected footfall in 2060-65," Prateek said.

"Our aim is to make the station a monument so that people, who come to visit the Puri temple, carry that feeling of grandness till the railway station while leaving the city," he added.

As per the redevelopment plan, the station is proposed to have three floors with world-class amenities, starting from easy access to the station, convenient and spacious parking to accommodate more than 500 cars, energy-efficient building, physical as well as automatic ticket counters, and waiting lounge, among others.

₹75 lakh seized from City airport in two days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 30: Security personnel at Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here seized ₹75 lakh cash from two persons during scanning of luggage bags here, official sources said Tuesday.

The cash was seized during the last two days from trolley bags of two passengers, one was coming from Chennai while the other had arrived from New Delhi, the sources said.

Official sources said ₹28 lakh cash was seized from the luggage trolley of a passenger who arrived from Delhi while ₹47 lakh was recovered from the luggage of another passenger who arrived from Chennai.

As the Model Code of Conduct is in force in view of the ensuing Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in Odisha, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) officials of the airport informed the matter to the Income Tax department, which has started investigation into the matter, they said.

From March 1 to April 17, different enforcement agencies have seized cash, liquor, drugs and other items worth ₹118.65 crore in the state.

The enforcement agencies have seized ₹2.07 crore cash, liquor worth ₹18.19 crore, drugs worth ₹43.69 crore, precious metals worth ₹ 7.17 crore and freebies / other items worth ₹47.44 crore from Odisha, EC officials said.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



MAN GETS 20-YR RI FOR MINOR'S RAPE IN CITY

DEBADURLAV HARICHANDAN, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 30: The Fast Track Special Court here Tuesday awarded 20 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) to a 30-year-old man after holding him guilty of raping a minor girl in the City in 2018.

The court also slapped a penalty of ₹10,000 on the convict, identified as Ramjan Khan of Raghunath Nagar under Khandagiri police limits in Khurda, for the offence under Section 376AB of the IPC. Failure to pay the fine would entail additional two months jail term, special public prosecutor Rajib Samal and



additional public prosecutor Balaram Sahoo said.

According to sources, Khan was selling toys in Dumduma area of the City when he saw the minor girl waiting for an autorickshaw October 26, 2018. Finding the girl alone, Khan raped her.

A passerby heard the girl crying and came to her rescue. Later, locals nabbed Khan and handed him over to Khandagiri police. Khandagiri police booked Khan under multiple Sections of the IPC including 341 and 354 and Section 6 of POCSO Act.

Inhaling fentanyl may lead to irreversible brain damage

Inhaling the synthetic opioid fentanyl - approved by the US Food and Drug Administration for use as pain relief and anaesthetic -- can cause irreversible brain damage, according to a new study.

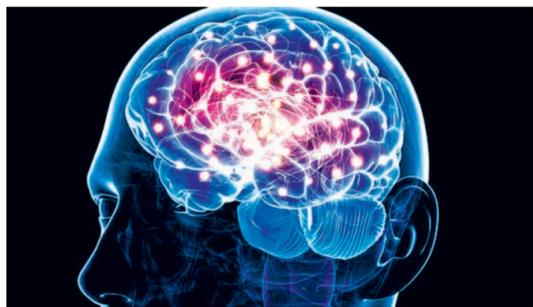
Fentanyl is cheap, readily available, and 50 times more potent than heroin, warned doctors in the journal BMJ Case Reports after treating a 47-year-old man found unresponsive in his hotel room after snorting the drug.

"We know very well the classic opiate side effects: respiratory depression, loss of consciousness, disorientation," said lead author Chris Eden, now a second-

year resident in internal medicine at the Oregon Health & Science University.

"But we don't classically think of it causing possibly irreversible brain damage and affecting the brain, as it did in this case," he added. The middle-aged man was diagnosed with toxic leukoencephalopathy by fentanyl inhalation, which means the substance caused inflammation and damage to the brain's white matter. This led to unconsciousness and also to potentially irreversible loss of brain function, or possibly death.

The condition is manifest in various signs and symptoms, the most obvious of which are



neurological and behavioural changes, ranging from mild confusion to stupor, coma, and death.

Although the recovery is slow, some people will recover fully, while others will progressively get

Fentanyl is cheap, readily available, and 50 times more potent than heroin, warned doctors in the journal BMJ Case Reports after treating a 47-year-old man found unresponsive in his hotel room after snorting the drug

worse. In this case, a brain scan revealed white matter inflammation, swelling, and injury in his

cerebellum - part of the brain responsible for gait and balance.

The man remained bed-bound for 18 days later and was fed via a tube. Doctors prescribed several different drugs to treat urinary incontinence, kidney injury, cognitive impairment, suspected opioid withdrawal, pain and agitation, and pneumonia.

After 26 days, he underwent rehabilitation, and after another month, he returned home. However, outpatient physiotherapy and occupational therapy continued. The study reported that it took him almost a year to fully recover and return to work full-time.

SC appreciates apology by yoga guru Ramdev



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 30: The Supreme Court Tuesday appreciated the 'marked improvement' in the unconditional public apology published in newspapers by yoga guru Ramdev, his aide Balkrishna and Patanjali Ayurved Limited (PAL) in the misleading advertisements case.

A bench of Justice Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah told senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Ramdev, Balkrishna and PAL that language of the apology was adequate and the names were also there in it.

"I don't know the second apology is on whose vetting. There has been marked improvement," Justice Amanullah said, adding, "We appreciate that. Now finally they have understood."

He said earlier when the apology was published, only the company's name was there.

"Now the names have come. It is a marked improvement, we appreciate that," Justice Amanullah observed, adding, "The language is adequate."

After the hearing, the apex court asked the firm's counsel as to why they have e-filed the apol-

ogy published in newspapers when the court had specifically asked that the original has to be filed by April 23.

"This is not compliance of our order," Justice Kohli observed.

"There is too much of communication gap, Rohatgi. Speaking for myself, I raise my hands now. Too much of an indulgence," Justice Amanullah said.

The bench noted in its order that the firm's lawyer have conceded that there has been some misunderstanding of the orders passed by the court by his briefing counsel and one more opportunity be given to comply with the order by filing the original page of each newspaper in which the public apology has been published.

"The registry is directed to accept the said document when filed," the bench said and posted the matter for hearing May 7.

Rohatgi sought exemption from personal appearance for Ramdev and Balkrishna for the next date of hearing in the matter.

"The exemption is granted limited to the next date of hearing," the bench said.

The apex court is hearing a plea filed in 2022 by the Indian Medical Association alleging a smear campaign against the Covid vaccination drive and modern systems of medicine.

While hearing the matter April 23, the top court had said the public apology published in newspapers were not on record and asked those to be filed within two days.

PAL had assured the top court November 21 last year that it will not violate any law, especially those relating to advertising or branding of products manufactured and marketed by it.

It had also assured the bench that "no casual statements claiming medicinal efficacy or against any system of medicine will be released to the media in any form".

The top court had said PAL is "bound down to such assurance."

The non-observance of the specific undertaking and subsequent media statements had irked the bench, which later issued notices to show cause why contempt proceedings should be not initiated against them.

On March 19, the top court had directed Ramdev and Balkrishna, who is the managing director of PAL, to appear before it after taking exception to the company's failure to respond to the notice issued in the case relating to advertisements of the firm's products and their medicinal efficacy.

The top court had said it deemed it appropriate to issue Ramdev a show cause notice as advertisements issued by Patanjali, which were in the teeth of the undertaking given to the court November 21, 2023, reflect an endorsement by him.



REGALING POSE: Artiste Bidya Biswajeeta performs on the occasion of World Dance Day at Gunjan Dance Academy in Cuttack, Tuesday

Women should speak up to effect change: Nandita

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 30: FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) organised a talk show titled 'How to break the glass ceiling?' which focused on women breaking the stereotypes in entrepreneurship, here Tuesday. Acclaimed actress and director Nandita Das attended the event as guest speaker on the occasion.

Das engaged with the FLO members and the audience, shared her personal experiences on entrepreneurship. She also shared her journey, various challenges she faced along the way and how she fought them.

Speaking at the event, Das said, "Women are always reminded of how they look which is unfortunate because it undermines their confidence. Women are continuously reminded of their identity. 'Do we ever ask men about their look or question their identity?' she asked.

Women should start asking questions in order to initiate conversation that leads to change, Das said.

"In the film industry, men feel uncomfortable working under female directors. It is important for women to speak up to bring change," she added.



The programme was attended by some of the most prominent and influential women entrepreneurs, including FLO chairperson Rashmi Sahoo, FLO senior VC Prangyan Mishra and FLO VC Panchami Manoo Ukil. The event provided a platform to network, learn and inspire by the stories of women like Nandita Das.

Mother's Public School's walkathon today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 30: Mother's Public School (MPS) is going to organise a walkathon here May 1, with the aim of spreading awareness on water conservation and judicious use of drinking water.

ACP Traffic Jayanta Kumar Dora will flag off the walkathon. Around 200 walkers are going to participate to raise awareness about conserving water.

Staff and students of the school are going to participate in a three-km walkathon, starting from Unit I campus Wednesday at 6.05am.



The programme is a community-driven initiative with a vision to create a healthier, more inclusive world, keeping in alignment with the sustainable development goals of the United Nations to which the school has sincerely pledged itself, the organisers said.

School chairman and principal Poly Patnaik said, "Educators' health and well-being has multiple dimensions: physical, emotional, mental, financial and social. These elements are interconnected and they influence each other. Mother's Public School prioritises establishing health and well-being as a collective priority and responsibility for the educators to face the challenges and to have a positive mindset."

Managing director Minati Sabat said, "Our planet is running out of time! Climate change is no longer something that can be ignored or put off as it is a reality today! Each of us is responsible for reducing carbon footprint."

Speak up and get others to join in taking action. It's one of the quickest and most effective ways to make a difference," she added.

Oath taking to say 'no' to child labour



Bhubaneswar: On the occasion of World Labour Day, ActionAid Association in collaboration with Centre for Child and Women Development (CCWD) appealed the people to make the state free of child labour Tuesday. On this occasion, an oath taking ceremony and community-level awareness meeting was organised to create awareness on child labour among different stakeholders. "Let's join hands to make the state free of child labour," said Sadasiv Swain, secretary of CCWD. Recently, in a letter to commissioners of all municipal corporations, executive officers of municipalities and NACs recently, State Urban Development Agency project director Sarada Prasad Panda asked them to seek the undertaking from street vendors not to employ children below the age of 14, at the time of issuing vendor certificate.

ECoR GM inspects work at Bhub, Cuttack rly stations

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 30: East Coast Railway (ECoR) general manager (in-charge) Mohes Kumar Behera Tuesday inspected the redevelopment work of both Cuttack and Bhubaneswar railway stations and reviewed the ongoing redevelopment works.

During the inspection, Behera advised railway officials to take necessary precautions to ensure safety while on work. Timely completion of infrastructure projects and passenger amenities was also emphasised, indicating a commitment to meeting scheduled targets.

"The vision to transform these stations into centers of attraction with world-class passenger facilities is ambitious and highlights a dedication to enhancing the travel experience for passengers," officials said

In a thorough assessment of the redevelopment progress, Behera inspected both side entry points and circulating areas of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar railway stations.

The development works for entry points will have facilities like parking for two/three/four wheelers, pickup and drop point, parking for ambulance and VIP vehicles including wider approach roads, air concourse for passengers waiting, foot over bridge (FOB), integrated passenger announcement system and fire alarm protection system, baggage scanners, passenger flow management system and integrated CCTV surveillance among others.

Senior officials from ECoR headquarters led by chief administrative officer (Construction) AG Srinivas were present on the occasion.

CUO to hold next academic session from new building

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 30: The Central University of Odisha (CUO), Koraput will commence classes from its first permanent building for the upcoming session, a statement said Tuesday.

VC Chakradhar Tripathi said that at present, 15 departments out of 18, operate from a temporary location. "The shift will signify a stride towards progress," he said.

Tripathi informed that the new academic building will be completed in next few months. It will have all necessary facilities along with staff quarters, he said.

He further said that the momentum of growth was underscored during a recent online event where Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for various infrastructure projects, including two academic buildings, an administrative building, two hostels and one library building at the



CUO, in presence of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, with a total project cost of ₹129.79 crore.

"Another ₹479.92 crore was also sanctioned by the Ministry of Education for the various infrastructure projects of the university including academic buildings, hostels, international guest house, health centre building and auditorium," he added.

Tripathi also revealed plans for the establishment of a 'Charkha Centre' aimed at empowering local unemployed individuals through garment manufacturing, alongside with an emphasis on sectors like agriculture, forest management, animal husbandry and dairy and logistic and supply chain management for economic development of the state.

'Autism Ek Aawaz' by GrandQueens Club

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 30: With the objective of promoting intervention for autism in children, the GrandQueens Club organised an event on 'Autism Ek Aawaz: raising autism awareness' here Tuesday.

Odia Language Literature & Culture department director Dilip Routray joined the occasion as chief guest. Founder and Chief Functionary of Shantidham Foundation Soubhagya Routray graced the occasion as guest of honour. GrandQueens Club founders Saurabh Sureka and Rupa Sureka were also present in the event. Munmun Singh conducted the programme.



On this occasion, 18 GrandQueens were chosen as 'GrandQueen Autism Ambassadors'.

These ambassadors, representing the spirit of compassion and advocacy, shall play a pivotal role in spreading awareness about autism and fostering a more inclusive society.

Among the speakers present were Shubranshu Jena, MD, DM, Senior consultant neurology at Apollo Hospitals. Debashish Panigrahi, Consultant Paediatric Neurology at Ankura Hospital, Pallavi Rana, Occupational Therapist and consultant at Sum Hospitals, Kanhu Panda, Consultant Paediatric, Utkal Hospital.

A special symbol for Autistic people was also launched at the event which was created by 'Madhav Autism Foundation', Hyderabad.

Observations of galaxies support existence of dark matter

The findings on dark matter were arrived at using "real, observed relationships" between stars and galaxies could be a basis to test two different models to describe the universe, according to Francisco Mercado, lead author of the study published in the journal Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomy Society



explain how the universe works solely from matter that can be directly observed?

While currently, many physicists think that dark matter must

exist to explain the motions of stars and galaxies, Mercado said his team "put forth a powerful test to discriminate between the two models."

For the test, the researchers performed computer simulations using both normal and dark matter on observed features measured in real galaxies. The features included patterns in the motions of stars and gas in these galaxies.

The study led by the University of California, Irvine, US found that these features "are expected to appear in a universe with dark matter but would be difficult to explain in a universe without it."

"We show that such features appear in observations of many real galaxies. If we take these data at face value, this reaffirms the position of the dark matter model as the one that best describes the universe we live in," said Mercado.

While the team expects more

debate within the research community to follow in the wake of the study, they said there "may be room for common ground" as they found that only the simulations involving both normal and dark matter could explain the observed features of real galaxies.

"Simply put, the features we examined in observations require both the existence of dark matter and the incorporation of normal-matter physics," said co-author Jorge Moreno, associate professor of physics and astronomy at Pomona College, California, US.

Now that the dark matter model of the universe appears to be the leading one, the next step is to see if it remains consistent across a dark matter universe, said Mercado.

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Weavers in lurch as 70% handloom units shut

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, April 30: As many as 7,000 artisans have been rendered jobless following the closure of 70 per cent of the handloom units in Kendrapara district during the last three decades.

The handloom units had to close down following the arrival of modern machines and quality threads in the market. As a result, over 7,000 artisans earning their livelihood by weaving handloom clothes lost jobs to the modernisation wave sweeping the textile industry in the country.

Absence of government sponsorship, publicity and marketing facility is stated to be the reason behind the closure of these handloom units. Moreover, lack of modern weaving machines and quality threads dealt a body blow to the traditional handloom sector in this district.

The dhoti, napkin (gamchha) and clothes manufactured by these handloom units were once in great demand among the consumers in the state. However, with the passage of time, modern manufacturing machines and high quality cotton thread forayed into the market and spelt disaster for these handloom units in the district.

Moreover, several handloom weavers' cooperative societies which had been marketing their products have now become a thing of the past.



A weaver Kishore Dey of Thakurhat village said many looms have fallen silent as several weavers are now not keen on weaving sarees, lungis, dhotis, and towels. The increasing cost of raw materials has robbed the weavers off their businesses.

He said over 10,000 residents of Kushiapal, Dihasahi, Haripur, Korua, Kutaranga, Keutagada, and other villages were into weaving clothes. Handwoven napkins, dhotis, and shawls produced by these units were in great demand even in foreign countries, he added.

Weaving clothes in the loom was part of the school curricu-

lum and a school was established for the purpose during the freedom movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi to overthrow the British rule. Currently, there is great demand for handloom products in the country and abroad but many units are on the verge of closure while others have shut down due to absence of government sponsorship, Dey added.

Another weaver Narayan Bhadra of Korua village said handloom products are in great demand in and outside the state as well as in foreign countries. Weaving is the second source of livelihood for many after agri-

culture. Over 3,000 people are still engaged in weaving handloom clothes.

However, a fall in income has forced many youths to migrate to other states and abroad for a decent livelihood. Plagued by a series of problems and dwindling income, the youths have lost their faith in this business, he said.

Harekrushna Das, president of the Kushiapal handloom weavers' cooperative society, said the demand for handloom products is still high among the customers despite sharp rise in the business of machine woven clothes.

The handloom products are in great demand during marriages and various other festivals. However, lack of marketing facilities is troubling them, he said. Another weaver Ajay Kumar Behera said the increasing cost of raw materials and their shortage have hit the weavers hard.

Moreover, the government restrictions imposed on purchase of some chemicals have also hit the weavers hard as they have failed to prepare quality clothes and sarees. Things have come such a pass that weavers now fail to recover even the production cost of a handloom product due to a drop in profit margin.

This apart, handloom products do not get the kind of publicity that Sambalpuri handloom or Jhel saree of Mayurbhanj, usually worn by President Droupadi Murmu, he added.

When contacted, ADM Pitambar Samal said the state government is attaching utmost importance on the improvement of the handloom sector and marketing the products through the state government owned Khadi Board and Boyanika.

Recently, the government has sanctioned ₹15 crore to Boyanika with which handloom products are purchased from the weavers. This will greatly help in improving the business of the weavers, he added.

Truck falls off bridge, crushes boy to death



POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, April 30: In a tragic incident, a minor boy was killed when a speeding sand laden truck fell off the Badajora bridge near Santhapur village under Gandia police station in Dhenkanal district Tuesday morning.

The deceased was identified as Subha Behera, 14, a Class VIII student and resident of Santhapur village. The incident occurred when he had gone to the creek under the bridge to take a bath.

According to sources, the driver of the sand laden truck (Regd No-OD 14 Q 7479) lost con-

trol of the vehicle due to rash driving and plunged off the bridge. Subha and two others were returning after taking bath in the creek under the bridge when the mishap occurred. Subha was crushed under the truck and died on the spot. The driver of the truck identified as Prakash Nayak also sustained critical injuries in the incident.

On being informed, Gandhia police along with Fire services personnel reached the spot and rescued the body from under the truck. A pall of gloom prevailed in the locality after the news spread.

Ex-MGNREGA asst awarded 4 yrs RI

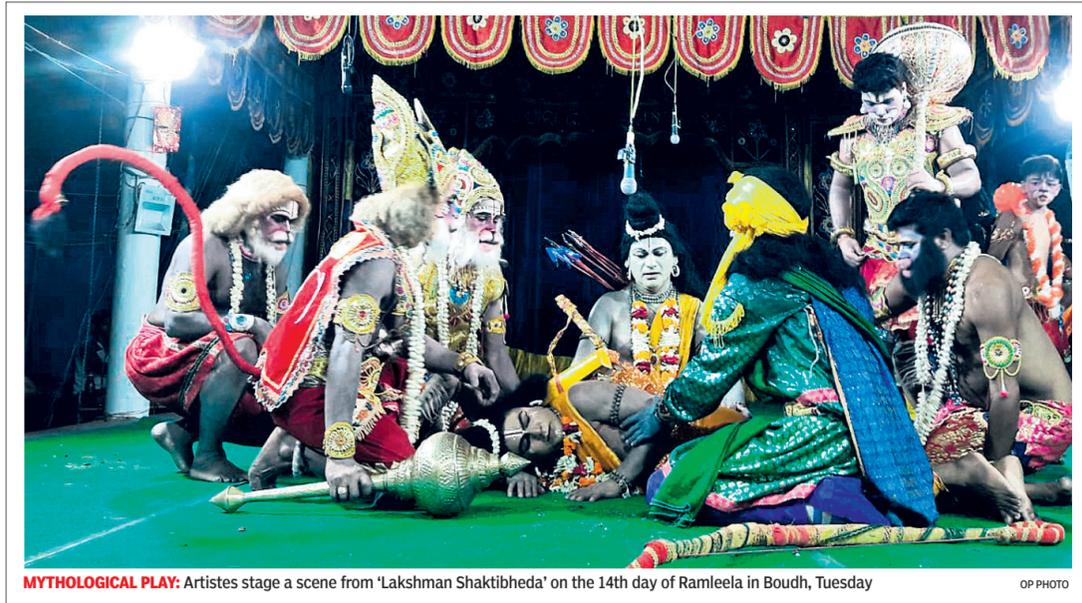
POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 30: The Special Vigilance Court here Tuesday handed down four years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) to a former MGNREGA assistant of Saharpada block in Keonjhar district while pronouncing the judgment in a Vigilance trap case.

The convict was identified as Lalit Kumar Mohanta, a former MGNREGA assistant of Saharpada block in Keonjhar district. The court also slapped a penalty of ₹2,000 on the convict, apart from the punishment.

In default, Mohanta has been directed to undergo additional two months of rigorous imprisonment. The court awarded him the punishment under Section 7 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988. Mohanta was disengaged from his job after being caught while receiving bribe by the Vigilance sleuths in the year 2016.

Sources said Mohanta was caught red handed while demanding and accepting bribe of ₹10,000 from a complainant to facilitate issue of work order in his favour for execution of the work under MGNREGA scheme, February 26, 2016. Later he was produced in the court and remanded to judicial custody after the magistrate rejected his bail plea.



MYTHOLOGICAL PLAY: Artists stage a scene from 'Lakshman Shaktibhedha' on the 14th day of Ramlleela in Boudh, Tuesday

Elderly dies of sunstroke

Dharakote: A 70-year-old man allegedly died of sunstroke at Jagmohan village under Dharakote police limits in Ganjam district, Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Bhalu Sahu, 70, in the village. He had been to the Rushikulya river to attend nature's call when he collapsed on the spot and lost his consciousness. On being informed, his family members rushed him in an ambulance to the Dharakote hospital. However, doctors pronounced him 'brought dead'.

In-laws murder woman in Bhadrak

POST NEWS NETWORK

Tihidi, April 30: Police here arrested three persons and forwarded them to court Tuesday for allegedly killing a woman at Paliabindha Beherasahi village under this police limits in Bhadrak district Monday, police said.

The deceased identified as Akhilata Behera, 25, was murdered by her mother-in-law Bhagyabati Behera, father-in-law Ganesh Behera and husband Madhusudan Behera, Chandbali SDPO Kartik Chandra Mallick said in a press conference organised at Tihidi police station Tuesday.

According to the police, Akhilata was in love with Madhusudan and they got married in 2019. However, Akhilata's in-laws were not happy with their marriage



and there used to be frequent quarrels within the family due to various reasons since their marriage. When Madhusudan was not home, Akhilata's mother-in-law asked her to give a bowl to eat Monday morning but when she denied the same an argument broke out between them. Akhilata's father-in-law, who was present at the scene, started beating her mercilessly with a bamboo stick and then in a fit of rage caught hold of her neck with a saree with the help of his wife.

When Akhilata died of suffo-

cation, they took the body inside the room and hanged her from the ceiling to give it the shape of suicide. Later they informed police that Akhilata committed suicide. However, Akhilata's brother lodged a complaint at Tihidi police station alleging that his sister was murdered by her in-laws over ₹50,000 dowry.

Acting on the complaint, police along with a scientific team reached the spot, seized the body and initiated an investigation. Police after preliminary investigation found injury marks on the neck of the deceased and during questioning her in-laws confessed their crime. After registering a case (No-197/24) police arrested the accused and recreated the crime scene on the spot, informed SDPO Mallick.

Hindalco Project 'Gyanarjan' helps students for entrances



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 30: Aditya Birla Group's Hindalco, Hirakud has launched the company's 'Gyanarjan Project' in Odisha. Basically, 'Gyanarjan' trains Class V and Class X students in subjects such as Science, Maths and English, to enable them to crack the entrance exams to professional courses for admission to institutes of eminence.

Collaborating with 'Alok' of Burla, the implementing agency, the 'Gyanarjan' has established education centres at Sai World School, Hirakud and Government Nodal High School, Mahammadpur.

Interestingly most of the students from the marginalised sections aspire to get into renowned institutions like Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya and Navodaya Vidyalayas, among others. Gyanarjan equips them with es-

sential knowledge and skills for entrance examinations to such schools. Initially providing extra coaching classes for Class X students, it now includes Class V students. This is to stoke in them the fire to move higher and higher at an early stage.

Kailash Pandey, Hindalco Business Head, Mining and Cluster Head, Sambalpur, said, "The Gyanarjan Project stands as a testament to Hindalco's dedication to educational empowerment and community progress. Through equipping students with essential knowledge, skills, and support, we strive to encourage students to dream big and pursue their passion."

Muralidhar Behera, Additional District Education Officer, Sambalpur, lauded Hindalco for its efforts in providing comprehensive training to students, thereby fostering their academic success.

3-day LAMP workshop for 25 RSP women executives

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, April 30: "Compete with yourself for a healthy professional growth," advised Atanu Bhowmick, Director In-Charge, RSP, while addressing the 25 women executives in the concluding session of Leadership and Management Productivity (LAMP) Workshop for women executives held at HRD Centre.

Present on the occasion were majority of the top executives of RSP and from B-More Consulting Shobeh Ahmed, former director (SAIL), Roshan Joseph and Ajoy Joseph as the faculty members.

Speaking further on this occasion, Bhowmick spelled out the important pillars of leadership and said, "It is the responsibility of a leader to keep the team happy, engaged, informed and productive."



SR Suryawanshi, ED (Works) exhorted the women executives to take leadership roles in their respective areas of operation in whichever post they might be in.

Tarun Misra, P&A, expressed the hope of seeing more women in higher positions and leadership roles in RSP.

Bhowmick, Suryawanshi and Misra presented the certificates to the participants. The team

'Sharks' that garnered maximum points during the three-day workshop was also given a special prize on the occasion.

Shobeh Ahmed elucidated about the objective of the workshop and praised the management for conducting such workshops for grooming future leaders. Roshan Joseph expressed happiness over the enthusiasm and eagerness of the participants to learn and perform.

prda पेंशन निधि विनियामक और विकास प्राधिकरण
PENSION FUND REGULATORY AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

NOTICE

Intimation of change in address of office of Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)

PFRDA has shifted to its new office premises w.e.f. 01.04.2024. The new office address is as below:

**Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority
E-500, Tower E, 5th Floor,
World Trade Centre,
Nauroji Nagar,
New Delhi-110 029
Phone No.- 011-40717900**

The Authority may be contacted at the abovementioned new address.

This is for information of all the stakeholders in the NPS architecture and general public.

Sd/-
**CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER
ADMIN & HR Department**

Please visit our website www.pfrda.org.in for complete information or scan the QR code

Form No. INC - 19

NOTICE

[Pursuant to Rule 22 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014]

(A) Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of Sub-Section (4) (ii) of Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013, an application has been made to Odisha Cancer Care Foundation to the Regional Director, Eastern Region for conversion of the Company (Not for Profit Licensed Company registered under Section 8(5) of the Companies Act, 2013) to any other Company under Section 8(4) (ii) of the Companies Act, 2013 by adding the words "Private Limited" to its name in place of Foundation.

(B) Principal objects of the Company after the revocation of licence as per the provisions u/s 8(4) (ii) of the Companies Act, 2013 shall be as follows:

- To provide medical facilities in the State of Odisha for the treatment of cancer by:
 - Constructing and managing a cancer hospital replete with diagnostic centre/s, cancer hostel/s, cancer hospice, day care centre/s; managing and establishing temporary accommodation to ensure needy patients complete their treatment; providing ambulance service and emergency call response centre for imparting critical care nursing, as deemed necessary.
 - To set up, establish, maintain, operate, run, manage or administer hospitals, nursing homes, medicare, healthcare, diagnostics, health-aids and research centres.
 - Administering medical advice and treatment of cancer and other critical diseases through other hospitals, infirmaries, clinics, dispensaries, diagnostic centers, laboratories, recovery centers and research centers.
- To participate in a cooperative cancer management network spread across various parts of the country by sharing data, technology, expertise and other available resources in order to provide access to standardised quality healthcare.
- To impart education and training to oncologists, nurses, paramedicals and other people associated with the field directly or indirectly either by itself or in association with other entities in order to tackle the rising need of cancer care and other critical diseases.
- To provide, encourage, initiate or promote facilities for the discovery, improvement or development of new methods of diagnosis, understanding and prevention and treatment of cancer.

(C) A copy of the draft Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company may be seen at the Registered Office of the Company i.e. Room No. 603-604, 6th Floor, Forum Mart Building Complex, Kharavela Nagar, Unit - III, Khordha, Bhubaneswar, Odisha - 751001.

(D) Notice is hereby given that any person, firm, company, corporation or body corporate, objecting to this application may communicate such objection to the Regional Director, Eastern Region, within thirty days from the date of publication of this notice, by a letter addressed to "The Regional Director, Eastern Region, Nizam Place, II MSO Building, 3rd Floor, 234/4, A.J.C Bose Road, Kolkata - 700020, West Bengal.

For Odisha Cancer Care Foundation
Sd./- Raghavan R. Shastri
Director
DIN: 00027418
Date: 30.04.24

FOCUS EMPLOYMENT

DISTRESSED WORKFORCE



Employment in the informal sector has increased spectacularly with around half the jobs performed in the formal sector turning out to be informal in nature

such a trend is quite contrary to the pre-pandemic scenario - before 2019, employment in informal sector was falling steadily and reflected a reversed trend in the aftermath of 2019; likewise, the share of formal sector employment was moving up since long back which slipped during the post-2019 period.

One of the biggest challenges for Indian labour market is the dwindling workers' earnings in real terms. The monthly real wages of regular and self-employed workers declined by Rs 230 and Rs 174, respectively. The overall employment quality, measured by the 'employment condition index', shows a varied picture for different states. The workers' employment conditions are worst, as the report highlights, in Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh; whereas, the conditions are relatively better in Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Telangana, Uttarakhand, and Gujarat. Though state-level policies are a dire necessity, especially in the states crippled at the bottom of the pyramid of employment quality, to improve the employment conditions of the workers, the Centre ought to extend support to economically backward regions.

Given the evolving dynamics of the economic landscape, the Indian labour market is passing through remarkable transformations shaped by technological innovations, demographic shifts, and evolving work paradigms. With the advent of artificial intelligence, robotics, and big data analytics, the industrial sector is leveraging gains owing to enhanced productivity in the production process. However, such transformations require new skill sets and competencies which constrain a large fraction of the distressed workforce in finding a job of their choice. Given such a trajectory, the Centre and states should come forward with robust frameworks of labour reforms and social security measures thereby safeguarding the rights and well-being of workers.

The writer is a Senior Research Fellow (Ph.D.), Jawaharlal Nehru University.

the service sector that slumped sharply in terms of employment acceleration - the growth of employment dropped markedly from 10.8 per cent to 1.1 per cent during the same period. Hence, positive labour market outcomes can largely be attributed to agriculture and construction sectors only. Such a dynamic can well be understood by observing the changing nature of the Indian labour market during the COVID-19 pandemic - a large fraction of rural labourers who were earlier working in towns and cities migrated back to their native places and preferred to work in agriculture and construction sectors.

The quality of employment shows a grim picture. Employment in the informal sector has increased spectacularly with around half the jobs performed in the formal sector turning out to be informal in nature. As the India Employment Report 2024 suggests, nearly 82 per cent of the workforce is working in the informal sector, and around 90 per cent is informally employed. Self-employment remains to be the key source of overall employment growth - as is evident from the report, both self-employment and unpaid family work has spurred substantially, especially for women. It is quite clearly evident that the share of self-employment accelerated markedly, whereas, the share of casual and regular employment decelerated during 2019-22. It is worth mentioning here that

only by 1.3 percentage points. However, the World Bank data reveals that India is markedly lagging behind in terms of the magnitude of LFPR when compared with its South Asian peers like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka as well as other comparable middle-income countries.

It is worth noting down that female LFPR is sharply lower than that of men in India. According to PLFS 2022-23 (National Statistical Office) data, less than four in ten working-age women enter the labour force as compared to eight in ten men. Though female LFPRs are lower than those of males in several other parts of the world, this gap remains quite sharp in India. Only 180 million women are present in India's labour force, compared to 380 million men. A sector-wise break-up reveals some of the spectacular changes. Improvements in employment outcomes can largely be attributed to the agriculture and construction sectors. Between 2019 and 2022, the compound growth rate of the agriculture sector workforce has increased markedly by 8.9 per cent, though it has been steadily declining since 2000. The workforce in the construction sector was growing very slowly during 2012-19 (by 2.2 per cent); it accelerated by 6.4 per cent in 2019-22. Employment growth also remained positive, though minuscule in magnitude, in the manufacturing sector - it gained momentum from negative to 3 per cent during this period. It was

India has stood out to be the second largest labour market in the world with a little under 600 million people, six in 10 working-age people, working or seeking jobs. However, around 400 million people belonging to the working age cohort are still out of the labour force. The India Employment Report 2024, jointly prepared and produced by the Institute for Human Development (IHD) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), highlights the key issues pertaining to Indian labour market keeping an eye on the dynamics of social, educational, and economic structure of the country in the last two decades. The report, drawing insights from the nationally representative data, argues that the Indian labour market confronts several acute challenges, despite some of the positive outcomes, in recent days such as the declining share of regular and casual work opportunities and falling real wages of self-employed and regular workers.

The periodic labour force survey 2022-23 reveals that Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) and Worker Population Ratio (WPR) continue to increase, being consistent with their respective recent past trends. Between 2000 and 2022, the size of the labour force has increased by 171.1 million to 567.4 million, approximately 8 million annually. Likewise, the size of the workforce has gone up by 157.4 million to 544.5 million, by around 7 million annually during this period. The unemployment rate too has declined between 2022 and 2023. The LFPR of Indian adults has gone up from 55.2 per cent in 2022 to 57.9 per cent in 2023. This increase holds for both rural and urban India, with a substantial increase in the former (3.3 percentage points) relative to the latter (0.7 percentage points). A large part of the increase is due to a higher fraction of women joining the labour force with a 4.2 percentage point increase in their LFPR. For the men counterparts, on the other hand, it was observed that LFPR increased



Dakrushi Sahu

ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FOR INDIAN LABOUR MARKET IS THE DWINDLING WORKERS' EARNINGS IN REAL TERMS

What the soul sees and has experienced, that it knows; the rest is appearance, prejudice and opinion.

SRI AUROBINDO



Rights & India

India's record of human rights in the past few years has come under serious international scanner. The recent ethnic strife in Manipur, when the state machinery was blatantly used to help the majority ethnic community to settle scores with a minority group in genocidal attacks, brought worldwide condemnation. In this backdrop, the United Nations Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) will hold its session in the first week of May to decide, among other things, whether the National Human Rights Commission of India (NHRC) will retain its 'A' status. The NHRC's ratings were put on hold in 2023 when the UN body took exception to the presence of police personnel in human rights investigation and the lack of gender and minority representation. Police inclusions violate international conventions and defeat the very rationale of protection of human rights. Downgrading NHRC's rating from A to B, which is in the realm of possibility, would affect its ability to vote at the UN Human Rights Council and some other UN General Assembly bodies.

The meeting of the Sub-Committee on Accreditation (SCA) of the GANHRI in May is part of the five-year peer review for each member of the 114-member alliance. Sensing the reservations the world body has for India's recent human rights record, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is reportedly reaching out to various countries involved in the review process to make its case through diplomatic channels.

Since being accredited in 1999, India had retained its 'A' ranking in 2006 and 2011. But, two years after the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) assumed power in 2014, its status was first downgraded and then restored after a year. This is the second time during the Modi government that it is facing a possible listing downgrade. There are reasons for being concerned. In March, 2023 the SCA made a six-point submission to slam India for the involvement of police officers in its investigative process, calling it a "conflict of interest." The NHRC, however, sought to rebut the charge arguing that the presence of government officials, including Secretary-General and CEO, NHRC, former Gujarat-cadre IAS officer Bharat Lal, adds to the effectiveness of the body. At present, of the two individual members of the NHRC, one member Rajiv Jain is an IPS officer who was Director of the Intelligence Bureau, while the Director-General of Investigation is former Special Director, CBI, Ajay Bhatnagar.

The criticism stems from the fact that the appointment of a police officer who had worked as the country's intelligence chief undermines the neutrality of the human rights body as his pro-government bias after having served it for years cannot be ruled out, to say the least. This makes human rights watchdogs suspect that the NHRC is turning into a coercive mechanism to stifle protest and assertion of human rights by civil society activists, journalists or any other individuals. In fact, the suspicion has been strengthened by umpteen cases of incarceration of advocates of free speech in India under the current regime. The death in custody, that too in very inhuman conditions of Stan Swamy, who raised his voice for justice to the downtrodden, is a case still fresh in public memory.

In a joint letter to GANHRI dated 26 March, 2024, nine human rights groups, including Amnesty International, expressed growing concerns about increasing restrictions on civil society and "discrimination against minorities ahead of the country's General Elections." They also cited various development and human rights indices that have downgraded India's ratings in the past few years.

These groups reportedly have urged the GANHRI-SCA to amend the current 'A' rating of the NHRC to accurately reflect its failure to comply with the Paris Principles and address the deteriorating human rights situation in India. In a related development, the US State Department's latest global report spoke of "significant" human rights concerns in India. Predictably, the MEA has rubbished the report calling it biased and reflecting a "poor understanding of India." But, that is too simplistic an observation and it skirts the main issue. Being in a denial mode is no answer. This is especially so when India has seen too many cases of civil society activists either dying in custody or languishing in jail after having been put behind bars under draconian laws on trumped-up charges.

Spewing hatred against minority groups for capturing power and taking ruthless measures against critics of the government may bring short term benefits. But, in the long run such blinkered policies lower a country's standing in the comity of nations and harm its social fabric.

WISDOM CORNER

It is paradoxical, yet true, to say, that the more we know, the more ignorant we become in the absolute sense, for it is only through enlightenment that we become conscious of our limitations. Precisely one of the most gratifying results of intellectual evolution is the continuous opening up of new and greater prospects. NIKOLA TESLA

Look not at what is contrary to propriety; listen not to what is contrary to propriety; speak not what is contrary to propriety; make no movement which is contrary to propriety. CONFUCIUS

There is an ecstasy that marks the summit of life, and beyond which life cannot rise. And such is the paradox of living, this ecstasy comes when one is most alive, and it comes as a complete forgetfulness that one is alive. JACK LONDON

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1840: The world's first postage stamp was released in England; it was created by Sir Rowland Hill and became known as the Penny Black.

1889: May Day founded. May Day—traditionally a celebration of the return of spring, marked by dancing around a Maypole—was first observed as a labour holiday, designated as such by the International Socialist Congress.

1924: Iodized salt first went on sale in the United States, available at grocery stores in Michigan; the state was then part of a region known as "the goitre belt," which refers to enlargement of the thyroid gland due to iodine deficiency.

1941: Orson Welles's Citizen Kane, considered by many critics to be the greatest film ever made, premiered in New York City.

1961: Fidel Castro declares Cuba a socialist nation and bans elections. A month after Cuban troops had fought off a U.S. backed military invasion at the Bay of Pigs, Castro announces that "The revolution has no time for elections."

1978: Naomi Uemura becomes of the first person to reach the North Pole alone. The Japanese adventurer is also credited with the first solo ascent of Mount McKinley and the first solo rafting of the Amazon river. He disappeared in 1984 during a winter ascent of Mount McKinley.

1999: The body of British mountaineer George Mallory was discovered on Mount Everest, some 75 years after he and Andrew Irvine disappeared while attempting to become the first people to summit the peak.

IN JEST THIS

Divide your day wisely for optimum health

Have you ever wondered whether you are doing enough sitting for optimum health? Is eight hours of sitting per day enough or should you aim for 10 hours?

Thankfully, an international team of researchers has provided us with some answers, telling us exactly how we should divide our time every day for optimum health.

The researchers, led by Dr. Christian Brakenridge of Australia's Swinburne University of Technology, analysed how 2,000 people spent their days and determined that the ideal daily balance is six hours of sitting, five hours and 10 minutes of standing, eight hours and 20 minutes of sleeping, and four hours and 20 minutes of physical activity.

Before you panic about the imbalance in your daily routine, let me break down each of the "24-hour time-use compositions," as the researchers called them:

SITTING: The recommended daily amount is only six hours. Depending on your job, this may seem too little or too much. If

you're a construction foreman, you probably don't sit much on your job. When you return home, you need to plan your evening to incorporate enough sitting.

Spouse: "Do you want to go to the gym with me?"

Foreman: "I'd love to, but I didn't do enough sitting today. I'll be on the couch for the next five hours."

Spouse: "Oh honey, I'm proud of you. You're so disciplined!"

If you work in an office, you probably need to cut back on your sitting. You may need to get a standing desk. You can also take short walks around your desk whenever you aren't occupied or your boss is.

When you get home, you need to plan your evening to incorporate less sitting.

Spouse: "Do you want to go to a Vir Das comedy show with me?"

Bank clerk: "I'd love to, but please make sure it's standing-room only."

Spouse: "We'll probably have seats. It isn't sold out."

Clerk: "Okay then, I guess I'll have to keep giving him a stand-

ing ovation."

STANDING: The ideal amount is 5 hours and 10 minutes. In other words, you need to do almost as much standing as you do sitting. If you're going to be sitting in an airplane for a three-hour flight, don't complain if you spend half the time standing in line to use the restroom. The same applies to all the other lines you find yourself in, whether at the voting booth or the supermarket.

Customer: "This line isn't moving at all. I can't stand it, all this standing."

Manager: "I'd offer you a chair, but I care about your health."

SLEEPING: The recommended amount is eight hours and 20 minutes. For many of us, it's hard to sleep for that long. That's because we go to bed too late, after spending too much time sitting. But if we incorporate more standing and more exercise into our lives, we'll be eager to do more sleeping.

EXERCISE: We should ideally get four hours and 20 minutes of exercise, which seems excessive. But you'll be glad to know that

we can divide this into two hours and 10 minutes of light-intensity physical activity, and two hours and 10 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity.

Any activity that doesn't increase your heart rate or make you tired probably qualifies as light-intensity. Washing the dishes or cooking would be light-intensity - and so would changing a light bulb.

For moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, you'd need to do something more demanding, such as running, walking fast, or working out in the gym.

Can you really complete two hours and 10 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity in an average day? Probably not, unless you're training for the Olympics or have a job that keeps you moving briskly.

But don't worry: the ideal daily balance is based on a variety of health outcomes. You can still improve your health by shifting the balance slightly, especially if it means spending more time on your feet and less time on your butt.



Melvin Durai

IF YOU WORK IN AN OFFICE, YOU PROBABLY NEED TO CUT BACK ON YOUR SITTING. YOU MAY NEED TO GET A STANDING DESK

Call to action

Sir, Labour Day, observed on May 1st, is a global occasion dedicated to honoring the invaluable contributions of workers to our societies. Marked in over 80 countries, including India, Labour Day is a platform for advocating workers' rights and shedding light on issues affecting the working class, emphasising the ongoing struggle for social and economic justice and the importance of solidarity among workers. The origins of Labour Day can be traced back to the labour movement's enduring struggle for improved working conditions and worker rights. It symbolises the ongoing fight for social and economic justice, emphasising the significance of fair labour practices. Beyond mere celebration, Labour Day is a call to action for social and economic justice. It encourages workers to reflect on their progress, reassert their commitment to creating a fairer world, and stand together in solidarity. Despite the festivities, it's essential to acknowledge the challenges faced by many labourers, particularly their difficulties in accessing essential healthcare. Labour Day, at its heart, aims to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of the working class, elevate awareness about their rights, and shield them from exploitation. It stands as a poignant reminder of the vital role workers play in our societies and the continual push for economic fairness and social justice.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

Global scourge

Sir, Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has not received the crucial importance it deserves. When bacteria, virus, fungus, and parasite are resistant to the drugs that are designated to kill them, and free the patient of the prevalent infection caused by them, the resultant AMR could prove to be catastrophic. During the COVID-19 pandemic, 75 per cent of patients used "precautionary antibiotics" that was really unnecessary because antibiotics act against bacteria, not viruses. Nowadays, there has been an increase in over the counter (OTC) buying of antibiotics and, if this trend continues, AMR may become the global leader of mortality over the next two decades. Unnecessary intake of antibiotics should be discouraged at the level of family doctors too. Patients attending clinics and hospitals should be made aware of the side-effects and complications of overuse of antibiotics.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

CBI chargesheet: Manipur cops drove two Kuki women to mob

A video showing two women being paraded naked surrounded by a mob of men went viral leading to country-wide outrage last year in July, nearly two months after the incident that took place May 4



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 30: The Manipur Police personnel allegedly drove the two women from the Kuki-Zomi community, who had sought refuge in their official gypsy, to a mob of around 1,000 Meiti rioters in Kangpokpi district, the CBI chargesheet has said.

The two women were subsequently stripped naked and paraded before being sexually assaulted during the ethnic violence in the state, the chargesheet added.

The women, one of whom was the wife of a Kargil war veteran, desperately asked the police personnel to drive them to a safe location but were allegedly told by them that there was no key (of the vehicle) and did not provide any help, the officials giving details of the chargesheet said.

A video showing two women being paraded naked surrounded by a mob of men went viral last year in July, nearly two months after the incident that took place May 4.

The CBI filed its chargesheet against six accused and a report against one Child in Conflict with the Law (CCL) before the Special Judge, CBI Court at Guwahati October 16 last year. It has alleged that the two women were running away from a mob of around 900-1,000 persons carrying sophisticated weapons like AK rifles, SLR, INSAS and .303 rifles.

The mob had forcefully entered their village in Kangpokpi district, about 68 km south of Saikul police station, it said.

The women, along with other victims, ran into the forest to escape from the mob but were spotted by the rioters who had separated the victims. Some members of the mob told the women to reach the police vehicle parked on the roadside to seek help, officials in the know of the development said.

The two women managed to get inside the vehicle, in which two police personnel and the driver were sitting. Three to four personnel were outside the vehicle.

One of the male victims, who

also managed to make his way inside the vehicle, kept pleading with the driver to drive them to a safe place but was told there was no key.

The husband of one of the victims had served the Indian Army as a subedar of the Assam Regiment.

The police also did not help the father of the man sitting in the vehicle from being assaulted by the mob, the CBI alleged.

Later, the driver of the police gypsy drove the vehicle towards a mob of around 1,000 people and stopped it in front of them. The victims desperately asked the police personnel to drive them to safety, but no help was provided to them.

The mob had already killed the father of one of the male victims who was sitting in the gypsy along with the two women, the agency has said. The violent mob came towards the gypsy when the police personnel fled from the scene, leaving the victims at the mercy of the crowd.

The rioters dragged the women out, stripped them of their clothes and paraded them naked before sexually assaulting them, the chargesheet has said.

The CBI has chargesheeted Huiem Herodas Meitei, who was nabbed by Manipur Police in July, and five others, and a report has been filed against a juvenile.

The accused have been charged under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, including those pertaining to gangrape, murder, outraging the modesty of a woman and criminal conspiracy, the CBI has said.



Manipur Police and Army personnel during a search and area domination operation in vulnerable areas of hill and valley districts of Manipur PFI PHOTO

Man-eater tiger captured after 2-month operation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandrapur, April 30: A nine-year-old tiger that had killed six persons in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra in the last two months has been caged, marking the successful culmination of a two-month-long operation to capture the elusive big cat on the prowl which had struck terror in villages.

The tiger which managed to throw foresters off his trail with his sharp animal instincts finally took the bait placed inside a cage Monday night in the Karva-Ballarpur forest area, a senior official said Tuesday.

The tiger had killed four per-



sons in the Central Chanda division and two others in the Chandrapur division in the last two months, the official added.

In view of the human-tiger conflict, villagers in the forest area were living in the atmosphere of terror, prompting the Forest department to set up a

team to capture the big cat, said Swetha Boddu, Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF), Central Chanda division.

She said the operation to capture the tiger was going on continuously for the last two months.

As the tiger was more cautious, it became difficult to cap-

ture him. The team initially faced a tough time, but with persistence and patience, the Forest department succeeded in the operation by caging the tiger Monday night in the Karva-Ballarpur forest area, said Boddu.

The caging of the troublesome tiger before the start of the Tendu leaf collection season came as a huge relief for forest department personnel and villagers in the central Chanda division.

Further action about the tiger will be taken on directions from senior officials, the DCF said.

Another official said troublesome tigers are generally shifted to a zoo in Nagpur and not released in the wild again.

Congress under pressure to field Muslim candidate from Mumbai

Last week, Congress Working President M Arif Naseem Khan stoked a major row after he quit as the party's Star Campaigner and the poll campaign panel to protest against the failure of the MVA to field a single Muslim nominee for the 48 LS seats in Maharashtra

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 30: Amid finger-pointing and an eyeball-to-eyeball row unfolding, pressure is now building on the top Congress leadership to field a Muslim candidate from Mumbai for the upcoming May 20 Lok Sabha elections, as per sources. The development came a day after Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge - without taking names - indicated in Assam that the Maha Vikas Aghadi allies in Maharashtra could probably have reservations about fielding a Muslim candidate in the state or Mumbai.

Taking umbrage, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut painstakingly cleared the air to say that any such impression conveyed to the Congress leadership was misleading and erroneous.

"We have never said to the Congress to field this candidate or not nominate some other contender... it is the party's internal matter. We shall welcome any candidate they decide and work wholeheartedly to ensure their victory," asserted Raut.

Apprehensive of a possible backlash, senior Congress leaders like Chandrakant Handore, MP, ex-Minister Suresh Shetty, MLC Bhai Jagtap and MPCC treasurer Amarjit Manhas held a meeting to soothe state Congress Working President M Arif Naseem Khan, besides assuring that they would take up the matter with the party top levels.

A senior source said that a letter had been sent to the central party leadership to reconsider Prof. Gaikwad's nomination and accommodate Khan in Mumbai North Central since he



is a prominent local leader.

The leaders have also urged the party to field Gaikwad from Mumbai North constituency which has a fair sprinkling of Dalit, minorities and OBC voters, and expressed optimism that this could resolve the problem amicably plus save the Muslim support base of the MVA.

Raut declared that Khan is a senior and respected Muslim community leader, an ex-Minister with good credentials and has excellent rapport with the SS (UBT) President and ex-CM Uddhav

Thackeray and other leaders.

"We have absolutely no objections if the Congress fields Khan 'saheb' from anywhere, we shall support wholeheartedly to ensure his victory," said Raut, as Congress leaders heaved a sigh of relief.

Last week, Khan stoked a major row after he quit as the party's Star Campaigner and the poll campaign panel to protest against the failure of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) to field a single Muslim nominee for the 48 LS seats in Maharashtra.

A peeved Khan dropped dark

hints that the blunder could prove costly and the MVA nominees may forfeit the Muslim and other minority votes in the states, particularly where the minorities dominate, amid speculation that the SS (UBT) reportedly was reluctant to support a Muslim candidate.

Assuring that he was not a rebel, Khan, an ex-Minister, made his displeasure public after the Congress named city party President Varsha Gaikwad as the Mumbai North Central constituency candidate but did not oppose her nomination.

Now, it is up to the Central leadership in Delhi to take a call on Khan for Mumbai North Central, which he was very keen to contest, and nominate Gaikwad from Mumbai North, said a state party leader.

Incidentally, around 35 years ago, there was a precedent when the Congress had nominated late ex-Minister Celine D'Silva from Mumbai North East, but following an uproar had replaced her with the late ex-Union Minister Gurudas Kamat, in the 1989 LS polls, he added.

81.16 pc turnout in Manipur repoll

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, April 30: A voter turnout of 81.16 per cent was recorded at six polling stations in Outer Manipur Lok Sabha seat, where repolling was held Tuesday, election officials said.

No untoward incident was reported and voting, which commenced at 7am, was held peacefully under tight security arrangements, they said.

A voter turnout of 81.16 per cent was recorded till the end of polling at 4pm, the officials said.

Repolling was necessitated as unidentified persons had damaged EVMs and VVPATs before the completion of voting at four of these six polling stations April 26, while EVM malfunctioning was reported at one polling sta-

tion, and voting could not be completed at another due to threat and intimidation by unknown miscreants, they said.

Voting at four polling stations in Ukhrul assembly segment, and one each in Chingai assembly seat in Ukhrul and Karong in Senapati was declared null and void, a notification issued by the office of Manipur's chief electoral officer had earlier said. Five of the polling stations are in Ukhrul district and have a



total of 4,156 voters. Around 76.06 per cent of 4.84 lakh voters exercised their franchise during polling in 13 of 28 assembly segments of Outer Manipur Lok Sabha constituency April 26. Voting was held in the remaining 15 segments, along with the entire Inner Manipur Lok Sabha seat, in the first phase April 19.

'Migrants from Myanmar have set up 996 villages in Manipur'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Imphal, April 30: Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh said Tuesday that the influx of illegal immigrants from Myanmar led to the emergence of 996 new villages in the state in the past 18 years.

In a series of posts on social media, the Chief Minister said the unnatural growth of 996 new villages since 2006 and illegal immigration from Myanmar is a threat to the indigenous people and national security.

"Will anyone accept the unnatural growth of new villages and population, causing massive changes to the demography of the state and the country due to the influx of illegal immigrants? We're confronting a serious issue within our nation, especially in Manipur, where several new villages have emerged due to a massive influx of illegal immigrants from



Myanmar since 2006 till date. During this period, massive forest covers have been destroyed to establish settlements and carry out poppy plantations," the chief minister said.

CM Singh also said that these illegal immigrants have started encroaching on the resources, job opportunities, land, and the rights of the indigenous people.

"We have started collecting biometric data of the illegal immigrants besides geo-tagging their settlements," the chief minister said, as he appealed to everyone in the country to support the government in keeping the nation safe and secure from

illegal immigrants.

CM Singh also said that when the UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak recently asserted the nation's unyielding commitment to deporting illegal immigrants and even claimed that no foreign court can stop them, nobody dared to question the British government.

"But when the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Manipur government are adopting a similar stance and initiating the deportation of illegal immigrants from Manipur, certain sections of people are losing their sleep. They have been persistently spreading false propaganda to portray the Manipur government as communal," he said.

A Manipur government report said that since 2006, the state has witnessed a substantial increase in the number of new villages, primarily attributed to the influx of illegal immigrants from Myanmar.

These immigrants have set up settlements by encroaching upon forest lands, leading to deforestation and environmental degradation, the report said, adding that they have engaged in illicit activities such as poppy cultivation, further exacerbating the socio-economic and ecological challenges faced by the region.

In response to these challenges, the Manipur government has initiated several measures aimed at addressing the issue of illegal immigration and its associated impacts.

Besides collecting biometric data of the illegal immigrants and geo-tagging their settlements, the other measures include enhancing security along around 400 km India-Myanmar border in Manipur, engagement of indigenous communities, and empowering them to safeguard their rights and interests against encroachment and exploitation.

Row in Manipur as NCERT textbook links traditional sport with Mizoram

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Imphal, April 30: The Manipur government is likely to take up with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) the issue of the popular Manipuri game of 'Mukna-Kangjei' being identified as that of Mizoram in one of its textbooks, officials said Monday.

A Manipur government official said that the state authority noticed this incorrect mentioning of the game as of Mizoram. Earlier, BJP legislator Rajkumar Imo Singh requested state Education Minister Basanta Kumar Singh to take up the matter with the Central government to resolve the issue.

Singh, the son-in-law of Chief Minister N Biren Singh, said on



X, "Mukna-Kangjei is a traditional sport of Manipur, a variant of hockey and involves

wrestling too, thus known as Wrestling-Hockey. NCERT has made a gross error by publishing the association of this traditional sport with Mizoram. It is purely a traditional sport of the state of Manipur. NCERT needs to rectify this mistake immediately. Our state Education Minister Shri Th Basanta Singh should take this matter up with the Government of India to solve this issue and ensure that such errors are not repeated again by NCERT."

Citing the mistake, the Physical Education Teachers' Association emphasised the importance of accuracy in educational curriculum, particularly those relating to cultural heritage and indigenous games, and urged the government authorities to take suitable steps to correct it.



Phase I turnout 66.14%, Phase II 66.71%: EC

IN THE 2019 ELECTIONS, THE TURNOUT IN THE FIRST PHASE STOOD AT 69.43 PER CENT

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 30: Hours after the opposition parties questioned the alleged delay on the part of the Election Commission of India (ECI) in announcing the final voter turnout for the two phases of the ongoing Lok Sabha polls, the EC Tuesday said a voter turnout of 66.14 per cent was recorded in Phase I and 66.71 per cent in Phase II.

Officially sharing the turnout figure, the poll panel said in Phase I of the elections, 66.22 per cent of male and 66.07 female electors turned up to vote. The turnout for registered third-gender voters stood at 31.32 per cent.

In the 2019 polls, the turnout in the first phase stood at 69.43 per cent.

In the second phase of elections held April 26, the male voter turnout was recorded at 66.99 per cent, while the female turnout stood at 66.42 per cent. As many as 23.86 per cent of the registered third-gender voters came out to vote.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls in Phase II, the turnout was 69.64 per cent.

In Phase I, 102 seats went to poll



this time, while in Phase II elections were held in 88 constituencies.

According to the poll panel, out of 21 states and Union territories which went to polls in the first phase, 11 recorded a higher turnout of women voters. These are Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Lakshadweep, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

In the second phase where 13 states and UTs went to poll, six registered a higher women voter turnout. These are Assam, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Kerala and West Bengal.

The EC made it clear that the final turnout will only be available post-counting with the counting of postal ballots and its addition to the total vote count.

Postal ballots include postal ballots given to service voters, ab-

sentee voters -- those above 85 years of age, persons with disabilities (PwDs), those on essential services and voters on election duty.

Daily accounts of such postal ballots received are given to all candidates, it noted.

Earlier in the day, the Congress, CPI-M and TMC questioned the EC over the delay in announcing the final voter turnout figures for the first two phases of the Lok Sabha polls, 11 days after the first round of polling April 19.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said it is essential for the Election Commission of India (ECI) to be timely and transparent about all election-related data, and it should come out with the figures and make them public.

"For the first time, even 11 days after the first phase of the polls and four days after the second phase, the final voter turnout has not been published by the ECI. In the past, ECI used to publish the final voter turnout immediately after voting or within 24 hours. Only approximate polling figures are available on ECI's website. What accounts for this delay," he asked in a post on X.

ADMIN PULLS UP SLEEVES FOR 100 PER CENT VOTING

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, April 30: The district administration here has taken a slew of initiatives to ensure 100 per cent voting in the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the state, a report said Tuesday.

The matter came to the fore at an awareness meeting held under the direct supervision of the district Collector and district election officer Ashish Thakare at the Zilla Parishad conference hall here, Tuesday.

Addressing the meeting, Collector Thakare urged all elderly, differently-abled persons, women and transgender voters to exercise their constitutional rights of voting for an inclusive election.

All the senior officers attending the meeting said that no voters should be left behind in exercising their franchise during the polls. Later, all the guests took a pledge to vote in the upcoming elections. They also called upon the people to create awareness on voting among their respective communities in their areas.

They said that every voter is



important in shaping the future of the district and the state. Zilla Parishad's chief development and executive officer Biswaranjan Nayak said that it is pertinent to empower all sections of the society so that people will be able to break the hurdles and actively participate in the democratic process.

Among others, Sadar BDO Samarjit Kar, ORMAS's joint chief executive officer Kaushik Patra and district social security Krushna Chandra Behera and over 100 participants rep-

resenting transgender association, persons with disabilities (PWD) association, voluntary organisations working for the differently-abled and senior citizens attended the meeting.

Notably, this awareness programme was organised under Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programme in the district. The district administration has been organising such awareness programmes all over the district in view of the elections.

BIRAMITRAPUR ASSEMBLY SEAT

BJP's Shankar Oram oozes confidence ahead of polls



Shankar Oram, who entered into politics in 1997, has tested success twice by winning Raghunathpali Assembly seat in 2004 and Biramitrapur seat in 2019

RAJESH MOHANTY, OP

Rourkela, April 30: Sitting BJP MLA of Biramitrapur and the party's candidate for the Assembly constituency this time, Shankar Oram, is confident of his victory in the upcoming polls. Sources said Shankar's confidence stems from his work and sustained public contact throughout the current stint.

Though there are allegations against him, Shankar brushed them aside by saying that those are all creations of media and his detractors.

He said, "These are the handiwork of some media persons and some of my adversaries who are sitting here in Rourkela, away from Biramitrapur's ground reality. They know but don't want to accept my involvement in my constituency."

Sitting in the outer room of his official residence at Sector-2 here with his male Rottweiler (pet dog), Shankar was look-

ing confident about his political groundwork.

"I hold an RSS background and am trained to manage my constituency. Last time I had hardly any presence in 103 out of the total 307 booths in my constituency but still I conquered the electoral battle. I polled a maximum of 10 per cent votes in those booths but this time I have my booth committee ready and also panna pramukh ready."

Shankar is not in best of terms with BJP's Sundargarh MP and party heavyweight Jual Oram since the former's name started doing the rounds as a probable MP candidate. Jual did not take this lightly.

About the development, Shankar said, "There were two surveys about me and Kusum Tete and on both the occasions my name appeared at the top. Is it my fault? I made it clear to the party that I am ready for any responsibility but will not insist on anything."

Shankar entered into politics in 1997 and has tested success twice by winning Raghunathpali Assembly seat in 2004 and Biramitrapur in 2019.

This time Biramitrapur is going to witness one of the tightest triangular fights between BJD, BJP and JMM-Congress alliance.

"I have my own advantage. The entry of JMM and Congress is going to affect the chances of BJD, not mine," Shankar asserted. Elaborating more on this, he said, "JMM will divide Christian votes which would have otherwise gone the BJD kitty. In 2004, JMM won the seat because BJP's vote share was barely 20 per cent. But, now the BJP share has gone up and this time I have developed my base amongst the Christian voters also."

Shankar revealed that he has funded construction of several churches in the region and that he has visited almost all the churches during the last four years when he was invited as the chief guest at the functions organised there.

Biramitrapur town is dominated by Hindu voters. A few days ago, the town was on the verge of communal boil. "However, I've an edge over others in the town area," he mentioned.

In the last election, Shankar had emerged winner by defeating his nearest Congress rival Rajesh Joseph Tirkey with a margin of 16,181 votes. While Shankar polled 60,397 votes, Tirkey could garner 44,212 votes.



BJD candidate for Bhubaneswar-North Assembly seat Susant Kumar Rout files his nomination papers at the sub-collector's office in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

No quota to Muslims till I'm alive: Modi

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, April 30: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday tore into the Congress saying as long as he is alive he won't allow reservation for Muslims, on the basis of religion, at the cost of SC, ST and OBCs.

Addressing a poll rally in Medak district of Telangana, Modi exuded confidence that he will celebrate 75 years of the Constitution on a grand scale in his third term.

In a veiled attack on Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Modi alleged that the money collected in the state through "double R (RR) tax" is being channelled to Delhi.

He made these comments while



referring to blockbuster Telugu film titled 'RRR', which received global accolades. Targeting the Congress party over the fake video case, he said it was being done to mislead people and create tension in the society.

Alleging that the Congress would impose 55 per cent inheritance tax if voted to power, Modi said when the whole world was

In a veiled attack on Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, Modi alleged that the money collected in the state through "double R (RR) tax" is being channelled to Delhi

economically progressing, India was suffering from policy paralysis under the previous UPA government. "If Congress comes to power, they will bring inheritance tax. Congress is planning to collect more than half - 55 per cent as tax on inheritance (received from parents)," he claimed.

Taking a dig at the Congress, he said whenever the grand old party is in power, it has five political symbols-- first, false promises; second, vote bank politics, third, supporting mafia and criminals, fourth dynastic politics and fifth is corruption.

Modi further alleged that first it was BRS, which looted Telangana and now it is Congress.



BJP's Deogarh Assembly nominee Subhash Panigrahi accompanied by party's Sambalpur Lok Sabha nominee Dharmendra Pradhan participate in a procession ahead of filing of nominations, Tuesday



Six BJD members of Hatikhoja Panchayat Samiti under Narla Assembly constituency joined Congress in the presence of senior Congress leader and party's campaign committee head Bhakta Charan Das, Tuesday

of the day quote

Warfare has transcended into new domains, such as space, cyber, electromagnetic spectrum and information. Consequent to these developments, conventional force ratios, which was the measure of military strength and superiority in the past, stand blunted today

GEN MANOJ PANDE | ARMY CHIEF

This time there was a miracle in Lok Sabha elections. The BJP candidate from Surat won unopposed, and the Congress candidate in Indore withdrew his nomination and extended support to the BJP. This shows people's deep affection towards the BJP which is increasing all the time

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

Raghav Chadha has undergone a major eye surgery in the UK. It is said that his condition was serious and there was a possibility of blindness. As soon as he gets better, he will come back to India and join us in the election campaigning

SAURABH BHARADWAJ | DELHI HEALTH MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Baharagora records 47.1°C

Ranchi/ Dumka: Severe heatwave conditions gripped parts of Jharkhand Tuesday with Baharagora in East Singhbhum district recording a maximum temperature of 47.1 degrees Celsius. The weather department issued an 'Orange Alert' for severe heatwave in 11 Jharkhand districts for Wednesday as mercury may go up by two to three degrees Celsius above the existing, an official said.

Delhi court dismisses bail pleas of Sisodia

New Delhi: A Delhi court Tuesday dismissed the bail pleas of former Deputy Chief Minister and AAP leader Manish Sisodia in the corruption and money laundering cases lodged by the CBI and the ED in relation to the alleged excise scam. Special judge for CBI and ED, Kaveri Baweja, denied the relief, saying the stage was not right to grant the bail. The court had reserved the order after hearing arguments from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) as well as the counsel appearing for Sisodia.

4 killed, 34 hurt in road mishap

Nashik: Four passengers, including a teenage boy, were killed and 34 others injured after a state-run bus they were travelling in rammed into a truck in Nashik district of Maharashtra Tuesday, police said. Nine of the injured persons are in a serious condition, they said. The Maharashtra government announced a financial assistance of Rs 10 lakh to the family members of each victim. The incident involving the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) bus occurred close to Aher Vasti near Chandwad town in the district on the Mumbai-Agra National Highway around 9.45 am, they said.

Another NEET aspirant ends life

Kota (Rajasthan): A 20-year-old NEET aspirant allegedly hanged himself here days before appearing for his third attempt at cracking the exam. "Sorry papa, I couldn't do it this year as well," a note found in the room said. This is the ninth case of suspected suicide by a coaching student in Kota since January.



We will never bow before the Centre. They had stopped Awas Yojana money, but we have managed to provide housing funds for 11 lakh houses

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

Musk's surprise China visit leaves India spurned

Musk was due to meet Modi last week and announce an investment of up to \$3 billion in a car plant, but cancelled saying there were "very heavy Tesla obligations"

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 30: Elon Musk's surprise visit to China this week won concessions for Tesla but left India feeling spurned after he cancelled a scheduled trip there for earlier this month, with Indian commentators calling the move a snub.

India's pained reaction highlights the increasing rivalry between India and China.

Asia two largest countries by population and among the region's most dynamic economies. Business and diplomatic relations between them have been strained since a 2020 border clash left 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers dead.

Musk was due to meet Modi last week and announce an investment of up to \$3 billion in a car plant, but cancelled saying there were "very heavy Tesla obligations".

By then, the Indian government had sent out invites for a startup event Musk was to attend. Musk Sunday turned up in China, meeting with Premier Li Qiang and making progress towards rolling out its advanced driver assistance package in the world's biggest auto market.

Indian news channels that often take a hard line position against China blasted Musk's trip. The Mirror Now news channel ran a prime time news segment with a tagline "Shoddy ethics or simply business?"



INDIA'S PAINED REACTION HIGHLIGHTS THE INCREASING RIVALRY BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA, ASIA TWO LARGEST COUNTRIES BY POPULATION AND AMONG THE REGION'S MOST DYNAMIC ECONOMIES

ON SUNDAY, MUSK TURNED UP IN CHINA, MEETING WITH PREMIER LI QIANG AND MAKING PROGRESS TOWARDS ROLLING OUT ITS ADVANCED DRIVER ASSISTANCE PACKAGE IN THE WORLD'S BIGGEST AUTO MARKET

Neither Tesla or Modi's office responded to requests for comment. Musk said April 20 he looks forward to visiting India later this year, but the Indian government has not commented on his trip cancellation or China visit.

Musk's India trip could have boosted Modi's re-election campaign, with a Tesla investment announcement during poll

campaigning providing an endorsement of Modi's business friendly image as he seeks a rare third term.

Modi's government has been trying to court foreign companies to India as they diversify their supply chains beyond China because of geopolitical tensions between Beijing and Washington.

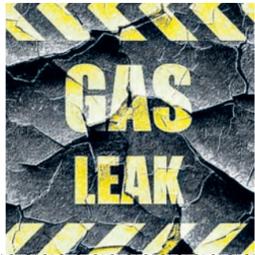
Modi's opponents seized on Musk's China visit to criticise the prime minister.

"Such is the lack of faith in the Modi gov't regulatory policies, that big businesses are turning to China over India repeatedly," Shama Mohamed, the national spokesperson of main Opposition Congress party wrote on social media website X.

Political satirist Akash Banerjee, who runs a YouTube channel "The Patriot", questioned how Musk had no time to meet Modi, but still went to China. "Do you think Modi will forgive Musk from his heart?" Banerjee said in a video that has clocked 2,68,000 views in 19 hours.

AMMONIA GAS LEAK TRIGGERS PANIC

Ammonia gas leak at a defunct chips manufacturing unit in Chenniveerampalayam village near Karamadai here triggered a panic leading authorities to evacuate about 250 families from the locality as a precaution, said police Tuesday. The leakage from a cold storage unit for potatoes in the export factory closed four years ago caused ammonia to dissipate into the air around midnight of April 29 leading to some villagers complaining of eye irritation



Devender Yadav to be interim Delhi Cong chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 30: The Congress Tuesday appointed former MLA Devender Yadav as interim president of its Delhi unit, two days after Arvinder Singh Lovely resigned from the post while criticising the alliance with AAP and statements of the party's candidates in the national capital.

Yadav, who won from the Badli Assembly constituency in Delhi in 2008 and 2013 and lost to Ajesh Yadav of AAP in 2015, is currently the All India Congress Committee's (AICC) Punjab in-charge.

"My heartfelt thanks to Sh Kharje ji, Smt Sonia Gandhi ji, Rahul Gandhi ji, KC Venugopal ji and Smt Priyanka Gandhi ji and all senior leaders of the Congress, for the faith they have bestowed in me yet again!" Yadav said in a post on X.

"Will try my best to tread the coveted and ideological vision party has laid for me and give my 100 per cent!" he said.

According to a statement issued by the party, "Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge has appointed Yadav as the interim president of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) with immediate effect."

The development comes as the Congress and AAP prepare for the May 25 election to the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi.

In his resignation letter sent to the Congress president Saturday, Lovely had said that he found himself "handicapped" as all unanimous decisions taken by senior Delhi unit leaders were "unilaterally vetoed" by the AICC's Delhi in-charge Deepak Babaria.

The Delhi Congress unit was against the alliance with AAP but the party high command went ahead with it, Lovely had said as his resignation brought to the fore the party's factional feud.

PANNUN CASE MEA slams Washington Post report



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 30: A day after The Washington Post named an Indian official for allegedly plotting to assassinate Sikh extremist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, India Tuesday said the report made "unwarranted and unsubstantiated" imputations on a serious matter and that investigation into the case was underway.

The newspaper, citing unnamed sources, named a Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) officer in connection with the alleged plot to kill Pannun on American soil last year.

"The report in question makes unwarranted and unsubstantiated imputations on a serious matter," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. He said a high-level inquiry committee set up by New Delhi to look into inputs provided by the US on the alleged plot was still probing the case.

"There is an ongoing investigation of the high level committee set up by the Government of India to look into the security concerns shared by the US government on networks of organised criminals, terrorists and others," he said. Jaiswal was responding to media queries on the report.

"Speculative and irresponsible comments on it are not helpful," Jaiswal said, slamming the report by the US daily.

The Washington Post report identified the RAW officer as Vikram Yadav and alleged that he was involved in the plot to assassinate Pannun.

In November last year, US federal prosecutors charged Indian national Nikhil Gupta of working with an Indian government employee in the foiled plot to kill Pannun.

Pannun, wanted in India on terror charges, holds dual citizenship of the US and Canada. He has been designated as a terrorist by the Union home ministry under the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The allegations about the failed plot to kill Pannun came to fore weeks after the Canadian Prime Minister claimed in September of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar June 18 in British Columbia. India had strongly rejected the charges.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar December 7 said in Parliament that India instituted an inquiry committee to look into the inputs received from the US in the Pannun case as the matter has a bearing on national security.

JD(S) SUSPENDS REVANNA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hubbali (Karnataka), April 30: The JD(S) Tuesday suspended Prajwal Revanna, the NDA candidate from the Hassan Lok Sabha constituency in Karnataka and former Prime Minister Deve Gowda's grandson, over his alleged involvement in a sex scandal.

Speaking to reporters here, former Chief Minister and JD(S) state President HD Kumaraswamy said that if he is proven guilty in the probe being conducted by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) set up by the state government, Prajwal Revanna would be expelled permanently from the party.

The decision was taken in the core committee meeting of the JD(S) held in Hubballi city.

The Core Committee Chairperson, JD(S) MLA G.T. Deve Gowda stated that the suspension of Prajwal Revanna was made as per the decision of the party. "The decision has been conveyed to the National President HD Deve Gowda and he has also been requested to take a call on expelling Prajwal



The pen drive containing the sex videos of hundreds of women allegedly involving Prajwal Revanna came into circulation three days before the first phase of polling April 26

Following the complaint to the State Women's Commission in this regard, the state government formed an SIT to probe the matter

Congress government taking Prime Minister Modi's name here? Let Chief Minister Siddaramaiah be reminded about the tragedy his family suffered. Prime Minister Modi had protected the respect of his family then. This is the gift he is giving to Prime Minister Modi for protecting the honour of his family," Kumaraswamy stated without giving details.

Meanwhile, Prajwal Revanna has left the country and is in an undisclosed location. His father JD(S) MLA HD.

Revanna has said that "no matter where he is, if the SIT summons him, he will attend the probe". The matter has taken a political turn ahead of the second phase of polling in Karnataka scheduled May 7 for 14 Lok Sabha seats.

Meanwhile, the BJP Tuesday welcomed the JD(S) decision to suspend MP Prajwal Revanna over allegations of sexual abuse, asserting that it will push for the full might of law against him, and launched a fierce counter-attack on Congress for "delayed" action by the Karnataka government.

PATANJALI ADVT CASE Top court pulls up Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 30: The Supreme Court Tuesday came down heavily on the Uttarakhand State Licensing Authority for its "inaction" for six years in the misleading advertisements case involving Patanjali Ayurved Limited, saying it has to be left with the court if it wanted "sympathy and compassion".

While expressing dissatisfaction over the explanation offered in the affidavits, including the one filed by the State Licensing Authority (SLA), the apex court questioned why the authority has "woken up" only after the court's April 10 order.

"The long and short of it is, when you want to move, you move like lightning and if you don't want to move, you drag your feet forever and ever. This is what it shows," a bench of justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah observed after perusing the affidavit filed by the SLA.

Rising STDs a concern for increasing infertility in India: Docs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 30: The spike in the number of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) like chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, and mycoplasma genitalium are contributing to infertility in India, warned doctors Tuesday.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) may pass from one infected person to another via blood, semen, vaginal, and other bodily fluids through sexual contact.

While these are usually asymptomatic, they can cause serious complications like infertility, both in men and women, if left untreated.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), almost 1

million people worldwide contract STDs.

Each year, about 30 million people in India alone contract STDs.

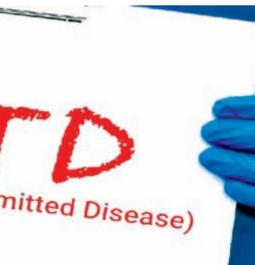
On the other hand, a recent Lancet study showed that India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) - the average number of children born per woman - is dipping irreversibly to 1.29, far lower than the replacement rate of 2.1.

Explaining the link between the two, gynaecologist Dr Manisha Singh from Fortis Hospital, Bengaluru, told IANS, "STIs like chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, and Mycoplasma genitalium can sneakily mess with fertility. They cause inflammation and scarring in reproductive organs, like the fallopian tubes in women or sperm

ducts in men."

"Chlamydia and gonorrhoea are the two most common infections in women that can cause infertility. These infections cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) which can lead to chronic inflammation and damage to reproductive organs, like the fallopian tubes and uterus, making it difficult to conceive," added Dr. Dhivyaa Chandrasekar, Consultant - Obstetrician & Gynecologist, Motherhood Hospitals, Bangalore.

"In men, it results in inflammation of the urethra, testicles, and other reproductive organs,



SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIS) MAY PASS FROM ONE INFECTED PERSON TO ANOTHER VIA BLOOD, SEMEN, VAGINAL, AND OTHER BODILY FLUIDS THROUGH SEXUAL CONTACT

WHILE THESE ARE USUALLY ASYMPTOMATIC, THEY CAN CAUSE SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS LIKE INFERTILITY, BOTH IN MEN AND WOMEN, IF LEFT UNTREATED

ACCORDING TO THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION (WHO), ALMOST 1 MILLION PEOPLE WORLDWIDE CONTRACT STDs. EACH YEAR, ABOUT 30 MILLION PEOPLE IN INDIA ALONE CONTRACT STDs

which can lead to severe conditions like epididymitis or pro-

statitis, harming sperm production and quality," she told IANS.

The doctors said detecting and treating these infections early and having safe sex, are crucial to protect fertility.

When the tubes get blocked, one may require In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF), where fertilisation happens outside the body in a lab, as it can't occur naturally within the fallopian tubes.

"If you suspect the presence of an STI, it is best to get it diagnosed at the earliest. One must prioritise preventive measures like when used correctly and consistently, condoms offer one of the most effective methods of protection against STIs, including HIV," Dr Dhivyaa said.

international

of the day quote

Israel would enter Rafah to destroy Hamas' battalions there with or without a deal

The two countries (US, China) should help each other succeed rather than hurt each other, seek common ground and reserve differences rather than engage in vicious competition, and honour words with actions rather than say one thing but do the opposite

If somebody can impose a will upon this court, that is also interference; interference can be from within, from without, from intelligence agencies, from your colleagues, from your family member, from social media, from everybody else

SHORT TAKES

Toll in Kenya flash floods rises to 169

Nairobi: The death toll due to heavy rains pounding several parts of Kenya and devastating flash floods has mounted to 169 people, a government official said. Government Spokesman Isaac Mwaura confirmed the death toll Monday evening, saying a dam that burst Monday morning in the western Kenyan town of Mai Mahiu has killed 48 people and affected scores of others, Xinhua news agency reported.

Netanyahu vows to invade Rafah

Tel Aviv: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged Tuesday to launch an incursion into the southern Gaza city of Rafah, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are sheltering from the 7-month-long war. Netanyahu said Israel would enter Rafah to destroy Hamas' battalions there "with or without a deal."

FB, Instagram face EU scrutiny

London: The European Union said Tuesday that it's investigating Facebook and Instagram over a range of suspected violations of the bloc's digital rulebook, including not doing enough to protect users from foreign disinformation ahead of EU-wide elections. The investigation includes an urgent request for Meta to provide information about its move to discontinue a key tool for monitoring elections.



Palestinian civilians living in Gaza were suffering a collective punishment from Israel's retaliatory military campaign for the attacks launched by Hamas October 7

BIRD FLU SPREADING AMONG CATTLE

A World Health Organization official said Tuesday there was a risk of H5N1 bird flu virus spreading to cows in other countries beyond the United States through migratory birds. US officials are seeking to verify the safety of milk and meat after confirming the H5N1 virus in 34 dairy cattle herds in nine states since late March, and in one person in Texas



Trump fined \$9K for violating gag order

The Republican candidate in the 2024 presidential election is charged with falsifying business records to conceal a \$130,000 payment to porn star Stormy Daniels in exchange for her silence about a sexual encounter she said she had with Trump in 2006



when it is in session, four days a week. Outside the courtroom, Trump criticised prosecutors again. Jurors so far have heard from two other witnesses. Trump's former longtime executive assistant, Rhona Graff, recounted that she recalled once seeing Daniels at Trump's office suite in Trump Tower and figured the performer was a potential contestant for one of Trump's "Apprentice"-brand shows. Former National Enquirer publisher David Pecker laid out how he agreed to serve as the Trump campaign's "eyes and ears" by helping to squelch unflattering rumors and claims about Trump and women.

HUSH MONEY TRIAL

AGENCIES

New York, April 30: Donald Trump was held in contempt of court Tuesday and fined \$9,000 for repeatedly violating a gag order that barred him from making public statements about witnesses, jurors and some others connected to his New York hush money case. If he does it again, the judge warned, he could be jailed. Prosecutors had alleged 10 violations, but New York Judge Juan M Merchan found there were nine. The ruling was a stinging rebuke for the Republican former President, who had insisted he was exercising his free speech rights. Merchan wrote that Trump "is hereby warned that the Court will not tolerate continued willful violations of its lawful orders and that if necessary and appropriate under the circumstances, it will impose an incarceratory punishment." Trump stared down at the table in front of him as the judge read the ruling, frowning slightly. The ruling came at the start of

the second week of testimony in the historic case. Manhattan prosecutors say Trump and his associates took part in an illegal scheme to influence the 2016 presidential campaign by burying negative stories. He has pleaded not guilty. Trump must pay the fine by the close of business Friday, Merchan said in a written ruling. He must remove seven offending posts from his Truth Social account and two from his campaign website by 2:15 pm EDT, Tuesday, Merchan said. Court was resuming Tuesday with Gary Farro, a banker who helped Trump's former attorney Michael Cohen open accounts, including one that Cohen used to buy the silence of porn performer Stormy Daniels. She alleged a 2006 sexual encounter with Trump, which he denies. For his part, the former President and presumptive Republican nominee has been campaigning in his off-hours, but is required to be in court

Chinese scientist protests lab eviction



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shanghai, April 30: The first scientist to publish a sequence of the COVID-19 virus in China staged a sit-in protest outside his lab after authorities locked him out of the facility — a sign of the Beijing's continuing pressure on scientists conducting research on the coronavirus. Zhang Yongzhen wrote in an online post Monday that he and his team had been suddenly notified they were being evicted from their lab, the latest in a series of setbacks, demotions and ousters since the virologist published the sequence in January 2020 without state approval. When Zhang tried to go to the lab over the weekend, guards barred him from entering. In protest, he sat outside on flat-topped cardboard in drizzling rain, pictures from the scene posted online show. News of the protest spread widely on Chinese social media and Zhang told a colleague he slept outside the lab — but it was not clear Tuesday if he remained there. "I won't leave, I won't quit, I am pursuing science and the truth!" he wrote in a post on Chinese social media platform Weibo that was later deleted. In an online statement, the

Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center said that Zhang's lab was being renovated and was closed for "safety reasons." It added that it had provided Zhang's team an alternative laboratory space. But Zhang wrote online that his team wasn't offered an alternative until after they were notified of their eviction, and that the lab offered didn't meet safety standards for conducting their research, leaving his team in limbo. Zhang's latest difficulty reflects how China has sought to control information related to the virus: An Associated Press investigation found that the government froze meaningful domestic and international efforts to trace it from the first weeks of the outbreak. That pattern continues to this day, with labs closed, collaborations shattered, foreign scientists forced out and Chinese researchers barred from leaving the country. When reached by phone Tuesday, Zhang said it was "inconvenient" for him to speak, saying there were other people listening in. In an email Monday to collaborator Edward Holmes seen by AP, Zhang confirmed he was sleeping outside his lab after guards barred him from entering.

India to grant full cost of SL northern port development

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, April 30: The Sri Lankan Cabinet Tuesday decided to implement the renovation of the Kankesanthurai Port in the Northern Province with India agreeing to grant \$61.5 million - the entire cost of the project. Situated in the northern region of Sri Lanka, the Kankesanthurai Port or the KKS Port, with an area of approximately 16 acres, is located at a distance of 104 kilometres (66 nautical miles) from Karaikal Port in Pondicherry. The direct passenger ship service connecting Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu to Kankesanthurai port near Jaffna covers a distance of 111 kilometres (60 nautical miles) in approximately three and a half hours. "Considering the importance of the project, the Indian government has agreed to grant the entire estimated cost of the project," a statement said Tuesday. It added that the project implementation had been delayed as the Economic Value of Equity (EVE) estimated cost provided by consulting service agencies was higher than the relevant loan amount. "Therefore, further discussions have been held with the Government of India regarding the possibility of completing the project under the Public Private Partnership Method," the statement said. The original cabinet approval for the project was given May 2, 2017. Thereafter, the approval for offering Project Management Consultant Services was given December 18, 2019. It was announced in March this year that the project's full cost was \$61.5 million.

SNIPPETS

King Charles III returns to public duties

London: Britain's King Charles III, who was diagnosed with cancer earlier this year, Tuesday resumed his public-facing duties with a planned visit to a cancer centre in London where he held hands with a number of patients. The 75-year-old monarch, still undergoing treatment which Buckingham Palace earlier said has been rated as "very encouraging" by his medical team, was also named Cancer Research UK's new patron as he joined wife Queen Camilla at the Macmillan Cancer Centre at University College Hospital. Smiling and cheerful Charles and Camilla spoke to staff and patients at the centre where the King was overheard saying it was important to get enough people diagnosed early. "This visit will be the first in a number of external engagements. His Majesty will undertake in the weeks ahead," Buckingham Palace has said.

AstraZeneca makes big u-turn

London: UK-headquartered pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca (AZ) has admitted that in "very rare cases" its COVID vaccine can cause a blood clot related side effect but the causal link is unknown, according to court papers being quoted in the UK media. The Daily Telegraph reports that in a legal document submitted to the High Court in London in February for a group action being brought by 51 claimants, AZ admitted that the vaccine developed with the University of Oxford to protect against COVID-19 may cause Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS) in "very rare cases". The AZ Vaxzevria vaccine, also manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII), was known in India as Covishield.

IMF approves disbursement of \$1.1bn loan tranche to Pak

Washington/Islamabad: The IMF has approved an immediate disbursement of the final tranche of \$ 1.1 billion to Pakistan as part of a bailout package, emphasizing that the cash-strapped country needs to take tough measures to bring its economy back on track. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Executive Board's decision Monday came after the global lender completed the second and final review of Pakistan's economic reform programme supported by the IMF's Stand-By Arrangement (SBA). With this development, the disbursements under the SBA reached around \$3 billion. All board members favoured the release of the last instalment. India, however, abstained from voting.



A state trooper pepper sprays pro-Palestinian protesters, during the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, after police vehicles were blocked at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas, US. Protests at US universities showed no sign of slowing, with police at the University of Texas at Austin arresting dozens of students whom they doused with pepper spray and pro-Palestinian protesters occupying a building at Columbia University. REUTERS

PLASTIC POLLUTION TREATY

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ottawa (Ontario), April 30: The world's nations finished a round of negotiations early Tuesday on a treaty to end plastic pollution and made more progress than they have in three prior meetings. Coming into Ottawa, many feared the effort would stall to craft the first legally binding treaty on plastics pollution, including in the oceans. The last meeting was marred by disagreements and there was much left to do. But instead, there has been a "monumental change in the tone and in the energy," said Julie Dabrusin, a Canadian parliamentary secretary. It was the fourth Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution session. For the first time, the nations began negotiating over the text of what is supposed to become a global treaty. They agreed

5 takeaways from global negotiations



to keep working between now and the next and final committee meeting this fall in South Korea. Here are some of the biggest takeaways from the meeting: **NATIONS ARE NEGOTIATING** The talk shifted in Ottawa from sharing ideas to negotiating treaty language. Finally, said Santos Virgilio, Angola's chief negotiator. Time was wasted in previous meetings, Virgilio said, but this time many arguments had been exhausted and it was time to find solutions. "It's big, because we have been going round and round during these sessions without showing direction," he said in an interview. "But at least now, people are showing, OK, they have goodwill." **LIMITING HOW MUCH PLASTIC IS MADE IS ON THE TABLE** Most contentious is the idea of limiting how much plastic is manufactured globally. Currently,

the negotiations at the final meeting in South Korea in the fall. Without this preparation work between meetings, it would've been daunting to complete the negotiations this year. **MANY BORE WITNESS TO PLASTIC POLLUTION** Waste pickers have been on the frontlines of trying to solve plastic pollution for decades, said John Chweya, a 33-year-old waste picker representing Kenyan waste pickers. They collect, sort, recycle and sell plastics that would otherwise pile up or be burned. They're exposed to hazardous materials and can suffer from respiratory illnesses, skin infections and other diseases. They want a treaty that recognizes the role they play and helps waste pickers transition to safer jobs. In Malawi, Tiwonge Mzumara-Gawa sees plastic bags littering the lands where goats and cows graze and peo-

ple burning waste behind their homes because there is no waste collection. She believes it'll take a global agreement for the national government to do more to address plastic pollution. Mzumara-Gawa is a campaigner for the Christian charity Tearfund. Frankie Orona told negotiators their decisions affect peoples' lives and health. Indigenous land, water and air are being contaminated as fossil fuels are extracted and plastic is manufactured using hazardous chemicals, said Orona, executive director of the Texas-based Society of Native Nations. **NEGOTIATORS AIM TO FINALISE TREATY THIS FALL** They plan to finish negotiating in South Korea so the treaty can be adopted next year at a diplomatic conference. It's an extremely short timeline for negotiations, meant to match the urgency of the problem.

Man with sword held after stabbing spree in London, boy dies

AGENCIES

London, April 30: A sword-wielding man Tuesday smashed a vehicle into a home and then went on a stabbing spree in a "serious incident" near an east London Tube station, killing a 13-year-old boy and wounding four people, before being arrested, the Metropolitan Police said. The police said the incident did not appear to be linked with "any act of terrorism" and that of the five people injured, a boy has died from his injuries and the others, including two police officers, remain in hospital after the attack in Hainault area of the city. "A 13-year-old boy was taken to hospital after being stabbed and sadly died a short while after. The child's family are being supported by local officers and are now with some specialist officers," said Met Police Chief Superintendent Stuart Bell in a statement.

of the day quote

The industry-first 'Battery Subscription Model' removes another barrier to EV adoption by addressing battery concerns and offering a cost-effective ownership option. We are confident this model will sustain EV growth in a post-subsidy environment

DIEGO GRAFFI | PVPL CMD

We are encouraged by our start to 2024, delivering another quarter of volume, topline and earnings growth amidst a dynamic backdrop

JAMES QUINCEY | COCA-COLA COMPANY CHAIRMAN

Our lithium-ion cell manufacturing project is progressing well and is expected to be commissioned within defined timelines. We are positive about the future and are very well positioned to capitalise on opportunities both in the lead-acid as well as in the lithium-ion battery space

SUBIR CHAKRABORTY | EXIDE INDUSTRIES MD & CEO

Q4 RESULTS CORNER

BoM net profit jumps 45%

Bhubaneswar: Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) reported a 45 per cent year-on-year (Yo-Y) jump in net profit at ₹1,218 crore in Q4FY24, buoyed by healthy growth in net interest income and non-interest income, and relatively lower tax provision burden. The Bank also announced a dividend of ₹1.40 per equity share of ₹10 face value for FY24 and approved raising of ₹7,500 crore capital, including equity issuance, in FY25. Nidhu Saxena, MD & CEO, said the bank will sustain the profitability and efficiency parameters assiduously built over the last 15 quarters or so even as it has set its sights on turning into a bank of great significance through a notch up in its ranking (by business size) among public sector banks in the next one year and by two notches in 2-3 years.

Indian Oil net profit halves

New Delhi: Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) Tuesday reported halving of its March quarter net profit largely because of losses in the petrochemical business and shrinking margin after it announced a pre-election fuel price cut despite rising input costs. The net profit of ₹4,837.69 crore in January-March compared to ₹10,058.69 crore a year back and ₹8,063.39 crore in the October-December quarter, according to a stock exchange filing by the company. Profit was lower as refining margins dipped, the petrochemical segment turned negative, and the firm, last month, cut petrol and diesel prices by ₹2 per litre each despite crude prices edging up.

REC net profit grows 33%

New Delhi: State-owned REC Ltd Tuesday posted a 33 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to ₹4,079.09 crore during the March quarter on account of higher income. The company had clocked a net profit of ₹3,065.37 crore during the January-March quarter preceding FY 2022-23, REC said in a regulatory filing. The company's total income during the fourth quarter rose to ₹12,706.66 crore from ₹10,254.63 crore in the year-ago period. Total expenses were ₹7,477.18 crore in the March quarter as against ₹6,353.40 crore. For the entire FY24, the company's net profit was ₹14,145.46 crore, up from ₹11,166.98 crore in FY23.



We have to make efforts, so the GDP grows, and the benefits reach to all. GDP growth doesn't happen automatically; efforts are required at micro and macro levels and on the ground

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

INDIA RANKS THIRD GLOBALLY FOR PHISHING ATTACKS

India ranked as the third-largest country globally for phishing attacks after the US and UK, with its technology sector facing nearly 33 per cent of all such strikes, marking it as the most targeted industry, according to a report by cybersecurity firm Zscaler.



India's oil import bill could swell in FY25

ANY ESCALATION IN THE IRAN-ISRAEL CONFLICT COULD IMPART AN UPWARD PRESSURE ON THE VALUE OF IMPORTS, ACCORDING TO AN ICRA ANALYSIS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 30: India's net oil import bill could widen to \$101-104 billion in current fiscal from \$96.1 billion in 2023-24 and any escalation in the Iran-Israel conflict could impart an upward pressure on the value of imports, ICRA said Tuesday.

The domestic rating agency said based on its analysis, lower value of Russian oil imports is estimated to have led to savings of \$7.9 billion in 11 months (April-February) of 2023-24, up from \$5.1 billion in 2022-23.

"With India's oil import dependency expected to remain high, if the discounts on purchases of Russian crude persist at the prevailing low levels, ICRA

expects India's net oil import bill to widen to \$101-104 billion in FY2025 from \$96.1 billion in FY2024, assuming an average crude oil price of \$85/bbl in the fiscal," ICRA said.

Additionally, any escalation in the Iran-Israel conflict and an associated rise in crude oil prices could impart an upward pressure on the value of net oil imports in the current fiscal year, it added.

As per ICRA's calculations, a \$10/barrel uptick in the average crude oil price for this fiscal pushes up the net oil imports by \$12-13 billion during the year, thereby enlarging the current account deficit (CAD) by 0.3 per cent of GDP.

Accordingly, if the average crude oil price rises to \$95/barrel in FY2025, then the CAD is likely to widen to 1.5 per cent of GDP from ICRA's current estimate of 1.2 per cent of GDP for 2024-25.

CAD, which is the difference between value of India's imports and exports, is estimated at 0.8 per cent in 2023-24.

India is more than 85 per cent dependent on imports for its needs of crude oil, which is con-



verted into fuels such as petrol and diesel at refineries.

ICRA said the value of India's imports of petroleum crude and products declined by 15.2 per cent Yo-Y during April-February of last fiscal, even as volumes rose slightly in this period.

This was supported by the fall in average global crude oil prices as well as savings from stepped up purchases of discounted Russian crude.

In volume terms, the share of crude petroleum imported from

Russia jumped to 36 per cent in April-February FY2024 from 2 per cent in FY2022, while that from West Asian countries (Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Kuwait) fell to 23 per cent from 34 per cent, respectively.

ICRA estimates that the lower imputed unit value of imports of Russian oil, compared to imports from West Asia, has led to savings in India's oil import bill amounting to \$5.1 billion in 2023-24 and \$7.9 billion in 11 months of 2023-24, thereby compressing

Markets close lower on fag-end selling



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 30: Reversing early gains, benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower Tuesday due to a sell-off in banking and IT shares in the last hour of the session amid a mixed trend in global markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 188.50 points or 0.25 per cent to settle at 74,482.78. The index opened higher and rallied further 440.11 points or 0.58 per cent to hit a high of 75,111.39 in day trade. However, the barometer pared all the gains as selling emerged in banking and IT shares towards the end of the session.

The broader Nifty hit a lifetime intraday high of 22,783.35 in day trade before squandering its gains. Nifty closed lower by 38.55 points or 0.17 per cent to finish at 22,604.85 as metal, pharma and IT shares declined. As many as 25 Nifty shares closed lower, 24 advanced while one closed unchanged.

Losses in HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank,

Infosys, TCS and Tech Mahindra dragged indices from the day's high levels.

From the Sensex basket, Tech Mahindra, Tata Steel, JSW Steel, HCL Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services, Larsen & Toubro and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the biggest laggards.

Mahindra & Mahindra, Power Grid, Bajaj Finance, IndusInd Bank and Maruti were the major gainers.

"Nifty erased all the intra-day gains in the last hour of trade and ended in the negative zone in a highly volatile session," said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

"Global markets remained mixed ahead of the US FED policy meet as markets appear to have already factored in the slim chance of a near-term rate cut. Profit booking ensued towards a close given the sharp rally in the last couple of days and a holiday-led truncated week," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

Domestic initial Q4 corporate earnings forecasts were con-

servative, however, Nifty50 companies' earnings to date have remained marginally better, with the exception being the IT sector, while auto and realty continue to be robust, Nair added.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.49 per cent and smallcap index advanced 0.10 per cent.

Among the indices, teck dropped 0.98 per cent, IT by 0.98 per cent, metal by 0.85 per cent, commodities by 0.56 per cent and telecommunication by 0.33 per cent.

Consumer discretionary, financial services, utilities, auto, realty and power were the gainers.

"The Bank Nifty witnessed a volatile trading session during the expiry day, with bulls dominating the first half and bears taking control in the second half. Although the index fell short of reaching the 50,000 mark, the overall sentiment remains bullish," Kunal Shah, Senior Technical & Derivative Analyst at LKP Securities said.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong settled in the positive territory while Shanghai ended lower.

European markets were mostly trading lower. Wall Street ended with gains on Monday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were buyers Tuesday as they bought equities worth ₹1,071.93 crore on net basis, according to exchange data.

In the previous session, the BSE benchmark jumped 941.12 points or 1.28 per cent to settle at 74,671.28 Monday. The NSE Nifty went up by 223.45 points or 1 per cent to 22,643.40.

Domestic equity markets will remain closed Wednesday on account of Maharashtra Day.

India likely to grow over 7 pc in 2024-25: NCAER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 30: The Indian economy could grow more than 7 per cent during the current fiscal amid a benign global outlook and expected above-normal monsoon, economic think tank NCAER has said.

In its April 2024 issue of Monthly Economic Review (MER), NCAER said a range of high-frequency indicators reveal the resilience of the domestic economy with the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for manufacturing at a 16-year high and UPI, the leading digital payments system, touching the highest volume since its inception in 2016.

"Projected acceleration in both global growth and trade volumes, as well as a forecast of an above-normal monsoon, indicate that the Indian economy can again attain growth rates higher than 7 per cent during the current fiscal year," said NCAER Director General Poonam Gupta.

According to NCAER, Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections reached ₹1.8 lakh crore in March, the second best since its rollout in 2017, while UPI recorded 13.4 billion transactions (in volume) in March 2024, the highest since its introduction, registering a growth of 55.3 per cent on a year-on-year basis.



Bajaj Allianz General Insurance unveils Privé



POST NEWS NETWORK

Pune, April 30: Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, one of the leading private general insurers in India, Monday announced the launch of Privé, an exclusive customer experience programme offering access to elevated and unmatched customer service. Traditionally, in India, the drive to increase insurance penetration over the last few years has largely been focused on tapping the customer base across the tier 2/tier 3 locations and rural markets, predominantly covering middle, upper middle class, and rural customers.

Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, in addition to its strong focus on increasing insurance penetration across all the above-mentioned customer segments, will now also cater to a special segment of customers typically requiring insurance solutions with enhanced coverage limits. Recognising the mul-

ti-faceted requirements and comprehensive protection that align with such discerning customers' financial and lifestyle preferences, Privé goes beyond the traditional insurance offerings. By being part of Privé, customers gain access to an array of exclusive and prioritised insurance services, ensuring their requirements are met with precision.

To become a part of Privé, the customers have the flexibility to select from a range of products across health, home, motor, personal accident, and cyber, insurance as per their specific needs.

Privé is committed to elevating the service experience through experts focused on expediting claims processing and assistance. Such customers would also have access to 'Privé Connect', a dedicated team available to swiftly address all insurance queries and requirements for catering to any service request or claims.

India's gold demand up 8% in Jan-Mar despite high price

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 30: India's gold demand rose 8 per cent annually to 136.6 tonne in the March quarter helped by a strong economic environment despite prices touching historic highs, according to the World Gold Council.

The aggressive gold buying by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) also contributed to the rise in demand.

India's gold demand in value terms rose 20 per cent on an annual basis to ₹75,470 crore during the January-March period of this year on volume growth as well as a rise in quarterly average prices by 11 per cent.

Tuesday, the World Gold Council (WGC) released its global report 'Gold Demand Trends Q1 2024', showing that India's total gold demand, including both jewellery and investment, increased to 136.6 tonne in January-March this year from 126.3 tonne

in the year-ago period.

Out of the total gold demand, the jewellery demand in India increased 4 per cent to 95.5 tonne from 91.9 tonne. The total investment demand (in the form of bar, coin among others) grew 19 per cent to 41.1 tonne from 34.4 tonne.

Sachin Jain, Regional CEO, India, WGC, said the rise in gold demand reaffirms Indians' enduring relationship with gold.

"India's continued strong macroeconomic environment was supportive for gold jewellery consumption even though prices reached a historic high in March leading to a slowdown in sales as the quarter ended," he added.

Jain expects the gold demand in India to be in the range of 700-800 tonne during this year.

If the price rally continues, he said the demand could be at the lower end of this range. In 2023, the country's gold demand was 747.5 tonne.

Asked about the factors driv-



ing demand growth in January-March, Jain told PTI, "Historically, eastern markets of the world including India and China respond when the prices are going down and there is a fluctuation, whereas western markets respond when the prices are going up."

"For the first time we have

seen a complete reversal where Indian and Chinese markets have responded to an increase in prices of gold," he said.

Jain said the demand for jewellery as well as investment products like bar, coin and ETF has gone up.

"The second reason for the increase in demand has been

the buying by the central bank RBI," he said.

While the RBI bought 16 tonne of gold in the full 2023, it has already purchased 19 tonne in the first quarter of this calendar year, Jain highlighted.

He mentioned that the RBI has indicated that it would continue buying.

Asked about the outlook for the April-June quarter, Jain said the demand might slow down due to a sharp rally in gold prices and the ongoing election process.

As per the WGC data, India's gold demand in value terms rose 20 per cent to ₹75,470 crore from ₹63,090 crore.

Out of this, the jewellery demand grew 15 per cent to ₹52,750 crore from ₹45,890 crore, while gold investment demand went up 32 per cent to ₹22,720 crore from ₹17,200 crore.

The WGC also mentioned that the total gold recycled in India stood at 38.3 tonne in January-March, up 10 per cent from 34.8

tonne in Q1 2023.

"Total gold imports in India in Q1 2024 was 179.4 tonne, up by 25 per cent compared to 143.4 tonne in Q1 2023," the Council said.

The average quarterly price in Q1 2024 was ₹55,247.20 per 10 gm of gold as against ₹49,943.80 per 10 gm in Q1 2023 (without import duty and GST)

"Q1'24 also saw healthy levels of gold bar and coin demand in India, up 19 per cent year-on-year at 41 tonne. This was on a par with Q1'22, which was itself the strongest first quarter since 2014," Jain said.

The price correction in February sparked investors' interest, with anticipation of a rebound driving purchases, he added.

"As the price rallied to successive record highs, investors remained bullish, contributing to the robust demand," Jain said.

Investments into gold ETF too saw positive inflows of over 2 tonne.

Samson, Chahal in for WT20

PANT, DUBE TOO FIND THEMSELVES IN THE PROVISIONAL SQUAD FOR ICC T20 WORLD CUP, WHILE GILL AND RINKU NAMED AMONG RESERVES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 30: Sanju Samson and Yuzvendra Chahal Tuesday made it to India's provisional squad for the T20 World Cup thanks to strong IPL performances but Shubman Gill and the big-hitting Rinku Singh were relegated to the reserves group as selectors went with the tried and tested for the marquee event in June.

The BCCI announced the Rohit Sharma-led squad after a meeting between secretary Jay Shah and chief selector Ajit Agarkar in Ahmedabad. Rohit and Agarkar are expected to address the media in Mumbai Thursday.

All-rounder Hardik Pandya was retained as vice-captain despite his poor recent form after taking over Mumbai Indians leadership in the ongoing IPL. Hard-hitting batter Shivam Dube also made the cut following a strong IPL showing for Chennai Super Kings.

Samson, who has had a good IPL both as a batter and captain for Rajasthan Royals, was included as the second wicket-keeper-batter behind Rishabh Pant, pipping the likes of KL Rahul and Ishan Kishan.

Leg-spinner Chahal, who last played for India in August 2023, is the second wrist-spinner in the team alongside Kuldeep Yadav.

However, Gill, who is enjoying a good run in the IPL as Gujarat Titans captain, found himself among the standbys along with Kolkata Knight Riders' big-hitter Rinku.

The selectors decided to show faith in Yashasvi Jaiswal, who had a slow start in the IPL but

There was a lot of debate over Hardik's place in the squad while Samson was not debated much. Rinku was just unlucky. It was a toss-up between (Dube and Rinku with Hardik also in the squad)

A BCCI SOURCE

regained his touch with swash-buckling hundred recently for Rajasthan Royals. The redoubtable Virat Kohli completed the Indian top order after pulling off strong batting performances in the IPL.

The T20 World cup begins June 2 in the USA and the Caribbean. India will open their campaign against Ireland June 5 in New York.

India, who have had disappointing campaigns in the previous two World Cups due to their conservative batting approach, needed to make a few bold calls to stake a claim for an elusive ICC trophy.

Picking Dube ahead of Rinku Singh is a bold call in that aspect considering the latter had done no wrong since making his India debut in August last year.

Before the IPL, Rinku, who has a strike rate of 176.23 in 15 T20Is, was considered a certainty in the India squad but selectors have preferred the six-hitting skills of Dube in the middle-order.

To be fair to the left-hander from Mumbai, he has been in sensational touch in the IPL and also flaunted his power hitting prowess in India's last T20 series in January.

On the wicketkeeper-batters'



front, India were spoilt for choice and eventually the selectors picked Pant and Samson. Pant being chosen was an expected lines after the match-winner proved his form and fitness in the IPL after coming back from a horrific car accident in December

2022. It will be interesting to see how the management uses Samson, who has been playing in the top order for Royals. Should he turn up for India, Samson will need to move down the order. India's top order has come

THE SQUAD

Rohit Sharma (C), Hardik Pandya (VC), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (WK), Sanju Samson (WK), Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah & Mohammed Siraj;
RESERVES: Shubman Gill, Rinku Singh, Khaleel Ahmed & Avesh Khan.

under a lot of criticism for its outdated approach in previous editions. Considering the core remains the same, it remains to be seen how giants like Virat Kohli and Rohit fare in probably their last appearance in the biennial event.

Jaiswal has added much-needed freshness to the top-order and will be expected to build on his recent performances for India at the T20 showpiece.

India will need wickets in the middle overs if they are to go deep in the tournament and that could come from the wrist-spin duo of Kuldeep and Chahal, who have been reunited once again.

Playing for Rajasthan Royals, Chahal has picked up 13 wickets so far in the IPL and recently reached the 200-wicket mark in the competition. Ravindra Jadeja will be the spin all-rounder in the playing eleven and his back-up in the squad is Axar Patel.

Questions remain over the pace attack with selectors picking Mohammed Siraj and Arshdeep Singh to assist spearhead Jasprit Bumrah. Both Siraj and Arshdeep have not had the best of IPLs but are proven performers on the international stage.

Avesh Khan, who has shown remarkable accuracy in the death overs this IPL, is among the reserves and so is left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed.

India eves outplayed by China in Uber Cup



Anmol Kharb was in tears after injuring her foot in her match against Han Yue in Chengdu, Tuesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chengdu (China), April 30: Teenage sensation Anmol Kharb left the badminton court in tears owing to an ankle injury as an under-strength Indian women's team suffered a 0-5 defeat to the mighty China in their final group A fixture of the Uber Cup here Tuesday.

Having already qualified for the quarterfinals by picking up successive wins against Canada and Singapore, Ashmita Chaliha sat out the contest against the 15-time champions. The team is competing without PV Sindhu. India will end the group stage proceedings in second place behind China.

It was a reality check for the young Indian team as they could not take a single game from the Chinese during the five-match tie. To add to India's woes, 17-year-old Anmol was forced to retire after twisting her ankle during the second singles contest.

Olympic champion and World No.2 Chen Yu Fei started off the proceedings for China with an easy 21-12, 21-10 win over 83rd ranked Isharani Baruah.

National champions Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra,

INDIA TO PLAY HOST

New Delhi: India will host next year's World Junior Badminton Championships at the National Centre of Excellence in Guwahati, the sport's global governing body BWF said Tuesday. It will be the first time since 2008 that the prestigious Badminton World Federation (BWF) event will be held in India. India last hosted the event in Pune. Dates for the 2025 event are yet to be confirmed.

ranked 67, were no match for reigning world champions Chen Qing Chen and Jia Yi Fan, who doubled China's lead with a 21-13, 21-12 win.

After losing the first game 9-21 and trailing 1-4 in the second against Han Yue, Anmol rolled her right ankle while trying to defend a point. She received medical attention but the pain didn't seem to subside and the ankle looked swollen, forcing her to retire from the match giving China a 3-0 unassailable lead.

In the next two matches, Liu Shen Shu and Tan Ning defeated Simran Singh and Ritika Thaker 21-9, 21-10, while Tanvi Sharma lost 7-21, 16-21 to Wang Zhi Yi as China completed the 5-0 drubbing of India.

CSK eye all-round stability against unpredictable PBKS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 30: An inconsistent Chennai Super Kings will have to display all-round solidity when they face an unpredictable Punjab Kings in their IPL match here Wednesday.

The Super Kings have 10 points from nine matches, similar figures as that of Lucknow Super Giants, Sunrisers Hyderabad and Delhi Capitals, and the defending champions would certainly like to breakaway from that mid-table gridlock with a win.

However, the defending champions will be a worried lot as Kings, who have six points from nine games, are coming to this match after scaling down 262 against Kolkata Knight Riders, the highest chase in the history of T20 cricket.

But the Chepauk deck is a different beast, offering a semblance of assistance to the bowlers and it was evident in CSK's impressive 78-run win over SRH in their previous match.

There was no dew in Chennai on that night, and the CSK bowlers defanged SRH's potent batting unit with their accuracy and variations after their batters put on board a 200-plus total. They need an encore against Punjab, and all eyes will be on skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad, who is on a hot streak. However, the real storm-force in the CSK lineup is Shivam Dube.

On the other hand, PBKS will be desperate to carry the momentum after that record chase and climb up the ladder from the current eighth place. For that, their batters need to fire in unison once again.

However, PBKS' bowling department looks a bit shaky. The visitors will also require a much-improved effort from their spinners.

MATCHDAY
Indian Premier League
CSK vs PBKS
Time: 07:30 pm
Telecast: Star Sports Network
Stream: Jio Cinema

India down Bangla in rain-marred T20I

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sylhet (Bangladesh), April 30: Radha Yadav and Dayalan Hemalatha produced an all-round show as a dominant India beat Bangladesh by 119 runs under the Duckworth/Lewis method in a rain-marred second women's T20I here Tuesday.

Led by left-arm spinner Radha's splendid show (3/19), Indian bowlers bundled out Bangladesh for 119 after the hosts opted to bat first. There were two wickets apiece for Deepti Sharma (2/14) and Shreyanka Patil (2/24). For Bangladesh, opener Murshida Khatun (46, 49b, 5x4) was the top scorer.

Chasing a modest total, India lost an early wicket as Shafali Verma (0) was caught down the leg side after she tried to flick it through fine leg. Hemalatha, however, blazed away to a 24-ball 41 (5x4, 2x6) as India raced to 47/1 in 5.2 overs, when the heaven opened up for the second time during the match.

The par score was 28 and the Indian eves were ahead by 19 runs, and with the surface rendered unplayable by the heavy rain, the visitors were declared winners. India thus took a 2-0 lead in the five-match series.

Earlier, Dilara Akter got the Bangladesh innings underway when she pulled Renuka Singh, the star of the five-match series opener, over mid-wicket for a four in only the second ball of the match. Akter got into a good position and whipped off her pads a swinging Renuka deliv-



ery over backward square leg for a boundary.

An 11-run first over was followed by the wicket of Akter as experienced spinner Deepti struck with one that was drifting in, which prompted the batter to go for a sweep but she could not get the elevation and ended up giving a catch to Renuka in the deep. Renuka conceded another boundary when Murshida came down the track to smash her over mid-off.

India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur then made a mess of a straightforward chance off

Renuka after getting both her hands to it, giving Murshida reprieve on 6 after the batter mistimed her shot.

One-down batter Sobhana Mostary opened her account with a boundary as she drove a delivery from Renuka, was proving to be quite wayward on this day, past backward point.

There was a bowling change at the other end, and off-spinner Shreyanka struck in her very first over, having Mostary (19) trapped in front of the wicket after a promising start by the batter.

Brought into the attack for the first time in the eighth over, left-arm spinner Radha started on a bright note before removing Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana and Fahima Khatun off successive balls. Radha, however, could not complete a hat-trick as Sultana Khatun struck her for a boundary.

BRIEF SCORES: Bangladesh Women 119 (Murshida Khatun 46; Radha Yadav 3/19, Deepti Sharma 2/15, Shreyanka Patil 2/24) lost to India Women 47/1 (Dayalan Hemalatha 41 n o) by 19 runs via DLS method.

NADAL TOILS HARD FOR WIN IN MADRID

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, April 30: After spending more than three hours on the court and earning a hard-fought victory, Rafael Nadal was feeling optimistic again. Nadal's body withstood its toughest test yet at this Madrid Open in a 6-1, 6-7(5-7), 6-3 win over 91st-ranked Pedro Cachin Monday.

He didn't show any signs of physical limitations in a victory that earned him a spot in the round of 16 at the clay-court tournament where he is the record five-time champion. Cachin asked for Nadal's shirt after congratulating him at the net, and received the gift moments later.

Nadal will next face 31st-ranked Jiri Lehecka. He said he needs "to find a way to be able to play days in a row and still be competitive." The 37-year-old Nadal is trying to get in shape for next month's French Open.

Top-seeded Jannik Sinner was not at his best but had enough to defeat Pavel Kotov 6-2, 7-5. Sinner will face 16th-seeded Karen Khachanov. Third-seeded Daniil Medvedev was two points from defeat before he rallied to beat Sebastian Korda 5-7, 7-6(7-4), 6-3. Fifth-seeded Casper Ruud beat Cameron Norrie 6-2, 6-4.

KEYS DOWNS GAUFF
Madison Keys rallied after trailing in the first and second sets to beat Coco Gauff 7-6(7-4), 4-6, 6-4 in an all-American fourth-round meeting. She will face eighth-seeded Ons Jabeur, who eased past Jelena Ostapenko 6-0, 6-4.

Lewa hat-trick seals Barca win Super Giants move closer to IPL playoffs

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona, April 30: Barcelona survived a tricky first half to beat Valencia 4-2 with the help of a second half hat-trick from Robert Lewandowski and a red card to Valencia goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili.

On a rainy night in Catalonia, the home side dominated possession but was behind at the break due to two defensive errors. Fermin Lopez put Barcelona ahead with a lovely glancing header midway through the first half.

Valencia levelled just five minutes later thanks to a woeful intervention from keeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen. He intercepted a long ball 25 yards from his goal but he tried to be too fancy and Hugo



Duro easily dispossessed him and ran the ball into the empty net.

Before halftime, Valencia took the lead thanks to another elementary mistake. Ronald Araujo's mistimed tackle felled Peter Federico in the box and Pepelu

coolly converted the spot-kick.

The balance of the match changed moments before the break when Mamardashvili used a hand outside the box to thwart a scoring chance by Lamine Yamal and was red-carded.

Lewandowski headed an equaliser from a corner kick after 50 minutes. However, it took Barcelona until the 82nd to regain the lead from another Lewandowski header after Valencia failed to clear another corner. The hat-trick came in the third minute of stoppage time from a 25-yard free-kick.

Barcelona replaced Girona in second place and were 11 points behind Real Madrid. Madrid need five from their last five matches to guarantee a 36th Spanish league title.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 30: Marcus Stoinis made a composed fifty to complement the splendid effort of the bowlers as Lucknow Super Giants strengthened their chances of a playoff berth with a nervy four-wicket win over Mumbai Indians in the IPL here Tuesday.

Mumbai Indians' top-order came a cropper as they stuttered to a below-par 144/7, riding on contributions from Nehal Wadhwa (46), Ishan Kishan (32) and Tim David (35 not out).

In reply, Stoinis scored a 45-ball 62 (7x4, 2x6), but once he was gone LSG survived some anxious moments before getting home with four balls to spare. With their sixth win in 10 games,



LSG climbed to the third spot in the IPL standings. MI, on the other hand, slumped to their seventh loss in 10 games.

LSG made a watchful start to their chase after Nuwan Thushara struck with his fourth

ball to remove impact sub Arshin Kulkarni for a duck on his IPL debut. Stoinis and KL Rahul (28) then took LSG to 52/1 at the end of powerplay.

After Rahul's departure, Stoinis and Deepak Hooda (18)

added another 40 runs to take LSG close to 100. LSG slowly but comfortably completed the chase despite being reduced to 133/6 in the 19th over.

Earlier, MI dug in a big hole for themselves by losing four wickets in the powerplay. The visitors just couldn't recover from the hiccup despite a 53-run fifth-wicket stand between Wadhwa and Kishan. Tim David (35 n o) hit a few shots in the end, including a 17-run last over, to give the total some semblance of respectability.

BRIEF SCORES: MI 144/7 (Nehal Wadhwa 46, Tim David 35 n o, Ishan Kishan 32; Mohsin Khan 2/36) lost to LSG 145/6 (Marcus Stoinis 62; Hardik Pandya 2/26) by 4 wickets.