

State government authorised load shedding in April: Odisha minister Pratap Keshari Deb

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): The State government on Monday admitted that power distribution companies were authorised for load shedding for a couple of hours in April due to acute shortage of power. Replying to the admissibility of adjournment

The NTPC's Darlipali unit took a forced shut down at a time when the State was experiencing a heatwave condition and the demand for power was exponentially growing at 400 MW or more. The net loss of about 440 MW power from Darlipali plant further accentuated the crisis and this could not be made up due to shortage of power across the country. "Though Gridco was ready to buy costly power of 400 MW to 600 MW during peak hours from open market through the Indian Energy Exchange (IEX), there was no availability of power. This is despite the market clearing price (MCP) is exorbitantly high as Rs 12-16 per unit," Deb said. CONTINUED ON: P-7



motion moved by Mukesh Mahaling and Sanatan Bijuli of the BJP on frequent power cuts and higher power tariff, Energy Minister Pratap Keshari Deb informed the Assembly that power crisis became acute in the State from April 23 this year when one of the two units (2 x 800 MW) of Darlipali super critical power plant in Sundargarh district went out of the State grid due to technical snag.

Ukraine negotiating with Turkey, UN over grain export through ports: Zelensky

KYIV(KCN): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said that his country is presently negotiating with Turkey and

in some places, but definitely possible", because both Ukraine, as a grain exporting country, and farmers, who need exports to prepare for next year's sowing, are interested in this, reports Ukrayinska Pravda. The President noted that 22 million tonnes of grain are currently blocked in Ukraine. "We are currently negotiating with the Turkish side and the UN. Our representatives are responsible for the safety of grain exiting our ports. But it is a very important moment for someone to guarantee the safety of the ships of certain countries that will come to us to load food products other than Russia, which we do not trust," he was quoted as saying. CONTINUED ON: P-7



the UN regarding the export of grain through ports. During a briefing in Kiev on Monday alongside visiting Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Anderson, Zelensky said that implementing this project "will be difficult

of grain exiting our ports. But it is a very important moment for someone to guarantee the safety of the ships of certain countries that will come to us to load food products other than Russia, which we do not trust," he was quoted as saying. CONTINUED ON: P-7

India has eliminated all queues by going online: PM

Gandhinagar(KCN): Praising the role of digital technology in changing the lives of

fering a host of services. In the last eight years, he said, the



people of the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said India has eliminated queues or lines by going online and of-

DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) initiative, which aims to transfer subsidies or financial assistance directly to eligible beneficiaries through their linked bank accounts, has saved Rs 2,23,000 crore which were otherwise going to ineligible people. The PM was addressing a gathering after inaugurating "Digital India Week 2022" here at Mahatma

Mandir Convention Centre. Till eight to ten years ago, we had to stand in lines (queues) for everything. We had to stand in line for birth certificates, to pay bills, for ration, for admission, for results, for certificates, in banks. There were so many lines we used to stand in. India has eliminated all these lines by going online. Now, a majority of these services are digital," Modi said. Highlighting the importance of his government's Digital India Mission, Modi said time will not

after 22 years of BJD rule, the Government has failed to provide jobs and check the migration of youths to other states in search of jobs. They alleged that various schemes launched by the State Government and the start-up schemes had failed to generate employment. They further said although lakhs of posts in several Departments are lying vacant, the Government was not taking any steps to fill up these posts and instead appointed retired employees on a contractual basis. BJD had promised to provide employment to 150 people in each panchayat and generate 2 lakh jobs every year. Where are the jobs that the party had promised to provide, he questioned. The Government, he said during the last three years, opened ITIs to train the unemployed youths but most of these institutes are closed as there were no teachers to train the youths. On the other hand, liquor stores are being set up in the villages, added the Congress leader. The Government has

OGST rise by 45 %

Bhubaneswar(KCN): State has recorded a growth of 45.27% in OGST (Odisha GST) collection during the month of June in comparison to the same month in last year. The State has collected OGST of Rs 1247.63 crore during June '22 against Rs 858.83 crore during June 21. Odisha has also maintained the growth rate of gross GST with a collection of Rs 3965.28 Crore during June '22 as against Rs 2999.91 crore collected during June '21 registering a growth of 32.18%.

There is also a collection of Rs.1063.33 crore in

month. The total collection of VAT (Petrol & Li-

Out of the above, collection from Petroleum Products is Rs.



CGST with growth of 43.08%, Rs 847.93 crore in IGST with growth of 0.63% and Rs 806.39 crore. in Cess with growth of 45.22% during last

quor) is Rs 1094.33 crore during June '22 as against Rs 711.15 crore during June '21, thereby registering a growth rate of 53.88%.

860.57 crore during June 2022 against Rs 585.58 crore collected during June 2021 with a growth of 46.96%.

CONTINUED ON: P-7

Second dose of COVID vaccination coverage low in Bhubaneswar

BHUBANESWAR(KCN): After topping the country in the first dose COVID-19 vaccination, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC)

As many as 12.88 lakh people aged above 18 years have received second dose against 13.77



seems to have flunked the second dose inoculation. As per the vaccination statistics, the first dose coverage among 18 years and above population is 166 per cent (pc) while for the second dose coverage is 94 pc against due beneficia-

lakh first dose vaccination in the city. The inoculation of adolescents is also not encouraging as the first dose coverage among 15 to 17 years age group is 81 per cent (50,651) against a target of 62,680 beneficiaries. Similarly, the first dose coverage among 12 to 14 years age group is 39 per cent (16,627) against a target of 42,627 children. The precaution dose coverage of healthcare workers, frontline workers and senior citizens is 9939 (27 per cent), 16,804 (30 per cent) and 66,164 (45 per cent) respectively.

Opposition raises Unemployment Query

Bhubaneswar(KCN): Opposition in Odisha Assembly, BJP and Congress on Tuesday slammed the State Government raising the unemployment issue. The Opposition members alleged that even

Congress MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati said youths are going to other States for work while a whopping 22.5 percent of the total government posts are lying vacant. In its 2014 election manifesto, the ruling



BJD had promised to provide employment to 150 people in each panchayat and generate 2 lakh jobs every year. Where are the jobs that the party had promised to provide, he questioned.

The Government, he said during the last three years, opened ITIs to train the unemployed youths but most of these institutes are closed as there were no teachers to train the youths. On the other hand, liquor stores are being set up in the villages, added the Congress leader. The Government has

CONTINUED ON: P-7

America's Rhodes Island Hosts Car Festival

Rhodes Island (KCN): The smallest state of U.S.A; Rhodes Island celebrated 5th Rath Yatra Festival of Lord Jagannath with much glory and grandeur in the premises of Hindu Temple at Warwick. The religious rituals like



worshipping, homo and Mangala Arati were performed before the Idols in the morning by the main priest Somnath Shastri. The whole ambience of the Temple was agog with pious and spiritual fervour. At about 11.30 a.m. four Deities were taken in Pahandi procession to the aesthetically and colourfully decked up 15 feet high chariot. The decoration of the chariot was beautifully and meticulously done by Sourav Mishra, Saroj Behera, Pankaj Panda, Pritam Mishra, Chandra Nayak, Biswa Patnaik, Digvijay Mohapatra and Subhransu Mohanty. Floral ornamentation of the chariot was splendidly undertaken by Shradha Nayak, Pragyana Behera and Ranjitha Behera. The entire atmosphere got reverberated with the chanting of hymns, roaring of slogans like Hari Bol and Jai Jagannath, blowing off conch and playing of musical instruments such as Ghanta, Mardala, Jhanja and Mrudanga. The scenery of Pahandi Bije of Goddess Subhadra conducted exclusively by ladies was most

heart touching and memorable. This Year's Rath Yatra evoked an unusual enthusiasm and extraordinary enchantments among the spectators gathered to perform the most sacred act of having a holy glimpse of Gods and Goddess on board the chariot. Apart from devotees from Rhodes Island, Odia and non Odia families from far off places like Pennsylva-



nia, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Hampshire numbering around 300 also descended to witness the ceremony. The senior member of the Board of Directors of Hindu Temple, Mahesh Patel performed the traditional service of sweeping before the chariots called Chhera Pahanra. At 1.00 p.m. amidst the devotional renderings of

Kirtan by ISKCON devotees from Indian Heritage Foundation, the chariot was pulled around the perimeter of the temple compound and then was taken back to the premises of the Temple.



The deities were offered Prasad prepared in the style of Ananda Bazar of Puri by volunteers like Babita Mohanty, Munmun Das, Bishnu Priya Bal, Tapanwita Routray, Saumyashree Dash, Kalpana Mohanty, Mani Mahapatra and Lina Routray. The Delicious Prasad was later paracted by the devotees assembled on the occasion. There was a prediction by metrological Department that the Island state would be devastated by Rain and thunderstorm during the Rath Yatra day. But by the grace of the Biggest God of the Cosmos miracle happened. The Car festival witnessed a charming weather and went off without having any obstruction whatsoever. The highlight of the ceremony include the offering of the Book entitled "The Journey of Rhodes Island's Car Festival" and the article "Unbound Lord Jagannath" written by the main organiser Akshay Mohanty at the Lotus Feet of Lord of the Universe on the

Nandighosh chariot in Puri. A colourful cultural jamboori consisting of scintillating dance performances in Odissi and Bharatnatyam styles and recital of devotional songs dedicated to Lord Jagannath were also presented during the Mega Event. The cultural session was ably coordinated and mod-



erated by Akansha Patnaik and Leezalin Mishra. Distinguished dignitary, who graced the Festival include Sadananda Dasa of Indian Heritage Foundation. The entire arrangement was well managed and neatly executed by World Odisha Society's International Co-ordinator Akshay Mohanty and former President of Odisha Society of New England Debdutta Behera.

Huge Quantity of Gur Wash & ID Liquor destroyed by Excise Department

Khordha(KCN): In a state wide operations against illicit liquor teams of the Excise Department raided illegal liquor production centres at Barapada under Khordha Sadar PS, area and destroyed 4200 litres Gur Wash and 345 litres of illicitly distilled (ID) liquor. In a press release prohibition and excise department said that the raids were aimed at illicit liquor production centres located in accessible villages, forests areas and others. Excise Officials said that

individual cases we're being registered against ID, Liquor, manufactures, land owners, sellers and all others involved. The raid was conducted by Bhairab Sahoo, Inspector of Excise Khordha, Range, Sasmita Hota, Inspector of Excise, District mobile unit, Khordha, B. Manoj Kumar, OIC, Khordha, Geetanjali Behera, OIC, Jatni, Biranchi Narayan Mohanty, OIC, Begunia and all the Excise staffs of Khordha, Begunia and Jatni were participated.

Sanatan Mahakud Bags Gold Medal in Yoga

Kolkata(KCN): To mark the birthday of Guruji Sri Sri Ravisankar, Sri Sri Academy Kolkata was organized an inter School Teachers Fest



titled "SRI GURUOTSAV 2022". On this occasion teachers from many schools of Kolkata were invited to display their extracurricular activities or creativities like Song, Dance, Drama, Music, Yoga, Art, Painting, Clay Modeling and Cooking etc. On behalf of The Heritage School, Kolkata Yoga Teacher Mr. Sanatan Mahakud had participated in the Yoga demonstration event, under male category. It was attracted to Judges and public present in the event. In this competition Mr. Mahakud has secured First Position for which he was awarded with a Gold Medal and a Certificate of Merit.



Rath Yatra in Remanda village of Odisha's Jharsuguda breaks religion bar

JHARSUGUDA: Every Rath Yatra, a quaint village in Lakhapur block of the industrial Jharsuguda district presents a heartwarming picture of inter-faith harmony. In Lakhapur's Remanda village, a Muslim has been performing the 'Chhera Pahanra' ritual on the Trinity's chariot during the car festival for the last 39 years. Village gountia (headman) Mohammad Zamil-ul-lah has been performing the chariot sweeping ritual since 1983. The Rath Yatra in Remanda village is unique as it is celebrated three days after the scheduled date. Accordingly, the car festival was held in the village on Monday and Zamil-ul-lah carried out the 'Chhera Pahanra' ritual. Villagers said the tradition of a Muslim sweeping the chariot dates back to Zamil-ul-lah's ancestors. During the British rule, village gountia Warris Mohammad was first assigned this responsibility.

Then his son and Zamil-ul-lah's great grandfather Masud Ali performed the ritual in Remanda after he was appointed the village gountia by the British rulers. Since then, Muslim families of the village have been actively participating not just in Rath Yatra but other festivals like Nuakhai with their Hindu neighbours. Zamil-ul-lah's family also participates in pulling the chariot to Mausi Maa temple. "My forefathers were doing the 'Chhera Pahanra' during Rath Yatra and I must continue the tradition," said Zamil-ul-lah who is also a recipient of the National Integration Award. Sources said earlier, the car festival was organised in Remanda by borrowing the idols of Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath from the nearby Sunari village. But since the last few years, Remanda has got its own idols. The deities are being worshipped in the house of priest Subash Satpathy.

Lifestyle partners with Goonj to drive 'sustainability' with fashion

As part of its CSR program, Lifestyle has launched a sustainability initiative with installation of garment donation boxes in 60 stores. Kolkata (KCN): On this occasion Magsaysay awardee, new role in triggering Rohini Haldea, Founder Goonj said dignity and development in the world. That's a win-win all over." Lifestyle said, "It Lifestyle is important

organization that has built a network of communities from urban to village India, channelizing material as a tool to address crucial gaps in rural infrastructure, water, environment, health, disaster relief, and rehabilitation. The organization builds and maintains a connection of empathy, dignity, and values issues of those in need. gives us immense pleasure to announce our association with Goonj that has been driving large efforts towards enhancing the dignity of the underprivileged across India. Lifestyle strongly believes that the progress of the society is a collective responsibility and aims to do its bit by facilitating recycling of under-used fashion." Anshu Gupta,



for many reasons. On the one hand, it presents a great example to the entire retail sector on how every organization can do its bit while on the other hand, more importantly, it gives every customer a chance to do something for others. In the process a lot of clothes will be prevented from going to landfills, instead they will play a The contribution box will be installed in key cities including Kolkata, Mangalore, Mysore, Chennai, Coimbatore, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida, Ghaziabad, Lucknow, Kanpur, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Pune, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Bangalore, Bhubaneswar, Indore, Guwahati and more.

CLASSIFIED

CAUTION

Readers are advised to make appropriate enquiries while responding to advertisements in these columns. The Kalinga chronicle publication does not vouch for any claims made by the Advertisers. The Printer, Publisher, Editor and Owner of The Kalinga Chronicle Publications shall not be held responsible/liable for any consequences, in case such claims are found to be false.



AUTOMOBILE



REAL ESTATE

SALE

Kawasaki Bajaj in tiptop condition for sale. Contact: 2555328

PURCHASE

Required a Marshal/Commandor / Boleto in good condition. Contact 2555763

SALE

Flats ready for possession before Rathayatra at Puri near Seabeach for sale. Contact: 9861078308

Residential plots at Pahala close to NH-5 and near Pata Railway Station, Bhubaneswar for immediate sale. Contact: 0674-2556733

Residential plots at

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENT TARIFF

Classified advertisements are released daily. The normal classified advertisement is charged @ Rs. 5/- per word up to maximum number of 50 words. Any extra word will be Rs. 8/- per word. The minimum charges for any classified advertisement is Rs. 100/-. The options for bold lettering and outlining are also available and are charged @ 7/- and 10/- per word respectively. Extra charges for photographs Rs.100/-. For Box No. Rs. 100/-

HIRE

For hiring of Car / Jeep / Bus on monthly basis. Contact : 2555763



BUSINESS

Saving 10,000/- for high return, extra earn and Foreign trip opportunity, 9238504001. Independent business work from home, training in Singapore, 9338014287.



MATRIMONIAL

BRIDE WANTED

Wanted bride for Khandayat Boy, 37plus, Caste no bar, 0674-2555763

GROOM WANTED

Wanted Groom any service / business family for a Brahmin Girl. Contact 2555226

Gohira Chhak in front of CV Raman Engineering College beside NH-5, near Tamando. Contact : 9238691168

PURCHASE

Simplex / Duplex building at BBSR contact : 9437002509

ACCOMMODATION WANTED

Required Single / Double / Triple Stored North/East facing building at Puri. Contact 9437143483



TOURS & TRAVELS

We provide luxury coach buses (16,25,32,41,52 seater) for Picnic, Excursion, Marriage. Maa Santoshi Travels, Contact : 9861079437 For Luxury Passenger vehicle, Contact : Sagasity Tours & Travels, Acharya Vihar, Bhubaneswar, Ph. 2540219

WANTED

Required Driver/Peon/Attendant/ Aya

Please Contact-8984600400

ACCOMMODATION WANTED

Required double/Single/ Multi storied Bungalow type North or East Facing Independent building At-Nayapalli, Jayadev Vihar, V.S.S. Nagar, Mancheswar, Rasulgarh, Sallashree Vihar, Niladri Vihar.

Please Contact- 8338870595

Maara Movie Review: A grounded remake of Charlie with quite a bit of heart

If you didn't know that Maara is the remake of the Malayalam film, Charlie, the opening shot of fireflies fluttering about is a strong hint of the magic contained within the universe of this film. Shortly, you see little Paaru in rapt attention, as a nun narrates to her the story of a soldier who's travelling across seas and jungles in a quest to find his soul. This is pretty much the story of this film as well, as Paaru (Shraddha Srinath) grows up to find herself in a similar quest for her soul, well, soulmate, in Maara (Madhavan). There's another quest for a soulmate in this film, one undertaken by Vellaiyan (a wonderful Mouli), one that is later taken over by Maara. The film is a reinforcement of the power of stories, of the stories each of our lives are. This is why there are multiple characters with their own short stories, including those of Selvi (Abhirami), the sex worker, and Kani (Sshivada), the guilt-ridden doctor. The implication is that no one story is necessarily more important than another. I got the sense that Maara doesn't think of himself as a hero or a saviour, even if those around him seem to believe that. He's merely a tool, a person who breezes through life hoping to repay the extraordinary help that Vellaiyan has done to him. I loved this touch because shorn of it, Maara, the character, could have felt idealistic and

unrelatable—which would have gone against the point of the film itself. This way, there's a reason for why Maara is the way he is, why he can't afford to stay at one place for too long. I quite enjoyed that Madhavan plays this character without

kites, in the sketch-book and its pencil illustrations... hell, even in the blotches of Maara's acid-wash hoodies. There's a call through this film, through its characters, to refuse to fall into the trap of mundanity and indif-

small community. Maara, the film, suggests that perhaps, just perhaps, his way of life could also come down to the courage to choose to step away from the norm. Realise the magic of life in you, it seems to be saying... notice the al-

speaking about Maara says, "destiny". Another likens him to a mythical character, Santa Claus, while commenting on Maara's habit of sudden appearances that usually result in joy to whoever he meets. Maara himself, as he

about Meenakshi; watch his eyes grow wide in surprise, and almost well up under the weight of decades of mourning. Ghibran's background music and Thamarai's evocative lyrics add so much to such scenes as well. It's wonderful that films like Maara are able to offer elderly characters like Mouli's as much purpose and are able to see them for the individuals that they are, instead of simply as a crutch for a lead character. Of course, much of this credit must go to the original film, Charlie. In a world that is in a tearing hurry, at a time when films and stories are designed to be rapid for fear of making audiences impatient, films like Maara come as a welcome relief. In this film, at least two important exchanges—between Vellaiya and Paaru, and later, between Maara and Kani—happen as wood slowly burns to ember, as tender faces are lit by the warm glow of a fireplace. It's for such moments that I'll remember this film, even if some inconsistent performances and some synthetic moments stop it from being truly great. Nevertheless, it's a film that has heart and that encourages empathy towards those around us, and if possible, to note that magicity doesn't need to be thought of an otherworldly trait, if only we cared to pay more attention to the beauty around us.



a sanctimonious flavour—and more importantly, in a way that shows that Maara isn't above vulnerability. There's no moral superiority in that ascetic laughter of his—which probably can be thought of as even the desperate attempt of an unhappy man to be happy, chained as he is to his lifelong quest.

Director: Dhilip Kumar
Cast: Madhavan, Shraddha Srinath, Mouli

The film is almost a homage to art—and the dreaminess inherent in it. This can be spotted throughout the film: In the pretty wall murals, in the art plastered across and drawn all over the walls of Maara's home, in the designer

ference, into routine and repetition. Maara is pretty much the film equivalent of 'Follow the white rabbit'. That's perhaps why during a conversation between Maara and a thief (Alexander Babu), you can see a neon sign in the background that reads 'White Rabbit'. The usual response to such a call is to cite a lack of financial security, and while that is a reason to be empathetic about—especially given the enviably cushy work-free existence Paaru seems to be leading in this film—we could also note how Maara, who's hardly a wealthy man (as a thief realises), makes the choice to get by, winning and returning favours in his

most mystical beauty of existence. It's also likely that this is why the film's many shots are lit as they are, with many faces often aglow, as though in the presence of a halo. This is why the coincidences in this film become palatable. The central idea at the heart of this film is of two lonely souls in search of each other. Take note of that inexplicable attraction little Paaru feels as she sees a speeding train from within her bus. Or take note of that instinctive smile from Maara as he steps into his room, a room that Paaru has lived in briefly. In such a film, coincidences are to be thought of as divine providence, or as one character, when

does many times in this film, underplays this notion that he's a mystical being. It's his understanding—and you will see it from his eyes when he's engaged in conversation with every single character—that each of us is magical, as are our stories. In this film with performances that range from great to over-the-top, I loved Mouli in particular, who plays Vellaiya, an old man consumed by his unrequited love. Watch him in that scene with Paaru as he brings to her an old photo of his beloved, Meenakshi, but hesitates after seeing her be so charmed by photos of Maara instead. Watch him in another scene with Paaru as she tells him

Shooting for third season of 'Four More Shots Please' to begin soon: Kirti Kulhari

MUMBAI(KCN): Bollywood actor Kirti Kulhari on Thursday said shoot for her series "Four More Shots Please!" is set to commence in coming days. The Amazon Prime

Taking to Instagram, Kulhari shared her excitement to team up with her co-actors again for the new season. "And we are back #fourmoreshotsplease #season3 shoot begins su-

tions, the show was recently nominated in the best comedy series category at the 48th International Emmy Awards. On the film front, Kulhari is currently awaiting the release



Video series, which also features Sayani Gupta, Maanvi Gupta and Bani J, follows a quartet of friends who deal with their relationships, work-life conflicts, ambitions and anxieties in a male-dominated society.

per soon. Lovely to be back with the crazy 3," Kulhari wrote alongside a series of candid photos with Gupta, Gagroo and Bani. Created by Rangita Pritish Nandy and produced by Pritish Nandy Communica-

of the Hindi remake of Hollywood blockbuster "The Girl on the Train", starring Parineeti Chopra. The movie, which premiere on streamer Netflix on February 26, will feature Kulhari as a British cop.

Vijay Sethupathi, Katrina Kaif in Sriram Raghavan's next?

It was recently revealed that Sriram Raghavan's upcoming film, Ekkis, has been put on hold. A big-budget military drama starring Varun

Santosh Sivan, is a Hindi remake of Maanagaram (2017). He is also rumoured to star in an upcoming web series directed by Raj and

Sriram Raghavan's last film was Andhadhun (2018) with Ayushmann Khurrana and Tabu. The film is getting a Tamil and Telugu re-



Dhawan, the film was delayed due to Covid-19.

Now, rumour has it that Sriram has signed Katrina Kaif and Vijay Sethupathi for his next. If true, this is the latest Hindi project Vijay Sethupathi is attached to—the others being Laal Singh Chadha and Mumbaikar. The latter, directed by

DK. The unrevealed series will also star Shahid Kapoor.

Banita Sandhu clarifies on COVID-19 diagnosis, says she 'continues to test negative'
MUMBAI(KCN): "October" actor Banita Sandhu on Thursday said she has continued to test negative for COVID-19 since her arrival to the country in January 3, contrary to what is being reported in media.

make with Prashanth and Nithiin, respectively, in the lead.

According to health department sources, Sandhu had tested positive for COVID-19 on January 4 in Kolkata after flying from United Kingdom and was admitted to a private hospital after she refused to be treated in a government facility.

How Wildfire Smoke Raises Infectious Disease Risk

longside a global pandemic that has killed millions, residents of the American West have for two consecutive summers confronted unprecedented wildfire seasons. So far this year, roughly 43,500 wildfires have charred more than 5 million acres, and fires continue to grow in frequency and intensity. With them come a number of human health concerns, including the risk that bodies worn down by exposure to smoke could more easily succumb to infectious diseases.



Teasing out the effects of wildfire smoke on health is both urgent and difficult. "With wildfires, we're generally looking in the rearview mirror, looking retroactively," says Sheryl Magzamen, a respiratory epidemiologist at Colorado State University. While air pollution from cars can be studied in real time by placing sensors near roads, she adds, wildfires are sporadic and unpredictable. "Where they are and when they happen and where the smoke goes is really complex."

But a burgeoning interest in respiratory diseases born out of the pandemic are bringing together wildfires and human health in new ways. While many effects are ascribed to smoke making lungs more susceptible to diseases such as influenza and COVID-19, early research indicates that in addition, smoke may itself also be a vector for spreading pathogens. "Even though it's upsetting to think about sometimes, it's an exciting time to be doing this kind of work," Magzamen tells *The Scientist*. "There's energy and motivation that maybe wasn't there before." San Francisco's famous Golden Gate Bridge was barely visible through the smoke on September 9, 2020.

© ISTOCK.COM, JASONDOIY

How dangerous are hazy skies?

The health effects of air pollution are well-documented, and scientists are beginning to probe wildfire smoke as a particularly damaging subset. Dirty air—full of exhaust from cars and factories, dust, smoke, metals, and pollen—kills an average of 9 million people worldwide each year, and a global study published today (September 8) in *The Lancet Planetary Health* attributed 33,500 deaths each year directly to wildfire pollution. For decades, scientists have linked exposure to particulate matter in air pollution to increased incidences of asthma, allergies, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, dementia, and certain cancers. "There's really no part of the body it doesn't touch," says Mary Prunicki, the director of air pollution and health research at Stanford University's Sean Parker Center for Asthma and Allergy Research.

Fine particles less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter (PM2.5) are considered to be the most dangerous component in air pollution, including smoke. That's because the particles are so small that they can pass across the lungs and enter the blood. "There's localized inflammation in the lung itself, but when the particle size is small enough, that inflammation and other problems can now happen throughout the body," Prunicki tells *The Scientist*.

See "Q&A: Pollution Linked to 15 Percent Increase in COVID-19 Deaths"

Inside our lungs, PM2.5 interferes with oxygen exchange and negatively affects lung function, making it hard to breathe deeply and disrupting the ability of cilia in the lungs to clear mucus and the potential irritants it contains, including viruses. Once it passes into the blood, PM2.5 also causes inflammation in the heart and brain and primes our immune system to react aggressively to allergens and bacteria, leaving us more vulnerable to viral pathogens such as influenza. A small increase in the daily average summer PM2.5 was associated with an increase in the subsequent winter influenza rate of between 16 and 22 percent. A study in rural Montana found that periods of dense wildfire smoke were associated with unusually bad influenza seasons in the winters that followed. University of Montana computational ecologist Erin Landguth, who led the study, says she originally expected smoke exposure in the weeks before flu season started to have the strongest association with the number of cases. Instead, PM2.5 levels from months before—during the height of the fire season—correlated most strongly with influenza cases: a small increase in the daily average summer PM2.5 was associated with an increase in the subsequent winter influenza rate of between 16 and 22 percent. "We were not expecting to see that long, long delay, but we threw a bunch of modeling at it and sure enough, it always popped out," she says.

This and research on fires is leading scientists to a better understanding of the unique risks posed by wildfire smoke, and recent evidence has shown that it may actually be more dangerous than other types of air pollution such as car exhaust. A study published in *Nature Communications* found that in Southern California, PM2.5 attributed to wildfire smoke was associated with a 10 percent increase in hospitalizations for respiratory events—the highest rise attributed to any source the team studied—and that wildfire-specific PM2.5 appeared to be up to 10 times more harmful to human health than that from other sources.

One reason may be that PM2.5 stemming from wildfires has a different composition than par-

ticulate matter from other sources. Wildfires burn wood, which can cause respiratory issues—as in the case of eucalyptus—but they might also burn rubber, metal, plastic, glass, or other synthetic materials, creating smoke that is more toxic when inhaled. Indeed, research in mice has shown that the respiratory toxicity of wildfire PM2.5 is three to four times greater than equal doses of ambient air pollution.

Evidence of the long-lasting damage caused by wildfire smoke in particular exists for people as well. For 50 days in 2017, smoke from across the West blanketed Seeley Lake, Montana, with a daily average air quality index of 221 micrograms per cubic meter (anything over 150 micrograms per cubic meter is considered unhealthy). Researchers at the University of Montana tracked 95 residents of the area over the next two years. Just after being exposed to smoke, roughly 10 percent of the participants had disrupted lung functioning similar to asthma, as measured by a spirometer. One year later, that number jumped to almost 46 percent, dropping only slightly to 34 percent the year after that.

People don't need to be near fires to be affected by their smoke, either. Because fires produce erratic wind patterns that can transport particles high into the atmosphere, smoke from fires on the West Coast darkened the skies over Manhattan in July. Like other types of air pollution, PM2.5 becomes oxidized and produces more free radicals as it ages, and because wildfire-derived PM2.5 often starts out as more inherently toxic because of what gets burned, it could also cause more damage once it enters the body, although the specifics of this effect are still under investigation. "We don't yet know whether acute exposure to a less toxic type of smoke is 'better' than a smaller quantity of more toxic smoke," Magzamen tells *The Scientist*. "But if we keep having these fires, I think we'll probably find out."

The wildfire smoke-COVID-19 connection

The increasing frequency and intensity of wildfires has taken place in tandem with another emergency: the COVID-19 pandemic. When the virus first appeared in the US in the spring of 2020, many residents were contending with evacuation orders prompted by wildfires alongside stay-at-home orders.

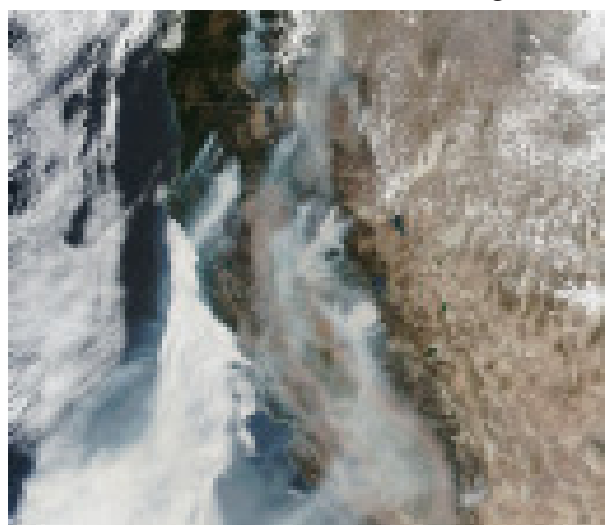
More than a year later, researchers are now releasing studies that document how that all played out. In Reno, Nevada, residents in 2020 encountered smoke from fires burning across several states, even those that were hundreds of miles away. "Normally, you would have really beautiful views, but even right now I'm looking out and you can't see the buildings downtown," says Daniel Kiser, a data scientist at the Desert Research Institute in Nevada who spoke to *The Scientist* in August, as several fire burned nearby. "It's just not a fun experience."

Kiser worked with a local hospital to study whether exposure to wildfire smoke was associated with the rate of positive SARS-CoV-2 tests in Reno. He measured PM2.5 using an array of four sensors and supplemented his readings with data from the EPA. From a local hospital, he received almost 36,000 test results. Between August 16 and October 10, 2020, the time period that year most affected by the smoke, positive cases rose by more than 17 percent (178 additional cases out of a total of 2,881). "I wouldn't say that we were particularly surprised by what we found," Kiser says, adding that smoke may make otherwise asymptomatic cases into symptomatic ones, or make symptoms more severe, "which might motivate [patients] in turn to go get tested when they might not otherwise have."

The smoke from California wildfires as seen by satellites on August 19, 2021

NASA'S EARTH OBSERVATORY

More recently, Harvard University biostatistician and epidemiologist Francesca Dominici and her colleagues extended those findings, modeling how many COVID-19 cases and deaths could be attributed to wildfire smoke across 92 counties in California, Oregon, and



Washington. To estimate the number of "fire days" each county experienced between March and December of 2020, team members used satellite imagery from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and PM2.5 readings from the EPA. They drew on county health records for numbers of daily cases and deaths.

The team found that fire days had higher levels of PM2.5 compared to nonfire days, and that elevated levels of wildfire-derived PM2.5 cor-

AMANDA HEIDT

responded with more hospitalizations and deaths from COVID-19. "The general trend is there," Dominici tells *The Scientist*, although the impact was not uniform across counties. In some places, there may have only been a handful of COVID-19 cases or deaths linked to wildfire. But in California's Sonoma County, one of the hardest hit areas, the authors attributed more than 1,700 additional cases—a 65 percent increase—and 18 additional deaths to wildfire smoke.

That the trend was not consistent does not surprise her, Dominici tells *The Scientist*. The model doesn't account for demographics, public health guidelines, or human behavior. There is a possibility, for example, "that wildfires are the cause of increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases even if PM2.5 is not, because others have been hypothesizing that people are spending more time indoors" where they could infect others, she says.

That interpretation contradicts preliminary results presented by Magzamen's colleagues at the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology conference in August. She and her team found that while deaths in Colorado in 2020 did increase overall, the interplay between wildfire smoke and COVID-19—which cooccurred between March and December of 2020—actually resulted in a reduced risk of death compared to periods in the preceding decade with smoke only. They hypothesized that smoke from local fires drove people indoors, but that this resulted in a decrease in SARS-CoV-2 transmission. Contradictory findings don't necessarily mean either study is wrong, Magzamen says. Rather, it comes back to a lack of detailed demographic information such as age or occupation that might explain the different trends. "We don't have that level of community data, because it's hard to do it in real time. But through sensors and crowdsourcing science, our hope is that we're going to start to be able to figure that out."

Are microbes hitching a lift on smoke?

When fires burn, they send bits of ash, charred wood, and other materials skyward. Each likely carries hitchhikers—fungi, viruses, and bacteria—known as bioaerosols. There's even preliminary evidence that SARS-CoV-2 can be carried this way. In a perspective published last year in *Science*, Leda Kobziar, a wildland fire scientist at the University of Idaho, noted that the intersection between bioaerosols in wildfire smoke and epidemiology "has yet to be addressed in public health and atmospheric sciences" despite evidence that fires can transport microbes.

One lingering question has been whether these microbes remain viable. In a paper published earlier this year, Brent Christner, a microbiologist at the University of Florida, used lab experiments and scheduled burns to study how microbes travel on particulate matter produced by wildfires. Rather than being torched by the fire's heat, Christner's team found that an equal percentage of bacteria remained viable following the fires compared to bacteria in ambient air. Furthermore, particulate matter collected from the air after a controlled burn harbored five times the amount of microbial cells present beforehand, and these numbers correlated with the fraction of PM10 in the air. These larger pieces may provide some protection to the microbes, Christner says, as might water vapor that gets released as wood combusts.

A dust particle from a controlled burn in Florida in 2019 covered in fluorescently stained microbes

RACHEL MOORE

While his work did not focus specifically on pathogens, Christner says it's unlikely that they would behave any differently. "We already understand that there are . . . pathogens which can be transmitted through smoke," although he adds that these are almost always plant pathogens that don't pose a risk to humans.

There is, however, one example of a human pathogen that is spread by smoke and is now appearing in places it didn't before.

Valley fever, also called coccidioidomycosis, is an infection caused by the fungus *Coccidioides*. After entering the lungs as aerosolized spores or attached to dust particles, the fungus causes fatigue, coughs, sore joints, and rashes that can last from a few weeks to several months.

Previously, the fungus had been found only in the Southwestern US and in parts of Latin America, where it primarily infects people in prisons or those working outdoors, including construction workers, agricultural field workers, and wildland firefighters, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Several studies have documented outbreaks of Valley fever among fire crews, including one among inmate firefighters in 2017 in which 10 fell ill and two were hospitalized with serious complications.

In 2013, several people living in Washington State who hadn't recently traveled to areas known to have the fungus developed the disease, demonstrating that the pathogen's range is expanding along with hot, dry weather. As record-breaking heat waves spread farther north, cases of Valley fever may continue to appear in new places. "Should this be a huge cause of concern for human health? I would say not normally," Christner says. "But the idea that we do have a fungus here that can cause disease should

keep us thinking."

Getting at mechanisms

In addition to large epidemiological studies that show broad trends in infections, researchers are also beginning to probe for possible cellular-level mechanisms to find out exactly how wildfire smoke might make people more susceptible to COVID-19.

One hypothesis is that when SARS-CoV-2 particles are attached to particulate matter, they're able to remain viable for longer while traveling farther in the air and penetrating deeper into the respiratory tract. Macrophages in the lung's alveoli that typically engulf and remove particles sometimes fail to clear the debris when exposed to chronic smoke, instead remaining with their ingested cargo in the alveolar region. In this scenario, the PM2.5 and other, smaller particles do double duty, shuttling the virus while simultaneously increasing oxidative stress and inducing local inflammation, which damages epithelial cells and makes them more susceptible to viral infection. Once SARS-CoV-2 is inside the lungs, that inflammation facilitates viral replication by disrupting normal cell function, while the leaky, damaged epithelial cells let the virus enter circulation and move to other parts of the body.

Another active area of research, Prunicki says, is how smoke and SARS-CoV-2 activate similar inflammatory and viral-recognition pathways, which may not only increase the risk for infection, but also lead to more severe cases of COVID-19. To do this, she adds, scientists are looking more closely at the individual cells and specific genes involved.

Even though it's upsetting to think about sometimes, it's an exciting time to be doing this kind of work.

—Sheryl Magzamen, Colorado State University

In research that hasn't yet been peer reviewed, scientists exposed cultured human nasal epithelial cells to wood smoke from eucalyptus or red oak and then infected the cells with SARS-CoV-2. Cells that hadn't been exposed to smoke upregulated antiviral response genes upon encountering the virus, including those involved in recognizing viruses, blocking viral entry, and signaling among cells. But epithelial cells that were bathed in smoke, particularly from red oak, downregulated many of those same genes in the three days following infection. The effect was sex-dependent, with cells from women showing more gene suppression than men, supporting epidemiological data showing that during wildfires in California in 2008, women were more likely than men to visit the hospital for asthma- or hypertension-related reasons.

Nasal epithelial cells are thought to be a primary site for SARS-CoV-2 infection because of their high expression of angiotensin-converting enzyme II, or ACE2, that the virus uses to slip inside cells. But ACE2 is found on many different cell types, and emerging evidence suggests that exposure to wildfire smoke causes epithelial cells in alveoli and pulmonary capillaries to increase production of ACE2 to reduce cytokine-induced lung injury or inflammation and avoid acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS). Rats exposed to wood smoke expressed more ACE2 within their alveolar cells, and smokers express more ACE2 in their lower respiratory tract epithelial cells than nonsmokers. "If there is more of that ACE2 receptor, it can make it easier for the virus to enter the cell and reproduce, which could lead to more infections," Kiser tells *The Scientist*, and, at least in mice, viral binding to ACE2 also keeps the enzyme from its role in repairing PM2.5-induced lung damage.

Outstanding questions

Even as the nexus of wildfires and human health draws more attention, much remains unknown: how chronic exposure to smoke might differ from acute events, and how the age of the smoke affects that dynamic; the details of how wildfire smoke makes humans susceptible to diseases like COVID-19; how much disease transmission takes place via airborne transport in wildfire smoke; and how to best protect against the double threat of a pandemic and rampant climate change.

It's increasingly urgent to find out. A 2019 census report stated that roughly a quarter of the US population resides in the West, where wildfires are projected to increase over the next several decades. Indeed, six of the 20 largest fires in California's history took place in 2020 alone, and the state is expected to emit between 19 and 101 percent more wildfire-derived material, including greenhouse and trace gases as well as particulate matter, through 2100.

In addition, scientists are predicting that COVID-19, too, will continue to be a part of daily life in the future—perhaps as a less potent, seasonal virus like its endemic coronavirus cousins. The current pandemic aside, in the long run, "I think, unfortunately, we are going to be dealing with viruses that continue to attack us and our respiratory system," Harvard's Dominici tells *The Scientist*. Given that the mechanisms behind how wildfires leave people more susceptible to COVID-19 remain largely unknown, she says, "I think this is going to be a really important area of research for my team for quite a while moving forward."

British Council to top up English skills of Bhubaneswar-Puri City Police before Hockey World Cup

BHUBANESWAR: Ahead of 2023 Men's FIH Hockey World Cup, Commissionerate Police on

guests in a better and friendly way. In the first phase, over 50 officers of Bhubaneswar-

Twin City of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack to enhance their verbal/written and presentation

report, case diary and replying to the courts. As international sporting events have increased in the Capi-



Monday roped in British Council to provide a specially-designed communication skills course to its officers. As fans and visitors from many countries are expected to visit Odisha next year, Commissionerate Police decided to develop soft skills of personnel from inspector and above ranks so that they will be able to deal with the international

Cuttack Police Commissionerate will take part in 'Confidence' course designed by the British Council. The course will be about six-week long and will be offered to the officers on both online and offline mode. The course will be of 34 hours. As part of the course, the British Council will guide the police officers of

skills. KISS Foundation has extended financial support for the initiative. Additional Commissioner of Police Umashankar Dash told The New Indian Express that the course will not only enhance the public experience while interacting with the Commissionerate Police but will also increase the output of the officers while writing an enquiry

tal City in recent years, the police have to deal with people from outside the state and foreign countries. Besides, they have to communicate with police agencies of other states, whenever there is a professional requirement. In 2021, British Council had launched the specially designed communication course for Kolkata Police officers to help them improve their soft skills.

Razorpay shared donor data with police, claims Alt News

NEW DELHI: Fact-checking website Alt News on Tuesday alleged that payment gateway Razorpay had shared its donor

Alt News said the donation platform had conveyed to them that their account was reactivated "after getting some clarity". "It has not been

founder Mohammed Zubair. Razorpay did not refer to the charges levelled by Alt News and said it was man-

all times and also continue to abide by the laws and regulations of India," Razorpay said. Alt News reiterated that only In-



data with the police without informing it. In a statement, Razorpay, without referring to the specific allegation of Alt News, said that it was mandated to comply with the written order from legal authorities under the provisions of the law. Razorpay had deactivated the account of Alt News on its donation platform following a request from the police and re-enabled it later.

specified by them as to what this clarity is," the fact-checking website said. It alleged that Razorpay had handed over Alt News donor data to the police. "This was done without informing us, or without even a preliminary investigation of any violation on the part of Alt News," it said. Delhi Police is probing the donations received by Alt News and has arrested its co-

dated to comply with the requirements of the law. "We had received a written order from the legal authorities under Section 91 of the CrPC (Code of Criminal Procedure) and we are mandated to comply with the same as per the regulation under the provisions of Indian law," the fintech platform said. "We will continue to hold the highest standard of data security, defend our customers at

dian bank accounts can make donations to it and foreign credit cards were never enabled in the Razorpay backend. "Therefore, the allegations of Alt News having received funds from foreign sources from whom we cannot receive donations are false," it said. "While we look for alternatives, we will continue with Razorpay as the donation platform for now," Alt News said.

Pakistan court grants one-time exemption from personal appearance to PM Shehbaz, his son in corruption cases

LAHORE: A Pakistani court on Tuesday granted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his son and Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz a

welfare". "It is for the reason of preoccupation in the discharge of constitutional obligations that [I] am unable to appear before this

in a money laundering case instead of placing him on the chair of prime minister," Khan said at a rally recently. The National Ac-

ing a contract to an ineligible proxy firm that resulted in the failure of the housing scheme. The scam caused a loss to the public ex-



one-time exemption from personal appearances at hearings in separate corruption cases. Prime Minister Shehbaz was to appear before an accountability court in Lahore on Tuesday in the Ashiana-i-Iqbal Housing Scheme corruption case in which he is facing misuse of authority and causing a loss of millions of rupees to the exchequer. He requested the court through his counsel that he be granted an exemption as he was "preoccupied in Islamabad in connection with various official matters" and cannot appear before the court. In a separate but similar application in the Ramzan Sugar Mills case, Hamza stated that as the chief minister of Punjab, he was "preoccupied with various important matters of urgent nature and public

honourable court today," he said, according to a report in the Dawn newspaper. The court accepted the applications of both leaders and adjourned the hearing till July 16. Shehbaz has already been granted permanent exemption from appearing in the Ramzan Sugar Mills case, in which he has been nominated as the primary suspect alongside Hamza. Shehbaz's pre-arrest bail in the Rs 14 billion money laundering case of the Federal Investigation Agency has already been confirmed by a special court. Ousted prime minister Imran Khan has expressed his surprise at how a suspect like Shehbaz, who is wanted in a multi-billion money laundering case, is given a "huge relief" by courts. "This man (Shehbaz) should be sent to jail

countability Bureau (NAB) filed a case against Shehbaz and Hamza in 2019, alleging that they "fraudulently and dishonestly" caused a Rs 213 million loss to the national exchequer. According to the NAB, when Shehbaz was the Punjab chief minister, he had issued a directive for the construction of a drain in Chiniot district primarily to benefit the sugar mills owned by his sons. The anti-graft watchdog had claimed to have obtained "sufficient incriminating" material and evidence during the investigation, the report said. In the Ashiana Housing Scheme case, Shehbaz had been charged with misuse of authority by unlawfully assuming powers of the board of directors of the Punjab Land Development Company (PLDC), and award-

chequer and deprived 61,000 applicants of houses, the report said. It is also alleged that Shehbaz's directive to entrust the project of a housing scheme to the Lahore Development Authority from the PLDC and intervention in affairs of the company was in violation of the Companies Ordinance, Memorandum and Article of Association and Corporate Governance Rules 2013, it said. NAB had alleged that the former chief minister through his unlawful acts and misuse of authority caused a loss of Rs 660 million to the exchequer and the overall project cost Rs 3.39 billion. Shehbaz was granted bail in both cases by the Lahore High Court (LHC) in February 2019, while Hamza was granted bail by the LHC in February 2020.

France brings 51 citizens home from IS camps in Syria, largest return since 2019

PARIS: French authorities on Tuesday repatriated 51 women and children from the former Islamic State-controlled areas in Syria, according to a statement from the national anti-terrorist prosecutor's office. It's the single largest return of women and children to France from camps in north-eastern Syria since the territorial defeat of the Islamic State group in March 2019. France saw more of its citizens leave to join IS than any other country in Europe. Tuesday's group comprises 16 women, aged

22 to 39, and 35 minors, seven of whom are coming to France unaccompanied by adults. All but two of the women in the group are French citizens. Twelve women returned with their children and four of the women had previously agreed to the return of their children, according to the prosecutor's statement. Eight women were taken into custody for questioning and the other eight were detained on arrest warrants. The children were placed in the care of the child protective

services attached to the Versailles Judicial Court. One of the 35 minors is in police custody on suspicion of participating in activities of a terrorist criminal enterprise, according to the prosecutor's statement. The minor will shortly turn 18, the statement said. Many European countries were slow to allow the return of women and children for fear they would violently turn on their homelands. France, which saw more of its citizens join IS in Syria than any other European country and

suffered multiple deadly attacks beginning in 2015, has been especially reluctant. French authorities have insisted that adults who fought with IS should be prosecuted in the country where they had committed crimes. In December, a 28-year-old Frenchwoman with diabetes died in a camp in Syria, leaving her 6-year-old daughter an orphan, according to the family's lawyer, who had been requesting their return since 2019.

Mamita Meher murder case: 'Only Govinda, driver involved', says Odisha government

BHUBANESWAR: maintained that only Radheshyam Chandi Mamita Meher murder case.



The State government on Monday Govinda Sahu and his driver were involved in the case.

In a written reply to a question from Bishnu Charan Sethi (BJP), Minister of State for Home Tushar Kanti Behera said that police has already filed chargesheet against the two accused in the case. Both Sahu and Chandi were lodged in Kantabanji jail in Balangir district as the case was

pending in the court, he added.

The Minister said that the police did

not find any evidence of involvement of any other person in the case during the investi-

gation. Behera also said that the Orissa High Court has granted conditional bail to Sahu for two

weeks after he filed a petition citing that his wife and son were extremely ill and he had to admit them in hospital.

Rajkummar Rao makes a dashing appearance in the city of Joy, Kolkata to promote HIT: The First Case!

Kolkata(KCN): The film has been making



noise ever since the trailer launch. As the audiences gear up to unravel this suspense thriller. The HIT actor Rajkummar Rao commences the promotions by visiting the city of joy, Kolkata.

At an event, Raj mentioned, "Well, this is our first city and what better than being in the city of joy. Our whole team has put in their best efforts and created this magical story of HIT: The First Case. Dr Sailesh Kolanu is an amaz-

ing director he absolutely brought the best out of Sanya and me. With every film I do, I want people to watch it and love it. I have watched this film and I have personally loved it. I am sure with word of mouth people will know more about this film and go and experience this thrilling experience in theatres!"



Gulshan Kumar and T-Series present in association with Dil Raju Productions HIT: The First Case. Directed by Dr Sailesh Kolanu, the film is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Dil Raju, Krishan Kumar, and Kuldeep Rathore. The film starring Rajkummar Rao and Sanya Malhotra hits the theatres on the 15th of July, 2022.

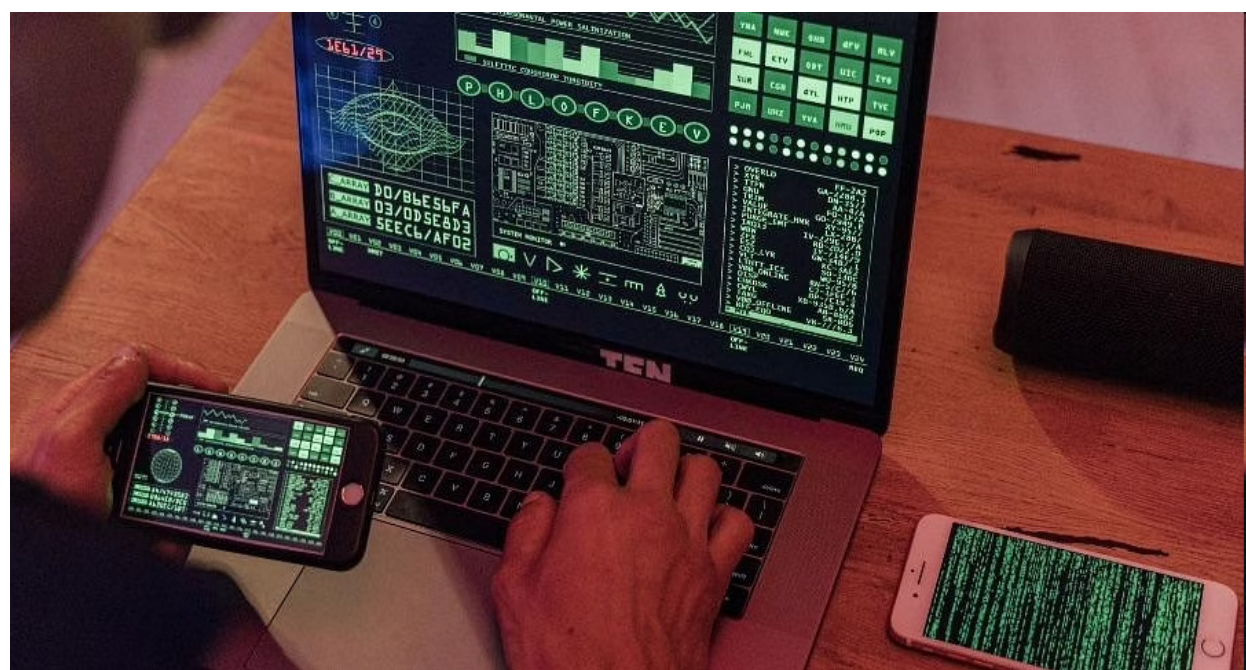
Hackers claim breaching Chinese police database of 1 billion citizens

HONG KONG: Hackers claim to have obtained a trove of data on 1 billion Chinese from a Shanghai police database in a leak that, if confirmed, could be one of the largest data breaches in history.

In a post on the online hacking forum Breach Forums last week, someone using the handle "ChinaDan" offered to sell nearly 24 terabytes (24 TB) of data including what they claimed was information on 1 billion people and "sev-

eral billion case records" for 10 Bitcoin, worth about \$200,000. The data purportedly includes information from the Shanghai National Police database including names, addresses, national identification numbers and mobile phone numbers as well as case details.

A sample of data seen by The Associated Press listed names, birthdates, ages and mobile numbers. One person was listed as having been born in "2020," with their age listed as "1," suggesting that information on minors was included in the data obtained in the breach. The Associated Press could not immediately verify the authenticity of the data samples. Shanghai police did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



The data leak initially sparked discussion on Chinese social media platforms such as Weibo, but censors have since moved to block keyword searches for "Shanghai data leak."

One person said they were skeptical until they managed to verify some of the personal data leaked online by attempting to search for people on Alipay using their personal information.

"Everyone, please be careful in case there are more phone scams in the future!" they said in a Weibo post. Another person commented on Weibo that the leak means everyone is "running naked" — slang used to refer to a lack of privacy — and it's "horrifying."

Experts said the breach, if confirmed, would be the biggest in history. Kendra Schaefer, a partner for technology at policy research firm Trivium China, said in a tweet that it's "hard to parse truth from the rumor mill, but can confirm file exists."

Such data leaks are fairly common, according to Michael Gazeley, managing director at Hong Kong-based security firm Network Box. "There are approximately 12 billion compro-

damage to the people whose data was leaked. Most of the data is similar to what advertising companies that run banner ads would have, he said.

"When you're talking about a billion people's information and it's static information, it's not about where they travelled, who they communicated with or what they were doing, then it becomes very much less interesting," Wisniewski said.

Still, once hackers get data and put it online it's impossible to fully remove.

"The information, once it's unleashed, is forever out there," Wisniewski said. "So if someone believes their information was part of this attack, they have to assume it's forever available to anyone and they should be taking precautions to protect themselves."

A major cryptocurrency exchange said it had stepped up verification procedures to guard against fraud attempts such as using personal information from the reported hack to take over people's accounts.

Zhao Changpeng, CEO of Binance, a cryptocurrency exchange, said in a tweet Monday that its threat intelligence had detected the sale of "1 billion resident records." "This has impact on hacker detection/prevention measures, mobile numbers used for account take overs, etc." Zhao wrote in his tweets, before saying that Binance had already stepped up verification measures.

In 2020, a major cyber attack believed to be by Russian hackers compromised several U.S. federal agencies such as the State Department, the Department of Homeland Security, telecommunications firms and defense contractors.

Last year, over 533 million Facebook users had their data published in a hacking forum after hackers scraped its data due to a vulnerability that has since been patched.



2021-2022

ADMISSION OPEN

Maharishi Public School, Baripada

STD-NURSERY TO VIII

ENROLL YOUR CHILD TODAY

(Special discount for new admission before 15.03.2021)

Find the Difference

- Small Classes
- Experienced, trained & loving teachers.
- Individual attention to each child.
- Regular meditation and yoga.
- Unique exam system, evaluation & Principles etc.

25% reservation as per RTE Act (2009)

MAHARISHI PUBLIC SCHOOL
 Baghra Road, Baripada
 For details
 Contact :
 Call-9438102188, 06792-255227
 Time : 8.00 A.M. to 12.00 noon
 E-mail- mps.bpd@gmail.com

 Find us on
 Facebook.com/Mps, Baripada



'Will switch to a new airline if recruitment drive announced': IndiGo employees look for job as stress takes toll

NEW DELHI: Deprived of sleep and suffering from fatigue, IndiGo em-

provide little or no time to rest. "If a new airline is announced tomorrow

Another IndiGo pilot who is planning his resignation said that working hours have

the airline for 4 years said their leaves have been shortened without giving them additional financial benefits.

According to a former senior employee at the airline, the single biggest reason why many are resigning is that they were not treated well during the two-year pandemic. He added that forceful salary cuts during covid-19 and the inhumane management style impacted employees' morale.



employees are actively looking for other opportunities. Post Saturday's mass leave that irked aviation regulator DGCA as 55% of its flights got delayed, nearly half a dozen IndiGo pilots and cabin crew TNIE contacted said that the country's only profitable airline is operating like a factory, which doesn't value employees and

requiring 20,000 cabin crew and 4,000 pilots, the whole of IndiGo staff would switch there," said a pilot who has been with the airline for over 5 years. According to industry sources, a majority of IndiGo's cabin crew members who took sick leave on Saturday were spotted at Air India's recruitment drive.

become very demanding and frequent posting at remote locations has angered many colleagues.

"Once, a colleague was sent to a small town without any prior accommodation arrangement. This gave him tons of unwanted discomfort," he said.

A senior cabin crew who has been with

In April, IndiGo suspended a few pilots who were planning to organise a strike to protest against pandemic-related pay cuts, a first for the airline.

According to sector experts, now that India's aviation industry is going through a structural

change with Tata's taking over Air India and the new player Akasa is all set to fly, there is an increased demand for workforce in this sector.

Mark Martin, founder and CEO of Martin Consulting, said the future prospect of Air India with the Tata Group is looking assuring.

"It is very promising for pilots and cabin crew from a long-term perspective as

salaries here are going to be very balanced along with ethical work culture," he added.

According to Martin, airlines that are not treating their employees well can experience a mass exodus as Asia alone requires 180,000 pilots and 250,000 cabin crew at the moment.

Query sent to IndiGo remained unanswered till this story was published.

Opposition raises Unemployment Query

Continued from page-1

not given priority to employment. Between 1999 and 2008, 45,513 primary posts were removed and according to a reply by the Finance Minister, as many as 2,26,513 posts are lying vacant, said opposition chief whip Mohan Charan Majhi.

Mr. Majhi said employment is not a priority of the government and it failed to solve the unemployment problem. The unemployment rate in Odisha is 5.4 per cent which is higher than the national average of 4.2 per cent.

There has been widespread corruption in employment and the government has a key role in the matter, he alleged.

Mukesh Mahalinga of BJP and Bahinipati demanded the government to stop appointing people on a contractual basis immediately. In his reply, Skill Development and Technical Education Minister Pritiranjan Gharai said training programmes are being held regularly to make youths employment ready.

He claimed that the unemployment rate in Odisha is the lowest in the country and said over five lakh youths were given jobs through the Chief Minister's Employment Generation Programme during the last three years.

As many as 1,00,564 young people have been provided training between 2011-12 and 2021-22 of which 27,611 youths have been recruited, he stated.

As many as 82 skill development centres have been set up while as many as 296 job-fairs have been organized in 30 districts across Odisha in between 2008-09 and 2021-22 in which as many as 5,60,045 job aspirants took part. Of them, a total of 1,48,645 participants have been recruited, he added.

Also, as many as 240 young men and women are being trained at World Skill Center and a total of 5,06,965 youths have been trained and self-employed in the last three years, said the Minister.

Employment and training are also being provided at model career centres that have been set up in Sambalpur, Cuttack, Rourkela, Dhenkanal, Berhampur, Keonjhar and Koraput with the help of the Central Government, he further added.

State government authorised load shedding in April: Odisha minister Pratap Keshari Deb

Continued from page-1

With many states of the country facing acute shortage of power, the IEX offered to sale only 40 to 60 MW to Gridco as against its requirement for over 400 MW. The increasing demand for power could not be met despite stepping up generation from hydro power stations of the State, he added.

Asserting that the State has not experienced any unscheduled power cuts from April 25, 2022, the Minister said the State government had instructed distribution companies to ensure uninterrupted supply of power in view of annual examinations and matric examination of students.

"The three months period from April to June was the most challenging period for energy sector in the country. Power supply regulation in many other states much more than Odisha where only 5 to 8 per cent consumers faced scheduled power cuts for 10-12 days in April," the Minister said. However, he admitted that the aggregated technical and commercial (AT&C) loss in Odisha is much higher than the national average.

India has eliminated all queues by going online: PM

Continued from page-1

wait for a country which does not adopt new technology when required and maintained the country had suffered this during the third industrial revolution.

"But now, India is guiding the world about the fourth industrial revolution - Industry 4.0. Gujarat has taken a lead in this initiative too, as the state had already taken initiatives like data centre, GSWAN, e-Gram and ATVT Jan Seva Kendra" said Modi, referring to measures taken on the digital front by the state government when he was Gujarat CM.

The experience of launching those initiatives in Gujarat became the foundation for the Digital India Mission, he said, adding the nation-wide programme of the Centre has given relief to the poor from corruption and it is working for elimination of middlemen in all fields.

The PM said the combination of Jan Dhan bank accounts, Aadhaar and Mobile, called 'JAM', has benefited the poor as well as the middle class more than other sections of the society.

While explaining how Digital India initiatives are saving people's time, as they are no longer required to visit government offices, Modi shared an experience of his Lok Sabha constituency Varanasi, where he learnt that labourers and poor citizens were preferring to travel by premium semi-high speed Vande Bharat Express train despite it being costlier than regular trains.

"The (Varanasi) station master said the train serves two purposes. It not only provides more space to keep the goods, it also saves 6 to 8 hours of their travel time, which these labourers can use to earn more money. This extra money would easily cover the high ticket fare (of Vande Bharat Express). This is the true example of (the proverb) time is money" said the PM.

Recalling his days as Gujarat CM, Modi said many people had objected to his plans to disburse widow pension through post offices or banks, saying it was difficult for beneficiary women to come out of their homes to collect the amount.

"When I remained firm on the plan and started its implementation, we learnt many ineligible persons were taking that pension by posing as widows. That was the reason why those who were opposing my decision wanted to continue it. Using the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) route, we have deposited over Rs 23,00,000 crore directly into the bank accounts of real beneficiaries in the last 8 years," said the PM.

He said the DBT initiative has saved Rs 2,23,000 crore which were otherwise going to ineligible people.

The PM informed the audience that biometric information of Aadhaar has so far helped in finding nearly 500 lost children and uniting them with their families.

"In May, nearly 1.3 lakh UPI (Unified Payments Interface) transactions took place every minute, which come to nearly 2,200 in one second. World's 40 per cent digital transactions are happening in India. Many countries are showing interest in our digital products such as UPI. These tools have scale, they are secure and they have democratic value," said the PM.

UPI is a system that powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application (of any participating bank), merging several banking features, seamless fund routing & merchant payments into one hood.

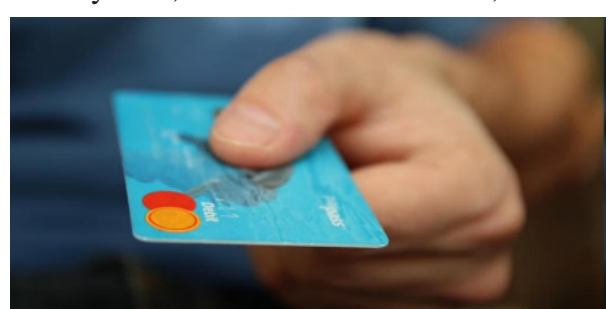
He said the "double dose" of Digital India and Make in India (push or local manufacturing) will help India in scaling new heights in the 'Industrial Revolution 4.0'.

On the occasion, the PM launched several new digital initiatives such as Digital India Bhashini, Digital India Genesis, Chips to Startup and My Scheme.

India's bank credit growth expected to remain positive; retail loan may do well: CareEdge report

NEW DELHI: The outlook for India's bank credit growth, which has witnessed modest growth in recent years, is ex-

pected to remain positive due to slew of factors such as economic expansion, rise in government and private capital expenditure, rising commodity prices, implementation of production-linked incentive schemes, and the push in retail credit, according to a report by rating agency CareEdge.



pected to remain positive due to slew of factors such as economic expansion, rise in government and private capital expenditure, rising commodity prices, implementation of production-linked incentive schemes, and the push in retail credit, according to a report by rating agency CareEdge.

The prospects in the medium term look promising with diminished corporate stress and a substantial buffer for loan provisions. The report said that retail inflation too is trending up, which is likely to add to the credit growth.

On the other hand, rising rates could, however, offset the growth potential to some extent by curbing the demand for credit.

The retail loan segment is expected to do well as compared with the industry and service segments, the rating agency said. In absolute terms, bank credit outstanding was reported to be at Rs 121.5 lakh crore

as of June 17, 2022, growing by Rs.14.1 lakh crore over the last 12 months. It was driven by a low base effect, small-

ticket loans, and an increase in working capital loans due to higher inflation.

46% of urban Indians say they feel the inflation crunch: YouGov data

Further, bank credit was reported to have witnessed a robust growth of 13.2 per cent year-on-year, while expanding by a significant 728 basis points or 7.28 percentage points.

Credit outstanding in the retail segment, saw a continued double-digit growth at 16.4 per cent in May 2022, which could be attributed to the growth in other personal loans, credit card receivables and consumer durable loans driven by improvement in economic activities and the job market.

Credit for the services sector also accelerated by 12.9 per cent year-on-year in May 2022, from a growth of 3.4 per cent in the year-ago period on account of a rise in non-banking financial companies, trade and shipping segments.

Ukraine negotiating with Turkey, UN over grain export through ports: Zelensky

Continued from page-1

He noted that the UN takes a leadership position in this process, and does not act as a moderator. "They seem ready to lead this process." The President also added that "Ukraine is not wasting time and we are working on various ways, both by rail and by the river, to export our grain".

The Russian military fleet is blocking sea routes to Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea coast, making it impossible to safely transport grain to other countries, Ukrayinska Pravda reported.

The international community fears that a shortage of Ukrainian grain on the global food market could trigger even greater instability. Meanwhile, Turkey is trying to mediate port unblock talks by demining the Black Sea and escorting bulk carriers for their safety.

However, Ukraine insists that acceptable guarantees for demining ports are weapons that Ukraine can deploy in the region.

On Monday, Kiev's ambassador to Ankara Vasyl Bodnar announced that a cargo ship carrying grain from a Russian-occupied region of Ukraine has been detained by Turkish customs authorities. It remained unclear where the cargo came from or how it was obtained.

OGST rise by 45 %

Continued from page-1

Similarly, the collection from liquor is Rs 233.76 crore during June 2022 while Rs 125.56 crore collected from this source during June last year with growth rate of 86.16%. There is a growth of 26.14 % in Profession Tax with a collection of Rs 23.66 crore during June 2022 against collection of Rs 18.76 crore during June 2021.

All GST registered taxpayers as well as other Professionals who are yet to pay their annual Profession Tax as well as file returns which was due by June 30 are advised to do so immediately, if not already done.

During the current financial year, 10485 new taxpayers have been bought under the GST fold. The total e-waybill generated during June'22 was 15.33 lakh against 13.38 lakh during June last year witnessing a growth of 14.57%.

Commissioner of CT & GST, Sushil Kumar Lohani has instructed the field officers to ensure at least 90% return filing, return scrutiny of all suspected/ big taxpayers as well as prompt demand and recovery in case of detection of irregularities.

The Commissioner has also advised the tax officers to adhere to the principles of 5T and attend to the genuine grievances of the taxpayers promptly. He has further appealed all the tax payers to file their GST returns correctly and in time to avoid any penal action in future.

Women's ODI rankings: Smriti Mandhana jumps to 8th position, only Indian in top 10

DUBAI: India vice-captain Smriti Mandhana moved up a rung to eighth position in the batter's chart in the latest ICC women's ODI

Pooja Vastrakar (up three places to 61st), Rajeshwari Gayakwad (up four places to 93rd) and Meghna Singh (up seven places to 100th).



rankings released here on Tuesday. Mandhana, who hit an 83-ball unbeaten 94 in India's 10-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the second ODI on Monday, is the lone Indian in the top 10 of the batting chart which is headed by Australian Alyssa Healey followed by England's Natalie Sciver.

All-rounder Deepti Sharma and opener Shafali Verma have made significant improvements to their positions after helping India take an unassailable 2-0 lead against Sri Lanka in the three-match ICC Women's Championship (IWC) series being played in Pallekele.

Deepti, who grabbed three for 25 and scored an unbeaten 22, has moved up two places to the 29th position among batters and three slots to 16th among bowlers. In the rankings for all-rounders, she has gained 20 rating points to reach within one point of Australia's Ashleigh Gardner, who is sixth on the list. Verma, who is leading the run aggregate in the series with 106 runs including an unbeaten 71 in the second match, is up 12 places to a career-best 36th among batters. She is currently ranked fifth on the T20 list.

Other Indians to move up the batters' list are

They have all also moved up the bowlers' list -- Gayakwad from 12th to 11th, Meghna from 58th to 47th and Vastrakar from 57th to 50th. Pacer Renuka Singh is also a major gainer, her seven wickets has lifted her 38 places to 65th position.

For Sri Lanka, Nilakshi de Silva has gained 13 ranks to reach 57th position among batters after accumulating 75 runs in the two matches while Hasini Perera (up 16 places to 83rd) and Anushka Sanjeevani (up nine places to 89th) are the others to progress in that list.

Among bowlers, former captain Inoka Ranaweera has progressed five places to 21st after her four wickets in two matches and Oshadi Ranasinghe has gone from 64th to 59th position.

The two wins have taken India to joint-second position with Pakistan in the IWC points table.

A win in the last match against Sri Lanka will see them catch up with South Africa at the top of the table with six points.

Sri Lanka are on two points, earned in their previous series against Pakistan.

Australian tennis ace Nick Kyrgios faces assault charge: Reports

SYDNEY: Australian tennis ace Nick Kyrgios will face court after being charged

Police in the Australian Capital Territory, where Canberra is located, released

following an incident in December 2021," the statement said. Barrister Jason

seriously." The barrister said Kyrgios would not comment because it was a



with assault, his barrister told the Canberra Times newspaper Tuesday.

The news broke as the 27-year-old, one of the most polarising yet exciting figures in tennis, prepared to enter the quarter-finals at Wimbledon on Wednesday.

only a brief statement on Tuesday evening without identifying the player.

"ACT Policing can confirm a 27-year-old Watson man is scheduled to face the ACT Magistrates court on the 2nd of August in relation to one charge of common assault

Moffett told the Canberra Times that his client was aware of the charge.

"It's in the context of a domestic relationship," he was quoted as saying.

"The nature of the allegation is serious, and Mr Kyrgios takes the allegation very

court matter, but would release a statement "in the fullness of time". The world number 40 will face Chile's Cristian Garin in Wimbledon for a place in the semi-finals.

It will be Kyrgios's first quarter-final at the Slams since the 2015 Australian Open.

Badminton Technical Committee apologises to PV Sindhu for 'human error' during Asia Championships

NEW DELHI: Badminton Asia Technical Committee chairman Chih Shen Chen has apologised to two-time Olympic medallist P V Sindhu for the "human error" committed by the referee during the women's singles semifinal match of the Badminton Asia Championships in April.

Sindhu had been left in tears after an "unfair" call by the umpires midway through her semifinal match against Japan's Akane Yamaguchi saw her go down in three games and eventually sign off with a bronze medal, her second in the continental championship. "Unfortunately, there is no rectification at this time. However, we have taken the necessary steps to avoid a repetition of this human error," the official said in the letter to Sindhu.

"We sincerely apologize for the inconvenience caused to you. We believe it is part of the sport and that it is accepted as such."

The incident had happened while Sindhu was leading 14-11 in the second game after having won the first game when the umpire handed her a one-point penalty for taking too much time to serve between points.

Sindhu, who turned 27 on Tuesday, lost her momentum after that incident and lost 21-13 19-21 16-21.

The Indian was seen having an animated discussion with the chief referee after the chair umpire asked her to hand over the shuttle to Yamaguchi but it all fell on deaf ears.

"The umpire told me you're taking a lot of time but

the opponent wasn't ready at that point. But the umpire suddenly gave her the point and it was re-



ally unfair. I think that was one of the reasons why I lost," Sindhu had said.

"I mean that is my feeling because at that moment it was 14-11 and could have become 15-11 but instead, it became 14-12 and she took continuous points. And I think it was very unfair. Maybe I would have won the match and played in the final."

Sindhu, who is a member of the Badminton World Federation's (BWF) Athletes' Commission, had immediately written a letter to the world body and the Asia badminton confederation, protesting against the decision.

Sindhu's father PV Ramana hoped such incidents don't happen in future.

"I am just happy that they accepted the mistake. I can humbly request that if such a situation arises again, the referee should take some time and see the recording, review the videos and then take an appropriate decision," he told PTI.

Sindhu is currently competing at the Malaysia Masters Super 500 tournament in Kuala Lumpur.

MAHARISHI PLAY SCHOOL

Nurturing awareness Moulding Future

ADMISSION OPEN FOR

PLAY GROUP (2+) to Onwards

A great Place to grow @ MPS

Call now for Application:

Laugh
Play
Learn
Share

MAHARISHI PUBLIC SCHOOL

N-3 B/14-15, IRC Village,
Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar

PH. 2558884 / 2550786 / 8984600700 (M)

E-mail : maharishipublic13@yahoo.com

Find us on
[facebook.com/maharishiplayschool](https://www.facebook.com/maharishiplayschool)

FOLLOW US
ON TWITTER
twitter.com/maharishiplayschool