



XSS Juices
Now in Attractive New pack
HULK
SUPERIOR Quality Superior Taste
CONTAINS NO FRUIT JUICE
SWEETENED CARBONATED DRINK
CONTACT US 9395665270 @XSSJUICES @XSSJUICES

Ranjit Gogoi under fire for April 14 Bihu lyrics

Mercury soars across India

HT Correspondent

MARGHERITA, April 18: All Assam Sema Naga Council has condemned the lyrics used for the live performance during 14th April Bihu Programme held at Sarusajai Stadium, Guwahati.

All Assam Sema Naga Council, president Kahoto Sema, vice president Kasto Sema and general secretary Hotoi Sema said, "Bihu is a state festival of Assam, and being Sema Naga we are proud of it as we participated in the Bihu programme, but the lyrics used by the Bihu expert Ranjit Gogoi 'Okora Naga, Nagini (Foolish Naga, Nagini)' during the Bihu programme at Sarusajai Stadium in Guwahati has hurt 2.5 lakh Sema Nagas, who are residing in

Assam. "We demand an unconditional apology from Gogoi before the Sema Naga people residing in Assam," said Kasto Sema, vice president of AASNC.

Altogether 11,304 bihuwotis (Bihu dancers) and dhuliyas (drum beaters) performed the 'largest Bihu performance in a single venue' to claim two titles in Guinness Book of World Records, held at Sarusajai Stadium on April 13.

The record which was created around 5:30 pm was performed for 15 minutes.

The event was organized by the state cultural affairs department to take traditional Bihu dance from regional to the world stage.

However, the All Assam Naga Welfare Society (AANWS) reacted



sharply to the Bihu song saying that the organizers should not allow such a song to be performed at an international event.

"We condemn the song performed by artist Ranjit Gogoi in the event to create the Guinness Book of World Records. We have

noticed that Naga communities have been insulted in the lyrics of the song using the words like okora Naga, Nagini, etc.," AANWS pres-

ident Shompha Wangsu and general secretary Manto Konyak said.

"The song intensely hurt the emotion and sentiments of the people of 10 Naga communities with 2.5 lakh population living in Assam," they said. Besides AANWS, other Naga civil societies or organizations, including community-wise organised councils and student bodies also reacted strongly to the song. "The song with derogatory lyrics against Naga people by well-known artist Ranjit Gogoi is not acceptable," AASWA president Shompha Wangsu said. An official of the Assam cultural affairs department, who organised the event said, "It's a traditional Bihu song. It has nothing to hurt the Naga community."

NEW DELHI, April 18 (PTI): Heatwave conditions continued unabated as temperature hovered in the range of 40 to 44 degrees Celsius over most parts of the country on Tuesday, with Hamirpur and Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh sizzling at 44.2 degrees Celsius.

Delhi's primary weather station, the Safdarjung Observatory, registered a maximum temperature of 40.4 degrees Celsius, four notches higher than normal. This is the fourth consecutive day that the maximum temperature settled above 40 degrees Celsius here.

The Pusa and Pitampura areas experienced heat wave conditions with maximum temperatures settling at 41.6 degrees to 41.9 degrees Celsius, (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

HT BRIEFS

Heroin seized

BOKAJAN: Responding to a tip off, the police set up a naka under Borpathar Police Station on Tuesday. Around 9 am, a pickup truck bearing registration no AS 15 AC 5442, coming from Dimapur, Nagaland was intercepted and on thoroughly checking 54 soap cases packed with heroin weighing at 687.26 grams was recovered. The contraband was hidden in a secret chamber. The market value of heroin is estimated to be ₹ 3 crore. In this regard, the driver and helper of the vehicle were arrested. They have been identified as Abdul Bashir Bhuyan (30), resident of Borbala, in Barpeta district, and Safikul Islam (21), resident of Goroimari Pathar, in Barpeta district.

Journalist awarded

GUWAHATI: Guwahati based senior journalist, writer and active social worker Azizur Rahman Saikia has been awarded the Best Social Worker Award by Hattigaon Sijubari Saseton Yuwa Manch; an organisation of Youth's social workers. The organisation awarded Azizur Rahman Saikia in Hattigaon Bihu Manch program on April 16, organised by Brihottar Hattigaon Rongali Bihu Utsav Udiapan Samiti. Padmasree Dr Ilias Ali, Bihu committee president Nabin Chandra Sarma along with Pabitra Kumar Sarma, Babul Ahmed, Bipul Kumar Sarma, administrative officer Juri Kalita, etc., were present in the occasion.

Assam-Arunachal border pact shortly

MoU to be signed in presence of Amit Shah: Atul Bora



GUWAHATI, April 18 (PTI): Assam and Arunachal Pradesh governments are likely to sign a memorandum of understanding this month to resolve the longstanding border disputes between the two states, Assam minister Atul Bora said.

Assam has finalised the draft MoU on its part and will forward it to the neighbouring state for its approval, he said.

"The draft of the MoU was discussed threadbare and given the final shape. The copy will now be shared with them, and if they are agreeable, we expect it to be signed

by as early as April 20 or at least within this month," Bora said here after a meeting, chaired by chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

He said the MoU will be signed by the two states in presence of union home minister Amit Shah.

"However, we cannot say that the MoU will be the final solution. The court and Parliament are also there," Bora, the minister for border area protection and development, said.

Members of 12 regional committees of Assam, local MLAs, MPs and district admin-

istration officials were present at the meeting to finalise the draft MoU.

The two states have been engaging in discussions to resolve the border disputes with Sarma and his Arunachal counterpart Pema Khandu signing the Namsai Declaration on July 15 last year wherein they had pledged to find solutions soon.

The two northeastern states had decided to restrict the number of 'disputed villages' to 86, instead of the previous 123.

Regional committees dealing with specific areas were formed last year, comprising ministers, local MLAs and officials from both sides to take the discussion forward.

The two states share a border of approximately 804.1 km. The grievance of Arunachal Pradesh, which was made a union territory in 1972, is that several forested tracts in the plains that had traditionally belonged to hill tribal chiefs and communities were unilaterally transferred to Assam.

After Arunachal Pradesh achieved statehood in 1987, a tripartite committee was appointed, which recommended that certain territories be transferred from Assam to Arunachal Pradesh.

Assam contested this and the matter is in the Supreme Court.

Supreme Court grants bail to Akhil Gogoi in NIA case

Sivasagar MLA hails apex court verdict



NEW DELHI, April 18 (PTI): The Supreme Court on Tuesday granted bail to independent Assam MLA Akhil Gogoi in connection with a case related to anti-CAA protests and suspected Maoist links. A bench of Justices V Ramasubramanian and Pankaj Mithal, however, affirmed a Gauhati High Court order which had set aside Gogoi's discharge in the case.

The lawmaker, who has allegedly been vocal against the Central government during the

anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests, had moved the top court against the February 9 order of the high court allowing the special NIA court in Assam to proceed with the framing of charges against him in one of the two cases.

Earlier, the high court had permitted the NIA to seek framing of charges in the special court against Gogoi and three of his associates in connection with anti-CAA protests and suspected Maoist links.

The high court's order had come on an appeal of the NIA challenging the order of a special NIA court giving clean chit to the four.

A high court division bench comprising Justices Suman Shyam and Malasri Nandi had asked the agency to go ahead with framing charges after reopening the case. The MLA has come to the apex court against the order. The other three accused were Dhairya Konwar, Bittu Sonowal and Manash Konwar, all of whom got bail in the NIA case and were released from jail. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

We are trying to bring a change in the education system: Tuliram

Tablet PCs distributed to teachers of KA, West KA



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, April 18: A total of 2,217 tablet PCs were distributed to schools by the Department of

School Education under Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) on Tuesday. The tablet PCs were distributed in a ceremo-

nial distribution function held at Sarsing Teron (Langkung Habe) Memorial Town Hall, Matipung here. The tablets were given to primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary levels for Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts to be used for e-learning in school. Shiksha Setu portal, management of school and daily updating of PM Poshan.

According to sources, the tablet PCs were given as per the student enrollments. Schools having enrollment below 195 are given a tablet PC, between 195 to 499 enrollment are given two tablet PCs, between 500 to 999 enrollment are given three tablets, between 1,000 to 1,499 enrollment (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

110 ex-militants join BJP in Assam

DIPHU, April 18 (PTI): More than 100 former militants joined the ruling BJP in Assam's Karbi Anglong district on Tuesday.

They were previously cadres of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and were led by Nabin Chandra Bodo.

Welcoming the new members at the BJP office here, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) chief executive Tuliram Ronghang said, "A total of 110 former members of the NDFB have joined our party today. They are from different areas and held various top positions in the militant outfit."

He said this will strengthen the party not only in Karbi Anglong, but also in neighbouring West Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao districts.

These three districts are represented by one MP in the Lok Sabha, with BJP's Horensing Bey currently holding the seat.



"The members who joined us today will work to further strengthen the party and ensure that Prime Minister Narendra Modi wins a third straight term," Rong-

hang said. Bey, Diphu MLA Bidyaising Englang and other members of the KAAC were present at the joining ceremony.

Youth Congress chief 'sexist': Angkita Dutta

GUWAHATI, April 18 (PTI): Assam Youth Congress president Angkita Dutta on Tuesday accused the unit's national chief Srinivas B V of being "sexist and chauvinistic", and discriminating against her based on gender. She also claimed of informing the matter to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

"How can a sexist and chauvinistic leader @IYC torture and demean a woman every single time. What happened to @priyankagandhi ladki hoon ladk Shakti hoon (sic)," the daughter of former Congress minister, Anjan Dutta, said in a series of tweets tagging Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi, among others. She alleged that Srinivas has continually harassed her and was "discriminating on the basis of my gender". "My values and education doesn't allow me anymore. The leadership has played deaf ears despite bring front of them MANY TIMES @RahulGandhi @kcvenugopalmp @priyankagandhi (sic)," she said on a micro-blogging site.

Dutta claimed that despite complaints, no enquiry committee has been initiated against Srinivas. "Is this the safe space @RahulGandhi talks about women @priyankagandhi," she said in another tweet. Dutta, however, did not cite any specific instance to substantiate her claims. Meanwhile, when (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Jadav Payeng conferred with Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma award

HT Correspondent
KOKRAJHAR, April 18: Eminent environmentalist and forest man of India, Jadav Payeng was conferred with the 5th edition of Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma Award 2023 at a programme held at Police Colony, Hauz Khas in New Delhi on Tuesday.

The award has been instituted by Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma Trust (GKBT) in memory of Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma, eminent social reformer and preacher of Brahma Dharma, who was born at Kazi-gaon Parbatjhora.

The award comprises a citation, endi shawl, memento and cash prize.

The chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region, Pramod Boro and chairman of GKBT, Ajit Boro conferred the award to Payeng amidst the presence of a huge gathering.

The 164th birth anniversary of Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma was observed on Tuesday in New Delhi



with a day-long programme which was organised by Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma Trust in association with the government of Bodoland Territorial Region and Delhi unit of All Bodo Students Union (ABSU).

The award giving ceremony was chaired by Urkhao Gwra Brahma, Assam cabinet minister and Sahitya Akademi award winner.

CEM Boro while attending the event expressed his gratitude, and said that he was blessed and honoured to have had the privilege of inaugurating the 164th birth anniversary observance of Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma at Community Centre, Police Colony, Hauz Khas, New Delhi.

He further recalled contributions and dedication of Gurudev

Kalicharan Brahma, which has been a source of inspiration for everyone.

"His message of peace & universal brotherhood continue to resonate with us," the CEM said.

"I extend my gratitude and appreciation to the organisers for such befitting tribute to this great visionary & social reformer. I also extend my heartfelt congratulations to eminent environmental activist Shri Jadav Payeng on being conferred the 5th Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma Award 2023 at the programme," Boro added.

Forest man of India, Payeng said that it is inspiring for him as he has been honoured with the Gurudev Kalicharan Brahma award in memory of the social reformer.

Rajya Sabha MP Rungwa Narzary, MLA Lawrence Islary, BTR executive member Nilut Swargiary, Bodo Sahitya Sabha general secretary Nilo Kanta Goyary were prominent attendees during the day's event.

Kataria, Himanta mourn the demise of Lt Gen Ajay Singh

HT Bureau
GUWAHATI, April 18: Governor Gulab Chand Kataria and chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma have condoled the demise of former Governor of Assam Lt Gen Ajay Singh who breathed his last on Tuesday.

In a message, Governor Kataria said, "I am deeply hurt by the death of former Governor of Assam Lt Gen Ajay Singh who served the state with deep commitment". His death is a great loss. Assam was indeed fortunate to have had such a leader at its helm, who served the state with honour and distinction.

"Though no words will suffice to express my grief on his death, I wholeheartedly pray to the Almighty for eternal peace of late Lt Gen Ajay Singh ji. His wonderful and gentle soul will forever remain in our hearts. My sincere condolences to the bereaved family", the Governor added.

Meanwhile, Kataria, visited the Delhi cantonment cremation ground on Tuesday to pay his last respects to Lt Gen Singh. Governor Kataria laid a floral wreath at the mortal remains of the former Governor and prayed for eternal peace of the departed soul.

Meanwhile, in a statement here today the chief minister said, "It is really sad to have lost a former Governor who contributed immensely to the development of our state. A veteran of the 1965 and 1971 wars, I recollect Lt General Singh's illustrious military career and invaluable contribution to the state and nation. His demise is a great loss".

Cook launches Apple's first India store in Mumbai

The store comes 25 years after the company started selling its products in the country through partners

MUMBAI, April 18 (PTI): Apple's chief executive Tim Cook on Tuesday launched the iconic consumer technology company's first retail store in India, welcoming customers into the facility inside a mall in suburban BKC.

"The energy, creativity, and passion in Mumbai is incredible! We are so excited to open Apple BKC — our first store in India," Cook, who opened the doors of the store for customers, tweeted. Hundreds of customers had queued up since last night to be among the first ones to shop or get a feel of the store, which comes 25 years after the company first started selling its products and services in the country through partners.

Dressed in a black-t and grey pants and accompanied by the company's senior vice president for retail Deirdre O'Brien, Cook opened the doors of the store to walk into a crowded foyer to pose for the media, and then started welcoming customers into the store. Customers took selfies with Cook, sought autographs and exchanged pleasantries before going in. One among them, a designer from Mumbai, carried his nearly four-decade-old Mac, a product which revolutionised personal computing and established Apple as a strong brand with a design focus, with him.

"I brought this just to show Apple's journey from 1984. This is the first Mac SE



which was launched in 1984. I have been using Apple products since 1984. Long journey it has been," said the designer from suburban Goregaon, who had joined the queue at 6 am on Tuesday and got more than just selfies and simple pleasantries with the Apple top executives. "I have been here since last night 8 pm, been camping outside the Apple store for about 15 hours now. I haven't had breakfast, haven't had a shower and you can see us all drenched in sweat. But yeah, we are super excited," said the first customer to go in, who wished to buy an Apple watch. The second customer to enter the shop took a flight from Rajasthan and joined the queue at 8:30 pm, and credited this to his love for the brand, and also spelt out his aim of being present in New Delhi

for the Apple's Saket outlet opening on Thursday.

At present Apple accounts for just 3 per cent share in the highly competitive smartphone market dominated by Chinese and Korean brands, but has lately seen high growth in sales, which establishes India's importance. The company is also keen to expand sourcing of products or components from the country, as it looks to diversify its supply chain beyond China.

The company employs 2,500 people in the country and has indirectly helped create 10 lakh jobs through its app ecosystem.

Excitement around the store had started to build since Apple announced the launch of two stores in India over a week ago. It had opened the Mumbai store — whose theme is

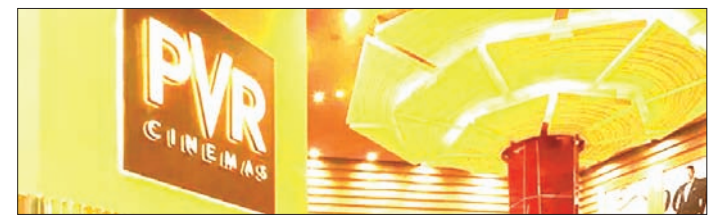
inspired by the city's iconic kaali-peeli or black and yellow taxis — for a media preview on the eve of the launch.

Apple's key beliefs in sustainability and inclusivity have driven the design of the store, O'Brien had told reporters on Monday, pointing out that the 100-strong team which will be on the floor will be speaking 18 Indian languages. Nearly half of the staff at the store, including the leadership, are women, she had said, adding that while a lot of features are at par with hundreds of such stores spread the world over, the company has also included Indian influences in the décor like a wall made up of Rajasthani stone.

A staircase with a 14-metre single piece glass on either side of the stairs is the key highlight of the store spread over 20,000 square feet over two floors in the Jio World Drive mall, which also houses brands like Diesel, Michael Kors, Kate Spade and Swarovski.

The store has products, merchandise and services like repairing the gadgets available for customers, executives said, adding that the customers will be able to check out the products and can also educate themselves on how to use them optimally. Like in any other store, there are long wooden desks on which the products have been kept, which also include specially built sensors that trigger the opening of switches.

PVR Inox inaugurates new 3-screen multiplex in Guwahati



GUWAHATI, April 18: PVR Inox launched a new 3-screen multiplex at NCS Square Mall, Guwahati on Tuesday. The new cinema will augment PVR INOX's foothold in Assam to a total of 4 cinemas across 14 screens, with its presence in Guwahati and Jorhat. With this opening, PVR Inox consolidates its presence in East India with a total of 126 screens in 33 properties.

Commenting on the launch, Ajay Bijli, Managing Director, PVR Inox said, "We are delighted to expand our presence in Guwahati, the biggest city of Assam, the vital gateway to North East India, which is poised to become a nodal point of India's growth story. The state has adopted numerous investor-friendly policies and the launch of our fourth property in Assam has been driven by the conducive business environment. This

launch reaffirms our commitment to promote the growth of multiplexes in underpenetrated markets across the country and address the growing demand for immersive big-screen experiences among movie enthusiasts exposing them to a world-class out-of-home entertainment destination."

Sanjeev Kumar Bijli, Executive Director, PVR Inox added, "North-east India is a kaleidoscope of geographic, ethnic, and economic heterogeneity. We are proud to expand our presence in Assam, the largest economy in the northeast region. We are thrilled to open our third property in Guwahati, a rapidly growing city in India. We are certain that the people of Assam and cinema enthusiasts of Guwahati would surely derive pleasure from an extraordinary movie-watching experience in our multiplex, a perfect blend of comfort and class."

NTPC signs MoU to explore feasibility of bamboo-based bio-refinery in Assam

NEW DELHI, April 18 (PTI): NTPC Ltd on Tuesday said it has signed an agreement with Chempolis India to explore the feasibility of setting up a bamboo-based bio-refinery at Bongaigaon in Assam.

In a statement, NTPC Ltd said the non-binding agreement was signed on April 10.

"NTPC and Chempolis India, a Fortum group associate, has signed a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on to explore the feasibility of setting up a bamboo-based bio-refinery," it said.

The bio-refinery project shall utilize bamboo for the production of 2G ethanol, bio-coal for thermal power plants and other value-added products.

This project, NTPC said aligns with its commitment to sustainable development and creating new opportunities for local communities.

Gold falls ₹180;
Silver declines ₹240



NEW DELHI, April 18 (PTI): Gold prices fell by ₹180 to ₹60,300 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday amid weak global trends, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal had closed at ₹60,480 per 10 grams in the previous trade.

Silver also declined by ₹240 to ₹75,780 per kg.

"Spot gold prices in the Delhi markets traded at ₹60,300 per 10 grams, down ₹180 per 10 grams.

"Gold demand in the domestic market is likely to improve after recent correction in prices and ahead of Akshaya Tritiya which is considered as an auspicious occasion for buying gold," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In the international markets, gold and silver were quoting lower at USD 2,003 per ounce and USD 25.15 per ounce, respectively.

Maruti, Hyundai see drop in retail sale market share last fiscal: FADA



NEW DELHI, April 18 (PTI): Passenger vehicle leaders Maruti Suzuki India and Hyundai Motor saw their market share dip in FY23 as compared with FY22 as they struggled with shortage of electronic components, according to automobile dealers' body FADA. Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra and Kia India on the other hand witnessed an increase in their market share based on the retail sales last fiscal. As per the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), the retail sales of country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India rose to 14,79,221 units in 2022-23 fiscal, attaining a market share of 40.86 per

Maruti Suzuki introduces new Super Carry

GUWAHATI, April 18: Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL), announced the launch of its upgraded Light Commercial Vehicle — Super Carry. Built for those who value superior quality and performance, the Super Carry is now powered by Maruti Suzuki's 1.2L Advanced K-Series Dual Jet, Dual VVT engine.

Maruti Suzuki's Super Carry mini-truck is powered by a 4-cylinder engine that now delivers improved performance with a Max Power of 59.4kW (80.7PS) @ 6000rpm and 104.4Nm of Max Torque @ 2900rpm in the petrol model. The new engine is mated to an upgraded five-speed manual transmission that offers improved gradability which enables customers to drive up steeper gradients than earlier.

Speaking about the new Super Carry launch, Shashank Srivas-

tava, Senior Executive Officer, Marketing and Sales, Maruti Suzuki India Limited said, "Maruti Suzuki has always believed in offering products that exceed customer expectations. The Super Carry, built for the unique requirements of the Indian mini-truck customer, has been accepted well in the commercial vehicle segment with more than 1.5 lakh units sold since its launch in 2016. The new Super Carry will continue to offer an excellent value proposition to customers. We are confident that it will prove to be an ideal companion for our commercial customers and partner in their success."

With the launch of the New Super Carry, Maruti Suzuki has also introduced a new CNG Cab Chassis variant. The mini-truck is also available in CNG Deck, Gasoline Deck, and Gasoline Cab Chassis variants.

Sensex, Nifty fall for a 2nd day

MUMBAI, April 18 (PTI): Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower for a second day on Tuesday due to profit-taking in select banking, power and FMCG stocks amid mixed global markets and foreign fund outflows. Fall in index major Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank also dented sentiment.

Reversing its early gains, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 183.74 points or 0.31 per cent to settle at 59,727.01. During the day, it declined 331.45 points or 0.55 per cent to a low of 59,579.30.

The broader NSE Nifty dipped 46.70 points or 0.26 per cent to end at 17,660.15 as 29 of its stocks declined while 21 advanced. After a gap-up opening, the index moved in a range of 17,766.60 to 17,610.20 during the day.

Among Sensex stocks, PowerGrid fell the most by 2.62 per cent. UltraTech Cement, Titan, Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finance, Mahindra & Mahindra, ICICI Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra, ITC and HDFC Bank were among the major laggards.

Nestle India bucked the trend, closing with gains of 1.99 per cent. HCL Technologies, IndusInd Bank,



Wipro, Maruti, Larsen & Toubro and Asian Paints were among the gainers. "The banking stocks pared the performance during the day while the market was grappling with the sell-off in the IT sector. However, the IT sector experienced a marginal relief rally, aided by bottom fishing, as the recent correction has made the sector attractive for long-term investment," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Global markets struggled to make much headway on Tuesday as investors weighed Chinese data that pointed to an uneven recovery, as well as the possibility of further policy tightening by the Federal Reserve and other central banks, said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities. In

Delhi govt denies renewal of sales licence to Pernod Ricard

NEW DELHI, April 18 (PTI): In a setback to the French spirits major Pernod Ricard, the Delhi government has rejected its application for renewal of sales licence on the ground of the ongoing investigations against the company. The excise department of the government of the national capital territory of Delhi had last week decided not to renew the sales licence of Pernod Ricard, said official sources.

An application from Pernod Ricard was received in September 2022 and it was not accepted then. Following this, the liquor major went to the court which directed the excise department to formally take a decision. That application has been now rejected, they said. The decision was taken on the ground of ongoing investigations against the company in matters related to violation of the excise policy of the Delhi government, sources added.

A response could not be ascertained from Pernod Ricard. Meanwhile, the excise department has also rejected the licence of Indospirits and Brindco.

Pernod Ricard has the right to appeal against the order before the higher authorities or take a legal course. This is a setback for Pernod Ricard as India is among its fast-growing markets.

Pernod Ricard competes with the British multina-



tional alcoholic beverage company Diageo, which owns United Spirits Ltd here, and some other domestic manufacturers. Pernod Ricard is the world's second-largest wine and spirits organisation and its portfolio comprises over 200 premium brands, including 100 Pipers, Chivas Regal, The Glenlivet, Absolut, Havana Club and Jacob's Creek.

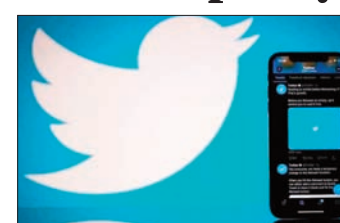
It also owns Indian brands such as Blenders Pride and Royal Stag. Pernod Ricard India is alleged to have financially supported some of its Delhi retailers to stock more of its brands. For this, some officials from the liquor firm allegedly provided bank guarantees.

Twitter to restrict visibility of tweets that violate its policy

NEW DELHI, April 18 (PTI): Social media platform Twitter will allow freedom of speech but not "freedom of reach" as it will restrict visibility of tweets that violate its rules, the company said in its policy update. Twitter will initially apply the visibility filter on tweets that are found violating hateful conduct rules and expand it to other domains later. The social media firm said that Twitter users have the right to express their opinions and ideas without fear of censorship. "We also believe it is our responsibility to keep users on our platform safe from content violating our rules. These beliefs are the foundation of freedom of speech, not freedom of reach -- our enforcement philosophy which means, where appropriate, restricting the reach of tweets that violate our policies by making the content less discoverable," the firm said.

The sample screenshot shared an example of visibility restriction of tweets that may violate Twitter's rule against hateful conduct.

"Restricting the reach of tweets, also known as visibility filtering, is one of our existing enforcement actions that allows us to move beyond the binary 'leave up versus



take down' approach to content moderation. However, like other social platforms, we have not historically been transparent when we've taken this action," it said.

The social media firm said that it will not place ads adjacent to content that is labelled under the new rule.

"Starting soon, we will add publicly visible labels to tweets identified as potentially violating our policies letting you know we've limited their visibility," the microblogging platform said.

Twitter said that authors will be able to submit feedback on the label, if they think "we incorrectly limited their tweet's visibility."

"Currently, submitting feedback does not guarantee you will receive a response or that your tweet's reach will be restored. We are working on allowing authors to appeal our decision," it said.

WeWork India takes on lease 92,000-sq ft office space in Pune

The workspace marks WeWork India's third transaction with Panchshil Realty

NEW DELHI, April 18 (PTI): Co-working major WeWork India has taken on lease 92,000 square feet office space in Pune from Panchshil Realty to expand its business. In a statement, WeWork India said it has signed a lease agreement for a new building 'Eleven West' in Pune.

Located in Baner, the workspace spans over 92,000 square feet and marks WeWork India's third transaction with real estate developer Panchshil Realty.

Arnav S Gusain, Head of Real Estate & Product, WeWork India, said, "This collaboration builds on our long-standing relationship with Panchshil Realty, which has consistently delivered quality workspaces to WeWork India."

Pune has emerged as one of the prominent cities for businesses seeking top-quality real estate, he said, adding that the company



would expand its footprint in the city by providing world-class workspace experiences to the modern workforce.

Sagar Chordia, Director, Panchshil Realty, said, "WeWork India has been a credible partner of Panchshil Realty since 2019. WeWork India marked its first space take-up in the city at Futura, Pune, and the addition of its office space at Eleven West further strengthens our

ties and reflects confidence in our workspaces." WeWork India is one of the leading office space providers aimed at creating flexible workspace solutions for companies of all sizes. Since entering the Indian market in 2017, WeWork India has expanded its portfolio to more than 6.5 million square feet of assets signed across 44 locations in the national capital region (NCR), Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune and Hyderabad.

LOST

I have lost my original Provincial Certificate of Metric Roll 415 No.0294 of the year 2005 and my Higher Secondary Provincial Certificate Roll 0609 No. 10175 of the year 2007 on the way to the market from my residence. The finder/s is/are requested to return the same.

John Khalkho,
S/o- Lt. Anjilush Khalkho,
Village- Phang Adong
PO- Hidipi, PS- Dillai
Ph. No. 8822569394

NAME CHANGE

I change my name to Shri Ram Chandra Amsih from Shri Ram Chandra Deka. For all intent and purposes from now on I will be known as Shri Ram Chandra Amsih instead of Shri Ram Chandra Deka.

Shri Ram Chandra Amsih,
S/o- Hira Sing Deka,
R/o- ITI Colony, Rongmongve
Village, PO- Diphu, PS- Diphu,
Karbi Anglong, Assam

AFFIDAVIT

By an Affidavit sworn before Notary Public, Diphu Court, I declared that my birth certificate vide SL. N. 241/36/8/99 issued by Military Hospital, Shillong where my date of birth has been wrongly recorded as 31/08/1999 instead of 31/08/2000. My actual date of birth is 31/08/2000.

On the other hand my Father's Name is wrongly recorded as Shiva Ram Basumatary instead of Siva Ram Basumatary in my birth certificate issued by the Department of Health Services. I declared that Siva Ram Basumatary and Shiva Ram Basumatary are the name of the same and single person.

Parishmita Basumatary,
D/o- Sri Siva Ram Basumatary
Vill.-Borbari,
P.O- Rajapahar, PS- Bakalia
Dist.- Karbi Anglong

UPPL celebrates Rongjali Bwisagu Pwrbw in Kokrajhar

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, April 18: Along with rest of the state, the Sukhanjhara Primary Committee of ruling United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) party under Banargaon block in Kokrajhar celebrated Rongjali Bwisagu Pwrbw 2023 (Rongali Bihu Utsov) at Kantalguri village playground with a day long programme scheduled on Monday.

As part of the programme, Sukhanjhara primary committee president, Dante Basumatary hoisted party flag followed by hoisting Rongjali Bwisagu flag by Karuna Kanta Basumatary, retired headmaster of SK Jeowary ME School, Sukhanjhara.

Participating people from all walks of life donning wearing traditional attire Dhokona, Jwmgra, Aronai, Phulam Gamcha etc joined hands to celebrate the festival.

Bwisagu dancing, songs attracted a huge gathering.

An open Bwisagu dancing & singing programme was also showcased to mark the Rongjali Bwisagu celebration among the participants participated from different villages of



the area.

On the occasion, senior and elder citizens were also offered warm felicitation with traditional Aronai and Phulam Gamcha as a token of respect and affection.

During the celebration, Prof Bandhuram Basumatary, retired principal of Kokrajhar DIET graced as chief guest, Kokrajhar East LAC MLA, Lawrence Islary, UPPL

media cell secretary Hantigiri Narzary, Farmer's Cell general secretary Amarjit Basumatary, SC Students Union general secretary Sujit Das, Banargaon TCLCC chairman Rabiram Brahma were prominent attendees in the event.

MLA Islary while highlighting the celebration of Rongjali Bwisagu Pwrbw (Rongali Bihu Utsov) said that the Rongjali Bwisagu Pwrbw is a festival

to accord warm welcome of Assamese New Year amongst the life of the humanity. He said that the Rongjali Bwisagu Pwrbw is also regarded as a cultural festival with traditions of the ethnic communities of the indigenous peoples like Bodo etc.

He has extended his Rongjali Bwisagu (Rongali Bihu) greetings and best wishes to all citizens of the citizens in the state.

NFR launches special trains from New Jalpaiguri to Howrah and Sealdah



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, April 18: The Northeast Frontier Railway has decided to operate two pairs of summer special trains between New Jalpaiguri - Howrah - New Jalpaiguri and New Jalpaiguri - Sealdah - New Jalpaiguri to clear the extra rush of passengers during the summer season. One summer special train will run for eleven trips and another summer special train for ten trips in both directions. Summer Special train no. 03027

(Howrah - New Jalpaiguri) will run for eleven trips leaving from Howrah at 11.40 pm on every Wednesday from April 19 till June 28, to reach New Jalpaiguri at 10:45 am on the next day. In return direction, Summer Special train no. 03028 (New Jalpaiguri - Howrah) will run for eleven trips leaving from New Jalpaiguri at 12:15 pm on every Thursday from April 20 till June 29, to reach Howrah at 11.30 pm on the same day. The summer special trains

will consist of 21 coaches. There will be AC First Class, AC 2-tier, AC 3-tier, Sleeper Class and General Second Class for accommodation of passengers.

Summer Special train no. 03103 (Sealdah - New Jalpaiguri) will run for ten trips leaving from Sealdah at 11.40 pm on every Saturday from April 22 till June 24, 2023 to reach New Jalpaiguri at 10:45 am on the next day. In return direction, Summer Special train no. 03104 (New Jalpaiguri - Sealdah) will run for ten trips leaving from New Jalpaiguri at 12:15 pm on every Sunday from April 23 till June 25, to reach Sealdah at 11.50 pm on the same day. The summer special trains will consist of 19 coaches. There will be AC First Class, AC 2-tier and AC 3-tier for accommodation of passengers.

During its both ways journey the summer special trains will run via Bandel, Katwa, Azimganj, Malda Town, Barsoi and Kishanganj.

Dairy farmers under NABARD get new mart

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, April 18: Hojai MLA Ram Krishna Ghosh ceremonially inaugurated Naba Kapili Rural Mart, a systematic outlet for milk and other milk based products, at Hojai Natun Bazar area a couple of days back here. NABARD sponsored the fund for setting up the mart for local rural dairy farmers and also promoted one group of such dairy farmers as Dakshin Hojai Milk Producers Company Ltd which contains almost 480 shareholders.

Rajendra Perna, DDM, NABARD, Rama Bala Devi, chairman, Hojai Zila Parishad, Lakhi Prasad Bora, Dairy officer, Dr Shamim Ara Rahman, veterinary officer, Mukut Deka, secretary of Gramya Unnayan Sangstha, Hojai and a host of dignitaries participated in the inaugural programme.

While addressing the occasion, Rajendra Perna, DDM NABARD stated that NABARD promoted one FPC to Milk Producers Company Ltd and had already been registered under company act. Earlier, under the guidance of NABARD, Dairy Development Department and NGO Gramya Unnayan Sangstha, Hojai, the FPC got involved in various activities including milk production, collection, processing, selling, etc with ₹ one crore turnover, he added.

Meanwhile in his inaugural speech, Ramkrishna Ghosh, MLA Hojai lauded the efforts of the FPC in expanding its business into newer areas with support from NABARD, Dairy Development Department, SBI etc and also thanked NABARD for sanctioning fund in setting up Naba Kapili Rural Mart at Hojai Natun Bazar Area, a release stated here.

AJYCP condoles demise of KSA former asst sec

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, April 18: Assam Jatiyabadi Yuva Chatra Parishad (AJYCP), central executive member, Jitu Phukon and his associates visited the residence of deceased Karbi Students Association's former assistant secretary, Biswajit Teron. Teron passed away on April 16 due to cardiac arrest. The AJYCP team visited the residence of late Teron at Diphu Serlongion and offered a phulam gamusa and a memento. Phukon expressed his sadness on the untimely demise of the KSA leader.

Speeding scooter hits pole

HT Correspondent

BOKAJAN, April 18: A speeding scooter lost control and met with an accident at Nilip Chokihola No.1 Chun Teron village under Chokihola Police Station. The scooter crashed against an electric pole. The rider of the two-wheeler, a young woman sustained severe injuries on her right-hand fingers.

The injured young woman was taken to Chokihola Hospital for treatment.

Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya 5th convocation on April 27

HT Correspondent

NAGAON, April 18: The fifth convocation of Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya will be held on April 27 at Guwahati unit, Rupnagar.

Assam Governor and the visitor of the University Gulab Chand Kataria will grace the occasion as the chief guest.

The University will present honorary D.Litt. awards to two distinguished personalities for the first time. Eminent educationist, social worker Dr Achyuta Samanta and eminent educationist, writer and Sankaradev scholar Bhabha Prasad

Chaliha respectively will receive the honour from the viceroy.

Prof Mirinal Kumar Borah, registrar of the viceroy, has informed that 22 PhD scholars, 14 M.Phil scholars and 452 undergraduate and post-graduate students will be awarded degrees during the convocation.

Dr Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, minister of state for education and the ministry of external affairs, will attend the convocation as the guest of honour, a press note said, adding that the successful candidates can apply online for the convocation on or before the April 24 by visiting the university website www.mssv.ac.in.

Guwahati Bihu Sammelani concludes with grand fanfare

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, April 18: The closing ceremony of 72nd Guwahati Bihu Sammelani, Latasil, Uzanbazar was held on Monday. The Bihu samragi was awarded in the memory of Anairam Nunisa and Raishmodi Nunisa.

The awards were coined as 'ANAIRAM NUNISA and RAISHMODI NUNISA BIHU SAMRAGI AWARD 2023'.

Pratiksha Rani Borgohain was awarded the Bihu Samragi Award. Dignitaries like Ashok Kumar Bishaya, president, Guwahati Bihu Sammelan, Nilupam Das, general secretary, Guwahati Bihu Sammelan and others.



Mission was to overhaul the traditional piggery sector through modern scientific interventions, training, and motivational programs.

While emphasizing the potential of piggery in Bodoland and mentioning the need to encourage and support small and medium-scale pig farms in the region, Boro said that the BTR government is committed to work for all round development and welfare of the Bodoland region.

Mission in-charge and eminent rural economy expert, Pushpadhar Das mentioned that Bodoland pig mission was launched to modernize and uplift the Piggery sector for transforming traditional livelihoods into sustainable economic activity, generating one-lakh kgs of pork per day by the fifth year, production of 1700 quality piglets per day, and 3 lakh pigs to be made available on any day. The mission envisages the

direct involvement of 30,000 households in pork production activities, additional involvement of 20,000 farmers in feed raw material production, and about 5,000 direct employment generations in non-farm support activities.

DCAC expert Niels Erik Jespersen gave a comprehensive presentation on the piggery sector in Denmark in the technical session.

The roadmap for the mission related to scientific rearing, quality piglets, veterinary science, and feed management was discussed in detail during the workshop.

Piggery Entrepreneur and Asom Gaurav awardee, Manoj Basumatary spoke on the multiple modules of training being undertaken for the benefit of the pig farmers through the mission.

The three-day workshop will include field tours to different districts of BTR and a session under the aegis of the North East Desk of the Invest India Programme of the government of India.

We demand unconditional apology: Naga Students to Ranjit Gogoi

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, April 18: The Rengma Naga Students' Union (RNSU), Karbi Anglong stated that they felt humiliated and insulted by the lyrics of the song sung by Ranjit Gogoi for using the words "Okora Noga", "Nagini" during the mega Bihu performance which scripted name in the Guinness Book of World Records in Guwahati.

"We condemn the song sung by Shri Ranjit Gogoi in the event to create Guinness Book of World record. The lyrics of the song have intensely hurt the sentiments and emotions of Naga Tribes living in Assam and other parts of North East," the union stated.

"Unfortunately, on the other side, we felt humiliated and insulted through the lyrics of the song sung by Shri. Ranjit Gogoi using the words "Okora Noga" "Nagini" etc. on a significant stage which has been witnessed by viewers of the nation and

across the globe. The Rengma Naga Tribes have been living in Assam since time immemorial and we are one of the proud tribes of Assam," the union added. The Union stated that the Naga communities, are an integral part of greater Assamese society and culture and that they are really proud to be part of this society but unfortunately, most of the time, they are being discriminated in different ways.

"The Rengma Naga Students' Union Karbi Anglong, Assam strongly demands this song to be banned in any future event hereafter. We also demand an unconditional apology from the artist Shri. Ranjit Gogoi failing to which, we will be compelled to take legal recourse.

The Rengma Naga Cultural troops also participated in witnessing the Guinness Book of World record performance and feel proud to be the people of the State," the union stated.

File No. NAM/Manpower/SPMU-DPMU/48/2022/02

NOTICE FOR

WALK IN INTERVIEW UNDER NATIONAL AYUSH MISSION (NAM),

ASSAM

It is for information for all willing candidates that Walk-In-Interview will be held for engagement in the following position on contractual basis as per schedule mentioned against the position name.

Sl No	Name of the Position	No of Positions	Date of Walk in Interview	Reporting time
1	Consultant-HR	1	02/05/2023	09 AM to 10 AM
2	Consultant-AHWC	1	03/05/2023	09 AM to 10 AM
3	Consultant-Procurement	1	04/05/2023	09 AM to 10 AM
4	Accounts Assistant	1	06/05/2023	09 AM to 10 AM
5	Programme Assistant	1	08/05/2023	09 AM to 10 AM
6	Office Assistant	1	09/05/2023	09 AM to 10 AM
7	Office Peon cum Chowkidar	2	10/05/2023	09 AM to 10 AM

Reporting Time: 09:00 AM to 10:00 AM

Venue: Office of the National AYUSH Mission, Assam, Saikia Commercial Complex, Christian Basti, GS. Road, Guwahati-05

The candidates must bring with them a duly filled **APPLICATION FORM** along with a set of self attested copies of all the relevant documents/certificates. The candidates also must bring all the relevant original documents/certificates for necessary verification at the time of the walk in interview.

The detailed advertisement regarding qualification, experience, age and **APPLICATION FORM** along with other terms and conditions may be downloaded from the office website of Directorate of AYUSH, Assam (<https://ayush.assam.gov.in>)

All applicants are advised to visit the website accordingly. No separate individual call letter for interview/selection test will be sent. No TA/DA will be paid for attending the interview/selection test.

Sd/-

Director of AYUSH cum Member Secretary (EB)
State AYUSH Society, Assam

Janasanyog/D/734/23

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tender affixing court fee stamp of Rs.8.25 (Rupees eight and twenty five paisa) only are hereby invited from the local intending tenderers/firms and reputed supplier for supply of spare motor parts and for repairing works of this district police vehicles / motorcycles and Generators as per list enclosed for the Financial year 2023-24. The tender will be received in the office of the Superintendent of Police, Karbi Anglong, Assam at MT Branch Police Reserve, Diphu upto 2 PM on 25-04-2023 and will be opened on the same day in presence of the tenderers or their authorized representatives, if any.

Terms and condition of the tender

- The tenders must be sealed and the sealed envelopes containing the tender should be subscribed as "Tender for supply of spare motor parts and for repairing works for the year 2023-24" for the office of the Superintendent of Police, Karbi Anglong, Assam to be put in the (tender box) placed at MT branch, Diphu.
- Each and every tenderers must furnish earnest money of Rs.5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the shape of NSC/ Kishan Vikash Patra/ Demand draft/ FDR pledged in favour of the Superintendent of Police, Karbi Anglong, Assam.
- The rates must be written legibly both in figures and in words with clear indication of quantum (i.e. each/dozen/box/pkt/unit etc.) of its contents etc. of which the rates stand for.
- No eraser should be used in the tender. If any correction has to be made just above the strike off line, the same must be attested by dated signature of the tenderer below the strike off line.
- While quoting rates, the tenderer must mention the brand, make of the articles for which the rates quoted stand for.
- The rates should be for destination. The rates should be quoted exclusive of G.S.T.
- The rates quoted once cannot be altered I withdrawn after submission of the tender and will hold for 1(one) year. No representation/appeal for enhancement of the rates on ground of rise of price on any other reason whatsoever will be entertained.
- The earnest money of the un-successful tenders will be immediately refunded after finalization of tenders. However, the earnest money of successful tenderer will be retained as security deposit for due performance of supplies.
- The selected tenderer/tenderers will have to supply the articles as and when intended. The articles supplied must be best quality or genuine make and must conform to the specification of brands quoted.
- The successful tenderer must be in a position to supply the articles within 7(seven) days from the date of receipt of supply order from this office.
- The tenderers must submit their photocopies of the following documents along with the tender without which the tender will be liable for rejection. All the documents submitted along with the tender will have to be self-attested.
 - Permanent Account Number (PAN) issued by the Income Tax Department.
 - Up-to-date Municipal/Gaon Panchayat Trade License.
 - Up-to-date Income Tax Return.
 - Provisional registration certificate of D.G.P Office, Assam, Guwahati-7.
 - G.S.T registration certificate
- The authority is not bound to accept the lowest rate.
- The intending renderers may visit the office of the undersigned during office hours for collection of the tender papers both hard & soft copy of the same.

Sd/-

Superintendent of Police
Karbi Anglong, Assam

Janasanyog/C/1084/23

No. TE[EX] Admn-2/2023/

Dated Guwahati, the

EDUCATIONAL NOTICE

FOR POLYTECHNIC ADMISSION TEST [PAT]-2023

It is brought to the notice to all concerned that the Polytechnic Admission Test [PAT]-2023 will be held on 18th June, 2023 from 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon.

The final date of issue of Admit Card will be declared later on.

The candidates are instructed to visit the website : dte.assam.gov.in for any further notification.

Sd/-

Director of Technical Education, Assam,
Kahilipara, Guwahati-19.

Janasanyog /D/717/23

Workshop on Bodoland Pig Mission gets underway

HT Correspondent

KOKRAJHAR, April 18: A three-day workshop on the Bodoland Pig Mission began from Tuesday being held at Radisson Blu Hotel in Guwahati.

The workshop was organised by Bodoland Territorial Council government with the participation of the Danish Consortium of Academic Craftsmanship (DCAC), Denmark to impart training and capacity building as well educational corporation while rearing the Piggery in its sustainable aspects.

Notably, the Bodoland Pig Mission will collaborate with the Denmark government in the areas of capacity building, educational cooperation, and mentorship to strengthen the mission.

Chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region, Pramod Boro ceremonially inaugurated the workshop and emphasized on proper implementation of the mission with letter and spirit.

Boro in his address mentioned that the objective of the Bodoland Pig

What days can you get pregnant?

By: Jayne Leonard

Females are most fertile within a day or two of ovulation, which is when the ovaries release an egg. But, it is possible to get pregnant in the days leading up to ovulation, as sperm can survive for several days inside the female body.

The days during the menstrual cycle when a person is least likely to get pregnant are known as the 'safe period.'

This article describes how to calculate the fertile window to aid or avoid conception.

Was this helpful?

The menstrual cycle

The average person's menstrual cycle is between 28-32 days. Some people have shorter cycles, while others have much longer ones.

The first day of a person's period is considered the first day of their menstrual cycle. Their period then typically lasts 3-7 days.

Variations in the menstrual cycle usually happen in the follicular phase that occurs before ovulation.

The luteal phase, which occurs from ovulation to the next period, is typically 14 days long.

Ovulation and conception

Ovulation occurs when one of the ovaries releases an egg. After release, the egg moves to the fallopian tube, where it will travel to the uterus, which takes about 24 hours.

Pregnancy occurs if sperm travels to the fallopian tube and fertilizes the egg. If sperm does not fertilize the egg, the egg moves to the uterus and breaks down, ready to leave the body during the next menstrual period.

Calculating ovulation

According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, ovulation occurs around 14 days before a person expects to have their next period if their monthly cycle is 28 days. Most people ovulate between days 11-21 of their cycle. The first day of their last menstrual period (LMP) is day 1 of the cycle. Ovulation does not always occur on the same day every month and can vary by a day or more on either side of the expected date. Doctors call the part of the cycle around ovulation the fertile window because the chance of pregnancy is highest at this time. For example, if ovulation occurs on day 14, a person can conceive on that day or within the following 24 hours.

However, their fertile window begins a few days before ovulation because sperm can survive for up to 5 days inside the female body. So, even if a person does not have sex on day 14 or 15, it is still possible to become pregnant if they had sex without using contraception on days 9-13.

According to research from 2018, the likelihood of conception rises from day 8, reaching its maximum on day 13 and decreasing to zero by day 30.

However, it is essential to note that these findings should only act as a guideline. Every person and every cycle is different.

It can be helpful for a person to chart their

monthly cycle and take note of the signs of ovulation to help pinpoint the exact day of ovulation each month.

Signs of ovulation

Tracking the signs of ovulation can help someone determine the precise day they ovulate each month.

Signs include:

- Mild cramping in the lower abdomen
- Wetter, clearer, and more slippery vaginal discharge similar to egg white
- A small increase in basal body temperature
- A higher sex drive

Some of these signs, such as basal body temperature, will continue to change after ovulation. For this reason, a person should not use temperature to predict the fertile window.

It may be helpful for someone to track the signs over a few months to get an idea of what is typical for their body.

But they should keep in mind that there are several variables, and the timing of ovulation can change, month-to-month.

Another option is to use an ovulation predictor kit or fertility monitor.

Fertility aids measure the levels of specific hormones in the urine to determine the ovulation day each month. Some devices also identify days of peak fertility.

Using a combination of these methods may provide an individual with the best accuracy.

The following table, based on research from 2015, summarizes a typical menstrual cycle and how fertile a person is likely to be at each stage:

To get a more specific range of highest fertility windows based on the day of ovulation, a person can track the first day of their last period in a pregnancy calculator.

Day of cycle	Stage	Fertility
1-7	menstruation	least fertile stage
8-9	post-menstruation	possible to conceive
10-14	days around ovulation	most fertile
15-16	post-ovulation	possible to conceive
17-28	thickening of uterine lining	less fertile — unlikely to conceive

Maximizing fertility and chances of conception

To maximize the chances of becoming pregnant, a person should time sexual intercourse to occur during the 2-3 days leading up to, and including, ovulation. Having sexual intercourse on any of these days may provide a 20-30% chance of pregnancy.

Other tips to improve the chances of conception include:

Have regular sexual intercourse. Pregnancy rates are highest among partners who have sex every 2 or 3 days throughout the month.

Avoid smoking. Smoking tobacco reduces fertility and impacts the health of a developing fetus. Limit alcohol intake. Alcohol intake can reduce fertility in males and females and harm a fetus. Maintain a moderate weight. People who have overweight or underweight are more

likely to have irregular ovulation.

Reduce stress: While the research on whether anxiety or stress can reduce fertility is not conclusive, it is clear that reducing stress can provide some benefit for a person trying to conceive.

Manage comorbidities: Rule out or treat any medical causes that may contribute to infertility. In females, this can include hormonal problems, endometriosis, polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), uterine fibroids, autoimmune disorders, and more.

A doctor can assess a couple's overall health and may be able to identify methods to improve the probability of conception.

What can affect male fertility?

Even if a person is having regular sexual intercourse and tracking ovulation, there can be reasons why the sperm cannot reach the egg.

Causes of male infertility include:

Sperm morphology: Differences in the size and shape of the sperm can impact fertility.

Low sperm count: The male partner's ejaculate fluid does not contain sufficient sperm. Fertility doctors consider a person to have a low sperm count if they have under 15 million sperm per milliliter of semen — the fewer the sperm, the lower the chances of conception.

Low sperm motility: This means the

sperm cannot move as efficiently to reach the egg. There are a variety of medical conditions that can cause any of these problems with male fertility, including a hormonal imbalance, infection or injury to the testicles, surgery in the area, and diseases such as cancer.

Avoiding pregnancy

Some people may wish to track their fertility to prevent pregnancy. This is known as the fertility awareness method.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) charts fertility awareness-based methods of contraception as having a 24% failure rate with typical use. The chances of pregnancy are lowest during a person's period and on the days on either side of the period.

However, they may still become pregnant if they have ovulated early or late in their cycle, as sperm can survive in the body for several days.

People wishing to use the fertility awareness method should speak with their doctor first.

Fertility and age

Ovulation and the fertile window can change from cycle to cycle, but

they may also alter with age. Fertility naturally begins to decline in females in their 30s. By age 40, a person's chance of conceiving drops to 10% per cycle.

The number of eggs and egg quality decrease with age. Ovulation may also become irregular.

Some medical conditions, such as endometriosis or PCOS, also make conception more difficult.

How does fertility differ with the pill?

Birth control pills aim to prevent unintended pregnancy. The pill prevents pregnancy by releasing synthetic hormones that stop ovulation from occurring and the uterus lining from thickening. So, even if the ovaries do release an egg, a fertilized egg would be unable to implant in the wall of the uterus. The pill also thickens cervical mucus, making it harder for sperm to reach an egg. According to the CDC, the birth control pill is more than 99% effective with perfect use but only 91% effective with typical use. This means that around 9 out of 100 women would become pregnant in a year of taking the pill with typical use.

When to see a doctor

Females who track their fertile window with the aim of getting pregnant should see their doctor for preconception planning.

As well as identifying barriers to conceiving, a doctor can advise on the use of folic acid or prenatal supplements to encourage a safe pregnancy. Most couples who have frequent sex without contraception will conceive within 12 months.

Women under 35 years of age should see their doctor if they do not conceive after a year of trying. Those over 35 years of age should seek medical advice after 6 months of trying to conceive. Anyone who has irregular cycles or does not appear to ovulate should also speak with their doctor.

There may be an underlying medical cause that is preventing ovulation and conception.

Frequently asked questions

Here are the answers to some frequently asked questions about when pregnancy can occur.

Can I get pregnant 2 days before my period?

Days 17-28 before the first day of a person's period are the days when the uterine lining begins to thicken. While a person is less likely to conceive during this time, conception is still possible.

Can I get pregnant on my period?

Although pregnancy is still possible, a female is less fertile while on their period.

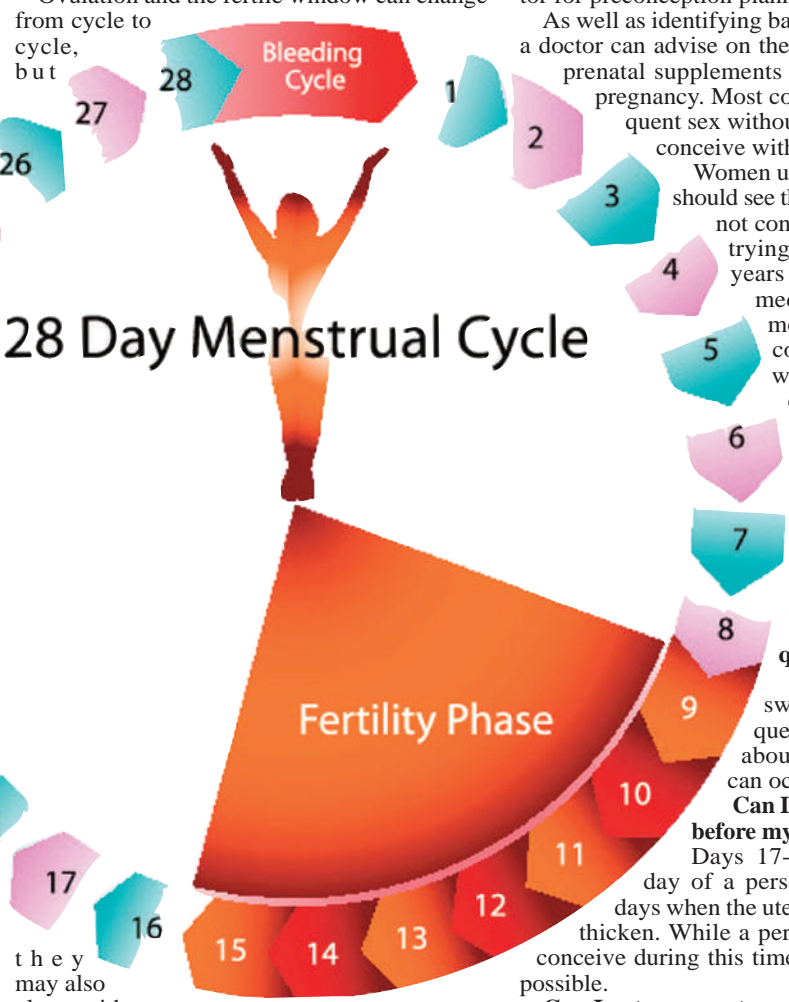
How many days after your period can you get pregnant?

A female can get pregnant at any time during her menstrual cycle. The likelihood of pregnancy is highest during ovulation, which is typically days 10-14.

Intermenstrual bleeding can occur between periods. To pinpoint the start of a menstrual cycle, a female must correctly identify their actual period. Each person's menstrual cycle is different. Generally, it lasts 28-32 days. A person is at their most fertile during ovulation, which occurs around days 10-14.

A person can calculate the exact days of ovulation each month by counting from the first day of their period.

However, certain medical conditions may affect ovulation or impact the sperm's ability to reach the egg. People who have been unable to conceive for over a year should talk with a fertility specialist. (Courtesy: Medical News Today)



Breastfeeding myths & facts: Busting common myths about breastfeeding

By: Shivangani Singh

Breastfeeding is not an easy journey; it is full of ups and downs. A woman is usually not used to the practice and a delay by the baby often makes the new mothers anxious. But there are various other myths around the breastfeeding journey and too much information or misconceptions can result in restlessness and overthinking among the mothers which is unwanted, unhealthy and not needed.

Problems relating to breastfeeding are common and few of them are low milk production, confusion with the diet, frequency of breastfeeding, etc. Today, we are here to tackle the myths and misconceptions and replace these with facts and truths so that you know better and are well prepared for your breastfeeding journey.

Myth 1: It is normal for breastfeeding to hurt

According to WHO, many women experience discomfort in the first few days of their breastfeeding journey since they are new to it and it takes some time for them to learn the process. But if they have the right support and position their baby correctly, making sure their baby is correctly attached to the breast; the problem of sore nipples can be prevented. If you think you do everything right yet face issues regarding lactation, it's best to consult a lactation specialist.

Myth 2: You need to wash your nipples before breastfeeding

No, this is the wrong information and a big misconception. You don't need to wash your nipples before breastfeeding isn't necessary. When babies are born, they recognize their mothers by their smell and touch thus they are already used to the mother's smells and sounds. The nipples produce a substance that has good bacteria and is recognized by the baby due to its smell. It is only beneficial for the baby since it helps them to build babies'

healthy immune system for life.

Myth 3: Breastfeeding mothers can't take medicines

There is no such thing that breastfeeding mothers can't take medicines. The main criteria is to just inform your doctor that you are breastfeeding and make sure to read the instructions on the medicines if you are buying over the counter medicines. Make sure to take medications at a specific time and in a specific dosage.

Myth 4: You can't breastfeed while you are sick

The mothers can and cannot breastfeed their child while they are sick and the answer depends on the type of sickness or disease the mothers are suffering from. Make sure to get the right treatment, eat right, and drink plenty of fluids. There are few diseases in which the antibodies produced in the mother's body is passed on to the baby thus it is better to take an advice from the doctor.

Myth 5: Many mothers can't produce enough milk

Almost all mothers produce the right amount of milk for their babies. Breastmilk production depends on the fact that how well the baby is latched on to the breast, the frequency of breastfeeding and how well the baby is feeding on the milk while breastfeeding. During breastfeeding, mothers need support and guidance from their health care providers, help at home, and need to stay healthy by eating right and drinking more fluids.

Myth 6: Breastfeeding mothers should only eat plain food

There's no such thing that breastfeeding mothers need to eat plain food but yes, you need to consume a balanced diet if you are breastfeeding. No change is required in the eating habits and diet of a mother as long as it is healthy. According to WHO, babies are habituated to their mothers' food preferences from the time they are in the womb so you do not need to worry about the baby's response. (Courtesy: The Quint)

No country for menstruating girls and women

By: Kriti Atwal/PARI

“Whatever I learn in school is the opposite of the reality in my home.” Priya is a 16-year-old schoolgirl from the Rajput community in the mountain state of Uttarakhand. She is speaking about the strict and clearly laid-out rules she is forced to follow when she is menstruating. “It is almost like living in two different worlds. At home I am made to isolate myself and follow all the customs and restrictions, and in school I am taught that women are equal to men,” she says.

A student of Class 11, Priya's school is in Nanakmatta town, seven kilometres from her home in the village. She cycles there and back every day. A good student, she initially tried educating herself on the subject. “I read books and I thought I would do this and that; I would change the world. But I was not able to convince my family that these customs have no meaning. I live with them day and night but I am unable to make them understand that these restrictions have no meaning,” she says. Her initial unease and discomfort at the rules and regulations has not diminished but she just goes along with her parents' thinking now.

Priya and her family live in the terai (lowland) region, the highest yielding agricultural region in the state (Census 2011). The region has three harvests — kharif, rabi and zaid — and most of the population is engaged in agriculture and keeps livestock, mostly cows and buffaloes.

Paddy fields on the way to Nagala village. Agriculture is the main occupation here in this terai (lowland) region in Udham Singh Nagar district. Photo: Kriti Atwal/People's Archive of Rural India

In another Rajput home close by, Vidha describes her living arrangements when she is menstruating: “For the next six days, I will be confined to my room. I have been told [by her mother and paternal grandmother] not to roam around. My mother will bring me whatever I need.”

The room has two beds, a dressing table and almirah. The 15-year-old Vidha will not sleep on her regular wooden bed but on a flimsy cot covered with a sheet that she says gives her a backache, but she does it for “my family's peace of mind.”

During this strictly mandated isolation, Vidha is allowed to go to school, but must come straight back to this room in her home in Nagala village in Sitarganj block. Her mother's phone and some books help the Class 11 student pass the time.

When a woman begins to sit separately from others in the family and moves her things to one side it's a signal to everyone that she is menstruating. Vidha resents the fact that who is menstruating and who is not, is public knowledge. She says, “everyone gets to know and discusses it. She [the menstruating person] is not al-



lowed to touch the animals and fruit-bearing trees, or cook and serve food, and even accept offerings from the temple.”

This view of women as ‘impure’ and ‘inauspicious’ is reflected in Udham Singh Nagar's demographics which show a poor sex ratio of 920 females per 1,000 males, lower than the state average of 963. Also, the literacy rate at 65 per cent is for women is significantly lower than among men — 82 per cent (Census 2011).

Below Vidha's bed is a thaali, a bowl, steel tumbler and spoon that she must use to eat during this time. On the fourth day she wakes up early to wash and dry these utensils in the sun. “Then my mother sprays gau mutra [cow urine] on the dishes, washes them again and places them back in the kitchen. I am given different utensils for the next two days,” she says, detailing the elaborate procedures that she has to follow. She is prohibited from moving around outside the house and wearing clothes “other than what my mother has given me to wear during those days,” she adds. The two pairs of clothes she wears must be washed and hung at the back of the house to dry and are not to be mixed with other clothes.

Vidha's father is in the army and it's her mother who manages the household of 13 people. Isolating in such a large family is awkward for her, especially explaining it to her young brothers: “My family members have told them that this is an illness for which girls have to live in isolation from others. If someone unknowingly touches me, then they are also considered ‘impure’, and only after they have been sprayed with gau mutra will they be ‘clean’. During those six days, everything that comes into contact with Vidha is sprayed with gau mutra. It helps that the family owns four cows so their urine is readily available.

The community has relaxed a few practices, but marginally. So while in 2022 Vidha gets a separate bed to lie on, Beena, in her 70s, from the same village, recounts how she had to stay in a cattle pen when she menstruated. “We would spread pine leaves on the floor to sit,” she recalls.

Another older woman remembers a time when, “I would be given phookhi [sugarless] chai along with dry rotis. Or we would get rotis made of coarse grain such as that given to animals. Sometimes they would forget about us and we would stay hungry.” Many women and men believe that these practices are ordained in religious texts and so cannot be questioned. Some women did say they are embarrassed but they also added that they believe the gods will be displeased if they don't isolate themselves. As a young man in the village, Vinay agrees that he rarely meets or comes face-to-face with menstruating women. Growing up he heard the phrase, “Mummy achool ho gayi hai [Mummy has become untouchable now]”. The 29-year-old lives with his wife in a rented room in Nanakmatta town. Originally from Champawat district of Uttarakhand, he moved here a decade ago when he began teaching in a private school. “We are never told that it is a natural process. If we stop following these restrictions from childhood, men will not look down upon any girl or woman when she gets her periods,” he says.

Purchasing and later disposing sanitary pads is a challenge. The solitary shop in the village may or may not stock them and then young girls like Chhavi say they get strange looks from the shopkeeper when they ask. Going home, they are forced to hide their purchases from prying eyes. Finally, disposing of the pads calls for a walk to a canal 500 metres away, a quick look around to check nobody's watching before it's flung in.

Giving birth invites yet more isolation

The idea of ‘impurity’ extends to those who have just given birth as well. Lata has teenage children but she remembers her time well: “Instead of 4 to 6 days [for menstruating girls], new mothers are kept apart from the rest of the household for 11 days. Sometimes this may even be 15 days, that is, until the naming ceremony of the child is done.” Lata is mother to a 15-year-old girl and 12-year-old boy and says a line of cow dung is drawn to demarcate the bed the new mother sleeps on from the

rest of the house.

While living in Jhankat village of Khattima block, Lata abided by these rules as she was living with her husband's extended family. She stopped briefly only when she and her husband moved out. “The last few years, we have started believing in these traditions again,” says Lata, who holds a master's degree in Politics. “If a menstruating woman falls ill, it is said that gods have become unhappy. All problems [in the family and village] are attributed to the non-compliance of these practices,” she says in an attempt to explain her compliance.

No one in the village will accept even a glass of water from the hands of a family in which there is a newborn child. The entire family is considered ‘impure’ and the sex of the child changes nothing. Anyone who touches the woman or the newborn baby is purified by sprinkling gau mutra. Usually, on the eleventh day, the woman and the baby are bathed and washed with gau mutra, following which the naming ceremony takes place.

Savita, Lata's 31-year-old sister-in-law, was married when she was 17 and forced to follow these customs. She recalls how in the first year of her marriage she had to eat with only a sari to cover herself — the custom of no undergarments had to be strictly followed. “After the birth of my first child I stopped that,” she says, but admitted that she later reverted to sleeping on the floor when she got her periods.

Growing up in homes where such practices are followed, boys in the area are not quite sure what to think. Nikhil is a young boy from Barkidandi village who is studying in Class 10. He says he read about menstruation last year and didn't quite understand it but, “I still thought the idea of keeping women separate is unreasonable.” However he says if he talks about this at home he will be scolded by the adults in the family.

This is a fear that Divyansh also shares. A 12-year-old schoolboy from Sunkhari village, he has been watching his mother sit apart for five days in a month but never understood why. “It is so normal for me that I think that this happens to all women and girls. But now I don't feel it is right. When I grow up will I go along with the custom or can I stop it?,” he wonders.

No such conflict is felt by an elder in the village who stated, “Uttaranchal [Uttarakhand's old name] is the abode of the gods. So [these] customs are important here,” says Narender.

He says girls in their community used to be married off at 9-10 years, before they began menstruating. “If she started menstruating, how would we do kanyadaan?” he says, speaking about the marital custom of ‘gifting’ a girl to her husband. “Now the government has changed the age of marriage to 21. Since then, the government and us have different rules.” (Courtesy: The Wire)

Putin visits Russian troops in occupied Ukraine

Putin's trips to the military headquarters come as Ukraine is preparing for a new counteroffensive to reclaim the occupied territories

KYIV, April 18 (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the headquarters of Russian troops fighting in Ukraine early on Tuesday, his second trip to the Russian-held territories there since March.

A video released by the Kremlin and broadcast by Russian state television showed Putin visiting the command post for Russian forces in the southern Kherson region. It showed Putin arriving by helicopter to receive reports from the top military brass about the combat situation.

The Russian leader then moved by helicopter to the headquarters of the Russian National Guard of the eastern Luhansk region to hear a report from commanders.

In both locations, Putin congratulated the military on Orthodox Easter, which was celebrated on Sunday and presented them with icons. Russia annexed the Kherson and Luhansk regions along with the Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions in September in a move that was rejected by much of the world as illegal. It was impossible to



independently verify the footage of Putin's visits to the two regions that was released by the Kremlin. The trip marked a second visit by the Russian leader to the areas that Russia occupied in Ukraine in as many months. Last month, Putin visited the Russian-held Sea of Azov port city of Mariupol, which was captured by Russian troops in May after two months of fierce fighting.

The locations of the military headquarters in the Kherson and

Luhansk regions weren't disclosed, so it wasn't possible to assess how close they are to the front line.

Putin's trips to the military headquarters come as Ukraine is preparing for a new counteroffensive to reclaim the occupied territories.

Russia's war in Ukraine has turned into a stalemate amid heavy fighting in the country's east, particularly around the town of Bakhmut, which for 8½ months has been the stage for the war's longest and

bloodiest fight.

Ukrainian officials have said they're buying time by depleting Russian forces in the battle while Kyiv prepares a counteroffensive. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has argued that if Russia wins the Bakhmut battle, it could allow Putin to begin building international support for a deal that would require Ukraine to make unacceptable compromises to end the war. Oleksiy Danilov, the secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, told The Associated Press in an interview in Kyiv that Ukraine's allies are helping the government to achieve the level of technical equipment necessary to launch the attack, delivering heavy armoured vehicles and ammunition.

He expressed confidence that Ukraine will be able to return all its occupied territories.

"We will defeat Russia," he said. "If you have a strong inner spirit, you will definitely win. And we always had it strong. This is something that always annoyed the Russians."

Suspected shooting attack in Jerusalem wounds 2 Israeli men

JERUSALEM, April 18 (AP): A suspected shooting attack by a Palestinian gunman in Jerusalem on Tuesday left two Israeli men wounded, police said. It was the latest in a year-long cycle of violence that shows no sign of abating after weeks of heightened tensions around Jerusalem during the overlap of the Jewish holiday of Passover and the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Israeli police were searching for the suspected attacker who fled the scene in the east Jerusalem neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah.

The two wounded, who were shot while inside a vehicle, were treated for moderate gunshot wounds. Tensions in Israel and the occupied West Bank soared weeks after an Israeli police raid on Jerusalem's most sensitive holy site, the compound home to the Al-Aqsa mosque. The mosque sits on a contested hilltop known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary, revered as the third-holiest site in Islam and the holiest site in Judaism.

Earlier this month, the Israeli military struck sites linked to the Palestinian group Hamas in southern Lebanon and the Gaza Strip after militants in the two territories fired salvos of rockets at Israel.

Tunisian Islamist leader Ghanouchi detained amid tensions

TUNIS, April 18 (AP): Influential Tunisian Islamist leader Rached Ghannouchi was detained on Monday after a police search, according to his lawyer, in a move denounced by his supporters as a stepped-up effort by the president to quash Tunisia's opposition.

The move against the 81-year-old former parliament speaker comes amid growing social tensions and deepening economic troubles in Tunisia, the birthplace of the Arab Spring pro-democracy movement more than a decade ago.

Ghanouchi, head of the Ennahdha party, is the most prominent critic of Tunisian President Kais Saied. While he has been detained for questioning in the past and released, his supporters described Monday's action as a more serious step.

Police entered his house for a lengthy search and brought him to the El Aouina jail in the east of the capital, his lawyer Nejib Chebbi told The Associated Press.

Ennahdha called for his release, saying in a statement that it "condemns this very dangerous development." Tunisia's official TAP news agency reported that he was detained on a warrant by counterterrorism prosecutors as part of an investigation into recent "provocative" comments. It did not elaborate.

Other Tunisian media reported that Ghanouchi was to be questioned over a video circulating online in which he purportedly says that the president's perceived efforts to "eradicate" Islamist opposition threaten to unleash civil war.

Ghanouchi has been detained before for questioning on suspicion of money laundering and terrorism financing through a charity. He has denied wrongdoing and his party says the accusations are politically driven. His daughter Yusra said her father had cooperated with police during past detentions, and lamented that the president "ordered a raid on his house and his arrest after sundown during the most holy night of Ramadan."

Sudan's generals battle for 3rd day; death toll soars to 185

KHARTOUM, April 18 (AP): As explosions and gunfire thundered outside, Sudanese in the capital Khartoum and other cities huddled in their homes for a third day on Monday, while the army and a powerful rival force battled in the streets for control of the country.

At least 185 people have been killed and over 1,800 wounded since the fighting erupted, UN envoy Volker Perthes told reporters.

The two sides are using tanks, artillery and other heavy weapons in densely populated areas. Fighter jets swooped overhead and anti-aircraft fire lit up the skies as darkness fell. The toll could be much higher because there are many bodies in the streets around central Khartoum that no one can reach because of the clashes.

There has been no official word on how many civilians or combatants have been killed. A doctors' group earlier put the number of civilian deaths at 97.

The sudden outbreak of violence over the weekend between the nation's two top generals, each backed by tens of thousands of heavily armed fighters, trapped millions of people in their homes or wherever they could find shelter, with supplies running low and several hospitals forced to shut down.

Top diplomats on four continents scrambled to broker a truce, and the UN Security Council was set to discuss the crisis.

"Gunfire and shelling are everywhere," Awadeya Mahmoud Koko, head of a union for thousands of tea vendors and other food workers, said from her home in a southern district of Khartoum.

She said a shell struck a neighbour's house Sunday, killing at least three people. "We couldn't take them to a hospital or bury them."

In central Khartoum, sustained gunfire erupted and white smoke rose near the main military headquarters, a major battlefield.

Nearby, at least 88 students and staffers have been trapped in the engineering college library at Khartoum University since the start of fighting, one of the students said in a video posted online Monday. One student was killed during clashes outside and another wounded, he said.

They do not have food or water, he said, showing a room full of people



ple sleeping on the floor.

Even in a country with a long history of military coups, the scenes of fighting in the capital and its adjoining city Omdurman across the Nile River were unprecedented. The turmoil comes just days before Sudanese were to celebrate Eid al-Fitr, the holiday marking the end of Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting. The power struggle pits Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, the commander of the armed forces, against Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, the head of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. The former allies jointly orchestrated an October 2021 military coup. The violence has raised the specter of civil war just as Sudanese were trying to revive the drive for a democratic, civilian government after decades of military rule.

Under international pressure, Burhan and Dagalo had recently agreed to a framework agreement with political parties and pro-democracy groups, but the signing was repeatedly delayed as tensions rose over the integration of the RSF into the armed forces and the future chain of command.

The US, the UN and others have called for a truce.

Egypt, which backs Sudan's military, and Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — which forged close ties to the RSF as it sent thousands of fighters to support their war in Yemen — have also called for both sides to stand down.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who is attending a Group of Seven meeting in Japan, spoke by phone with Burhan and Dagalo separately and underscored the urgency of reaching a cease-fire, according to the State Department's principal deputy spokesperson, Vedant Patel.

On Tuesday, Blinken told reporters in Japan that indiscriminate military operations are "recklessly endangering civilians, diplomats, including US personnel, and humanitarian personnel."

Blinken said a convoy of clearly marked US Embassy vehicles came under fire Monday, and that preliminary reports indicate the attackers were linked to the RSF. He said everyone in the convoy is safe and at home. Blinken called for an immediate 24-hour ceasefire as a step toward a longer truce.

In a joint statement on Tuesday, the G-7 foreign ministers condemned the fighting. "We urge the parties to end hostilities immediately without pre-conditions," it said, calling for them to return to negotiations and reduce tensions.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi said late Monday that Cairo was in "constant contact" with both the army and the RSF, urging them to halt the fighting and return to negotiations. But both generals have thus far dug in, demanding the other's surrender.

The European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell tweeted that the EU ambassador to Sudan "was assaulted in his own residence," without providing further details. EU officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Heavy gunbattles raged in multiple parts of the capital and Omdurman, where the two sides have brought in tens of thousands of troops, positioning them in nearly every neighbourhood.

Twelve hospitals in the capital area have been "forcefully evacuated" and are "out of service" because of attacks or power outages, the Sudan Doctors' Syndicate said, out of a total of around 20.

'No impunity': G7 vows tough, unified stance on Russia's war

KARUIZAWA, April 18 (AP): Top diplomats from the Group of Seven wealthy democracies vowed a unified front against Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, saying at the close of their meetings on Tuesday that they were committed to boosting and enforcing tough sanctions against Moscow.

The G-7 communiqué laying out their commitments also included strong words meant to curb what the ministers see as increasing Chinese and North Korean aggressiveness in Northeast Asia.

But it was Russia's invasion of Ukraine that highlighted the three-day summit in this hot spring resort town.

"There can be no impunity for war crimes and other atrocities such as Russia's attacks against civilians and critical civilian infrastructure," the ministers said.

"We remain committed to intensifying sanctions against Russia, coordinating and fully enforcing them," the communiqué said, and would support "for as long as it takes" Ukraine as it defends itself.

The foreign ministers' document was prepared as a template for global leaders to use at a G-7 summit that will be held in Hiroshima next month, and included language about Iran, Myanmar, Afghanistan, nuclear proliferation and other "grave threats."

But two crises stood out: China's increasing assertiveness against, and military maneuvers around, Taiwan, the self-governing democracy that Beijing claims as its own, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Russia's current offensive is largely stalled and Ukraine is preparing a counteroffensive, but there's widespread global worry about the Russian leader's repeated threats to use tactical nuclear weapons.

"Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric and its threat to deploy nuclear weapons in Belarus are unacceptable," the ministers said.

The G-7 envoys from Japan, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Canada, Italy and the European Union have



underlined that their meeting in Karuizawa marks a crucial moment in the world's response to Russian and Chinese aggression, two crises that are seen as challenges to the post-World War II rules-based international order.

Global efforts to confront the matters at the United Nations have been stymied by Chinese and Russian intransigence on the Security Council.

Leaders and foreign ministers of G-7 countries, most recently France and Germany, have recently concluded visits to China, and there is growing worry after China recently sent planes and ships to simulate an encirclement of Taiwan.

Beijing has also been rapidly adding nuclear warheads, taking a tougher line on its claim to the South China Sea and painting a scenario of impending confrontation.

The G-7 ministers said that peace and stability between China and Taiwan in the Taiwan Strait is "an indispensable element in security and prosperity in the international community," and they called for "the peaceful resolution of cross-strait issues."

On Taiwan, "there is clear unanimity in the approach we are taking," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters of his talks with other ministers in Karuizawa. "What I heard was a remarkable

convergence on concerns related to (China) and what we're doing to address those concerns," he said.

On stalled discussions with the Chinese, Blinken said the United States placed a premium on keeping communications channels open as President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping agreed to last year.

"My expectation would be that we will be able to move forward on that, but it does require China to make clear its own intentions in doing that," Blinken said.

The communiqué also urged China to "abstain from threats, coercion, intimidation or the use of force."

We remain seriously concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas. ... There is no legal basis for China's expansive maritime claims in the South China Sea, and we oppose China's militarization activities in the region."

Despite indications, notably comments from French President Emmanuel Macron, that the G-7 is split over China, US officials said in Karuizawa that there is a shared worry among G-7 nations over China's actions, and a desire to continue a coordinated approach on working with Beijing even as nations confront Chinese coercion and attempts to water down or circumvent international rules regarding trade and commerce.

Iran renews threats against Israel during Army Day parade



TEHRAN, April 18 (AP): Iran's president on Tuesday reiterated threats against Israel while marking the country's annual Army Day, though he stayed away from criticizing Saudi Arabia as Tehran seeks a détente with the kingdom.

The comments by Ebrahim Raisi came as fighter jets and helicopters flew overhead in Tehran, and as Iranian submarines sailed across its waters during a ceremony carried live by state television.

The day celebrates Iran's regular military, not its paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, whose expeditionary forces operate across the wider Mideast and aid Iranian-allied militia groups like Lebanon's Hezbollah. The Guard also routinely has tense encounters with the US Navy. Speaking at the ceremony, Raisi threatened Israel, which is suspected of carrying out a series of attacks targeting Iran since the collapse of its nuclear deal

with world powers. "Enemies, particularly the Zionist regime, has received the message that any tiny action against (our) country will prompt a harsh answer from the armed forces, which will accompany the destruction of Haifa and Tel Aviv," Raisi said. Raisi also reiterated a demand for the US to leave the Mideast. American policy since the Carter administration has viewed protected the Persian Gulf region as crucial to securing global energy supplies. A fifth of the world's supply of oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf.

While not specifically naming Saudi Arabia, Raisi did offer an olive branch in his remarks.

"The hand of our armed forces warmly shakes the hand of the regional nations that intend to create security in the region," the president said. In March, Iran and Saudi Arabia agreed to reestablish diplomatic relations and reopen embassies after seven years of tensions, a diplomatic agreement reached in China. In the time since, Saudi Arabia also has been involved in a prisoner swap with Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthis rebels, with hopes such a deal could see an end to that country's yearslong proxy war.

UN says leaving Afghanistan would be 'heartbreaking'

UNITED NATIONS, April 18 (AP): The United Nations is ready to take the "heartbreaking" decision to pull out of Afghanistan in May if it can't persuade the Taliban to let local women work for the organization, the head of the UN Development Program said.

UN officials are negotiating with the Islamist government in the hope that it will make exceptions to an edict this month barring local women from working for the organization, UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner told The Associated Press.

"It is fair to say that where we are right now is the entire United Nations system having to take a step back and reevaluating its ability to operate there," Steiner said. "But it's not about negotiating fundamental principles, human rights."

The Taliban have allowed Afghan women to engage in some work, Steiner said, and a UN report released on Tuesday shows that the country desperately needs more women working, with its economy flailing.

The Taliban takeover has been accompanied by some very modest signs of economic recovery.

There has been some increase in exports, some exchange rate stabilisation and less inflation. But gross domestic product, the sum of all goods and services produced within Afghanistan's borders, is expected to be outstripped by population growth, meaning that per capita income will decline from USD 359 in 2022 to USD 345 in 2024, the report says.

Some of those economic problems are due to Taliban policies keeping most women out of the workplace, Steiner said. Those economic problems mean more need in the country, but the UN has decided that human rights are non-negotiable and it will leave in May if the Taliban do not relent.

"I think there is no other way of putting it than heartbreaking," Steiner said. "I mean, if I were to imagine the UN family not being in Afghanistan today, I have before me these images of millions of young girls, young boys, fathers, mothers, who essentially will not have enough to eat." A source of faint optimism is the Taliban's allowing women to work in specific circumstances in health, education and some small businesses. "In one sense, the de facto authorities have enabled the UN to roll out a significant humanitarian and also emergency development assistance set of activities," Steiner said. "But they also continuously are shifting the goalposts, issuing new edicts."

J-Hope becomes 2nd BTS member to join South Korean army

In S Korea, all able-bodied men are required by law to perform 18-21 months of military service under a conscription system meant to deter aggression from rival N Korea

SEOUL, April 18 (AP): J-Hope, a member of K-pop sensation BTS, entered a South Korean boot camp Tuesday to start his 18-month compulsory military service, becoming the group's second member to join the country's army.

There was heated public debate in 2022 over whether to offer special exemptions of mandatory military service for BTS members, until the group's management agency announced in October that all seven members would fulfill their duties.

In December, Jin, 30 and the oldest member of BTS, became the band's first member to enter the army after revoking his request to delay his conscription.

South Korean TV footage on Tuesday afternoon showed what they called a black minivan likely carrying J-Hope moving into the boot camp in Wonju, about 90 kilometers (55 miles) east of Seoul. Hybe Corp., the parent company of BTS' management agency Big Hit

Music, later confirmed the 29-year-old singer entered the camp.

Dozens of fans showed up near the base after arriving via rented buses wrapped with large photos of J-Hope and words hoping for his safe service. Authorities mobilized soldiers and police officers to maintain order, and there were no immediate reports of safety-related accidents. Big Hit Music had pleaded with fans, who call themselves the "Army," not to come to the site due to safety reasons.

UN says leaving Afghanistan would be 'heartbreaking'

"I love you, Army. I'll see you again," J-Hope, whose real name is Jung Ho-seok, said Monday in a message posted on the online fan platform Weverse, with photos of himself with a military buzz cut.

Five other younger BTS members — RM, Suga, Jimin, V and Jungkook — are to join the South Korean military one by one in the coming years. That means the



world's biggest boy band is expected to reconvene as a group again a few years later.

In South Korea, all able-bodied men are required by law to perform 18-21 months of military service under a conscription system meant to deter aggression from rival North

Korea. The law gives special exemptions to athletes, classical and traditional musicians, and ballet and other dancers if they have obtained top prizes in certain competitions and are assessed to have enhanced national prestige. K-pop stars and other entertainers aren't subject to

Union tribal affairs minister launches scheme for tribal products

IMPHAL, April 18 (NNN): Union minister of tribal affairs, Arjun Munda launched the scheme "Marketing and Logistics Development for Promotion of Tribal Products from North-Eastern Region (PTP-NER)" in presence of Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh at a solemn function held at the Auditorium of Manipur State Film Development Society in Imphal on Tuesday.

The scheme aims to strengthen livelihood opportunities for tribal artisans through increased efficiency in procurement, logistics and marketing of tribal products from North Eastern states.

The launching programme was also attended by Forest, Environment and Climate Change minister Th Biswajit Singh, Tribal Affairs and Hills minister Letpao Haokip, minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, government of Meghalaya Dr M. Ampareen Lyngdoh, chairman, TRIFED, Ramsinh Rathwa, chief secretary, government of Manipur Dr Rajesh Kumar, officials of Tribal Affairs Ministry, and Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED) and senior officials of government of Manipur among others.

Addressing the gathering, Arjun Munda expressed gratitude to chief minister N Biren Singh for hosting the launch of such an important scheme for tribal peoples. He continued that the union government under the supervision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi had been taking up initiatives for empowerment, creation of employment opportunities and upgrading the livelihood of tribal peoples residing across the country. With such an objective, the PTP-NER scheme has been launched on Tuesday for promotion of tribal products from the Northeast region, he added.

Arjun Munda informed that the PTP-NER scheme is fully funded under central sector scheme of the Government of India and a budget of around ₹ 143 crore have been allocated towards this scheme for implementation. He further informed that the scheme will apply to the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim.

The union minister continued that the Prime Minister, considering the importance of the Northeast region in development of the country, had earlier launched "One District One Product" scheme to make a dis-



trict known for its product. The scheme launched today will facilitate linkage of tribal products with new markets, provide logistic and marketing strategy support to promote it at the national and global level, he added. He also appreciated the concerted efforts of the officials of the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry and TRIFED to successfully implement the initiatives taken up for the welfare of tribal people.

Chief minister N Biren Singh, while delivering his speech, expressed thankfulness

to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and union minister of Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda for introducing such an important scheme. He also appreciated the vision of the Prime Minister for the initiatives taken up for the welfare of the people of North-eastern states. Since he became the Prime Minister of the country in 2014, the scenario of the Northeast states has totally changed, particularly in development and the law and order, he added.

The chief minister recalled that TRIFED was launched in the State in 2019. At that time, there were only around 30 Self Help Groups (SHGs) comprising around 450 members only. However, the number is now about to reach around 50,000 SHGs members, he added.

Speaking on the quality and taste of products produced in the State, he informed the union minister that outlets for selling products of Manipur had been opened in some big cities across the country. He continued that marketing and logistic development for promotion of tribal products is the need of the hour, stressing the need for value addition, quality and hygienic packaging for capturing markets outside the state.

Stating that earlier the SHGs working in the interior parts of hill districts did not have work sheds and proper room to dry fruits, the state government had decided to earmark an amount of around ₹ 26.6 crore under the RIDF and constructed work sheds to facilitate them. He also reiterated the vision of the prime minister to provide quality life to the people, adding that the state government had also launched the "One Family One Livelihood" scheme, under which anyone from a family with no source of livelihood can apply for a loan of ₹ 10 Lakh with 30 percent grant. He added that government would consider including SHGs of TRIFED, so that they could also avail the benefits of the scheme to help increase their income generation.

Before the start of the launching programme, Arjun Munda along with N Biren Singh and others visited the stalls set up by Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVK) under different divisions and interacted with tribal artisans.

During the programme, 3 Van Dhan products from different VDVKS including Cinnamon from Kamjong, Black Rice from Ukhrul and Dry Bamboo Shoot from Noney were also launched.

Four Khasi youths to participate in World Pankration Championship

SHILLONG, April 18 (NNN): Four Khasi youths will be participating in the World Pankration Championship to be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Lozenza Songthiang, Francis RR Songthiang, Kyrshanbor R Songthiang and Nongkitboklang Songthiang will be leaving for Uzbekistan on April 30, to represent India in the world championship.

Meanwhile, the Khasi Students' Union (KSU) today extended its best wishes to four local youths.

Leaders of KSU also met and wished all four success in the championship. This was informed by KSU publicity secretary Pynshai Rani in a statement issued here.

'Disgruntled' Manipur BJP MLAs camp in Delhi

IMPHAL/NEW DELHI April 18 (PTI): Speculation over dissonance brewing in the N Biren Singh government in Manipur grew as a group of BJP MLAs are in Delhi to meet central leaders, with a senior party functionary from the state stressing that complaining or taking a dispute to the leadership did not tantamount to indiscipline.

However, a central BJP leader downplayed the development and ruled out any changes in the state government, noting that tussle between different interest groups has been a feature of Manipur politics. Issues related to demographic and regional grievances are also used by some for political reasons, he said.

State party officials have confirmed that at least four BJP MLAs from Manipur valley are in Delhi to meet central leaders. An unconfirmed number of party MLAs from the Kuki tribe are also believed to be camping in the national capital.

Uripok MLA Khwairakpam Raghumani, who is among the MLAs from Manipur valley camping in Delhi, posted a picture on Facebook of a meeting with union minister of state for DONER B L Verma.

"They (Thokchom Radheshyam Singh, Karam Shyam, Paonam Brojen and

Raghumani) discussed the border and developmental issues of Manipur," the post said.

Another BJP MLA, RK Imo Singh, on his official Facebook account said, "We all are bound by a particular ideology/constitution of the political party we belong to. As Legislators, we have a bounded duty to work as per the programmes and decision of that government/party. One may complain and take the dispute against the leader of the govt/party/minister to the appropriate authority, but not take that dispute to the media as that amounts to attract disciplinary action being taken up against the complainant."

The trip to Delhi to meet national leaders came a day after BJP MLA Karam Shyam of Langthabal constituency tendered his resignation on Monday from the chairmanship of Tourism Corporation Manipur Limited complaining that he had "not been assigned any responsibility".

On April 8, BJP MLA Thokchom Radheshyam of Heirok constituency had resigned from the post of advisor to the chief minister citing similar grievance.

Another party source told PTI, "The trip is not official but we believe they too went to meet

some leaders to express their grievances."

While the dissent of the valley MLAs are generally understood as rising out of personal frustration, that of the Kuki MLAs is more complex as it involves government policies which, Kuki observers believe targets their community.

Paolienlal Haokip, a Kuki MLA from Saikot in Kuki majority Churachandpur, had recently expressed dissent over the government policies related to eviction of Kuki villagers from reserved forest areas.

He had added that the state needs a "proper settlement policy for both the Hills and the Valley, not erratic, whimsical and targeted evictions. Matters of policy needs to be discussed within the cabinet and the Assembly, not at the whims and fancies of one person."

Haokip also raised question's over "the government's role to bring peace and harmony between communities living within the state" and sought to know whether entire communities were being demonised.

Some powerful Kuki groups are demanding solution to the Kuki political problem, including greater power for Hills people and a separate administration.

Schools in West Garo Hills to remain shut due to heat

SHILLONG, April 18 (PTI): Meghalaya's West Garo Hills district administration has ordered that schools be closed for three days from Wednesday due to soaring temperatures. The order came in the wake of the mercury levels soaring above 37 degrees Celsius in the district, and even touching 40 degrees Celsius in the plains.

"In view of the massive surge in temperatures and to ensure the well-being of the students, teachers and staffers, I have declared that all primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary schools in the district be shut from April 19-21," Deputy commissioner Jagdish Chelani told PTI.

He said that night schools, however, will remain functional.

The Met department has warned of rising temperatures in the state, particularly in lower altitude areas in Garo Hills and Ri-Bhoi districts.

Roster system, reservation policy should benefit citizens: UDP

SHILLONG, April 18 (NNN): United Democratic Party (UDP) chief, Metbah Lyngdoh has taken up the issue of the Meghalaya reservation policy and roster system with chief minister Conrad K Sangma and emphasised that discussion should be in the interest of all communities in the state.

"On his (CM) first day in office, I met him personally and I discussed with him with regards to the issue of the reservation policy and the roster system," Lyngdoh told reporters on Tuesday.

"I have placed before him this very sensitive issue which needs to be discussed in detail for the interest of the people of all communities in the state and the approach has to be in a very harmonious and peaceful manner," he added.

"First, the right platform is with the chief minister. That is the right platform. So we have aired our concerns about this issue and the chief minister has responded very positively that we will look into this issue," Lyngdoh said.

He reiterated that the issue is very sensitive and delicate and needs a very detailed discussion with the stakeholders in the government and said, "There we will place our points and give our suggestions accordingly."

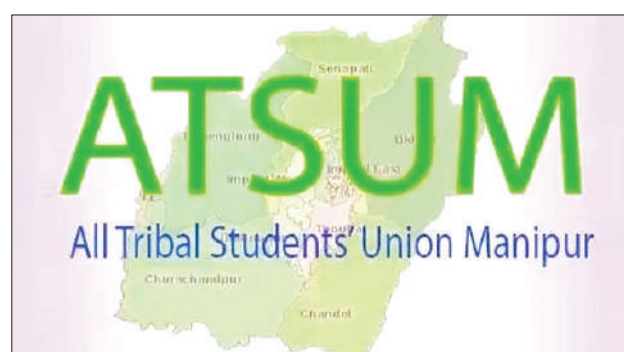
Lyngdoh also refused to comment on the VPP's demand for reviewing the state reservation policy.

Lyngdoh also said that he does not know who brought up the need to have a special session on the issue and said that the issue needs to be discussed first at the right platform then they will see from there.

ATSUM to resume suspended agitation

IMPHAL, APRIL 18 (NNN): The All Tribal Students' Union, Manipur (ATSUM) has said on Tuesday that it would "resume the suspended agitation from April 24, 2023 as the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) authority has failed to materialise the agreed terms of the tripartite agreement" signed between ATSUM, RIMS and Manipur state government on April 3, 2023, pertaining to (i) Cancellation of the RIMS notice dated 03-03-2023 for declaration of results for appointment to posts of LDC (ii) Fresh declaration of LDC appointment results with reservation as SC(3%), ST(34%) and OBC (13%) within one week time and (iii) to follow existing rules and DoPT guidelines in matters of all recruitment to Group C and Group D posts.

According to the apex tribal student body of Ma-



nipur, a joint meeting of the ATSUM, its subordinate bodies and federating units was held on April 17, 2023, to discuss the matter and seek further action plan.

"Irrked by the deliberate breach of tripartite agreement by the RIMS authority, the meeting resolved to resume suspended agitation from April 24, 2023, demanding befitting action against the erring RIMS authority and to implement the

agreed terms of Memorandum of Agreement on April 3, 2023 signed between the RIMS, the ATSUM and the Manipur state government," ATSUM stated.

The ATSUM then added, "Further, while taking serious note of the additional backdoor appointment of 15 posts of LDC in the RIMS without proper reservation norms, the ATSUM also demands the nullification of the said backdoor appointments".

TENDER NOTICE

The District Programme Co-ordinator, RMSA, KAAC, Diphu, invites fresh bids for the following works from the registered Contractor [Class-I (under PWD (Bldg.)) having experience of similar nature of work.

Details of the bid may be seen at the office of the undersigned during office hours from 19th April 2023 (4:00 PM) to 9th May 2023(2.00PM)

Name of work	Pa c k - age Nos.	Place of construction works	Approx. Value of work (In Lakhs)	Time of completion	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	EMD to be withdrawn in favour of	Tender cost
Construction of New School Building for upgradation of Upper Primary to Secondary school at Daldali ME School (18190505603)	01	Daldali ME School (18190505603) Lumbajong Block Karbi Anglong	Rs. 152.20	12 Months	Rs. 3,05,000/- (for general) Rs. 1,52,500/- (for reserved category)	District Programme Co-ordinator RMSA, KAAC Diphu	Rs. 5,000/-
Construction of New School Building for upgradation of Upper Primary to Secondary school at Amswai Lalung (Pvn) ME School (18330102502)	02	Amswai Lalung (Pvn) ME School (18330102502) Amri Block, West Karbi Anglong	Rs. 152.50	12 Months	Rs. 3,05,000/- (for general) Rs. 1,52,500/- (for reserved category)	District Programme Co-ordinator RMSA, KAAC Diphu	Rs. 5,000/-
Construction of New School Building for upgradation of Upper Primary to Secondary school at Maizia Hadi ME School (18331007303)	03	Maizia Hadi ME School (18331007303) Socheng Block, West Barbi Anglong	Rs. 152.50	12 Months	Rs. 3,05,000/- (for general) Rs. 1,52,500/- (for reserved category)	District Programme Co-ordinator RMSA, KAAC Diphu	Rs. 5,000/-
Construction of New School Building for upgradation of Upper Primary to Secondary school at Chokihola High School (190603703)	04	Chokihola High School (190603703) Nilip Block, Karbi Anglong	Rs. 354.75	12 Months	Rs. 7,09,500/- (for general) Rs. 3,54,750/- (for reserved category)	District Programme Co-ordinator RMSA, KAAC Diphu	Rs. 5,000/-

NOTE:

- The interested bidders must purchase a copy of the tender document from the office of the undersigned on payment of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand only) in the form of demand draft/bankers cheque drawn in favour of, "District Programme Co-ordinator, RMSA, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council" payable at Diphu. Non-payment of tender fee will result in non-responsiveness of the prospective bidder.
- Submission for both Technical and Financial Bid is mandatory. The technical and financial bid must be submitted in separate envelope clearly marking "Technical bid" & "Financial Bid". Both the technical & financial packets must again be enclosed in a separate envelope wherein the following should be clearly mentioned.
 - Name of Works
 - Package no
 - Name & address of bidder
- The hand copy of the technical bid & financial bid is to be submitted at the Office chamber of the undersigned on or before 09-05-2023 up to 1400 hrs for evaluation.
- Along-with the hard copy of the technical bid, the following documents (in original) must also be submitted on or before 09-05-2023 up to 1400 hrs:-
 - Original Power of Attorney for signing the BID, if any.
 - Bid Security in the form of Original TDR/FDR/ Bank Guarantee from a Nationalised/ Scheduled Bank.
- In the event of date of bid opening being a holiday, the activities will take place on the next working day.
- All the interested bidders are requested to read the bid document carefully before submission of their bid.

Sd/-

District Programme Co-ordinator
RMSA, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council
Diphu

Memo no.. RMSA/KAAC/UP & HS/223

Dated 18-04-2023

'Mangrove Man' in Kerala fights to salvage sinking shores

KOCHI, April 18 (PTI/AP): On the receding shorelines of low-lying Vypin Island off Kerala's coast, T. P. Murukesan fixed his eyes on the white paint peeling off the damp walls of his raised home and recounted the most recent floods.

"The floods are occurring more frequently and lasting longer," he said. The last flood was chest-high for his young grandson. "Every flood brings waters this high, we just deal with it."

Sea level rise and severe tidal floods have forced many families in Murukesan's neighborhood to relocate to higher grounds over the years. But the retired fisherman has almost single-handedly been buffering the impacts of the rising waters on his home and in his community.

Known locally as "Mangrove Man," Murukesan has turned to planting the trees along the shores of Vypin and the surrounding areas in the Kochi region of Kerala state to counter the impacts of rising waters on his home.

Tidal flooding occurs when sea level rise combines with local factors to push water levels above the normal levels. Mangroves can provide natural coastal defenses against sea level rise, tides and storm surges, but over the course of his life forest cover in the state has dwindled.

Murukesan said he grew up surrounded by beautiful, abundant mangroves that separated islands from the sea. Now, only fragmented patches of mangroves can be seen in Kochi, the state's financial capital.

"They protected our houses against floods, sea erosion, and storms, used to be an inseparable part of our life, our ecosystem," he said. "Only these can save us."

Murukesan said he has planted over 1,00,000 mangroves. He plants saplings on alternate days and does most of the work himself. Some help comes in the form of saplings from the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, a non-government organisation based in Chennai.

His efforts come up against a strong trend in the opposite direction.

Ernakulam district, which includes Kochi, has lost nearly 42 per cent of its mangrove ecosystems, including major decreases in the southern Puthuvyppeen area in Vypin, according to a study released last year by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies.

Mangrove cover in the state has reduced from 700 square kilometres to just 24 square kilometres since 1975, accord-



ing to the Kerala Forest department.

"The construction of coastal roads and highways has severely damaged mangrove ecosystems in the state," said K K Ramachandran, former member secretary of the Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority, a government body mandated to protect the coastal environment. "There should be an incentive for people who are making efforts to protect them."

Murukesan's dedication to the cause has won him praise, awards and the audience of senior politicians but not incen-

tives beyond the immediate benefits to his home.

He said the mangroves he planted in and around the area in 2014 have grown into a dense thicket and are helping reduce the intensity of tidal flooding, but he's nevertheless continuing his efforts.

Despite the thousands of new mangrove trees, other factors like climate change mean tidal floods have become more frequent and severe, sometimes keeping children from going to school and people from getting to work. It's all

mentally exhausting, Murukesan and his wife, Geetha, said.

"I have to travel a lot to collect seeds. My wife helps me in the nursery as much as she can. I am tired but I cannot stop," he said.

Geetha said they do the tough work "for our children," preserving the forest for decades to come.

"It keeps us going," she said.

Vypin is at high-risk for tidal flooding, said Abhilash S, director of the Advanced Centre for Atmospheric Radar Research at the Cochin University of Science and Technology.

"The sea level has risen and has damaged freshwater supplies. Sea erosion and spring tides have worsened. Coastal flooding is a common occurrence now," he said. "The carrying capacity of the backwaters has reduced due to sediment deposition and encroachment, and the rainwater enters residential areas during the monsoon season."

Backwaters in Kerala are networks of canals, lagoons and lakes parallel to coastal areas, unique ecosystems that help provide a buffer to rising sea levels.

According to the World Meteorological Organization, global mean sea level rose by 4.5 millimetres per year between 2013 and 2022. It's a major threat for

countries like India, China, the Netherlands and Bangladesh, which comprise large coastal populations.

NASA projections show that Kochi might experience a sea level rise of 0.22 metres by 2050, and over half a meter by 2100 in a middle-of-the-road climate-warming scenario.

"Many families have left," Murukesan said.

Fishing families living within 50 metres of the shore get a financial assistance of ₹ 10 lakh through a rehabilitation scheme run by the Kerala government. Only few of those not covered under it have means to relocate to safer places.

Some fishing families shift to government shelters in the monsoon season and return after it ends. A few have built still houses that stand on columns to fight tidal floods.

Murukesan knows the sea is rising, but it's the backwaters that make him more anxious. The backwaters have become shallow due to the silt deposited by heavy floods. During heavy rain events, the water inundated the island.

"We are caught between the sea and the backwaters. They are likely to swallow the island in some years, but I am not going anywhere," Murukesan said. "I was born here, and I will die here."

Will work for NCP till I am alive: Ajit Pawar on rumour of rift

'Such unfounded reports hurt party workers and create confusion among them'

MUMBAI, April 18 (PTI): Senior NCP leader Ajit Pawar on Tuesday said he would work for his party till he is alive and scotched speculation that he and a group of MLAs loyal to him might align with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.

Talking to reporters here, the Leader of the Opposition said there is no truth in reports about any rift in the Nationalist Congress Party and his joining hands with the BJP.

Pawar dismissed reports that he had taken the signatures of 40 of 53 MLAs of NCP amid a buzz about his rumoured alliance with the BJP.

He said such unfounded reports hurt party workers and create confusion among them.

"We (party MLAs) are all with the NCP. I will work for the NCP till I live," Pawar added.

He said the NCP has decided to strengthen the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) and the coalition has planned several rallies that target the Centre and the Maharashtra government over various issues.

The MVA comprises Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), NCP, and Congress.

Responding to a query, Pawar said no signatures of (NCP) MLAs were taken.

"We are working as a family and will continue to do that," he added.

Rumours about Ajit Pawar's next political move started doing rounds last week when he sud-



denly cancelled his scheduled meetings and also made comments which were seen as being soft on the BJP and chief minister Eknath Shinde's camp. The BJP is part of the Shinde government.

Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday added grist to the rumour mill claiming Sharad Pawar recently told Uddhav Thackeray that his party will never join hands with the BJP even if anyone takes an individual decision to do so.

Ajit Pawar slammed Raut without taking the latter's name on Tuesday and said spokespersons of other parties are behaving like spokespersons of NCP. The NCP leader said he would raise this issue whenever there is a party meeting.

"No one knows who has given them this right. You speak about the party of which you are a spokesperson. You speak about your party's mouthpiece. We are

very capable of making our stand clear.

"There is no reason to take our brief. They can put forth respective (party's) views. Our party's spokespersons, leaders at the state, as well as the national level, are capable of explaining the party's stand," he added.

When Maharashtra was under President's rule after the results of the 2019 Assembly polls were out and Shiv Sena (undivided) severed ties with ally BJP, Ajit Pawar secretly joined hands with Devendra Fadnis and a government was formed with Fadnis as the chief minister and the NCP leader as his deputy. However, that government lasted for just 80 hours after Ajit Pawar resigned.

After the Shiv Sena joined hands with the NCP and Congress to form a coalition government in November 2019, Ajit Pawar took oath as the deputy chief minister and handled the finance portfolio.

UNNAO GANG-RAPE

Accused set minor Dalit victim's house on fire; her infant son and sister fight for life

UNNAO (UP), April 18 (PTI): Two infants were in a critical condition Tuesday after a group of men set fire to the home of a minor Dalit girl, whom two of them had allegedly raped last year. The injured babies include the rape victim's six-month-old child — born after the 11-year-old was impregnated in the sexual assault — and her two-month-old sister, police said. The two rape accused, recently released on bail, allegedly barged into the family's thatched shed Monday evening with five others, after the victim refused to withdraw the case. They beat up her mother and then set the shed on fire. According to chief medical superintendent Sushil Srivastava, the rape victim's infant son suffered 35 per cent burns and her sister 45 per cent burns in the incident.

Cong raises questions over Dharavi project rebidding, asks if tender conditions changed to benefit Adani

NEW DELHI, April 18 (PTI): The Congress on Tuesday alleged that the Maharashtra government's Dharavi project rebidding "deliberately excluded" the previous winner, and asked if the tender conditions were changed to help Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "favourite business group" Adani. The opposition led by the Congress has been seeking a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe after the Hindenburg Research made a litany of allegations against the Adani Group, including fraudulent transactions and share-price manipulation.

The Gautam Adani-led group

has dismissed the charges as lies, and said they comply with all laws and disclosure requirements.

In a statement, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said that as part of the party's 'Hum Adani ke Hain Kaun (HAHK)' series in February it had asked Modi to explain the change in bid conditions that excluded the previous winner of a tender to redevelop Mumbai's Dharavi area and "allowed the Adani Group to win a fresh tender with a much lower bid".

Citing news reports, Ramesh said they have "exposed" in considerable detail how the process was manipulated to help

the Adanis.

"The Dubai-based Seclink Technology Corporation emerged as the highest bidder with a bid of ₹ 7,200 crore in the original November 2018 tender, outbidding its competitor Adani Infrastructure. That tender was cancelled in November 2020 because of issues related to the transfer of associated railway land," Ramesh said.

A fresh tender with new conditions was issued in October 2022 by the Maharashtra Urban Development Ministry, which came directly under deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis, he said.

The Adani Group won this with

a bid of ₹ 5,069 crore, lower than the original winning bid by ₹ 2,131 crore, he claimed.

"The changes in conditions included an increase in the realty experience of the financial partner, which prevented Seclink from rebidding, and an increase in the net worth of the bidder from ₹ 10,000 crore to ₹ 20,000 crore which restricted the number of bidders. The winner was permitted to pay its bid in installments rather than as a one-time payment as originally specified, which helped the cash-strapped Adani Group meet its payment obligations," Ramesh alleged.

'We are heading in the right direction toward jointly creating a positive impact for future global health architecture'

Need to break cycle of panic, not let fatigue diminish efforts on pandemic preparedness: Mandaviya

NEW DELHI, April 18 (PTI): Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday stressed on collectively breaking the cycle of panic and not letting pandemic fatigue diminish the country's efforts of preparedness against the coronavirus situation.

In his keynote address at the concluding session of the second G20 Health Working Group Meeting, he said India's G20 Presidency plans to continue the momentum brought during Italy and Indonesian presidency and consolidate the efforts made so far towards health emergencies preparedness, prevention and response.

About the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the healthcare systems around the world, the Union minister said, "It is essential for us to collectively break the cycle of panic and neglect and not let the phenomenon of pandemic fatigue diminish our ongoing efforts on pandemic preparedness, prevention and response."

He also highlighted the need for a formal global coordination mechanism for medical countermeasures and noted that India has proposed the agenda of digital health and innovation to promote the use of technology in health service delivery, bridging the digital divide across the world and promoting digital public good.

"As G20 Health Working Group, we are heading in the right



direction toward jointly creating a positive impact for future global health architecture," Mandaviya said.

Union minister of state for health Bharati Pravin Pawar reiterated that the fulcrum of India's G20 Presidency lies in the ancient Indian philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (World Is One Family) and emphasized creating resilient healthcare systems that ensure equitable access to affordable and quality healthcare to people across national borders.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan highlighted the need for an integrated global health framework through the approach of 'One Health' and the need to counter the challenge of antimicrobial resistance.

He urged everyone to continue their discussions to collectively work towards ensuring universal health coverage.

NEW DELHI, April 18 (PTI): The opposition parties are yet to firm up an alliance for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, but their unanimous demands for a caste census and the removal of reservation cap could be a binding factor and hand them what a section of leaders feels the "Brahmastra" to counter the BJP and its Hindutva plank.

The issues of caste census and reservation not only put all opposition parties on the same page but leaders feel it could also help them win back many backward classes who have veered towards the BJP in the recent past.

At a DMK-convened conference, RJD leader and Bihar deputy chief minister Tejashwi Yadav summed it up for opposition parties when he had said that the best way to beat the BJP's politics of "polarisation" was through social justice-based politics.

This formula has been adopted by the Congress with much enthusiasm with Rahul Gandhi making an aggressive pitch for a caste-based census and the removal of 50 per cent cap on reservation in his recent speech in Karnataka's Kolar, in a bid to turn the tables on the BJP that had been gunning for him over his 2019 "Modi surname" remarks alleging that he insulted OBCs.

The BJP has hit back at Gandhi for his remarks, alleging that he is being "disingenuous" with his claim on the issue of social justice when the erstwhile Siddaramaiah-led Congress government in Karnataka did nothing to address long-pending demands of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

The Opposition has spoken with unanimity on general issues such as inflation and rising employment but lacked cohesiveness on specific issues like the Adani matter. However, with the issues of caste-based census and removal of reservation cap, opposition parties have found an arrow with which they can hit multiple targets at one go -- it forges instant unity in the opposition ranks, puts the BJP on the back foot as it is yet to spell out its stance on them categorically, and prepares a counter for the Hin-



dutva push expected closer to the polls.

With the Congress aggressively taking up the issue, it is likely to endear the party to regional outfits which have till now been circumspect of the grand old party fearing that it may play the "big brother" by superseding their agenda with issues of its own.

Asked about the Congress' strong pitch, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh told PTI, "The demand for a caste-based census was articulated forcefully by many civil society groups to Rahul Gandhi during Bharat Jodo Yatra. The Congress is following through on that demand."

A socio-economic caste census was conducted by the end of 2012 covering some 25 crore households but the data could not be published for various reasons, he pointed out. An example of how the issue of caste-based census could be the glue for the Opposition unity is how even the Aam Aadmi Party which does not see eye-to-eye with the Congress on most issues has joined the caste-based census chorus.

The JD(U) and the RJD, which are part of the ruling 'Mahagathbandhan' alliance in Bihar, the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) have also been vociferously demanding caste-based census for a long time.

The caste census and the removal of the cap on reservation are also likely to put the BJP in a quandary and test its own outreach to the backward classes.

The BJP unit in Bihar had supported a resolution at an all-party meeting convened by Nitish Kumar and later a unanimous resolution was passed in the Bihar Assembly on caste census. However, the BJP's central leadership is yet to respond to the demand for a socio-economic caste census.

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal said the "doublespeak" of the BJP is clear from its "ambivalent position" on the Opposition demand for publishing the figures of the caste-based census of 2011.

"It (BJP) seeks the votes of the forward classes while it engages in doublespeak on backward classes," he alleged.

Sibal added that just being on the same page on this issue was not enough and that the Opposition unity requires much more than this. RJD MP Manoj Jha, another prominent voice in the Opposition ranks, also underlined the importance of the caste-based census issue.

"We have been demanding caste-based census, it started in 2010-11 when Lalu ji, Sharad ji and Mulayam ji raised this question and the then UPA government agreed to it. Subsequently, 2014 heralded (Narendra) Modi ji's victory and myself and other MPs raised the question as to what happened to the data and we were told that the data got corrupted. Don't know whether the corruption was of the data or somewhere else," Jha told PTI.

"The Kolar speech of Rahul ji provided a

further impetus to the demand made by several state governments and leaders from diverse political parties. It is important to see that it is not a political issue, it involves deepening of democracy, who would not want deepening of democracy, it involves psychological, social and political empowerment of communities, it involves ensuring representation in accordance with their population," the RJD leader said.

Having said that, it is important to collectively raise this issue and tell the prime minister and his party that politics cannot be rhetorical, one has to come down to the ground and look at what are the critical issues, he said.

"The critical issue is that in the governance structure and bureaucracy, the representation of SCs, STs and OBCs is negligible. Can a democracy live with such anomalies? That is our question and that is how we will take it up forward," he asserted. Political commentator Sanjay Jha, who was once a spokesperson for the Congress party, alleged that India has been devastated by a double whammy -- unemployment crisis and extreme inequality -- under the current government.

"The biggest sufferers are those from underprivileged communities and the backward classes. No amount or number of social welfare programmes being propagated by the BJP can neutralize the deprivation and the economic destitution of millions of Indians. Therefore the Opposition is completely justified in focusing on social justice as its key political message," he told PTI.

"That's why a nervous BJP is prevaricating on the caste census, as at core, it remains an upper caste party. Further, it is a party of the rich, by the rich, for the rich," he claimed.

A leader on condition of anonymity said that with the BJP likely to use its Hindutva plank to consolidate its vote bank, the demands for a caste-based census and the removal of reservation cap could be the Opposition's "Brahmastra" ahead of the 2024 elections.

Will not go into personal laws, says SC while hearing pleas for legal validation for same-sex marriages

NEW DELHI, April 18 (PTI): The Supreme Court on Tuesday made it clear that it will not go into the personal laws governing marriages while deciding the pleas seeking legal validation for same-sex marriages and asked the lawyers to advance arguments on the Special Marriage Act.

A five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud termed the issue involving the pleas "complex" and said the very notion of a man and a woman, as referred to in the Special Marriage Act, is not "an absolute based on genitals".

"It is not the question of what your genitals are. It is far more complex, that's the point. So, even when the Special Marriage Act says man and woman, the very notion of a man and a woman is not an absolute based on genitals," said the bench, which also comprised Justices S K Kaul, S R Bhat, Hima Kohli and P S Narasimha.

On being pointed out the difficulties and ramifications for the Hindu Marriage Act and personal laws of various religious groups if the apex court were to hold same-sex marriages valid, the bench said, "Then we can keep the personal laws out of the equation and all of you (lawyers) can address us on the Special Marriage Act (a religion neutral marriage law)."

The Special Marriage Act, 1954 is a law that provides a legal framework for the marriage of people belonging to different religions or castes. It governs a civil marriage where the state sanctions the marriage rather than the religion.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta,



appearing for the Centre, referred to the laws on transgenders and said there are several rights such as the right to choose partners, privacy right, right to choose sexual orientation, and any discrimination is criminally prosecutable.

"However, the conferment of socio-legal status of marriage cannot be done through judicial decisions. It cannot even be done by the legislature. The acceptance has to come from within the society," the top government law officer said.

He said the problem will arise when a person, who is a Hindu, wants to avail the right to marry within the same sex while remaining a Hindu.

"Hindus and Muslims and other communities will be affected and that is why the states should be heard," the law officer said.

"We are not going into the personal laws and now you want us to get into it. Why? How can you ask us to decide it? We cannot be compelled to hear everything," the bench said.

Then this will amount to "short circuiting" the issue and the Centre's stand is not to hear it all,

Mehta said, to which the CJI responded: "We are taking a middle course. We don't have to decide everything to decide something."

On being pointed out that even the religion-neutral Special Marriage Act has the term 'man and a woman', the bench said it is not the question of "genitals" and the very notion of the special law having "man and woman" is not restricted to the genitals.

Mehta, however, insisted it is restricted to the genitals and added there were several laws which the court will be making redundant inadvertently if it chose to give legal backing to same-sex marriages.

The law officer gave the example of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPc) and said a woman cannot be called for examination after a certain time and there could be a situation where a man says that though he has the genitals of a male he is not a man.

"There is always change in the society and it begins from somewhere," he said.

The bench said though 10 petitioners wanted it to be dealt with on a broader aspect "we are restricting it and we are not going

into personal laws etc".

The law officer contended the bench was saying it will not go into the personal laws but the earlier judgments opened this window and so again this would open another window later.

"But we cannot bind our future generations long after we are gone and turned to dust," the bench observed.

The law officer said the court should decide first whether it can go into this question at all or it would be essentially for parliament to deal with it.

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi supported the Centre's objection to same-sex marriages and said all states were necessary parties in the matter and needed to be heard.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Jamiat-Ulama-i-Hind, said the court should either hear the issue in entirety or not hear it at all as a piecemeal approach will cause more harm than good to the group seeking legal validation for same-sex marriages.

"I am a firm believer of the autonomy of an individual...we need to celebrate the union of two people... now, if marriage is allowed and it breaks, then the question will be who will take care of the child. Who will be the father... who will be the mother..." he said.

Giving some examples of other nations, Sibal said they reformed all other laws and that he was all for same-sex marriage but not in this fashion.

"If this is not done as a whole, then let it not be done at all," he said.

Delhi HC dismisses death row convict's plea seeking information under RTI

NEW DELHI, April 18 (PTI): The Delhi High Court on Tuesday dismissed a petition by a death row convict in the 2006 Mumbai train blast case seeking disclosure of information pertaining to the ban imposed on terrorist outfit Indian Mujahideen.

Ehtesham Qutubuddin Siddique had filed an application under the RTI Act seeking "background notes" of the Centre and reports of state governments of Gujarat, Delhi and Andhra Pradesh in relation to the ban on the organisation, which was stated to have carried out the blast. The outfit was proscribed under the stringent anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The petitioner challenged in the high court an order passed by the Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) on June 13, 2019 denying him the information on the ground that it was covered under the exemptions provided in the RTI Act.

While refusing to interfere with the CIC's decision, Justice Prathiba M Singh said the information sought by the petitioner has far reaching consequences and has to be seen from the "larger issue of safety and security of the public and the nation". It said the information Siddique has sought, if provided, will have a bearing on sovereignty and security of the country.

"A perusal of the information shows that the same has far reaching consequences. The same organisation is stated to be involved in various unfortunate incidents since 2005, some resulting in severe loss of life and property," said the court.

It observed that the disclosure of the information sought by the petitioner can "jeopardize the sources" of the government in relation to the ban on Indian Mujahideen and the CIC's opinion that sharing the information would endanger the sources is "correct and

does not require interference".

"In view of the above, the writ petition is devoid of merit and is dismissed," ruled the court. Advocate Arpit Bhargava, representing the petitioner, contended the information sought in the RTI application was needed to prove the innocence of the petitioner in the criminal case and there was no further need to maintain confidentiality in relation to the "background notes" and the reports of the states as Indian Mujahideen has already been declared a banned organisation under UAPA.

The counsel for the Centre said the information in question cannot be disclosed as it is confidential and disclosure will be against public interest.

Siddique was awarded capital punishment for the July 11, 2006 serial blasts when seven bombs packed with RDX ripped through many western line local trains in Mumbai killing 189 people and injuring 829.

The petitioner, currently lodged in a prison, claimed in his plea he was falsely implicated by the Anti-Terrorism Squad of Mumbai in the train blasts case.

The trial court's order of sentence is still pending confirmation by the Bombay High Court and the reports of the state governments and the Centre's background notes would prove the innocence of the petitioner as well as violation of his human rights, the plea said. Last year, the high court had dismissed another petition by Siddique challenging a CIC order denying disclosure of certain information pertaining to the sanction granted by the Maharashtra government for his prosecution under UAPA.

The high court had earlier this year rejected his petition seeking reports submitted by the Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh governments regarding investigation into the train bombings.

Contd. from Page 1...

Youth Congress chief 'sexist'

contacted, Assam Pradesh Congress Committee president Bhupen Kumar Borah refused to comment on the issue. "I am in touch with AICC state in-charge Jitendra Singh over the matter. I can comment only after a thorough discussion with the AICC," Borah told PTI.

We are trying to bring a change

are given four tablet PCs and enrollments with 1,500 and above are given five tablet PCs. Distributing the tablet PC to teachers the chief executive member (CEM), KAAC, Tuliram Ronghang said considering the number of enrollment, the tablet PCs are given to schools. The tablet PC will be used for e-learning and attendance of teachers. The CEM said, "We are going for a change in the education system. If we want to improve our education, we also need to adopt e-education." The CEM also enquired about the scarcity of furniture in schools and asked them to inform the concerned authorities regarding the issue.

"There should not be any shortage of furniture in schools. Furniture for the headmaster room, teacher's common room and classrooms should be there. I have asked the Inspector of Schools (IS) to find out the requirement of furniture in every school," the CEM said.

Executive member (EM), KAAC, Education, Richard Tokbi in his speech said the government of India and government of Assam has provided tablet PCs to all provincialised government schools of primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary levels for e-learning. The government of Assam has distributed 51,800 tablet PCs to teachers. In Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts, 2,217 tablet PCs will be distributed. This is just a ceremonial distribution and the rest will be given at the block levels, the EM informed. The EM further said, "Giving tablet PCs to schools will reduce the official work load of teachers and concentrate more in classroom teaching. The project will help in the day to day management of the schools. The project will also give a new push to elementary education in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong districts." MLA Bidyasingh Englang said the tablet PCs are given to schools to adapt to electronic means in the learning process in schools. Teachers have a greater responsibility toward students in schools, he said. Tablet PCs were given to 10 schools as a ceremonial distribution. The rest will be distributed at the block levels, the officials informed.

Businessmen rescued

His wife was in the house and she has been apprehended," he added. The official said the kidnappers had sent videos to the families of the victims, demanding ₹ 10 lakh as ransom. "We are investigating the motive behind the incident and also are on look out for the main accused," he said, not ruling out possible old monetary transaction between the two sides behind the alleged kidnapping.

Supreme Court grants bail

Gogoi was the only one whose bail was rejected by the court and he was released after spending 567 days in jail once Special NIA Judge Pranjal Das cleared him along with the three others of all charges.

The NIA is investigating two cases against Gogoi related to anti-CAA protests. In one of those, the special NIA court had granted him bail, which was upheld by the Gauhati High Court too in April 2021 after the probe agency challenged it. The RTI activist continued to be in judicial custody as he was rejected bail in the second case related to anti-CAA violence and was being investigated by the NIA.

Later, the special NIA court on July 1, 2021 released Gogoi and his three associates for their alleged role in the violent anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act stir in the state in December 2019 and observed there was nothing to indicate that the "talk of blockade" threatened the country's economic security or was "a terrorist act."

The NIA then moved the Gauhati High Court appealing it to allow the agency to frame charges under various sections, including section, of the IPC and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

Our Correspondent adds: Speaking to this reporter in Sivasagar, Gogoi said that he felt much strengthened now to fight boldly for the people of the state without compromising on any issue. Gogoi said that the Centre and the state government had tried their best to put him in "Chakrabayuehu" (in a tight corner), but the Supreme Court has granted him bail till the Lower Court completes the formalities, if any, to proceed further.

Mercury soars across India

respectively. Cloudy weather and light rain may provide some relief from the heat in the city on Wednesday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The IMD said a western disturbance active over the western Himalayan region is predicted to bring light rain in the northwestern plains starting Tuesday.

Earlier this month, the MeT office predicted above-normal maximum temperatures for most parts of the country from April to June, except parts of the northwest and the peninsular regions. Above-normal heatwave days are expected in most parts of central, east, and northwest India during this period. The meteorological department has issued an "orange" alert with a warning of severe heatwave conditions for two days from Tuesday in Patna, Banka, Jamui, Nawada, Aurangabad, Supaul and several other districts of Bihar.

Besides, a "yellow" warning has also been sounded in Begusarai, Nalanda, Gaya, Arwal, Bhojpur, Rohtas, Buxar, Khagaria and Munger regions of the state. The meteorological department uses four colour codes - green (no action needed), yellow (watch and stay updated), orange (be prepared) and red (take action) - for weather warning. "People are advised to avoid heat exposure and dehydration," a senior official of the Bihar Disaster Management Department said. In West Bengal, Bankura recorded the highest temperature at 43.7 degrees Celsius, while capital city Kolkata's maximum was 40 degrees Celsius.

Hot weather conditions continued to prevail in Haryana and Punjab with the maximum temperature settling above the 40 degree-mark in most parts of the two states.

In Haryana, sizzling heat swept across Hisar as the mercury settled at 41.4 degrees Celsius, according to a report of the meteorological department here. Karnal also experienced a hot day recording a high of 40.7 degrees Celsius. Ambala recorded a high of 39.7 degrees Celsius, Narnaul recorded a high of 40.2 deg C while Bhiwani registered a high of 39.6 degrees Celsius. Bathinda in Punjab recorded a maximum temperature of 41 degrees Celsius. The mercury settled at 36.6 degrees Celsius in Amritsar and at 41.2 degrees Celsius in Patiala. Chandigarh, the common capital of the two states, recorded a high of 39.4 degrees Celsius.

Prayagraj and Hamirpur in Uttar Pradesh were the hottest at 44.2 degrees Celsius, with the weather department predicting rain/thundershower at isolated places over western parts of the state. Lucknow recorded the maximum temperature of 41.3 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 24.5 degree Celsius.

The desert state of Rajasthan also saw the temperature rising with Chittorgarh recording 43.2 degrees Celsius followed by Kota (42.8 degrees), Banswara (42.7 degrees), Phalodi (42.2 degrees), Dholpur (42 degrees), Alwar and Sawai Madhopur (41.7 degrees each), Tonk (41.6 degrees), Churu and Pilani (41.4 degrees each), Barmer (41.2 degrees) and Jaipur (40 degrees Celsius).

However, the MeT has predicted light rain and thunderstorm in Jodhpur and Bikaner divisions and in Jaipur, Ajmer and Bharatpur divisions on April 19 and 20. It has also predicted a fall in temperatures by 2-3 degrees in the next two days. Reeling under the scorching sun, people in lower hills of Himachal had some relief as maximum temperatures dropped by few notches following light rains at several places. Una recorded a high of 37.4 degrees, while Dhaulakuan was hottest in the region with a maximum temperature of 38.7 degrees.

The popular tourist destinations of Shimla, Manali, Dharamsala and Narkanda posted a high of 25.4 degrees, 21 degrees, 28.2 degrees and 19.2 degrees Celsius, respectively.

The Andhra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority (APSDMA) forecast severe heat wave conditions in one mandal and heat wave conditions in 117 more across the state on Tuesday.

"While the heat wave is expected to hit seven mandals in Alluri Sitarama Raju district, 16 in Anakapalli, four in East Godavari, two each in Eluru, Palnadu, Visakhapatnam and Nandyala, six in Gunturu and 10 in Krishna," the disaster management department said in a statement.

Cong counts political dividends after 2 key Lingayat leaders join it, BJP seeks to counter narrative

BENGALURU, April 18 (PTI): As the Congress counts political dividends after two BJP leaders from the dominant Lingayat community joined it, ahead of May 10 Assembly polls in Karnataka, the ruling party has sought to downplay the desertion and project their move as mere "betrayal".

Lingayats, who constitute about 17 per cent of the state's population largely concentrated in the State's northern districts, form the strong vote base of the BJP. The Congress has been making attempts to break the Lingayat vote bank of the BJP for sometime now, by trying to project that the party has ill-treated the community by sidelining its veteran leader and Lingayat strong man B S Yediyurappa, after using him for its advantage. Now with senior leaders Jagadish Shettar (former CM) and Laxman Savadi (former Deputy CM) switching to its side, the Congress is planning to push this narrative further, hoping to create a perception against BJP in the minds of Lingayats. Several Congress leaders in the last couple of days have been trying to push this narrative, while also seeking to portray that the wave is in their favour, a party functionary said.

State Congress President D K Shivakumar even claimed that 2-3 percent of Veershaiva-Lingayat votes are shifting in his party's favour after Shettar and Savadi joined it, and have given an open invitation to their supporters in the BJP to join the party.

"Our estimation is we would win 141 seats, after Jagadish Shettar and Savadi joining the party we will reach 150 seats (out of total 224). Because of their joining, 2-3 percent of Veershaiva-Lingayat votes are shifting, because their supporters and well-wishers are shifting to Congress," Shivakumar told reporters here today. "I'm giving an open invitation to Shettar and Savadi's supporters in BJP to join Congress," he added. Foreseeing that the Congress will use this opportunity to build a narrative that BJP is ill-treating Lingayat leaders, the saffron party on the very day Shettar resigned as MLA, fielded Yediyurappa, arguably the tallest and a mass leader from the commu-



nity, to defend it. Yediyurappa had termed Shettar and Savadi as "betrayers", and listed out all key positions they were given by the BJP.

Chief minister Basavaraj Bommai, a Lingayat himself on Tuesday in Bagalkote said, one or two Lingayat leaders from BJP defecting to other parties, ahead of elections, will have no impact, and expressed confidence that the BJP will win more seats than last time in this region, where leaders have quit.

"In Karnataka politics, Lingayats are 'aware' voters, whenever they have taken a decision they have taken a right decision. The Congress is showing too much love towards Lingayats after the election is declared. Congress were the ones who tried to divide Lingayats," Bommai said. He accused the Congress of indirectly opposing and obstructing reservation related decisions favouring Lingayats. "They have always opposed the development of the community. There used to be Jalebi files during Siddaramaiah's (Congress) tenure." "Jalebi files" are pertaining to Gowdas, Lingayats and Brahmins, while Non-jalebi files refer to others. The BJP leaders used to accuse the then Siddaramaiah-led Congress government of clearing only non-jalebi files. Claiming that the Congress could not give water to farmers of north Karnataka, who were mostly Lingayats, by not implementing the Upper Krishna project for decades, Bommai said, the BJP gave representation to the community politically, socially, economically and administratively.

World Heritage Day: Residents, experts lament shrinking architectural legacy of Patna

PATNA, April 18 (PTI): For 26-year-old conservation architect Diptanshu Sinha, the razing of the Dutch and British-era Patna Collectorate also led to demolition of whatever hopes he had for the revival and redemption of the historic city's "dying heritage". Heartbroken, he quit his job at an NGO that works on conservation of heritage structures, and moved to Gurugram.

"Every person has a breaking point. I couldn't take the razing of the collectorate building which had preceded a wave of demolition since 2010. The last structure in the collectorate campus to go down was the frontage of its famed Dutch-era Record Room which had magnificent columns, and carried within its wide walls, centuries of history of urban evolution of Patna," Sinha said.

Patna Collectorate -- the headquarters of the district administration -- consisted of a cluster of buildings, including the 17th-century Record Room and old District Engineer's Office, both from the Dutch era; and the British-era DM Office Building and the iconic District Board Patna Building of 1938. According to him, what the centuries-old collectorate building needed was a "human touch of restoration" and instead it got the "cold claws of bulldozers".

Sinha claimed that Patna gets excited about the opening of a new mall. But heritage is not on its agenda, and World Heritage Day is rather alien to them, he said. World Heritage Day is celebrated on April 18 every year to raise people's awareness about the diversity of cultural heritage and the efforts that are required to protect and conserve it. "The city has become ruthless when it comes to heritage. The government destroys old buildings in the name of development and people look the other way without any



guilt," Sinha alleged. He was a part of the citizen-led movement 'Save Historic Patna Collectorate' that fought for six years to save the landmark, which featured in the Oscar-winning film "Gandhi", from demolition.

The Supreme Court on May 13 last year rejected a plea by INTACH to save the landmark, and bulldozers rolled in the next day. The cluster of buildings in the 12-acre Patna Collectorate campus were razed in phases, the last demolition taking place in late December.

Prior to this, over a century-old Gole Market was dismantled in 2019 to make way for a smart city project, the 1885-built Anjumam Islamia Hall was razed in 2018, Bankipore Central Jail in 2010, and a range of other heritage buildings in the last 13 years, including the City SP Bungalow, Civil Surgeon's Bungalow, District and Sessions Judge Bungalow, New Police Line Building, among others. Many historians and architects have criticised the razing of the historic Patna Medical College and Hospital buildings in a phased manner for a redevelopment project. The 100-year-old Sultan Palace has also been facing the threat of demolition since June last year.

"They want to give new projects to people. There is nothing wrong with that but it is happening at the cost of our heritage. Recently, a major portion of the historic Cancer Block of the PMCH was dismantled for a Patna Metro corridor and PMCH station. Given the manic pace of insensitive development, everything old will be erased in a few years," rued 19-year-old Aman Lal Lal, a student of Patna College, claimed the city was under a "development overdrive" with "scant regard for old buildings and other heritage structures".

Mumbai-based conservation architect Abha Narain Lambah, who has worked on conservation projects in many cities, some of which have won UNESCO awards, said demolition of old buildings "denudes the character" of historic cities. "What separates Patna from Delhi, Mumbai from Lucknow, Noida from Calcutta, are the old buildings. These structures are part of our composite urban fabric and should not be treated as a burden or a liability, but an asset," she told PTI. "Demolition of old buildings leads to erasing tangible heritage and collective memories of a city. Patna should act wisely when it comes to its heritage buildings," Lambah said.

On World Heritage Day, many other experts also pitched for preserving the past while building a future in Patna, saying that "restoration and not demolition is the way forward". Kamalika Bose, a conservation architect from Mumbai who recently visited Patna, said, "The lament and criticism over the loss of built heritage were evident while interacting with long-time residents and old-timers." "While much may be lost, it is never too late for a turnaround. A concerted effort to safeguard, restore and reuse what remains is most essential," she said.

SAIF ALI KHAN JOINS JR NTR'S NEXT MOVIE, STARTS FILMING

MUMBAI, April 18 (PTI): Actor Saif Ali Khan on Tuesday joined the cast of superstar Jr NTR's next feature film.

Production banner NTR Arts shared the news of Saif joining the pan-India movie's cast, which also includes actor Janhvi Kapoor.

The studio also posted photos of Saif's meeting with Jr NTR and director Koratala Siva.

"Team #NTR30 welcomes #SaifAliKhan on board. The National Award winning actor joined the shoot of the high voltage action drama," NTR Arts posted on Twitter. Tentatively titled "NTR 30", the movie is billed as an high-octane action drama set in the forgotten coastal lands of India.

The movie marks the first collaboration between Saif and Jr NTR. It is slated to be released in theatres on April 5, 2024.

Saif will be next seen in Prabhas-led "Adipurush", which has been shot simultaneously in Hindi and Telugu. The film is scheduled for a theatrical release on June 16.



ILEANA D'CRUZ TO WELCOME FIRST CHILD



MUMBAI, April 18 (PTI): Actor Ileana D'Cruz on Tuesday announced that she will soon welcome her first child.

The actor shared the news in an Instagram post. "Coming soon. Can't wait to meet you my little darling," Ileana wrote alongside two photographs-- a baby romper with "And so the adventure begins" printed on it and a "Mama" pendant.

Many of her industry friends and colleagues congratulated the actor on the post.

Ileana's mother Samira D'Cruz commented,

"Welcome soon to the world my new grand baby can't wait."

"Ahhh congratulations my love this is amazing news," Shibani Dandekar wrote.

Nisha Aggarwal commented, "So beautiful. Congratulations."

Nargis Fakhri posted love-struck and clapping hands emoji.

On the work front, Ileana recently featured in a music video of the song "Sab Gazab", sung by Goldkartz and Badshah. Her last movie outing was Abhishek Bachchan-led "The Red Bull".

Kanu Behl's 'Agra' to have world premiere at Directors' Fortnight of Cannes Film Festival



MUMBAI, April 18 (PTI): Acclaimed filmmaker Kanu Behl is returning to the Directors' Fortnight section of the 2023 Cannes Film Festival, this time with his upcoming Hindi feature film "Agra".

Produced by Saregama India Ltd, UFO Production, and O28 Films, the movie will have its world premiere at Directors' Fortnight, an independent section of the prestigious film gala.

Written by Behl and Atika Chohan, "Agra" is an exploration of sexual dynamics within a family and the deep dystopian fractures created in a modern India fast shrinking

into pigeon-holed spaces.

The feature film -- an India-France co-production -- is fronted by the debutant Mohit Agarwal, "Aashiqui" star Rahul Roy, "Lion" actor Priyanka Bose, Ruhani Sharma, along with Vibha Chibber, Sonal Jha and Aanchal Goswami in pivotal roles. Behl said he is overjoyed that "Agra" is beginning its journey at Director's Fortnight.

"Agra" has been a deeply personal and difficult exploration for me, a deep dive into the inner entrails of desire and male sexual repression, and an attempt to understand the hoodoo... I hope it opens a

conversation around sexuality and the 'homes' we choose to live in, as it reaches a wider audience," the writer-director said in a statement.

"The world premiere of 'Agra' at the Directors' Fortnight is a huge honour for us. We often credit ourselves as a studio that is into fearless filmmaking and Agra is a perfect example. Kanu Behl had deep faith in the subject and we are glad we made this film with him. I look forward to seeing how the audience reacts to the film at Cannes," added Siddharth Anand Kumar -- Sr. VP of Films & Event at Saregama India Ltd.

SALMAN'S 'KISI KA BHAII KISI KI JAAN' OPENS ADVANCE BOOKING

MUMBAI, April 18 (PTI): Superstar Salman Khan on Tuesday announced that audiences can now book the tickets for his upcoming film "Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan".

The family entertainer, directed by Farhad Samji, is scheduled to be released on Friday.

Salman shared the advance booking news on his Instagram page.

"Advance booking is now open for #KisiKaBhaiKisiKiJaani Grab your tickets now! See you in theatres on April 21st," the 57-year-old actor wrote.

A Salman Khan Film (SKF) production, "Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan" also features veteran Telugu actor Venkatesh, Pooja Hegde, Jagapathi Babu, Bhumiika Chawla, Vijender Singh, Raghav Juyal, Siddharth Nigam, Jassie Gill, Shehnaaz Gill, Palak Tiwari and Vinali Bhatnagar. The film marks the Bollywood superstar's first big screen release in a leading role in four years. He was last seen in a cameo appearance as spy Tiger in superstar Shah Rukh Khan's blockbuster hit "Pathaan", which released in January.



MUMBAI, April 18 (PTI): Why haven't other Indian stars done it? That's the question Priyanka Chopra Jonas says she is asked all the time and one to which she has no ready answer other than the fact that she left the baggage of being a Bollywood star when she crossed over to the West.

The former Miss World, arguably the only mainstream Indian actor to make it big in the American entertainment industry, is now fronting the global spy series "Citadel".

"People ask me all the time, why haven't other people done it? Why haven't other actors from India broken the way you've broken? I don't have the answer to that. All I know is that the one thing that I did, which maybe led to it, was I didn't carry my baggage," Priyanka told PTI in an interview during a recent visit to India.

"I come from India and I'm a big star here, and I have an

entourage of 20 people. I don't do that (there). I will give an audition. I have no qualms in walking into the room and showing people my work. I'm not afraid of the work. I don't carry my ego or my pride," she added.

The 40-year-old decided to explore Hollywood at the peak of her career in the Hindi film industry around 2011-2012. She began as a singer with the single "In My City".

and went on to feature as the lead in the American TV show "Quantico" and played the antagonist in the film "Baywatch".

"I've been a leading lady for a very long time, whether that's in Hollywood or in Bollywood. I consider myself a leading lady. It takes time to get there. It took me about eight years working in Hollywood to be able to do leading parts," the actor said.

In her 20-years in the Hindi film industry, she has starred in films such as "Kaminey", "7 Khoon Maaf", "Barfi", "Bajirao Mastani" and "Dil Dhadakne Do".

Most recently, she was seen in "The Matrix Resurrections" alongside Keanu Reeves.

The actor said it took her eight years of building her "credibility" with "smaller roles and movies" to finally reach a position where she is getting opportunities with big names such as "The Matrix" creators Lana and Lilly Wachowski and "Avengers: Infinity War" duo Joe and Anthony Russo, who have produced "Citadel".

"I've been a leading lady for a very long time, whether that's in Hollywood or in Bollywood. I consider myself a leading lady. It takes time to get there. It took me about eight years working in Hollywood to be able to do leading parts," the actor said.

In her 20-years in the Hindi film industry, she has starred in films such as "Kaminey", "7 Khoon Maaf", "Barfi", "Bajirao Mastani" and "Dil Dhadakne Do".

I don't carry my ego or my pride: Priyanka on her global success



Like characters that defy authority: director Tigmanshu Dhulia

MUMBAI, April 18 (PTI): "Paan Singh Tomar" director Tigmanshu Dhulia says he has always been fascinated by stories of people who defy authority and his films reflect that world.

Dhulia, who is known for films such as "Haasil", "Saheb Biwi Aur Gangster" franchise, "Bullett Raja" and "Yaara", is revisiting the world of student politics 20 years after his debut film in web series "Garmi".

"Crime, gangsters, and characters who defy authority... this is something that I have always liked. Even as a child, I used to watch only action films, I used to

hate drama. I would tag along with my parents, once they were going to watch a social film, like 'Anurag'. I used to hate it," the filmmaker told PTI in an interview.

"I don't like authority myself, I want to defy authority. So characters that defy the establishment or authority, like, gangsters like to stay in free space, even if they are violent, I find those interesting since childhood. I can't change this and I like those things even today," he added.

Dhulia remembers watching Ramesh Sippy's 1975 classic "Sholay" at the age of eight, which

left a huge impact on him. He also loved watching Westerns such as George Roy Hill's "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" and "The Cowboys", among others.

"I was amazed with the visuals 'Sholay' had, I had not seen something like this before, even the characters, the shot taking... I had no knowledge about shot taking but it was all making an impact on me. I would like Westerns, war films, so (all) these films I have loved watching, they have had an influence on me," Dhulia added.

"Garmi" revolves around a young man who moves out of his hometown with aspirations of be-

coming a civil servant but stumbles into the world of college politics, powerplay and crime.

"I started digging into it long back, my first film ('Haasil') was on student politics. I wanted to revisit this part of society. It's been 20 years and it was interesting to explore the world after 20 years, like what has happened in society."

"The world is volatile, exciting. It is about a boy and they are all young, 22 or 23-year-old and how politics affects them. I wanted to revisit that area again, how society has changed. It (subject) is very close to me, my first movie," Dhulia said.



LIVERPOOL HADN'T TASTED VICTORY IN MORE THAN SIX WEEKS

Liverpool ends barren run by thrashing Leeds 6-1 in EPL

LEEDS, April 18 (AP): Liverpool won for the first time in five English Premier League games after thrashing Leeds 6-1.

Liverpool hadn't tasted victory in more than six weeks, since routing Manchester United 7-0.

But after Cody Gakpo's opener and Mohamed Salah's quickfire addition for a 2-0 halftime lead on Monday, Liverpool tore apart Leeds in the second half. Salah and Diogo Jota finished with a pair each, and Darwin Nunez came off the bench to score late.

Leeds halved the deficit two minutes after the break when Ibrahim Konate was caught in possession by Luis Sinisterra, who lifted his effort over goalkeeper Alisson to make it 2-1.

But the Leeds defense collapsed in familiar fashion, suffering consecutive heavy home defeats eight days after losing to Crystal Palace 5-1. Leeds has conceded 60 league goals, more than any other side.

Liverpool remained eighth in the standings, two points behind Brighton. Leeds' survival hopes were dealt another big blow by staying 16th, two points above the drop zone.

Jürgen Klopp hailed what he



called Liverpool's best performance of the season.

"The moment in the game I enjoyed the most was the 92nd minute," the Reds manager said.

"It's already 6-1 and we lose the ball and we had four players chasing."

"From a counter-pressing point of view that was definitely the

best game we've played this season, in possession probably as well."

"We were calm in the decisive moments to pass exceptional

balls. Mo's second was super play. Curtis (Jones) to Robbo (Andrew Robertson), then Cody (Gakpo) and then the ball to Mo. That was really good. There were lots of good moments."

Liverpool went ahead in the 34th minute in controversial fashion. Trent Alexander-Arnold appeared to use his arm to control the ball when dispossessing Junior Firpo. But referee Craig Pawson allowed play to continue and there was no VAR intervention after Alexander-Arnold received a return pass from Salah before crossing low for Gakpo to turn home.

There was nothing controversial about the visitors' second goal. Jota robbed Weston McKennie in midfield and slipped in Salah, who smashed a left-footed finish into the top corner from the left edge of the penalty area.

The visitors had struck twice in four minutes from their first two chances to assume full control by halftime. Leeds then hauled itself back two minutes after the restart. Ibrahim Konate was caught in possession by Sinisterra and the Colombian showed strength and composure to dink a neat finish over Alisson.

Brisbane Olympics leader marks 1 year in long run up to 2032



BRISBANE, April 18 (AP): In the 12 months since becoming president of the organizing committee for the 2032 Brisbane Olympics, Andrew Liveris has refined his vision of what the Summer Games will look like in nine years.

He foresees a bit of Barcelona, a little dose of London and lot more of what makes Australia and the Oceania region tick.

As well as helping establish a board containing 22 people, including stakeholders from three tiers of government, and recruiting CEO Cindy Hook, Liveris has been asking plenty of questions and "benchmarking" previous Olympic hosts to get a sense of where Brisbane will be similar and where it'll be different.

"A year in, I see we'll use the best of Barcelona and the best of London, but we are developing something which actually is going to be very unique and hopefully seen as very much us," Liveris said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Liveris, a former chairman of the Dow Chemical Company — a former top Olympic sponsor — said local organizers had already conducted about 2,500 branding interviews and the feedback embodies what he describes as the "lifestyle superpower" of Brisbane and the surrounding coastal cities of southeast Queensland state.

"What's coming out is the warm, generous hospitality of the people... and then the amazing nature that we live in that we maybe take for granted," he said. Some of Australia's top tourism destinations, including the Great Barrier Reef and the Gold Coast, are in Queensland state and will offer backdrops for Olympic events.

Addressing the general assembly of the Oceania National Olympic Committees in Brisbane on Tuesday, Liveris said those characteristics were shared

across the region. And he emphasized how sports, tourism and business across Oceania could benefit from Brisbane hosting the Games.

Australia has already hosted the Olympics twice, at Melbourne in 1956 and Sydney in 2000. Brisbane, Australia's third-biggest city, was awarded the 2032 Games in July 2021 as the preferred candidate selected to fit the IOC's so-called New Norms reforms which aim to avoid excessive spending and potential white elephant projects.

Brisbane is central to one of the fastest growing regions in the country, is an established gateway to people from the Pacific, and was already in the process of reshaping itself with construction of a new subway rail line and a new metro system due for completion next year.

The federal government and Queensland state have already agreed to a 50-50 funding split on a deal worth about 7 billion Australian dollars (\$4.7 billion) to build or remodel venues for the Olympics, including a revamp of the Gabba Stadium — the state's long-term cricket and Australian rules football headquarters — and construction of a 17,000-seat downtown indoor arena.

Both major projects will add to the new transport infrastructure. "We'll blend a Melbourne, which was an urban games, to a Sydney, which was a warm, hospitable beautiful environment games," Liveris said. "We can be both, because we're recreating our center. The center of this city will be nothing like it is now. This is a very livable city, but (the Olympics) will make it a livable city for the 21st century."

Brisbane's Olympics follow Paris next year and Los Angeles in 2028. Organizers will start revising their plans with the IOC in June and have them finalized within 18 months.

Man City aims to finish off Bayern in Champions League

DUESSELDORF, April 18 (AP): Manchester City and Bayern Munich's seasons are each defined by one signing — for better or worse. As City prepares to finish off Bayern in the Champions League quarterfinals on Wednesday after beating the German champions 3-0 in the first leg, Erling Haaland has redefined the role of a modern striker. Haaland has scored 47 goals in 40 games in all competitions, and has a possible 13 more games to play this season. The Norwegian scored against Bayern in the first leg after demolishing another German team, Leipzig, with five goals in the previous round.

Then there's Sadio Mané. The Senegal forward was supposed to reshape Bayern's attack into a fluid, flexible threat less reliant on a traditional striker when he joined from Liverpool last year as Robert Lewandowski left.

However, Mané has contributed little on the field in recent months and upset squad stability. He has been a bit-part player ever since a leg injury ruled him out of the World Cup, and was suspended from the squad for Bayern's draw at Hoffenheim on Saturday for what the club called "misconduct" after confronting teammate Leroy Sané in the locker room following the loss to City. German media reported he had struck Sané in the face. Tuchel has said Mané apologized like a "role model" in a process which had a "cleaning effect" on the squad's atmosphere, but it's yet to be followed by any improvement on the field.

Bayern and coach Thomas Tuchel are staking their faint hopes on home advantage and a promise to finally turn their team's form around.

Asian Champions Trophy is a litmus test for Asian Games: Harmanpreet Singh

BENGALURU, April 18 (PTI): Indian men's hockey team captain Harmanpreet Singh on Tuesday said the upcoming Asian Champions Trophy in Chennai will be a "litmus test" for the side ahead of the Asian Games to be held in September-October later this year. The seventh edition of the Asian Champions Trophy is scheduled to be held from August 3 to 12, serving as a precursor to the Hangzhou Asian Games in September where teams will vie for gold and qualify for the Paris Olympic Games.

"For many of us, it will be the first time that we will be playing in Chennai. I remember our seniors talking about the Asia Cup in 2007 held in Chennai which was a great tournament for India, defending the title in a successful campaign," Singh said in a release. "This will be an ideal tournament for us to see where we



stand against the same teams with whom we will be competing in the Asian Games. It will be a litmus test for the team ahead of the Asian Games.

"It will also give us a good understanding of our opponents and

we can further prepare well for the Asian Games where we aim to win the gold medal and directly qualify for the Paris 2024 Olympics." India won the Asian Champions Trophy in the inaugural edition in 2011 and beat

Pakistan in the final in 2016 to reclaim the title. In the following edition in 2018, India were joint winners with Pakistan after rain affected the proceedings in Muscat.

In the previous edition in 2021 held in Dhaka, the Indian team finished with a bronze medal.

With Korea and Malaysia showcasing good form in World Cup 2023 in Bhubaneswar-Rourkela, Harmanpreet said that the competition will be intense.

"Korea has shown great progress over the last couple of years. They won the Asia Cup in Jakarta last year and also did very well in the World Cup," the ace dragflicker said.

"Malaysia too is a strong contender for the title and they continue to have one of the best penalty-corner attacks. It will undoubtedly be a hard-fought tournament."

Trans woman blocked from Australian basketball league

MELBOURNE, April 18 (AP): A transgender female player has been blocked from joining the second-tier of Australia's women's national basketball league after a panel ruled her ineligible to compete at the sport's elite level.

Lexi Rodgers last month revealed in a podcast that she was applying to play in for the Kilsyth Cobras, a Melbourne-based club in Australia's NBL1 South competition, saying she wanted to put a face to the "trans player" being mentioned in local debate in mainstream and social media.

Basketball Australia issued a statement Tuesday saying its three-member expert panel had deemed Rodgers to be ineligible

to play in the NBL1 this season.

The sport's national governing body said it assessed the eligibility of prospective transgender players on a case-by-case basis at the professional and semiprofessional levels.

"We acknowledge we're still on a path of education and understanding," Basketball Australia said.

"To aid us in developing our framework, Lexi will provide feedback and advice from her experiences. "The balance of inclusivity, fairness and the competitive nature of sport will always be a complex area to navigate." Rodgers responded by saying she still hoped to play at the elite level in future and "I

hope Basketball Australia understands that this is not the end of my journey as an athlete and that it must not miss future opportunities to demonstrate its values."

"I am sad about the potential message this decision sends to trans and gender diverse people everywhere," Rodgers wrote in an Instagram post.

"I hope that one day basketball's governing body can replicate the inclusion and acceptance I have found on the court with my teammates."

Suzi Batkovic, a three-time Olympian and member of Basketball Australia's expert panel, thanked Rodgers for cooperating in a process that is a "complex space that continues to evolve."

"As we continue to develop our own framework for sub-elite and elite competitions, we understand the need to have a clear process and continual education within all layers of the sport so we can best support players, coaches, clubs, associations and the wider basketball community," Batkovic said.

Last month, transgender athletes who have transitioned to female from elite women's international competition.

The World Athletics Council adopted the same rules as swimming did last year in deciding to bar athletes who have transitioned from male to female and have gone through male puberty.

Under Bravo, youngsters will gain confidence to bowl at death: Dhoni

BENGALURU, April 18 (PTI): Handling youngsters at the death overs is a "challenge" and Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni is looking at the seasoned Dwayne Bravo to help them out.

Along with Dhoni, Bravo has been a part of some of CSK's finest wins in the Indian Premier League.

"It is a difficult one for the youngsters. But they are working hard. Bravo is one of the specialists. Under him, the bowlers will gain confidence. It's a team game. The coach, the bowling coach and the senior players guide them," Dhoni said after his team's eight-run win over Royal Challengers Bangalore here on Monday.

Dhoni is impressed by

Shivam Dube's footwork against the spinners but said he needs to work on his batting against pacers.

Dube blazed away to a 27-ball 52 in the team's match against RCB. Having posted an imposing 226 for six, CSK emerged victorious by eight runs.

"Dube is a clean hitter, is a tall guy with good reach. He has an issue with the fast bowlers but he's a clean hitter against the spinners. We had certain plans for him. We feel he's someone who can deliver. He needs to believe in that more than us," Dhoni said at the presentation ceremony.

CSK were worried till the time the duo of RCB skipper Faf du Plessis (62 off 33 balls) and



Glenn Maxwell (76 off 36) were at the crease.

"Whenever you score 220, the batsmen need to keep on hitting. If Faf and Maxi had continued, they would have won it by the 18th over. I keep assessing from behind the wicket, I am always involved in what needs to

be done rather than thinking about the result."

Devon Conway slammed 83 off 45 deliveries while Dube blazed away to a 27-ball 52, before CSK stopped RCB at 218 for eight.

"I think we played it perfectly, the last five overs were

set up for the finish. DK finishing the game, that's bread and butter for him, but that shows how good their bowling was," RCB skipper du Plessis said.

"200 was going to be par, we went for few runs towards the end. We could have minimised the damage by restricting them (for less than 20 in an over)."

"The last four overs were where it was set up for a perfect finish. It was one of those wickets, one of the best (for batters.) As a bowler you need to be skilful. Siraj was unbelievable."

"We couldn't manage to finish it off, but we got to move on. I lost a little bit of power towards the end, was disappointed as I got stiff. Need to keep going harder against the spinners in the middle overs."

Boston Marathon sweep for Kenya, but not favorite Kipchoge

BOSTON, April 18 (AP): Defending Boston Marathon champion Evans Chebet wasn't focused on beating Eliud Kipchoge, the world record holder considered the greatest marathoner of all time.

Conquering the course was the goal. Chebet won the world's oldest and most prestigious marathon on Monday for the second year in a row, leaving Kipchoge behind at Heartbreak Hill to spoil the two-time Olympic gold medalist's much-anticipated debut and win in 2 hours, 5 minutes, 54 seconds.

Gabriel Geay of Tanzania won a footrace for second, finishing 10 seconds behind the winner and two seconds ahead of Kenyan Benson Kipruto. Kipchoge finished sixth — just his third major marathon loss to go with 12 victories.

"When we race, we don't race against an individual," said Kipruto, the 2021 winner and Chebet's training partner. "When we woke up this morning, we were going for a race, not for an individual. ... And that's what happened." Hellen Obiri, a two-time Olympic silver medalist in the 5,000 meters, won the women's race in 2:21:38 to complete the Kenyan sweep. Amane Beriso of Ethiopia was second, 12 seconds back, followed seven seconds later by Israeli Liron Salpeter. "I tried to be patient and wait for the right time to happen," said Obiri, who finished sixth last fall in New York in her marathon debut. "Today was my time." It was the third straight Kenyan sweep. Obiri is the 15th Kenyan to win the distaff division since 1966. Chebet is the 25th Kenyan men's champion and fourth in a row; he is the first man to defend his Boston title since Robert Kipkoech Cheruiyot won three in a row from 2006-08.

Chebet's time was the sixth-fastest in course history. Kipchoge finished in 2:09:23, the slowest marathon of his career. "In a marathon anything can happen," Obiri said of the men's race. "It was a strong field, and everybody was there to race."

Chebet was in a lead pack that dropped Kipchoge around Mile 20, shortly after he missed his bottle at a water station. Geay, Kipruto and Chebet pulled away with about three miles left, and Chebet made his move in the final mile. "Most of them blew up. Even Eliud Kipchoge blew up," said Scott Fauble, who finished seventh and was the top American. "I almost caught him." Kipchoge had been hoping to add a Boston Marathon victory to his unprecedented running resume. The 38-year-old has won four of the six major marathons; Boston is the only one he has competed in and failed to win. (He has never run New York.) He also broke 2 hours in an exhibition in a Vienna park.

Inconsistent LSG faces RR test in IPL

JAIPUR, April 18 (PTI): Blowing hot and cold, Lucknow Super Giants will look to tick all the boxes and return to winning ways when they clash with table-toppers Rajasthan Royals in an IPL match here on Wednesday.

With three wins and two losses so far, LSG is a team overflowing with talent but they have missed a trick or two at times to find themselves on the losing side twice.

In the last match against the Punjab Kings, Lucknow couldn't get enough runs in the middle overs, leaving them 10-15 runs short in the end.

While KL Rahul returning to form with a sizzling 56-ball 74 is a big positive, LSG will rue the scoring opportunities they squandered in the middle overs.

Lucknow have no dearth of power in their batting, with Kyle Mayers at the top and Nicholas Pooran and Marcus Stoinis in the middle capable of pulverising any opposition.

While Mayers did his job in the powerplay, he, perhaps, needs to think about building partnerships after the first six overs, especially with Deepak Hooda struggling to get runs at the top.

Against PBKS, LSG also committed the mistake of bringing in the talented Ravi Bishnoi too late, allowing the batters to take the chase deep into the final over.



Bishnoi is a wily customer with a mean googly, and skipper Rahul may think of using him in the middle as well, instead of holding him back for the death overs.

Krishnappa Gowtham and Krunal Pandya too have done well in their respective roles.

Among the fast bowlers, LSG possess the fiery pace of Mark Wood and Avesh Khan. Yudhvir Singh Charak too will look to carry on his good run after a sensational two-wicket haul on debut against Punjab.

However, for Lucknow, it will be an uphill task to disturb the apocryphal of the Royals, who have performed like a well-oiled machine with a hat-trick of wins to grab the top spot in the IPL standings. RR possess a formidable batting line-up with the likes of Yashasvi Jaiswal, Jos Buttler and Sanju Samson ensuring that the side has a good start and has enough runs in the powerplay.

While Buttler, with 204 runs has been their highest run-scorer, Jaiswal has struck at 149.45 during

his 136 runs so far in the IPL. And, when the duo failed the other day against GT, skipper Samson rose to the occasion, bailing out the team with a 32-ball 60 as West Indian Shimron Hetmyer completed the job with a 26-ball 56.

Devdutt Padikkal too has come up with cameos but Riyan Parag hasn't been able to grab the opportunities.

RR also has some quality spinners, with the trio of Yuzvendra Chahal, Adam Zampa and Ravichandran Ashwin making life

difficult for the opposition.

It was the spinners who had won them the match against Chennai Super Kings, while pace spearhead Trent Boult did the job against Delhi Capital by taking those two wickets in the first over to derail their chase. Medium pacer Sandeep Sharma too has used all his experience, taking wickets regularly during his spells.

Squad (from):
Lucknow Super Giants: KL Rahul (c and wk), Kyle Mayers, Deepak Hooda, Krunal Pandya, Amit Mishra, Nicholas Pooran (wk), Naveen ul Haq, Ayush Badoni, Avesh Khan, Karan Sharma, Yudhvir Charak, Yash Thakur, Romario Shepherd, Mark Wood, Swapnil Singh, Manan Vohra, Daniel Sams, Prerak Mankad, Krishnappa Gowtham, Jaydev Unadkat, Marcus Stoinis, Ravi Bishnoi, Mayank Yadav.

Rajasthan Royals: Sanju Samson (c), Abdul Basith, Murgan Ashwin, Ravichandran Ashwin, KM Asif, Trent Boult, Jos Buttler, KC Cariappa, Yuzvendra Chahal, Donovan Ferreira, Shimron Hetmyer, Jason Holder, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Dhruv Jurel, Obed McCoy, Devdutt Padikkal, Riyan Parag, Kunal Singh Rathore, Joe Root, Navdeep Saini, Sandeep Sharma, Kuldeep Sen, Akash Vasisth, Kuldip Yadav, Adam Zampa.

Match time: 7:30 PM IST.

New Zealand snatches dramatic 4-run T20 win over strong Pakistan



LAHORE, April 18 (AP): An experienced New Zealand survived Iftikhar Ahmed's late onslaught to snatch a stunning four-run win against Pakistan and keep alive their five-match Twenty20 series.

Iftikhar smacked six sixes and three fours and nearly sealed the series 3-0 for Pakistan with a blistering 60 off 24 balls. But New Zealand medium-pacer James Neesham kept his nerve in the final over and Pakistan was dismissed for 159 on Monday night.

Captain Tom Latham, leading New Zealand in the absence of eight frontline players busy in the Indian Premier League, anchored the Kiwis to 163-5 with a brilliant 64 off 49 balls.

"We were pleased to get a competitive total and it's satisfying to get across the line and keep the series alive," Latham said. "The whole squad will take a lot of confidence from this match moving forward."

Pakistan's strong top order fell and limped to 88-7 in the 15th over. Then Iftikhar counter-punched by raising Pakistan's joint fastest T20 half-century off just 20 balls. Together with Faheem Ashraf, who made 27 off 14 deliveries, Iftikhar brought Pakistan in sight of victory with a 61-run, eighth-wicket stand.

Faheem holed out at long on in the penultimate over and Pakistan needed 15 off the final Neesham

over. Iftikhar clobbered a first-ball six over the square leg boundary and hit a crisp boundary on the off side. However, Iftikhar tried to finish off the game with another big hit and was caught at long on. Off the final delivery, last man Haris Rauf was also caught in the deep. Neesham took 3-38.

"We didn't bat well enough," captain Babar Azam said. "The pressure kept building throughout the run chase, (but) Iftikhar delivered and Faheem also chipped in with crucial runs."

Babar, who smashed a century on Saturday, was out for 1 after Rachin Ravindra's spectacular diving catch at third man in the second over. Chad Bowes smartly ran out Mohammad Rizwan for 6 in the fourth over.

Ravindra, 2-28, and legspinner Ish Sodhi, 1-11, pinned down the batters in the middle overs.

Earlier, Latham and Daryl Mitchell (33) revived New Zealand with a 65-run, third-wicket stand before they fell in successive overs late in the innings.

Mitchell was deceived by Shaheen Shah Afridi's slower delivery and Latham, who hit seven fours and two sixes, was caught behind in Rauf's return spell.

Pakistan leads the series 2-1 and Rawalpindi hosts the remaining two matches on Thursday and Monday.

Left-handed batters on ground with short boundaries did the trick for CSK: Maxwell



BENGALURU, April 18 (PTI): Royal Challengers Bangalore all-rounder Glenn Maxwell feels Chennai Super Kings' left-handers did the trick for the four-time champions by exploiting the shorter boundaries to the hilt to earn a crucial eight-run win in their IPL clash here.

CSK won the high-scoring 'Southern Derby' on Monday, with three of their left-handers -- opener Devon Conway (83 off 45 balls), middle-order bat Shivam Dube (52 off 27) and Moeen Ali (19 not out off 9) -- helping them amass 226 for 6, which proved to be a winning total.

"I think with short boundaries (at the Chinnaswamy Stadium), they played heavy left-handers. Devon Conway batted for a long period in that innings," said Maxwell, who could have taken the match away from MS Dhoni's side had he remained at the crease for a little bit longer.

The Australian all-rounder, who struck his second half-century in this IPL, added that bringing in left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed to bowl to left-handers would have

been a risky proposition.

"I think, it would have been a risk to bowl Shahbaz Ahmed to those guys," said Maxwell, though he added that the 28-year-old all-rounder was a "clever bowler".

Both Faf du Plessis (62 off 33balls) and Maxwell (76 off 36) departed in quick succession in the middle overs, with Dhoni taking their catches.

The Australian wished he or his skipper had stayed a little bit longer, which could have turned the complexion of the game. "We did so well to get so close. We got into a position where probably we should have won the game, I suppose, if one of us was there a little bit longer."

"We were trying to get as hard as we could to get the run rate under 10 and make it a little bit easier at the back end. But a pretty exciting game of cricket, unfortunately we fell a little bit short."

Maxwell said the conditions were just perfect for him to come out in his favourite position at No.4 following the loss of two early wickets of Virat Kohli (6) and Mahipal Lomror (0).

"Whenever I've batted at No 4, I've generally played well. I think the pressure, the new ball swinging, it's a pretty familiar role that I played (against CSK). Especially for Australia, I've played that role many a times. Even at this ground in international cricket, when it comes to mind, it's not something that is foreign to me chasing big totals," he added.

Maxwell said Faf took the pressure off him early on in the innings and helped him to build the momentum later on in powerplay.

"I think I have a really clear mindset, the role that I have to play. I think together with Faf, he took a lot of pressure off me early on in my innings. I was able to take that momentum going towards the back end of the powerplay."

"Once we got out of the powerplay, it was just about making sure that we kept the run-rate ticking along. During the partnership, I thought we got to a position where we were on top," added Maxwell.

He said just one error -- his or Faf's dismissal -- had a cascading effect and, sort of, set off a chain of errors.

"Unfortunately what it takes in just one error, I suppose, to sort of bring about other errors as well. I had a lot of matchups in the side, might not have worked out the way we thought it would, but I think ramped the run rate."

The all-rounder said both Dinesh Karthik (28 off 14) and Shahbaz (12 of 10) had played their role well, and that Sri Lankan pacer Matheesha Pathirana's brilliance stopped them from winning.

"I thought DK and Shahbaz batted really well. They got us to a position where even Suyash (Prabuddesai), (Wayne) Parnell and (Wanindu) Hasaranga, I thought, (could win the game for RCB). We were still in the game all the way through right till the end. "I thought Pathirana, he executed absolutely brilliantly, he bowled a couple of really crucial overs. He's putting a lot of pressure to nail his yorker and he certainly did that under pressure, so hats off to them (CSK)."

Kohli fined 10 % of match fee for IPL code of conduct violation

BENGALURU, April 18 (PTI): Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) batter Virat Kohli has been fined 10 per cent of his match fee for breaching the Indian Premier League (IPL) Code of Conduct during the team's eight-run loss to Chennai Super Kings (CSK) at the Chinnaswamy Stadium. A statement said that Kohli had breached the rules under Article 2.2 of the IPL Code of Conduct. While the IPL statement did not go into details about the incident, which attracted the code of conduct violation, it could have been due to the former RCB skipper's over-the-top celebration following CSK middle-order batter Shivam Dube's dismissal off the bowling of Wayne Parnell on Monday. Dube struck a 27-ball 52 in CSK's mammoth 226 for 6 in the 'Southern Derby' as Mahendra Singh Dhoni's team won by eight runs. "Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) batter Virat Kohli has been fined 10 percent of his match fee for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2023 match against Chennai Super Kings (CSK) at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru," said the IPL statement. It said Kohli, who scored six runs on Monday, had "admitted to the Level 1 offence under Article 2.2 of the IPL Code of Conduct". "For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Match Referee's decision is final and binding," the statement added.RCB will play Punjab Kings next at Mohali on April 20.

Jayasuriya 10 wickets lead Sri Lanka to big win over Ireland



GALLE, April 18 (AP): Sri Lanka defeated Ireland by an innings and 280 runs inside three days of the first test and recorded its biggest victory margin on Tuesday. Ireland lost 13 wickets on the day to be all out for 143 and 168 in reply to Sri Lanka's 591-6 declared.

Slow left-arm Prabhath Jayasuriya led the Sri Lankans with a 10-wicket haul, taking the last wicket of the match when he trapped Ben White for 1 soon after tea. Jayasuriya took 3-56 in the second innings after a career-best 7-52 in the first. Spin bowling partner Ramesh Mendis had the best figures in the second innings of 4-76 and a match haul of five wickets. Mendis equalled Dilruwan Perera in becoming the fastest Sri Lankan to 50 test wickets in 11 matches. Seamer Vishwa Fernando took the other four Irish wickets, including opener Murray Commins for a pair.

The win surpassed Sri Lanka's previous highest victory margin of an innings and 254

runs against Zimbabwe in 2004.

Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne said the Irish had the bowling quality but their inexperience showed in their bowling lengths, and the field placements were more alike to limited-overs cricket, which made it easier for his batters to score. The home innings was built on centuries by Karunaratne (179), Kusal Mendis (140), Dinesh Chandimal (102) and Sadeera Samarawickrama (104). Ireland began day three on 117-7 and lost its last three wickets all on 143. Lorcan Tucker made a team-high 45 when he tried to sweep Jayasuriya and missed. Mark Adair was stumped off Jayasuriya and Ramesh Mendis finished the innings. Forced to follow on 448 runs in arrears, Ireland was 41-5 by lunch. While the bowlers were pinning down Ireland, Nishan Madusha was also outstanding in the field. His sharp low grab at short leg removed Peter Moor minutes before lunch, and his anticipation of a paddle sweep ended the 60-run resistance between Curtis Campher and Harry Tector. Tector was dismissed shortly after, run out for 42 after slipping while trying to return to his crease and losing his bat. Ireland was 108-7 and lasted 15 more overs. Ireland played only its fifth test, and was involved in its first test series. The second and last test starts at the same venue on Monday. "Sri Lanka at home are a daunting prospect for any team, never mind a team that haven't played a lot of test cricket," Ireland captain Andrew Balbirnie said.

Inter coach Inzaghi under pressure ahead of Benfica match

MILAN, April 18 (AP): Winning the Champions League may be Inter Milan coach Simone Inzaghi's only chance to keep his job.

Inter has had success this season, winning the Italian Super Cup and reaching the semifinals of the Italian Cup. And the team can reach the last four of the Champions League on Wednesday when it faces Benfica at San Siro in the second leg of the quarterfinals with a 2-0 lead from the first match.

But it's in Serie A where Inter has been struggling, and Inzaghi is feeling the pressure because of it.

Saturday's 1-0 loss to Monza was Inter's 11th league defeat in 30 matches and left the team in fifth place in Serie A, two points behind fourth-place AC Milan. "I don't find it strange," Inzaghi said of his situation on Tuesday. "I'm used to it. It's better that they criticize me rather than my players. This criticism gives us the motivation to work even harder."

"We haven't been good enough in the league. We haven't had an 'Inter' season. Like other teams, we've had our issues, but there's still time. We now need to focus on giving our fans a great evening that would see us go through to the quarterfinals. It would be a massive milestone." Inter has only won one of its past eight matches in all competitions — although that was last week's victory at Benfica.

"We know what we've done in the cups and that our standings in the league table aren't what we wanted but our only focus now is Benfica," Inzaghi said. "We know that we have the lead but we'll need to be at our best against a team that hasn't been getting results lately but is still really dangerous." If Inter prevails against Benfica it will face an Italian team in the semifinals — either AC Milan and Napoli.

CSK batters targetting 200-plus strike rate; tech shouldn't interfere with game: Conway

BENGALURU, April 18 (PTI): Chennai Super Kings opener Devon Conway has sounded an ominous warning to his team's opponents, saying his side has been aiming for 200-plus strike rates on good batting surfaces to put up imposing totals, which give them better chances of winning matches.

Monday was one such day when the four-time champions scored a mammoth 226 for 6 at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, and despite the onslaught from Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) skipper Faf du Plessis (62 off 33 balls) and Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell (76 off 36balls), CSK still managed to win by eight runs.

Conway (83), Ajinkya Rahane and Shivam Dube played a pivotal role with the bat, scoring at a strike rate of more than 180 to help CSK post the big total.

"Tonight (Monday) was a really good surface to bat on, so for us to get those big totals it's about trying to create a strike rate of around 200-plus," said Conway at the post-match press conference.

The New Zealander said that though he was some way off the 200-plus strike

rate, he was happy Rahane (37 runs, 185 strike rate), Dube (52, 192.59), Ambati Rayudu (14, 233.33) and Moeen Ali (19 not out, 211.11), had brilliant strike rates.

"I didn't manage to achieve that (200-plus rate) but some of the work done by the other players, like Ajinkya, Dube, Rayudu and Moeen Ali in the end, they all chipped in with really good strike rates and that's what got us to a very competitive total."

"That's probably the method on this kind of wicket where it's really good to bat," added Conway, who scored at a strike rate of 184.44.

The 31-year-old left-hand batter had a lot of appreciation for skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni for holding on to the two skiers behind the stumps to dismiss the two most dangerous batters Du Plessis and Maxwell.

The New Zealander said he was confident someone like Dhoni would never fluff those skiers -- one of the toughest catches to take in night games.

"Those (Faf and Maxwell) were very tough catches because it is not easy to catch balls that go straight up in the dark



night. I was very lucky to have MS (Dhoni) with the gloves on because if there is any person you want to take those tough chances, he's probably your guy. It was good for us (to) break the momentum of the innings and ultimately helped us win the match," added Conway.

Conway indicated CSK players could

have come under pressure while defending the big total, which probably led them to drop a couple of catches.

"No one tries to drop catches on purpose, these things happen. I don't know if there was pressure on the fielders or what it was. Thankfully, it wasn't costly for us but we've got to keep practicing

under pressure, take those half opportunities. Thankfully, we bowled well and that helped repair (the damage from) those dropped catches. "Before we went on to the field, MS said we are going to be put under pressure at times. The momentum that they (RCB) had was brilliant. Faf and Glenn put us under pressure but we always felt that by having 200-plus on the board, if we get a couple of wickets we could always bounce back."

"So, for our bowlers it was clear -- be patient and when the opportunity comes you just take them with both hands." Conway indicated it wasn't easy for players to go about their job seamlessly with the shadow of the hovering spider cam causing problems. He added that things shouldn't come to a point where technology interferes with the game.

"It (interference) happened a couple of times where the ball had got very close to the spider cam as well as the wires, that can obviously put a fielder off. I thing Faf stepped away a couple of times because the shadows of the spider cam was in his way. It's obviously a little bit testing for guys."

"It's nice to have that technology to show different angles of the game but there comes a point where (it) can't get too involved and interfere with the game. MS (Dhoni) was probably trying to speak to the umpires, saying 'don't get too close to the action and try to avoid too much (of what's) going on,'" said Conway.

Conway praised young Sri Lankan bowler Matheesha Pathirana's efforts in winning the match for CSK.

Pathirana's superb bowling in the 18th and 20th overs -- he dismissed Shahbaz Ahmed (18th over) and gave away just 10 runs in the last over besides taking the wicket of SS Prabuddesai -- helped CSK stall RCB's charge.

"Yes, I think a special effort from Matheesha to come into the team and a first game for him this year in the IPL and execute (his plan) under pressure like that. It was brilliant."

"He is very unorthodox and I personally haven't faced a ball from him, haven't faced him at the nets. It was very crucial to have him with us tonight and execute his plans that ultimately got us the win."