



Redefining love
Katrina Kaif says she underwent a transformative period that shaped her understanding of love, relationships and self-worth
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Onslaught continues
Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip kill at least 24 people, including over a dozen women and kids, as per local health officials
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FPIs pull out ₹10,355cr
Foreign investors withdraw ₹10,355 crore from the country's equity markets in the last four trading sessions due to US tariffs
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Shining campaign
The Indian boxing contingent comes up with an impressive performance at World Boxing bagging six medals
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TAKING TO STREET: Protesters shout slogans as they march during a "Hands Off!" protest against President Donald Trump Saturday, in New York, US

Odisha leads in Forest Rights implementation

OVER 65% CLAIMS RESULT IN TITLE DISTRIBUTION

Bhubaneswar, April 6: Odisha has emerged as one of the top-performing states in implementing the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, with more than 65% of claims resulting in the distribution of land titles to tribal and forest-dwelling communities. This makes Odisha one of the few states where a significant portion of claims under the landmark legislation have translated into legal recognition of rights over forest land. According to data from the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Odisha received over 7.2 lakh claims under the FRA — the second highest in the country after Chhattisgarh. Of these, more than 4.68 lakh titles have been distributed, reflecting a relatively better implementation rate compared to most other states. Despite recording over 1.44 lakh claim rejections, Odisha stands out for maintaining a balance between disposal and recognition of rights. Experts say this reflects a comparatively proactive state mechanism in processing and approving genuine claims under the FRA. The Forest Rights Act, enacted in 2006, aims to correct historical injustices by recognising the tra-

KEY FIGURES
(as of Jan 31, 2025 across India)

- Total FRA claims filed: 51.03L
- Claims disposed of: 43.57L
- Titles distributed: 24.98L

ditional rights of Adivasis and forest-dependent communities to inhabit and manage forest land. It allows for both individual and community claims. Across India, more than 51 lakh claims have been filed under the Act till January 31, 2025. However, only 24.98 lakh titles have been distributed so far — less than half the total claims. In contrast, Odisha's title distribution rate is well above the national average, which stands at just under 50 per cent. Alongside Odisha, Kerala (64.69%), Tripura (63.79%), Jharkhand (55.95%), and Gujarat (54.24%) are among the states with relatively high title distribution rates. On the other end of the spectrum, states like Karnataka (5.54%), Bihar (1.51%), and Uttarakhand (2.77%) have recorded alarmingly low success in converting claims into titles. While Odisha has made notable progress, civil society groups continue to caution that

a significant number of legitimate claims still face rejection, often due to procedural lapses or lack of adequate support for claimants during verification. Activists urge the state to strengthen the review process and ensure that community forest rights—which are often sidelined—are also fully recognised. Meanwhile, a report submitted by the Union Environment Ministry to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) recently revealed that more than 13 lakh hectares of forest land remain under what is officially termed "encroachment" in 25 states and Union territories. Ten states are yet to submit data on forest encroachments. The report was submitted to the NGT March 28, just ahead of a scheduled Supreme Court hearing Wednesday in a case challenging the constitutionality of the FRA. While the hearing in the apex court could not take place as a three-judge Constitution bench is yet to be formed, tribal and forest dwellers' organisations have alleged that the report submitted to the NGT shows that the Central government continues to double-speak on the issue of protecting tribal and forest-dependent communities' rights under the FRA.

4-yr-old raped by minor in Deogarh

Deogarh: A 4-year-old girl was raped by a 16-year-old boy under Rimal police limits in Deogarh district, police said Sunday. The matter came to the fore after family members of the survivor lodged a complaint at Rimal police station alleging rape of the girl child by the minor boy. The incident has spared shockwaves in the area after reports surfaced. Police launched an investigation into the incident as it detained the accused minor boy and interrogated him in this connection. The health condition of the survivor is stable and a medical examination will be conducted on her Monday, police said.

Probe on as water offered to cheetah

Bhopal: Authorities in Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park have initiated disciplinary action after a video showing a man offering water to a cheetah and her cubs went viral on social media. In this incident, field staff violated the instructions and have shown indiscipline, Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (APCCF) Uttam Kumar Sharma said in a statement Sunday. "Further, a video was made and shared in the media disregarding every discipline and instructions in this regard. Action is being taken against the concerned staff," Sharma added. KNP is located in Sheopur district, some 420 kilometres from Bhopal.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Congratulations! You're in! You failed the IQ test spectacularly

7 DIE AFTER OPERATION BY 'FAKE' CARDIOLOGIST

Damoh (MP), April 6: Seven persons have died allegedly after being treated by a fake cardiologist at a missionary hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district, prompting the NHRC to launch a probe into the matter, officials said Sunday. A team of the National Human Rights Commission will camp in Damoh from April 7 to 9 to conduct an investigation into the matter, NHRC member Priyanka Kanoongo said. As per a complaint lodged by a local resident with the NHRC, a person using the name 'Dr N John Camm', who was said to be working at the hospital, had shown himself to be educated and trained from abroad. The complainant claimed the real name of the person is Nar-

endra Vikramaditya Yadav. He misused the name of a famous cardiologist from the United Kingdom, Professor John Camm, to mislead the patients and they died due to his wrong treatment, the complaint alleged. The Mission Hospital authorities could not be contacted on the issue. Kanoongo in a post on X Friday said a case of the untimely death of seven persons has come to light in a missionary hospital in Damoh where a fake doctor was operating on patients in the name of the treatment of heart disease. According to the complaint, the said missionary hospital is covered under the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Yojana and hence government money has also been misused. The NHRC has ordered an investigation, he said.

PM launches new Pamban bridge in TN

Rameswaram, April 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday inaugurated the new Pamban bridge, India's first vertical lift sea bridge and flagged off train service linking Rameswaram island to the rest of the country. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin skipped the event. Modi flagged off a Coast Guard ship that sailed under the bridge and also laid foundation stone for and dedicated to the nation various rail and road projects totally worth over ₹8,300 crore. In his address, Modi said the day marked the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami and that Lord Ram's good governance is the foundation for nation building. He also outlined the connect Tamil Nadu had to Lord Ram



by quoting Sangam era literature. On the fishermen issue vis-a-vis Sri Lanka, he said over the past decade, more than 3,700 fishermen have been brought back from Sri Lanka, including over 600 in the past year alone. While Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin skipped the event and upped the ante on the delimitation issue saying Modi should allay the fears

of the people on the proposed exercise, the PM, without naming anyone, hit back by picking the Tamil pitch. He batted for imparting medical education in Tamil medium to help the poor and said the state got 11 new medical colleges in recent years. Modi said efforts were on to take Tamil language, heritage to all corners of the world.

Without naming anyone, the PM said he gets letters from leaders of Tamil Nadu and they do not sign in Tamil, and asked them to at least sign in Tamil. Earlier, the Prime Minister prayed at the Ramanathaswamy temple here. Lauding the hard work of Tamil Nadu's fisheries community, he said that over the past five years, Tamil Nadu has received substantial funds under the PM Matsya Sampada Yojana, stressing the government's efforts to provide modern facilities for fishermen. Against the backdrop of DMK regime crying foul over fund allocation to the state, Modi said over the past decade, the Central government has allocated three times more funds for Tamil Nadu's development compared to the period before 2014.

MA Baby elected CPI(M) gen secy

Madurai, April 6: Former Kerala minister MA Baby was elected as the CPI(M) general secretary at the 24th party congress here Sunday, sources said. A section of the party leaders had backed All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) president Ashok Dhawale for the post. Born to PM Alexander and Lilly Alexander in Kerala's Prakkulam in 1954, Baby's first exposure to politics came when he joined the Kerala Students Federation, the predecessor of the Students Federation of India, during his school days. He was a member of the Rajya Sabha from 1986 to 1998. Baby has been a member of the Politburo, the highest decision-making body of the CPI(M), since 2012.

Is US headed for a recession?

Washington, April 6: Just days ago, the US economy was showing signs of solid momentum. Job growth was strong, wages were rising, and consumer spending remained resilient. But a sudden escalation in trade tensions has drastically shifted the economic outlook — and not for the better. On April 2, President Trump announced sweeping new tariffs on nearly all US trading partners, calling it 'Liberation Day.' Markets reacted swiftly. In just two trading sessions, more than \$6 trillion in stock market value was erased, with the S&P 500 suffering its sharpest back-to-back losses since 2020. The index fell 4.8% Thursday and another 6% Friday after China retaliated with 34% tariffs on US goods. Some analysts predict a 'Black Monday' when the markets open April 7. The fallout has raised fresh concerns that a recession may be closer than previously



thought. "The size and disruptive impact of US trade policies, if sustained, would be sufficient to tip a still-healthy US and global expansion into recession," said Bruce Kasman, chief economist at JPMorgan. In a note titled "There Will Be Blood," Kasman raised the firm's global recession risk estimate to 60% from 40%. JP-Morgan now expects U.S. GDP to shrink 0.3% in the fourth

quarter of 2025 compared to the year prior — a stark reversal from its earlier forecast of 1.3% growth. Other forecasters are more cautious, but still concerned. David Seif, chief economist at Nomura, said there isn't yet enough data to definitively call a recession — typically defined as two consecutive quarters of contracting GDP — but warned that it could feel like one regardless. "Real consumption could be extremely anaemic, and it could feel worse for people than the GDP numbers indicate," he said. Nomura now forecasts just 0.6% GDP growth in the fourth quarter. Trump, who has long claimed that international trade deals disadvantage the US, insists the tariffs will bring jobs back from overseas. Still, economists widely agree that, in the short run, they will weigh heavily on household spending — the engine of the US economy, accounting for 70% of GDP.

Anant Ambani completes 180-km Dwarka padyatra



Dwarka, April 6: Anant Ambani completed a 180-kilometre spiritual walk from Jamnagar to Dwarka Sunday, coinciding with both Ram Navami and his birthday on the Hindu calendar. The 29-year-old Reliance scion embarked on what he calls his spiritual quest March 29 and walked 12-15 km a day on an average. This is no ceremonial march. It is an act of pure devotion—an offering of the body, mind, and spirit to

Lord Krishna. With every step, Anant surrendered to the grace of Dwarkadheesh and the ideals of Sanatan Dharma. His walk is not about making a statement; it is about seeking the Divine in stillness, solitude, and sweat. What makes this journey even more extraordinary is that Anant undertakes it while battling Cushing's Syndrome—a rare hormonal disorder—and morbid obesity, along with chronic conditions like asthma and fibrosis that have challenged him since childhood.

leisure



ELTON JOHN RETURNS TO SNL AFTER A DECADE

Veteran musician Elton John made a solid return to the sketch comedy show *Saturday Night Live* with Brandi Carlile. He graced the show despite his vision loss. The two made up for a dynamic duo as they appeared as the musical guests on the latest episode of the show.

HOWARD MAKES SHOCKING ALLEGATIONS AGAINST DIDDY

Terrence Howard has alleged that Sean 'Diddy' Combs made inappropriate advances towards him under the pretext of music and acting discussions. Howard emphasised the power dynamics in the entertainment industry, advising young talents against compromising their principles. Meanwhile, Combs faces multiple lawsuits related to sexual assault and trafficking.



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ARIES
 Today you will feel mushy and forlorn. Ganesh says you will make special efforts to strengthen your relationships. You look upon commitment as a security for the future. As a result, you will develop strong, long-term bondings.

TAURUS
 You will be fondly thinking about your close friends, particularly about the opposite. It may suddenly dawn upon you that you are in love, says Ganesh. If per chance there is a romantic encounter, go ahead and dive fearlessly in the pool of love. It is near certain that the wedding bells will be ringing for you sooner than you think.

GEMINI
 You will spend your day fulfilling the demands made upon you by your family members and colleagues. You will need to devote time to matters at home. Pay attention to the needs of your relatives for they will be helpful to you in the near future, says Ganesh.

CANCER
 Watch out for winds of change and ac accordingly. Ganesh warns you of drowning in a strong current. Your task will be easier if you adjust to circumstances. Fun and entertainment are today's password. In the social sector business, you will have success.

LEO
 Financial gains in shares and stocks are indicated. If you are an investor, your investments will yield substantial profits. Long-standing debts are also likely to be cleared, and pending dues will be settled. Expenses for the purposes of entertainment are a possibility, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
 Though you are a Cancerian, you will not bother people too much today. On the other hand, they will show more empathy for you. Ganesh says that you are too stubborn while carrying out your responsibilities, and also hold very strong convictions.

LIBRA
 Ganesh says you will give more importance to your family and there may be concerns about the health of a family member. There may be news from abroad regarding the health of a close family member, which may disturb you today. Do maintain your mental balance today and remember that this too shall pass.

SCORPIO
 You are all set to paint the town red as you feel romance and love creeping into your life slowly. You may bump into 'someone special' today and see love blooming for you. There are also chances of marriage proposals and meeting prospective candidates, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
 You are all set to groom your skills as a professional. Talking about work, determination and dedication are likely to rule you today. Putting your heart and soul, your work speaks volumes about your efforts. Appreciation, though slow in pace, is on its way to encourage you.

CAPRICORN
 You'll be popular today at your workplace. Your honesty and efforts will be recognised, which will be fulfilling for you. But, tomorrow will be a different day and times may not be favourable for you.

AQUARIUS
 You know how to examine the nuts and bolts of every assignment or project, and it consumes your resources to a great extent. But, like a stitch in time saves nine, your meticulous planning minimises the chances of a loss or a failure, feels Ganesh.

PISCES
 You will communicate with your friends or relatives living abroad today. There is a chance that these communications could translate directly into substantial gain for you. You will find yourself in the mood for socializing. You will likely invite friends over to dinner at your place in the evening, says Ganesh.



Survival lessons by Harshvardhan

Mumbai: Bollywood seldom gets the perfect combination of drop dead good looks and superb acting in its male actors. The industry got it right with Harshvardhan Rane, who is currently zipping around the town in his new custom-made muscular bobber bike.

The actor has built his life from scratch and learnt skills on the go after he left his home in Gwalior in pursuit of something meaningful, and something different.

Harshvardhan recently spoke with news agency, and shared how leaving home early is the best thing that could've happened to him, straight from a neutral setting to first gear transmission to scale the rough terrain of life.

The actor shared, "I'm studying psychology honors, I'm in my second year. It is one of the very important aspects that when you take an individual out of the family set-up and place them in the real world, the whole environment changes. You may be a Raja Beta or Bekar Beta in your home but when you step into the world, you get a reality check. The person, who leaves his house, gets feedback from the world, and then they mould their life around those feedbacks and the experience".



Hrithik's aspiration

Mumbai: Hrithik Roshan, celebrating 25 years in the Indian film industry, recently revealed a long-standing dream — to work with acclaimed director Christopher Nolan. Speaking at an event, Hrithik reflected on his journey and aspirations. He first acknowledged his father, veteran filmmaker Rakesh Roshan, as the one who made his early dream come true by launching him in *Kaho Naa... Pyaar Hai* in 2000. "Rakesh Roshan—that dream happened right in the beginning," Hrithik said.

The actor then shared his admiration for Nolan, calling him one of his all-time favourite directors. "Now, I'd actually like to work with Christopher Nolan," he added, expressing hope for a future collaboration.

On the professional front, Hrithik is stepping into a new role — that of a director — with *Krrish 4*. His father recently announced the milestone on Instagram, expressing pride in Hrithik's new avatar. The film will be co-produced by Rakesh Roshan and Aditya Chopra.

Additionally, Hrithik is set to appear in *War 2*, part of Yash Raj Films' spy universe. The action-packed film, also starring NTR Jr and Kiara Advani, is scheduled for release August 14, 2025.



Katrina on true love

Mumbai: Before marrying Vicky Kaushal, Katrina Kaif underwent a transformative period that shaped her understanding of love, relationships, and self-worth.

In a candid moment on *Koffee with Karan*, Katrina shared how being single allowed her to reconnect with herself and learn valuable lessons about emotional independence. She revealed that she never felt it was necessary for a woman to have a man to feel complete, emphasising that this belief applied to her, though she couldn't speak for all women.

Reflecting on her past, the *Ek Tha Tiger* actress admitted that her self-esteem had often been tied to the love and attention she received in relationships. When things were good with a partner, she felt confident, but when challenges arose, her self-worth took a hit. She realised that emotional dependency was unhealthy and unsustainable.

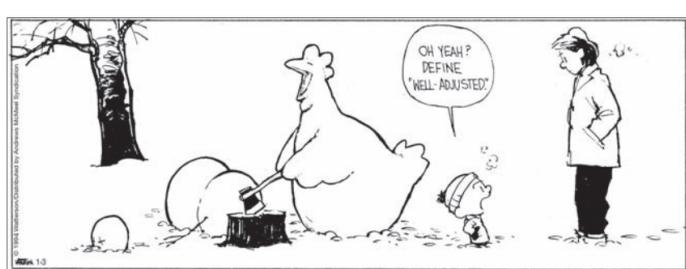
Katrina came to understand that no one could be responsible for her happiness, and depending on others for emotional validation was unfair and could damage relationships.

True love, she believed, should be based on mutual respect, admiration, and support, rather than neediness. This empowered mindset now shapes her marriage to Vicky Kaushal, where she embraces a relationship built on understanding, balance, and self-confidence.

PEANUTS



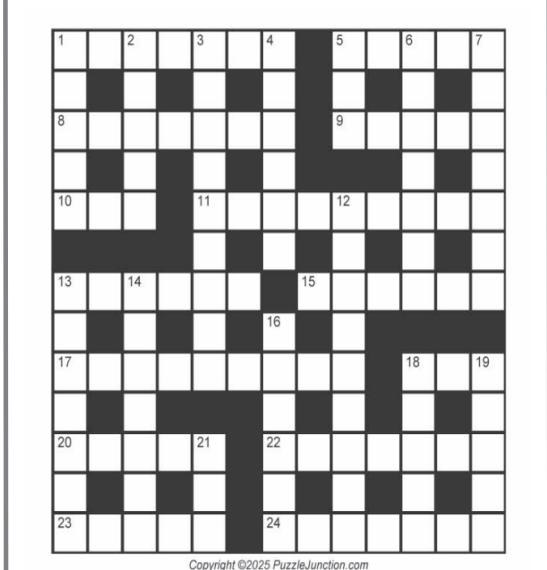
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



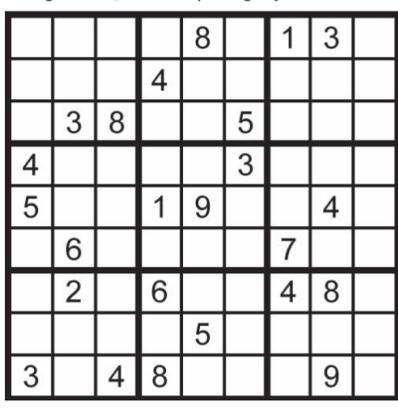
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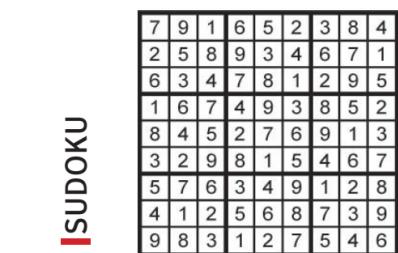
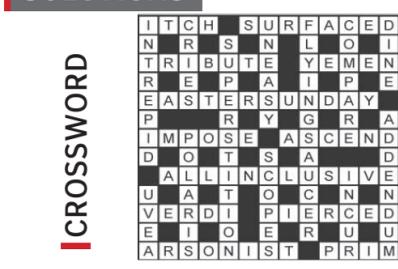
- Across**
- 1 Auto skeleton
 - 5 Shish follower
 - 8 Sainly glow
 - 9 Large feline
 - 10 Sermon subject
 - 11 Seaside promenade
 - 13 Colouring tool
 - 15 Beginning
 - 17 Playing a banjo
 - 18 Tavern
 - 20 Crystal clear
 - 22 Line of descent
 - 23 Lustrous fabric
 - 24 Latticework
 - 5 Young fox
 - 6 Theory of the universe (3,4)
 - 7 Enter uninvited (5,2)
 - 12 Haughtiness
 - 13 Rooks
 - 14 Brandy flavour
 - 16 Shoat
 - 18 Oyster's prize
 - 19 Sanctify
 - 21 Hibernation site
- Down**
- 1 Bedlam
 - 2 Kitchen
 - 3 Pantry
 - 4 Type of dresser

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Artists perform during Lingaraj Mahotsav organised by Ekamra Sanskritika Prakashani in Bhubaneswar Sunday



downtown

B'deshi woman dies, 14 hurt as bus overturns

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 6: A 73-year-old Bangladeshi woman died and 14 others sustained injuries after a tourist bus en route to Puri overturned near Uttara Square under Pipli police station in the wee hours of Sunday.

Pipli police inspector-in-charge (IIC) Souyendra Sekhar Tripathy said the deceased has been identified as Nonibala Nath, a native of Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh. Though the exact cause of the mishap is yet to be ascertained, the IIC said the bus carrying over 65 pilgrims from the neighbouring country was on its way to the Pilgrim Town when the driver was suspected to have dozed off, leading the bus falling into a roadside ditch near CIFA area. On being alerted by locals, the police reached the spot, and rushed Nonibala to City AIIMS where the doctors declared her 'brought dead'.

The IIC said the cops have launched a manhunt to nab the driver, who has fled the scene immediately after the mishap.

The tourists were reported to have already visited Ayodhya and Dwarka before heading towards Puri where they had plans to visit Srimandir and Batamangala Temple.

Later in the day, Commerce and Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena directed the department officials to extend necessary assistance to the injured persons. "The injured were discharged from Capital Hospital Sunday afternoon. A separate bus was arranged that left for Puri to cover the remaining tour," said an official from Regional Transport Office (RTO).

CM leaves for Delhi to meet industry leaders



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 6: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday left for New Delhi, where he will hold deliberations with various industry leaders and other stakeholders to attract investments to Odisha.

During this two-day visit, the Chief Minister will address several meetings, sharing the vision for Odisha's future and emphasising the reforms and initiatives taken by the state government to create an enabling environment for investors.

The state will sign a few crucial memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with industries that will not only strength-

en the current industrial ecosystem of the state, but also attract potential investments. This will help create jobs and spur economic development in the state.

The firms with whom the agreements would be signed include Indian Oil Corporation Ltd, Petronet LNG, and Indian Strategic Petrochemical Reserves Ltd, among others. These collaborations underscore the state's commitment to make Odisha a leading hub for petrochemicals and chemicals and serve to position the state as a key player in the nation's strategy for sustainable growth.

With the agenda to attract diverse industrial investments to the state, Majhi will visit the facility of HCL Tech campus in

The state will sign a few crucial MoUs with industries that will not only strengthen the current industrial ecosystem of the state, but also attract potential investments

Noida which symbolises the strides Odisha need to take toward integrating technology and innovation into the industrial framework.

The Chief Minister will also be engaged in one-on-one meetings with influential industry captains from diverse sectors, where he will discuss potential partnerships that can further enhance Odisha's industrial landscape.

This visit, rather than being merely an event, represents a critical leap into a future filled with possibilities for Odisha.

The efforts to build a robust industrial ecosystem in Odisha are driven by the vision of 'Purvodaya' - the resurgence of Eastern India. And the state is determined to seize this opportunity.

The CM is likely to return April 9.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Majhi hoists party flag on BJP's 46th foundation day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 6: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Sunday hoisted the party flag at the BJP headquarters here in the presence of state president Manmohan Samal on the occasion of party's 46th foundation day.

Several senior BJP leaders including state in-charge Vijaypal Singh Tomar and Nabarangpur MP Balabhadra Majhi were also present on the occasion.

Extending greetings to everyone on BJP's foundation day, Majhi in a post on X said, "That BJP, which is the world's biggest political party, has converted into a movement across



the country, with the dedicated efforts of each member of the party, workers and leaders."

"Let us remember the strong determination and sacrifice of all the workers and great leaders who have made priceless contributions to the party and work together. Let us further strengthen our resolution for building a viksit Bharat and viksit Odisha. #BJP46ViksitBharat #BJPPoun-

ationDay2025," he wrote on X. Speaking to reporters, Samal said the BJP, in its 46 years of struggle, has been able to strengthen its presence in pan India and got blessings to serve the people in 21 states.

The party is also serving the country under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and has become the number 1 party in the world, he said.

BREAKING BARRIERS

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

Divine Talent Hunt held in Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar: A state-level competition titled 'Divine Talent Hunt-2025' was organised by Divine Dance & Music Academy at the Bharja Kala Mandap here Sunday. The competition featured two categories - fashion show and modern dance. Around 400 participants belonging to various age groups and districts took part in the competition that was inaugurated by RK Dey, Director of INSK Technology, and Chandrika Dash, chief director of the host institution. While Baishali, Kumudini, and KR Santosini were the jury members for the fashion show, the modern dance competition was judged by a panel consisting of well-known choreographer Harihar Dash, Jaya Biswas, India's Best Dancer finalist Dibya Jyoti Nayak, and Barsharani Samal.

Bhubaneswar/Nabarangpur, April 6: Children in Junapani, a remote hamlet under Chandahandi block of Nabarangpur district, have a happy ride to their school every morning in a battery-operated auto-rickshaw. They seldom complain as the driver provides them all care and protection which their mothers offer them back home.

This is because the driver Laxmi Sinha is a mother, and the rent she gets from parents for carrying the tiny tots to school in her rickshaw is necessary to run her household and meet the needs of her six-year-old daughter. "Being a mother helps me understand the psychology and needs of children," says Laxmi, who is in her early 30s.

When she is not driving kids to school, Laxmi runs a tiny stall which gives her some extra income to plan her, and her daughter's, future.

Laxmi, a single mother, learnt the hard ways of life from early childhood days. Financial hardships in the family forced her to drop out after completing matriculation. Later, her parents arranged her wedding in 2015, hoping it would change her life. But fate had other plans.

Due to disturbances in marital life, Laxmi separated from her husband and came back to her parents' house with her two-year-old daughter. And being a single child, Laxmi was clear that it was her turn to shoulder the responsibilities of her ailing parents and two-year-old daughter, while paying



the house rent.

Not shaken by the hardships, Laxmi learnt driving by borrowing an auto-rickshaw from one of her relatives. After honing driving skill, she decided to take it up as a career option to support her family.

"I sold my ancestral land to purchase an electric auto," she points out. However, the journey was far from being smooth as unwittingly she took up a profession which was long considered a male bastion. "Being the only woman auto-driver in the village, people looked down upon me," she says, recollecting the initial days as an auto-rickshaw driver.

However, Laxmi continued with grit and determination. "Some villagers asked me to pick up their children from home and drop them back

from school every day. I readily agreed. And I'm continuing with the practice since then," she adds.

However, soon after getting the transport contract of children, Laxmi realised the money she earned wasn't good enough to make ends meet and fund her daughter's education.

"I later opened a small shop in front of Chandahandi Community Health Centre (CHC). I also started offering transport facility to patients. I started doing three jobs simultaneously," she says with a smile.

"The tiring chore doesn't break my spirit as I want to see my daughter well educated," Laxmi added.

At her stall, Laxmi serves breakfast and beverages to customers. "I wake up at 3am daily to prepare breakfast and then

leave to pick up schoolchildren. After dropping them at school, I take my daughter to school, and then come back to attend the shop," Laxmi said.

Laxmi has been driving auto for three years now and is determined to continue the routine to support her family. "I haven't got ration card, or any other government facilities yet though I had applied for those," she laments.

"My life's ride is full of pot-holes as I still face a lot of criticisms for driving an auto, but I ignore them with a smile. I know those harsh words won't bring bread on my table. I want to take care of my ailing parents and give my daughter quality education as far as possible. I don't want her to suffer like me," says Laxmi with steely determination in her eyes.

CM greets Sudarsan for winning British award



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 6: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday congratulated Puri-based sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik for being awarded "The Fred Darrington", 1st British Sand Master Award at the Sandworld Sand Sculpture Festival in Weymouth, UK.

Majhi in a post on X Saturday said: "Heartiest congratulations to Padma Shri awardee and eminent sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik on being honoured with the first British Sand Master Award, 'The Fred Darrington'."

"He conveyed the message of peace through his 10-feet-tall giant statue of Lord Ganesha at the International Sand Art Festival held in Weymouth. His contribution has further enhanced the cultural heritage of our country and state on the global stage."

Pattnaik, who is in the UK, in a statement said: "It is an honour for me to receive this award from the Mayor of Weymouth. It is named after Fred Darrington, who contributed a lot towards sand sculpture. I dedicate this award to all my fans and followers, who have always supported me."

Pattnaik has created a 10-ft high image of Lord Ganesha, with the message 'World Peace'. He said the competition was organised on the occasion of Sandworld 2025 International sand art festival in Weymouth in the UK.

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75-DAY COUNTDOWN TO INT'L DAY OF YOGA

Capital to celebrate Yoga Mahotsav today



Bhubaneswar, April 6: Odisha is all set to host Yoga Mahotsav-2025 Monday to mark the 75-day countdown to International Day of Yoga (IDY) June 21.

The event, organised by the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY) under the Ministry of Ayush, will be held at Kalinga Stadium, joint secretary of Ayush Monalisa Dash said in a press briefing Sunday.

Union Minister of State for Ayush and Health and Family Welfare, Prataprao Jadhav, will attend the event as chief guest, she said.

Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, Puri MP Sambit Patra, Bhubaneswar Central

ed in IDY events, with the number of participants increasing every year.

"We are proud of the growing global participation, setting new records annually," Dash said.

"As IDY celebrates a decade of its journey, we are now preparing for its 11th edition, and we are expecting to set a new milestone in participation this year," she stated.

In recognition of this achievement, the ministry is organising 10 signature events as part of the grand yoga festival: Yoga Sangama, Yoga Bandhan, Yoga Parks, Yoga Samavesh, Yoga Prabhava, Yoga Connect, Harit Yoga, Yoga Unplugged, Yoga Maha Kumbh, and Sam Yogam, the joint secretary said.

"These events will be complemented by a series of impactful initiatives and activities across the country in the run-up to IDY 2025," she added.

Through a video message, Jadhav said, "Following the initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the United Nations General Assembly took a historic decision in 2014 to declare June 21 as the International Day of Yoga. This global recognition of Yoga is a matter of immense pride for our nation, as Yoga is an integral part of our heritage."

"The central highlight of the International Day of Yoga each year is the mass yoga demonstration, graciously led by the Prime Minister himself. Preparations for day are already underway," he added.

Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, Puri MP Sambit Patra, Bhubaneswar Central MLA Ananta Narayan Jena and Ministry of Ayush Secretary Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha will grace the occasion

MLA Ananta Narayan Jena and Ministry of Ayush Secretary Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha will grace the occasion, Dash added.

Dash highlighted the significance of the common yoga protocol, saying, "It forms the foundation of International Day of Yoga and is available in 22 different languages. Last year, we launched the Braille edition of the Common Yoga Protocol to promote inclusivity."

To date, more than 24 crore people have directly participat-



DIVINE BLESSING: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati visits Ram Mandir in Bhubaneswar, Sunday to offer prayers on the occasion of Ram Navami

Rail boost for northern Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 6: Indian Railways is making significant strides in the redevelopment of Northern Odisha's railway stations under the Amrit Station Scheme. Seven key stations across the region—Kendujhargarh, Barbil, Jaroli, Baripada, Rairangpur, Betnoti, and Badampahar—are undergoing extensive upgrades aimed at transforming these stations into modern, state-of-the-art transport hubs.

This initiative will improve the travel experience for passengers while fostering regional economic growth.

Kendujhargarh railway station is undergoing a transformation with an investment of ₹10.16 crore, while Barbil railway station, which is receiving a major overhaul, has a budget of ₹17.7 crore. Similarly, Jaroli railway station is being revamped with an approved budget of ₹8.6 crore. Baripada railway station, one of the most significant stations in the region, is receiving an upgrade



Jaroli railway station after proposed redevelopment

worth ₹15.354 crore.

Budget has also been allocated for Rairangpur (₹7.4 crore), Betnoti (₹14.146 crore), and Badampahar (₹12.22 crore). While the stations are at different stages of completion, the entire redevelopment project is expected to be finished within the next two years, according to sources.

The redevelopment will focus on improving infrastructure, modernising amenities, and ensuring seamless connectivity to support both passenger comfort and commercial growth.

The selected stations in the northern region of the state are expected to undergo significant enhancements in design,

technology, and passenger services. The initiative is in line with the ongoing efforts to modernise the Indian Railway network and provide an efficient and user-friendly travel experience for all. The stations will feature modern platforms, upgraded ticketing facilities, waiting areas and improved cleanliness standards, ensuring convenience and comfort for all passengers.

The redevelopment will include FOBs with lifts and escalators to improve accessibility for senior citizens, differently-abled passengers, and families with children.

The stations will adopt green building principles, integrating

renewable energy solutions, water conservation practices, and waste management systems, in line with Indian Railways commitment to sustainable development.

Through these developments, a perceptible improving in the station circulating areas have been planned with drop-on and drop-out lanes along with adequate parking places.

Amenities like Wi-Fi, digital displays, advanced security systems, improved catering services and modern waiting lounges will enhance the overall travel experience.

The redevelopment project aims to stimulate local economies by boosting tourism, improving connectivity and creating employment opportunities in the region.

The Northern Odisha region, with its rich cultural heritage and diverse landscapes, will benefit significantly from these upgrades.

In total 59 railway stations in Odisha are being developed currently as part of Amrit Station scheme.

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CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By Virtue of an Affidavit before Notary, Bhubaneswar I, Santosini Dash, W/o - Nilambar Dash resident of Villa No.6, Aurovillla, 594, Gautam Nagar, Vivekananda Marg, Old Town, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, PIN-751002, declare by this Affidavit No.222, dated 07.03.2025 that from now onwards I shall be known as Santoshini Dash for all Purposes.

By virtue of an affidavit No.- 6195, dated 02.04.2025 before the Executive Magistrate, Sadar, Cuttack, I, ANSULA BHAWSINKA, W/o- Lokesw Bhaawsinka, R/o- Balu Bazar, Biswanath Lane, Cuttack- 753002 declare that my former name "Ansula Agarwal" has been changed and I shall be known as "Ansula Bhaawsinka" for all future purposes.

Bottled water alert amid heatwave

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 6: With temperatures steadily rising and the demand for drinking water surging, health and environmental experts are raising red flags over the increasing reliance on bottled water during summer. While it may seem like a convenient and safe option, excessive use of packaged drinking water could come at a serious cost—both to human health and the environment.



The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) had officially classified packaged drinking and mineral water as a high-risk food item. This classification has sparked renewed public interest in the possible health hazards associated with bottled water, especially when exposed to high temperatures during transport and storage.

"FSSAI's warning is grounded in scientific evidence," said Priyanka Singh Deo, a Bhubaneswar-based nutritionist and fitness consultant. "Research, including a 2022 review published in Environmental Science & Technology, shows that plastic bottles, when subjected to heat, can release microplastics and chemicals like BPA. These can accumulate in the body over time and potentially damage organs like the liver, kidneys, and even affect hormonal balance."

She further emphasised that microplastic pollution has now reached alarming levels, with traces even found in human bloodstreams, pointing to widespread exposure.

'Nurturing health early key to lifelong wellbeing'

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 6: World Health Day 2025 has placed a spotlight on the theme "Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Future," prompting thoughtful reflections from healthcare professionals, educators, and wellness advocates across Odisha.

The message resonates deeply—prioritising physical, emotional, and mental health from the earliest stages of life is essential for building a brighter, healthier future.

A timely reminder to focus on the roots of wellbeing. "The journey to a healthy life doesn't begin in adulthood; it starts right from childhood," he emphasised. "A child's home, school, and community play vital roles in shaping their emotional and mental resilience." According to Dr Patojoshi, wellness must be viewed holistically—not merely as the absence of illness, but as the presence of consistent care, compassion, and emotional connection.

"Families don't need to be flawless—they just need to be present. Something as simple as a warm hug, an encouraging word, or a quiet moment of listening can have a life-



long impact on a child's mental health," he said.

He further stressed the significance of preventive care, encouraging early habits like good sleep, meaningful relationships, movement for joy,

Cleanliness drive held during Odia Pakhya

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 6: As part of the ongoing Odia Pakhya celebrations—being observed for the first time across Odisha from April 1 to 14—a massive state-wide Swachhata Abhiyan (cleanliness drive) was carried out Sunday.

The initiative focused on cleaning temple premises, heritage sites, and tourist destinations across districts, aiming to promote hygiene and preserve the cultural charm of these significant places. The drive highlighted the spirit of cultural pride through community participation and civic responsibility.

Spanning all blocks and districts, the cleanliness campaign witnessed active involvement from district and block admin-

istrations, municipal bodies, Panchayati Raj institutions, youth groups, voluntary organisations, local residents, and elected representatives. Participants enthusiastically joined hands to clean temple complexes, village shrines, and prominent heritage landmarks. Beyond cleaning efforts, the drive also served as a platform to raise awareness about maintaining hygiene in public spaces. Many participants took to the official Odia Pakhya website (www.odiapakhya.com) to upload photos and share their experiences, contributing to a growing sense of collective celebration and pride.

The campaign received widespread appreciation and became a symbolic expression of how cultural heritage and civic sense go hand in hand.

Anant Ambani completes...

FROM PAGE 1

The physical toll of this padyatra would daunt even the fittest among us. Yet, for Anant, this pilgrimage is not about proving strength. It is about placing faith above fear, devotion above discomfort, and discipline above ease.

This is a solitary quest, accompanied only by a few close aides and spiritual guides. There are no cameras, no media briefings, no social media footprints—just the sound of footsteps on dusty earth, and the silent whisper of unwavering belief. In every grain of sand and every breath drawn under the open sky, Anant is living a truth few dare to embrace: that real strength often walks quietly.

In a world of constant noise, endless distractions, and shifting values, Anant Ambani's walk to Dwarka is a rare act of clarity, courage, and conviction. For a generation searching for depth in the superficial, and meaning in chaos, his padyatra offers something powerful—a reminder that faith is timeless, and that resilience doesn't always roar.

Anant's walk is not about ritual. It is about responsibility to the self. About waking up each day and choosing to walk a harder path—not for praise, but for peace.

Not to impress the world, but to express his gratitude to the Divine. His journey says: "I will walk through pain to say thank you. I will bear discomfort to show my belief. I will bow down—not because I am weak, but because I choose surrender over pride."

Through this sacred and deeply personal trek, Anant Ambani speaks to a generation, "Let your devotion guide you. Let it humble you. Let it build you. And when the weight of life feels heavy, let your faith carry you forward."

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Machhkund river still missing from Odisha, AP revenue maps



POST NEWS NETWORK

Nandapur, April 6: Although a year has passed since the National Green Tribunal (NGT) confirmed about the absence of Machhkund river in the official revenue maps of both Nandapur tehsil in Koraput district and its Andhra Pradesh (AP) counterpart, while investigating complaints over the destruction of the river's ghats due to illegal sand mining, the river is yet to appear in the records of either states.

A year ago, a team from NGT, along with revenue officials from both the states, had visited the Machhkund river near Shobhapur and Suduba ghats in Panthlung panchayat of Nandapur block in Koraput district to investigate into complaints made by Pooja Khil, the sarpanch of Panthlung panchayat. She had alleged that illegal sand mining was destroying the river ghats and the river, with sand being smuggled across to Andhra Pradesh.

During the investigation, officials were surprised to discover that the Machhkund river - used as a natural boundary between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh - was missing from the revenue records of both the states. Following media reports, the issue sparked state and national outrage, drawing criticism towards the state government and the

Machhkund river could miss out from the official revenue maps. Benudhar Sabar, Chief Development Officer of the Koraput Zilla Parishad, was present during the inspection.

It was alleged that the state revenue department, district administration, and the Nandapur tehsil office have been negligent in safeguarding the border. Meanwhile, Nandapur tehsildar Anadi Charan Sahu has retired.

QJ Khan, joint director of the Geological Department, stated that a report regarding the absence of the Machhkund river in the maps would be submitted to the state government and the tribunal.

The team members advised that in the coming days, administrative and revenue department representatives from both the states should hold a joint meeting to identify the boundary lines and accurately mark the river on the maps.

Meanwhile, residents of Panthlung panchayat and surrounding blocks expressed their disappointment that the NGT investigation and recommendations have remained only on paper. No concrete steps have been taken to officially mark the Machhkund river in the revenue maps, they alleged.

Locals have urged the Odisha revenue department, district administration, and the Nandapur tehsil office to treat the issue with the seriousness it deserves. They emphasised that identifying the state boundary, and including the Machhkund river in the revenue records, is essential not only for administrative clarity but also for protecting the cultural identity of Odia people and ensuring dignity and peace for the border communities.

When contacted, Koraput Sub-Collector Premlal Hial said he would take up the issue with the District Collector and initiate prompt steps for border demarcation.

revenue department.

However, though a year has passed, neither the ruling party nor the Opposition has taken any concrete step toward marking the boundary, launching a thorough investigation, or including the Machhkund river in the states' official maps. The Nandapur tehsil office, district administration, and state revenue authorities have also failed to take initiative, fueling public dissatisfaction, reports stated.

Local intelligentsia and observers say that the ongoing illegal sand mining by mafia from Andhra Pradesh continues unchecked at various ghats of the Machhkund river. They warn that this is only escalating border disputes between the two states.

Sources said that the Godavari river splits into two near Raipahad in Andhra's Goluru panchayat. One branch, known locally as the Patalganga, flows through Chatua-Padua and merges into the Jolapur reservoir. While, the other branch, identified as the Machhkund river, flows past Dugana village and Muchimapat, serving as a natural boundary between Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.

The NGT team was shown the topsheet map of the geology department and Google maps on mobile phones of both the state officials. The team members were left wondering how the



FESTIVE FERVOUR: Children dressed as Lord Sriram, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman participate in a procession at Agarpada Bazar in Bhadrak on the occasion of Ram Navami Sunday. Odisha Police had deployed 100 platoons of force across the state, including 26 platoons in Bhadrak, to ensure safety during the celebrations

NDRF, SAIL HOLD JOINT MOCK DRILL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, April 6: The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) recently conducted a joint mock drill at Propane Plant-3 of the Oxygen Plant, simulating a propane gas fire incident.

The exercise aimed to assess the effectiveness of RSP's onsite disaster management system and personnel, in line with statutory safety requirements. The mock drill Friday was attended by Biswaranjan Palai, executive director (Works), Anita Naik, deputy commissioner of the Rourkela Municipal Corporation, Bibhu Prasad, deputy director (Factories & Boilers), SK Rout, assistant director (Factories & Boilers), along with senior officers from RSP, CISF, NDRF, and ODRAF. During the exercise, Palai emphasised the importance of expanding such drills to other areas of the plant and leveraging the expertise of the NDRF team. Naik highlighted the need for meticulous coordination between different agencies for effective management of emergency situations.

Elephant herd destroys crops, spreads panic in Keonjhar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 6: A herd of 18 elephants that strayed near a canal in Bhatunia village - under the Sadar forest range in the district - a day ago, has destroyed several acres of vegetable crops in the area, a report said.

The presence of the giants has sparked panic among the residents in the area. They said they have been spending sleepless nights as chances of wild attack looms large.

Sources said that the herd, including calves, moved from the Ambadaha area to Tikarapada village Saturday evening. The elephants later crossed a railway line and reached a mango orchard in Bhandanalisahi, further alarming the residents living in the vicinity.

In an effort to protect their crops, farmers from Tikarapada, Kudiaghara, Mahadeijoda, Kadgarh, Bhatunia, Narsinghpur



and Kenduposhi villages joined Forest personnel and hundreds of locals to drive the elephants away. On Sunday morning, the herd was spotted bathing in the canal, drawing large crowds of onlookers.

Farmers alleged that the elephants trampled and destroyed several acres of vegetable fields while feeding on various crops in the area. Although the Forest department has been monitoring the movement of the herd, officials said they plan to drive the elephants back into the forest at the earliest. Meanwhile, residents have demanded immediate government assistance for those affected by crop loss.

While many villagers are trying to protect their fields and property, officials say some individuals are unnecessarily disturbing the elephants, causing the animals to become agitated and wander unpredictably.

There is also a concern that people approaching the elephants for selfies or photographs may provoke attacks.

Forest officials have urged the public to maintain a safe distance from the animals. "We are making people aware not to go near the elephants," said Ajit Das, range officer of the Sadar forest range, adding, "Compensation will be provided for any damage."

2 critical in bear attacks

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 6: Two persons sustained grievous injuries after they were attacked by bears in two separate incidents under Sadar forest range and Patna forest range, respectively in the district Sunday.

In the first incident, 60-year-old Alomani Mohanta was mauled by a bear at Raghunathpur village under Sadar forest range in the wee hours when she went out to collect Mahua flowers near her house. The animal which had strayed into the area to eat Mahua flowers inflicted serious injuries to her on head and hands. Villagers rushed her to Keonjhar DHH where she is presently recuperating.

In the other incident, 35-year-old Markand Munda of Swamunda Sahi under Patana forest range was attacked by a bear during the day when he was standing in the courtyard of his house. He has been admitted to Patana CHC in a critical condition.

Man dies as trailer ploughs into backyard of house

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 6: A 32-year old man was killed after the driver of a trailer lost control over the vehicle and rammed it into the backyard of a house at Bankamaruni village, under Sadar police limits, in Keonjhar district Sunday morning.

The deceased was identified as Rajesh Munda, 32, alias Chemuttu in the village.

Sources said that the incident occurred when Rajesh went to shoo away some stray cattle which were consuming straw from the haystack in his backyard. In the meantime, a trailer heading towards Joda from Keonjhar on NH-20 rolled down the roadside and ploughed into his backyard, knocking him down.

Rajesh died on the spot. On being informed, Sadar police personnel reached the spot and recovered the body. They also seized the vehicle for investigation.

The incident sparked tension in the area as locals staged a block-



ade on National Highway-20 demanding compensation to the bereaved family, and installation of safety measures. They said Rajesh was the sole bread winner of his family, comprising his wife, and two sons.

The road blockade disrupted

traffic as it left hundreds of vehicles stranded on both sides of the highway. Later, police and administrative officials reached the spot and placated the agitators from withdrawing the blockade, following which the blockade was withdrawn. ASI Prasad Chandra Khatua said, "The road has been cleared for traffic and an investigation is underway."

Meanwhile, sources said that the NH-20, and other roads, in Keonjhar district has become death a trap. Accidents occur almost on a daily basis, resulting in loss of lives and properties while many are injured and maimed.

As a result, commuting on the highway has become unsafe and the villagers living on the roadside are living in perpetual fear. As hundreds of heavy vehicles ply on this route every day to transport minerals, the condition of the road is getting worse day by day. Moreover, rash driving by some vehicles is contributing to accidents almost on a daily basis, sources added.

Jackfruit cafes coming up in Keonjhar

Women to receive skill training under Odisha Jackfruit Mission (OJM)

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 6: The Odisha Jackfruit Mission (OJM) has taken root in Keonjhar district as plans are afoot to open 'jackfruit cafes' with an aim to help tribal communities and farmers make better use of the crop and prevent distress sale.

With the rising demand for jackfruit, especially the raw variety, the state Horticulture department has launched an ambitious initiative to promote jackfruit-based food production.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi officially inaugurated the mission during a recent visit to Keonjhar. Under the initiative, a jackfruit processing unit funded by the department has been established in Kuarn village under Banspal block



at a cost of ₹3.29 crore.

To run the unit efficiently, Hingula Farmer Producer Company from Brahmagiri in Puri district signed an agreement with the district administration in Keonjhar Wednesday. The company will provide training to local women's groups in food processing and help them market the products.

Various jackfruit-based items

such as chips, jams, pickles, flour, and even fermented drinks will be prepared. The district will soon see the opening of kiosk-style 'Jackfruit Cafes' modelled after 'Millet Cafes' in various urban areas and towns, where snacks like jackfruit upma and fast food variants will be available, said Soumendra Narayan Panigrahi, Deputy Director of district Horti-

culture department said.

He added that other jackfruit products, including beverages and sweets, are in the pipeline. The soil and climate of Keonjhar district are highly favourable for jackfruit cultivation, making it ideal for year-round farming. Farmers will also receive training to produce two harvests per year.

The mission is expected to create numerous employment opportunities while also offering local residents healthy and tasty food options. Future plans also include processing other fruits like mango, papaya, and guava, and producing items such as juices and pickles.

Jackfruit is grown in abundance in Banspal, Sadar Harichandanpur, Telkoi, Ghatagaon, Patana, and Joda blocks in the district along with other fruits. With increasing shipments of raw jackfruit to other states, the mission is poised to help farmers and forest dwellers get better value for their produce.





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SRI AUROBINDO



Economic World War

One American – a poet (TS Elliot) – wrote many years ago, “April is the cruellest month.” Another American – President Donald Trump – has now in a different context proved the poet right. For, after weeks of threats and backtracking, Trump has finally unveiled the details of the protectionist measures he intends to deploy to ‘Make America Wealthy Again,’ as stated in the title of the presentation he made 2 April in the White House Rose Garden. By implementing reciprocal tariffs, the US President claimed to want to correct years of unfair trade relations that have allowed other countries to “rip off” America. The claim by Trump of other countries taking undue advantage of America cannot be denied. However, his politics aimed at the rest of the world threatens to profoundly reshape international trade and commerce. While the vast majority of economists have contested the merits of his policy, Trump unabashedly declared 2 April the US’ “Liberation Day.” Despite the linguistic hyperbole his whole intent is to force US trade partners to either pay their dues or relocate their production to American soil. Unlike demonetization and other politically motivated economic steps seen by Indians in the last decade, Trump’s prescription favoring America may seem tough to the outside world now but will certainly bring in more jobs, opportunities and prosperity to the US. The man has been consistent for the past forty years on this subject.

A generalized minimum rate of 10 per cent on exports to the US is imposed on all, with additional tariffs added country by country depending on the size of their trade surplus. Chinese products will thus be hit with 34 per cent, those imported from the European Union (EU) at 20 per cent, the rate for Japan has been set at 24 per cent, while for India it is 26 per cent. Trump said that these new taxes could be added to those already existing.

This whole exercise is an attempt to demonstrate America’s might in a very open manner that has become associated with the style of Trumps governance. But, the new economic regime he is trying to impose on the world is problematic for three reasons. First, these tariff rates seem to be calculated in a haphazard manner. They were not only based on the tariff barriers implemented by the targeted countries, but also on other, more contentious criteria. Alleged “currency manipulation,” standards and regulations, or even certain taxes (such as VAT, in Europe), which have been accused of adversely affecting the US, were taken into account. The decision to force a trade turmoil on the rest of the world is itself a grave matter but Trump alone can demonstrate this attitude in the present day world.

The second problem stems from the climate of uncertainty that results from these power plays. Trump seeks to monopolise the right to adjust US tariffs based on trade partners’ willingness to comply with American demands. This system of one-sided bargaining does not guarantee good business. This is because industrialists and investors need certainty and stability before they make their decisions to pump in their money.

Finally, Trump’s cry of Liberation Day has the potential to throw the global economy into a recessionary spiral which many respected American economists seem to be parroting. Many of them claim that contrary to what Trump has claimed, the tariffs will not be paid by exporting countries but by American consumers, who could see prices rise. While predictions already show inflation on the rise, growth forecasts, financial markets and the dollar are trending downward.

The other side of the fallout of Trump’s economic muscle-flexing is that many countries will be forced to take retaliatory measures. The EU has indicated that it would respond, while China has already retaliated. What trajectory this retaliation will take depends on the way the affected countries can handle their own trade and commerce. It is impossible for them to make a common cause. The only thing that is clear is that Trump is pushing the world to unprecedented economic changes the globalized economy has ever seen. It may result in a more balanced and divided global economy which could compel countries like India to learn to fend for themselves.

WISDOM CORNER

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

Each day is a little life: every waking and rising a little birth, every fresh morning a little youth, every going to rest and sleep a little death.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

Die to everything of yesterday so that your mind is always fresh, always young, innocent, full of vigor and passion.

JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1724: Johann Sebastian Bach’s St. John Passion is premiered. The sacred oratorio is the oldest extant Passion by the German composer. The highly popular work is a dramatization of the final days of Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel of John.

1927: The first public demonstration of a one-way videophone occurred between Herbert Hoover, then U.S. secretary of commerce, in Washington, D.C., and officials of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT&T) in New York City.

1933: Some eight months before Prohibition was repealed, low-alcoholic beer became legal in the United States; the day subsequently was celebrated as National Beer Day.

1939: Italian dictator Benito Mussolini made Albania a protectorate of his country, installing Italy’s Victor Emmanuel III as king, while Albanian King Zog I went into exile.

1939: American director Francis Ford Coppola—whose films included the classics *The Godfather* (1972), *The Godfather, Part II* (1974), and *Apocalypse Now* (1979)—was born.

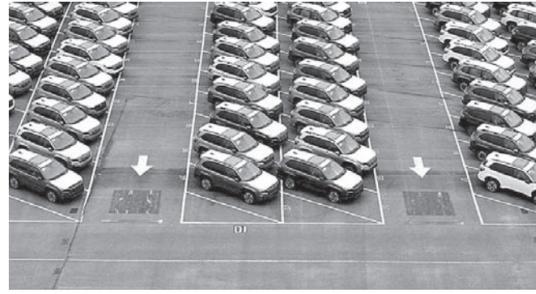
1947: American industrialist Henry Ford, who revolutionized factory production with his assembly-line methods and was the founder of the Ford Motor Company, died at age 83.

1948: The World Health Organization, a specialized agency of the UN, was formally established.

1963: Jack Nicklaus’s first Masters victory. American professional golfer Jack Nicklaus, a dominating figure in world golf from the 1960s to the ‘80s and the winner of 73 PGA tour events in his career, won the Masters Tournament at age 23 on this day in 1963.

FOCUS TARIFFS

ACCELERATING DECLINE



While Trump’s tariffs fly in the face of conventional economic wisdom – from Adam Smith and David Ricardo to John Maynard Keynes and Milton Friedman – his confidence may lead some to think there’s a hidden logic behind them



Kaushik Basu

INSTEAD OF CLINGING TO OUTDATED INDUSTRIES THROUGH PROTECTIONIST TRADE MEASURES, COUNTRIES SHOULD EMBRACE INNOVATION

On 26 March, President Donald Trump signed an executive order imposing a 25 per cent tariff on all cars and light-duty trucks imported into the United States. This measure took effect on 3 April – one day after the administration rolled out its “reciprocal tariffs” on US trading partners. Trump tried to reassure nervous Americans, promising that “our automobile business will flourish like it’s never flourished before.”

It won’t. While Trump’s tariffs fly in the face of conventional economic wisdom – from Adam Smith and David Ricardo to John Maynard Keynes and Milton Friedman – his confidence may lead some to think there’s a hidden logic behind them. Presumably, the tariff on cars and trucks aims to incentivise automakers to establish factories in the US.

But on closer inspection, it becomes clear that this rationale is deeply flawed. And while it will negatively affect many countries – especially Canada, Mexico, and Japan – its most devastating impact will be felt in the US itself.

Trump’s critics rightly point out that the tariff will raise US car prices, but that is just one of its many drawbacks. Consider, for example, that industries like automobiles (and semiconductors) have substantial fixed production costs. Given that a sudden tariff reduction after these sunk costs – such as acquiring land, building factories, and obtaining permits – have been incurred could lead to significant losses, investors would need to be assured that the tariffs will remain in place for at least 10-15 years. If the government could somehow signal to investors that the tariffs will remain in place for the foreseeable future, it is likely that new car factories will be

established in the US, increasing demand for labour.

But that may not be a positive development. Far from making American automobiles great again, the artificial boost in demand for traditional labour could harm the US economy’s long-term health. With the US market protected behind its tariff wall, domestic production would become increasingly costly, and countries with naturally lower labour costs, like China, India, Mexico, and Indonesia, would be able to produce cars at much lower prices, thereby outcompeting the US and gaining a stronger foothold in the global market.

Trump’s desperate attempt to bring back auto manufacturing contrasts sharply with how the US handled the decline of its textile industry. In the early nineteenth century, the US was a leader in textiles, with cotton and woolen mills operating at full capacity. The textile and garment sectors continued to thrive well after World War I, with North Carolina in the lead. But as the US grew wealthier

and labour costs increased, it gradually lost its comparative advantage and pivoted to sectors that required research and innovation – areas where it was well-positioned to lead. Today, the textile industry is dominated by countries like Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Turkey.

Had the US decided to impose heavy tariffs on imported textiles and clothing in the second half of the twentieth century to encourage domestic production, it might have remained a garment manufacturing hub. But this would have come at a steep cost: the US economy would not be where it is today. Instead, it would have large factories where workers toiled at labour-intensive jobs.

This is not to suggest that tariffs, when used strategically and sparingly, are not effective and perhaps even necessary in certain circumstances. But when they undermine a country’s competitive edge, as Trump’s tariffs undoubtedly will, they can only cause harm.

History offers valuable

lessons about the dangers of hyper-nationalism and protectionist trade policies. In the early twentieth century, Argentina was growing rapidly and was among the world’s richest countries, surpassing Germany and France. Some even predicted that it would overtake the US economically.

Everything changed in 1930, when José Félix Uriburu led a military coup and declared himself president. Within three years, he restricted immigration and nearly doubled tariffs. Meanwhile, the US was opening up its economy to both goods and people, investing in higher education, and conducting cutting-edge research. The American economy surged while Argentina’s stagnated, dashing any hopes of rivaling the US.

The takeaway is clear: instead of clinging to outdated industries through protectionist trade measures, countries should embrace innovation. Yet, while technological advances create economic opportunities, they also tend to reduce the demand for labour. The solution lies in redistributive taxation and profit-sharing to ensure that the benefits of growth are allocated equitably, rather than being hoarded by corporations and concentrated among billionaires.

To be sure, redistributive taxation is no easy feat. It must be carefully crafted to avoid discouraging innovation and distorting incentives. But it is far more desirable than Trump’s misguided policies, and in an era of rapid technological change, it is absolutely essential.

The writer, a former Chief Economist of the World Bank and Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University.

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SPECTRUM WORLD HEALTH DAY

An ailing system in need of overhaul

Indian healthcare scene presents multiple challenges on various counts: ignorance, infrastructure, manpower, patients’ affordability, and above all commercial stance of healthcare system at every level. The socio-cultural milieu we are in, for anyone staying hale & hearty, although a foremost pre-requisite for good living, is becoming too difficult by the day.

During times of epidemics or other health threats, local governments run awareness campaigns, issue advisories that are hardly taken in earnest. Gross ignorance persists about basics of health, hygiene and diseases in urban and rural areas. Most in the countryside do not distinguish between MBBS, MD and RMP degrees. The patient tells the attending doctor, the ‘red’ capsule you gave me is not as effective as the ‘green’ one you gave earlier, although the ingredients, even brand was same, only colour was changed. More pathetic than lack of knowledge about health & disease is unwillingness

to learn. Most of them own smartphone, but they seem to prefer its use elsewhere!

Thanks to government initiatives, the Ayushman Bharat scheme has benefited the underserved poor; the low patient-doctor ratio in the country, an issue till recent years has improved to near satisfactory level matching the WHO norm of 1 doctor per 1,000 people. Yet the fact remains that spread of doctors is not equitable, they are concentrated in cities and towns, and avoid rural postings. In rural and interior regions conditions are appalling. Majority of dispensaries are managed by non-qualified personnel like pharmacists who runs the show. The doctors, if posted, occasionally visit their workplace, and stay far off in the city with their family. Some years ago the pharmacists’ association of Uttarakhhand sought clarification from the state health department whether they can dispense the medications in their stock which they account for every year-end. Axiomatically, the question was too difficult,

hence no response.

Master practitioners of medicine have laid time-tested premises to follow, like: help the patient or at least do no harm; all diseases begins in the gut; all doctors treat, but a good doctor lets nature heal; warmth, sympathy, and understanding may outweigh the surgeon’s knife; a doctor’s mission is not just to add years to life but to add life to years; the best doctor gives the least medicines. In sharp contrast, these days, doctors focus on minting money. They earn many times more by referrals (read: commission) than consultation fees. You witness them saluting the patients, even young ones, and act more like a salesperson. Recall what happens when a patient in critical condition is brought to emergency of a hospital. After a cursory overview of symptoms what is assessed duly is the quantum of money that can be shelled out. The invariable query is about medical insurance; if not, total expenditure involved is conveyed with advice to deposit the same. Then, the

trail of diagnostic tests that were in many cases got done recently at the hospital of similar credibility! Financial capacity determines the line of treatment.

Patient is seen as consumer, to be extracted to fullest. Focus is on catapulting billing compromises with proper diagnosis enhancing chances of medical errors. Consequently, we witness phenomenal increase in litigations against doctors. Over 5.2 million cases demanding compensation for damages and injuries from doctors are currently pending in civil, criminal and consumer courts.

As mental health cases shall exceed other diseases in a decade in India and globally, and medical practices under scanner, nothing short of a paradigm shift to traditional Indian model may do. It already has time-tested, elaborate treatises on all aspects of health, well-being and peaceful living. It is time we espouse it.

The writer is a blogger. He writes on general, social and spiritual issues for major newspapers.



Harish Barthwal

THE SOCIO-CULTURAL MILIEU WE ARE IN, FOR ANYONE STAYING HALE & HEARTY IS BECOMING TOO DIFFICULT BY THE DAY

Prohibition no solution

Sir, This refers to “Dry Bihar recorded 190 hooch deaths in last 9 years: Official,” *Orissa POST*, Apr il5. Until now, according to official estimates, 190 people have died in a tragically commonplace “hooch tragedy” in dry Bihar. The champion of prohibition in the state, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, has not expressed sympathy or concern, only an unbecoming peevishness. The fact is that from 2016, when prohibition was imposed in Bihar, there have been over 200 hooch-related deaths in the state. Time and again, other state governments have experimented with prohibition. Nitish Kumar, it seems, has not learnt the lessons from their failures – or his own. Alcohol abuse does indeed have terrible social consequences. It is also undeniable that it is women, including and especially from among the poor and marginalised sections, who often bear the brunt of alcoholism in the family. But the fact remains that there is mounting evidence that prohibition is not the solution to alcoholism. Several states experimented with it in the past. In each case, the policy has been withdrawn because it pushes consumption underground, places an undue burden on the law and order machinery, increases criminalisation, and depletes revenues. The ban in Bihar has caused reported huge losses of revenue to the government, while treating citizens as incapable of making responsible choices.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

A pertinent question

Sir, This refers to “Cash row judge sworn-in secretly,” *Orissa POST*, April 6. I am at a loss how can a judge of questionable integrity be allowed to take oath as high court judge when prima facie case of holding unaccounted money was proved against him. How can the government at the Centre clear Varma’s name pending the final outcome of the probe? The pertinent question may arise whether the apex court is forced by vested interests to cover up the alleged corruption. The protests by lawyers should continue to thwart all attempts to dilute the honesty and integrity of judges.

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa Post are most welcome to contribute letters (100 words), articles and columns (between 600-1000 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

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



UP BRACES FOR HEATWAVE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 6: A punishing summer is in store for Uttar Pradesh, with prolonged periods of above normal temperature and intense heat waves predicted from April to June this year.

The state's Bundelkhand region, which covers seven districts of Jhansi and Chitrakootdham division, will bear the brunt of the heatwaves, posing significant risks to both human and animal health, weather officials said.

"During these months, above-normal maximum temperatures are expected across Uttar Pradesh. The forecast indicates that daytime temperatures will consistently exceed the 40-degree Celsius mark," Atul Kumar Singh, a MeT official here, said.

Adding to the concern, night time temperatures are also projected to remain unusually high. "The minimum temperatures recorded during night time are also expected to remain above normal," Singh said.

The Bundelkhand region is anticipated to be the epicentre of this extreme heat, he added.

The first week of April has already provided a stark preview of the impending heat, with daytime temperatures surging. "As per the MeT depart-



ment, the day temperature in Kanpur, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Fatehpur, Amethi, Ghazipur, Sultanpur, and Hamirpur have been crossing the 40-degree mark since last week. Saturday, Prayagraj recorded a maximum temperature of 41.6 degrees Celsius, 4.2 degrees above the seasonal average," MeT officials said.

The forecast predicts that maximum daytime temperature will frequently exceed 35 degrees Celsius, consistently bordering 40 degrees, and is likely to surpass 45 degrees in some areas.

Night time temperatures are expected to remain in the range of 35 to 40 degrees Celsius.

"The possibility of rain that could provide any relief during these days over Uttar Pradesh remains below normal in the months of April, May and June," Singh added.

Furthermore, an above-normal number of heatwave days are expected across the state.

"During April 2025, an above-normal number of heatwave days are likely over most parts of Uttar Pradesh," the forecast stated.

Medical professionals emphasise that heat waves pose a greater health risk than high temperatures alone.

"High temperatures cause general discomfort, which can be managed by staying in the

shade and consuming ample water. However, heat wave exposure disrupts the body's natural temperature regulation, leading to severe dehydration and potential health complications," explained Dr Shantanu Mishra, a Lucknow-based general practitioner.

In response to the MeT department's forecast, the state government has directed district administrations to implement mitigation measures.

"District administrations have been alerted to the expected adverse hot weather and instructed to take measures to reduce its impact. Hospitals in the districts have also been asked to prepare for a surge in heat-related illnesses," Uttar Pradesh Relief Commissioner Bhanu Chandra Goswami said.

The Animal Husbandry department is also taking proactive steps to protect livestock.

"Cattle shelters across the state have been instructed to provide shaded areas and ample water for animals. Veterinary departments have been placed on high alert to assist farmers in rural areas whose livestock may be affected by the extreme conditions," Animal Husbandry Minister Dharmpal Singh said.

Navy provides medical aid to Pakistani crew

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 6: An Indian Navy warship operating in the Central Arabian Sea provided urgent critical medical assistance to a Pakistani crew member on a fishing vessel off the Oman coast, the Navy said Sunday.

INS Trikand, a mission-deployed stealth frigate of the Indian Navy, Friday intercepted a distress call from an Iranian dhow Al Omeedi, operating approximately 350 nautical miles east of the Oman coast.

The Navy, in a release, said upon investigation, it was found that a crew member of the dhow had sustained severe injuries to his fingers while working on the engine and was in critical condition and that he had been transferred to another dhow, FV Abdul Rehman Hanzia, which was en route to Iran.

"Trikand immediately altered her course to provide medical assistance to the injured crew member. The crew of FV Abdul Rehman Hanzia consisted of 11 Pakistani (nine Baloch and two Sindhi) and five Iranian personnel. The injured



Pakistani (Baloch) national had suffered multiple fractures and severe hand injuries, resulting in heavy blood loss," the Navy said.

The medical officer of INS Trikand, along with a team comprising MARCOS (Marine Commandos) and the ship's boarding team, boarded the vessel to administer aid, it said.

After administering local anaesthesia, the ship's medical team performed suturing and splinting on the injured fingers, and the surgical procedure, which lasted for over

three hours, was completed, it said.

Bleeding was controlled in time, thereby preventing potential permanent loss of the injured fingers due to gangrene, the Navy said.

"Additionally, medical supplies, including antibiotics, were provided to the vessel to ensure the crew's well-being until they reached Iran. The entire crew expressed their deep gratitude to the Indian Navy for the timely assistance in saving their crewmate's life," the Navy said.

Phool Bangla festival to begin April 8



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mathura (UP), April 6: The Phool Bangla festival at Mathura's Banke Bihari temple will start from April 8 and conclude July 24, a temple official said Sunday.

He said the 108-day festival will start from Ekadasi of the Chaitra month and continue till the Amavasya of Savan month.

Tight security arrangements are already in place outside the temple under the supervision of a magistrate, said Mathura District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh.

According to Rajbhog Sevaadhikari Gyanendra

The flowers used in decoration of Banke Bihari temple are sent to Ashray Sadan, a home for widows where they are segregated and processed to make incense sticks

Kishore Goswami, the Phool Bangla festival involves decorating the temple with flowers primarily "to give the deity some relief from scorching heat".

"The temple is decorated with thousands of fragrant and decorative flowers to give the deity relief from hot weather. Bela, mogra, rose, chameli, carnation, marigold, lily, lotus and orchids are primarily used, along with other flowers. These flowers are sourced from local vendors as well as from Ajmer, Kanpur and Kannauj. Aromatic flowers are being brought from Delhi. Rose and mogra are Banke Bihari's favourite flowers," he said.

Goswami said earlier the floral offering to the main deity was allowed only in the evenings. But following a Supreme Court order in July 2016, pilgrims were allowed during the morning hours as well.

Talking about the tradition of the festival, he said Paramhans Goswami started it by using vetiver khus curtains and flowers to relieve Thakur Banke Bihari from heat.

"Only diyas (earthen lamps) were used inside the temple then. The heat from these lamps and temple stones made things worse. The flower decoration was started to make things better," he explained, adding that since then, the temple has been decorated with flowers twice every day.



Monks stage a protest demanding the repeal of the Bodhi Gaya Temple Act, 1949 (BGTA), under which the temple is currently governed, in Thane, Maharashtra, Sunday

Hindus in Europe, US mull opening 'Ram Naam Bank'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 6: Indian origin Hindus living in Europe and US are mulling opening overseas chapters of Prayagraj-based 'Ram Naam Bank' in their countries.

On the occasion of Ram Navami Sunday, the idea of opening a Ram Naam Bank was discussed among the devotees in Sweden. Nityanand Sharma, an IT Solution Architect, who works for a global furniture retailer in Sweden's Almhult and manages the affairs of a local temple there, said people were enamoured by the idea of a bank that propagates the name of Lord Ram.

"The name of Lord Ram is powerful and effective enough to dispel doubts, fears and anxiety. That is why the concept propagated by Prayagraj-based Ram Naam Bank, of embracing the divine presence by writing his name 108 times a day in a booklet has many takers globally," he said.

"Apart from Almhult, we are exploring this idea with our other friends in Europe. If all goes well, 'Ram Naam Bank' will have a presence in many places across Europe," he told PTI.

The 'Ram Naam Bank' in Prayagraj is a "spiritual bank" where devotees deposit booklets after writing Lord Ram at least 108 times daily.

"The uniqueness of the bank lies in the fact that its only 'currency' is Lord Ram," said Ashutosh Varshney, who manages the Ram Naam Bank's affairs in Prayagraj.

He said the bank was originally started by his ancestors in the 1870s. Apart from Prayagraj, such 'Ram Naam Banks' have since also come up in many parts of Uttar Pradesh, including the state capital Lucknow where a road crossing is also named after the bank. In Varanasi, a Ram Ramapati Bank is operating on the same concept.

"Earlier too, I wanted to write Lord Ram's name but was unsure about how to go about it. Now, Ram Naam Bank has provided an answer and surely we look forward to having a chapter of the bank out of India," said Nityanand Sharma.

Henk J Keilman, who hails from the Netherlands, is another foreigner who is interested in propagating the concept of 'Ram Naam Bank'.

A resident of Baarn, and a follower of Vaishnav tradition of Bhakti Yog, Keilman told PTI, "According to Vaishnav tradition of Bhakti Yog, God has many names. Ram is one of them. So the idea of a Ram Bank, where you can deposit copies filled with the Lord's name and generate good karma, is a very good idea."

7000 Maha villages abolish widow discrimination rituals

The campaign gained momentum after Herwad in Kolhapur district became the first village in the country to ban customs associated with widowhood in 2022 to maintain women's right to live with dignity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 6: A tide of social change has gradually risen in Maharashtra's rural belt, with more than 7,000 villages declaring that they have abolished customs and rituals which distress widows and discriminate against them.

Of the 27,000 gram panchayats in Maharashtra, 7,683 villages have held gram sabhas and announced they have gotten rid of customs that discriminated against widows, activist Pramod Zinjade, who has been spearheading the campaign to eradicate evil customs related to widows, told PTI.

The campaign gained momentum after Herwad in Kolhapur district became the first village in the country to ban customs associated with widowhood in 2022 to maintain women's right to live with dignity.

The village passed a resolution May 4, 2022, banning the removal of 'mangalsutra' (sacred necklace worn by married women) and toe rings of a widow, wiping her sindoor (vermillion) and breaking her bangles. Over the years, several rural pockets have taken a leaf out of Herwad's book by including widows in Sarvajani Ganapati

pujas, haldi-kumkum events and flag-hoisting ceremonies.

Taking cognisance of the challenges faced by widows in the country, the National Human Rights Commission issued an advisory last year and asked the states and the Union Territories to improve the quality of life of these women and protect their dignity.

Talking to PTI, Herwad's former sarpanch Surgonda Patil said the custom of breaking bangles and removing mangalsutra and toe rings has almost stopped.

"Earlier, we would visit homes where deaths occurred to check if these customs were followed. But now, people are more aware," he said.

He further said a few widows in the village have remarried, and they are included in social and religious gatherings.

Herwad resident Vaishali Patil, who lost her husband 12 years ago, said, "Widows are being treated with dignity and respect. People have realised we are humans. The mindset, however, has to change, and age-old customs cannot be stopped overnight."

She said convincing the elders in families to let go of certain rituals is hard and is still a work in progress.



Pranjal Wagh, former sarpanch of Kadoli village in Nagpur district, said she started the practice of inviting widows for haldi-kumkum programmes much before the Herwad gram sabha's resolution.

"When I was the sarpanch from 2017-22, widows didn't go out and socialise. I would invite all women for haldi-kumkum events and offer gifts to widows, despite objections," she said.

The Kadoli gram sabha also passed a resolution to ban evil customs related to widows, but it is not followed strictly, Wagh said, adding that she invites 1,000 women for haldi-kumkum every year. Anil Shirsat, sarpanch of Musalgaon in Nashik district, said his village was 90

per cent literate and doesn't follow evil practices against widows.

"We don't have the custom of removing mangalsutra, wiping sindoor and other rituals. For the last three years, we have been using 15 per cent of funds from the gram panchayat to help five needy widows every year," he said.

He said a resolution to empower widows will be passed in the next gram sabha.

"We will ask self-help groups to include widows and ensure their economic empowerment," he said. Sanjay Pawar, a member of the Dhondvir Nagar village panchayat in Nashik district, said their gram sabha had resolved to ensure widows live with dignity.

"We ensure they get pensions and homes under different government schemes. The gram panchayat takes care to resolve their problems," he said.

Social activist Lalit Babar, who works in the Kolhapur, Sangli and Solapur districts, said 76 gram panchayats in Sangla took an oath not to follow the age-old discriminatory customs related to widows.

"We have roped in block development officers and integrated child development services (ICDS) workers. When we get information about a man's death, we visit the home to check if his wife has been forced to perform any of the rituals," Babar said.

He said no grieving woman takes part in such rituals willingly and is often forced to do it.

"When we tell people that these customs are banned, they mostly listen. But 10 to 20 per cent still don't comply," he said. The activist said a draft law has been submitted to the government to ban customs related to widows, but only a law is not enough.

"We need a campaign to create awareness. ASHA and anganwadi workers can be of great help in the awareness campaign," he said.

It is a flawed extension of the doctrine of judicial independence to suggest that in case the committee for appointment of judges has a government nominee or an executive representative on it, the independence of the jurisdiction would be impacted

ASHWANI KUMAR | FORMER UNION LAW MINISTER

GOVT PLANS TO TRAIN FRONTLINE WORKERS

The Union Health Ministry is planning to roll out capacity building activities for frontline workers involved in administration of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination, sources said. Union minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said that the government will encourage vaccination of girls in the age group of 9-14 years to prevent cervical cancer



of the day quote

Agniveers' will be provided 20 per cent reservation in the police recruitment in the state

NAYAB SINGH SAINI | CHIEF MINISTER, HARYANA



The life and ideals of Lord Ram teach us to uphold dignity and discipline, and to remain calm in both favourable and adverse circumstances. Be it personal or family life, public or national life, or social and national relationships, Lord Ram's life offers a guiding path in all spheres

YOGI ADITYANATH | CHIEF MINISTER, UTTAR PRADESH



This is for the welfare of Muslim brothers and sisters. If it (amendments) is used properly, then the entire Waqf Board can be used for the welfare of poor Muslim brothers and sisters

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | UNION MINISTER



Pilot slams govt over US tariffs

The government was caught napping and it seems to be under US pressure to sacrifice Indian interests, Congress general secretary alleged



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: In a scathing attack on the government over the imposition of tariffs by the US, Congress general secretary Sachin Pilot Sunday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi should have worked out a constructive solution during his last America visit rather than just indulging in "photo ops" and exchanging gifts.

He said that at a time when the world is responding to the imposition of reciprocal tariffs by the US, the Indian government is merely buying time and leaving everything to fate.

In an interview with PTI, the former minister for Corporate Affairs said the Indian government is accepting what has been given out and has not even offered a response.

"I would imagine, when the

PM was in Washington (in February) and met the president of the US, instead of just photo ops and exchanging gifts, something more constructive should have come out of it," Pilot said.

"If our relations are as strong as the two leaders claim, then we would not have been slapped with these steep tariffs. Clearly, our exports will be severely hit, manufacturing was in any way on a downside, MSMEs are in for a shock... The economy will face severe stress due to resulting layoffs and job losses but unfortunately, we have not had an adequate response

or even an indication of how to navigate this situation," he said.

The government was caught napping and it seems to be under US pressure to sacrifice Indian interests, he alleged.

Pilot pointed out that many European countries have responded strongly and in fact, China will legally take action against the US in the WTO.

While European countries have spoken of similar tariffs, Canada and Mexico have also indicated reciprocal imposition of higher counter-tariffs but "we have not responded yet", Pilot said.

"So one does not know what the government intends to do but one thing is clear that these trade wars are going to pose a huge problem whether it is inflation, manufacturing, productivity, or transfer of technology—all will be impacted but despite Parliament being in session, we have not seen an adequate response or assurance from the Indian government on how it will protect Indian interests. And this silence is adding to the uncertainty," the Congress leader said.

Calling for a proper strategy to deal with the issue, Pilot said if the tariff proposal was in the pipeline, the Indian government should have communicated and dealt with it in a much more strategic manner than it has.

"We are just basically accepting what has been given out and while the whole world is reacting, we are yet to respond," he said.

Noting that India is now a more interconnected economy around the world, he said the US move will have an impact on India especially at a time when there is "record unemployment" since Independence.

Dallewal ends hunger strike after 130 days



The announcement came a day after Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Union Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Singh Bittu appealed to him to end his fast-unto-death

"You all have said (to me) to end the fast-unto-death. For me 'sangat' (people) is 'rabb da roop' (a form of God). I am indebted to you for looking after the agitation the way I had said. I respect your sentiments," said Dallewal, who addressed the gathering from a stretcher.

"The 'morcha' (agitation) continues. Even today I do not want to end the indefinite fast but you have asked me time and again (to end fast) and I respect it.

"But I want to ask you and get an assurance that we will have to put up a stronger 'morcha'. The fight is on. The MSP (guarantee) has to be taken and a bigger 'morcha' has to be put up. Do you agree on holding a bigger 'morcha,'" he asked the gathering.

"The government is alert and it knows farmers can fight. The way you took care of the 'morcha', the government has seen it," he said.

He asked the farmers' gathering to raise their hands in a show of support for the agitation.

"Dear friends, your order is like a direction of God," said Dallewal who was visibly emotional.

"It is not my wish but with a heavy heart, I accept your order," said Dallewal with folded hands as the the grain market reverberated with slogans of 'Kisan Mazdoor Ekta Zindabad' and 'Sardar Jagjit Singh Dallewal Zindabad'.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 6: Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal Sunday ended his hunger strike which he had started November 26 last year to press for various demands of agitating farmers including a legal guarantee on the minimum support price for crops.

The announcement came a day after Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Union Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Singh Bittu appealed to him to end his fast-unto-death.

Dallewal announced that he was ending his indefinite fast at a 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' organised at the grain market in Sirhind in Fatehgarh Sahib district of Punjab.

At the same time, he asserted that their fight for the legal guarantee on MSP for crops and other demands continues.

Farmer leader Dallewal asserted that their fight for the legal guarantee on MSP for crops and other demands continues

SHORT TAKES

Over 50 take ill from wedding food

Gondia: More than 50 people, including children, took ill and some of them were hospitalised after consuming food at a wedding in a village in Maharashtra's Gondia district, an official said Sunday. The affected persons are undergoing treatment at the rural hospital in Goregaon tehsil, the primary health centre and a private hospital in Gondia, the official said. He said the affected persons had consumed food at a wedding in Babai village Saturday.

Woman tied to pole, thrashed in Patiala

Chandigarh: A woman was tied to a pole and thrashed by the members of a family in Punjab's Patiala district after her son allegedly took away their daughter-in-law by luring her, police Sunday said. A case has been registered in connection with the matter and two persons have been arrested, they said. Punjab State Women Commission has directed the senior superintendent of police (SSP) of Patiala to submit an action-taken report by April 7 in the matter. The incident took place at Jansuha village in Patiala April 4 and the video of the incident went viral on social media.

Woman, 2-year-old son killed in fire

Ahmedabad: A woman and her two-year-old son were charred to death after a fire broke out at a bungalow in Ahmedabad city Sunday, officials said. Air-conditioning equipment stored in the single-storey bungalow in Gyanda residential society caused the blaze to spread rapidly, they said. "Saraswati Meghani (33) and her two-year-old son Soumya died in the fire," Inspector RM Patel of Vasna police station said. He said the blaze caused minor damage to a neighbouring house and spread to four four-wheelers parked outside the premises.

Soldier shoots self at Army camp in J&K

Jammu: A soldier allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself with his service rifle at an Army camp in Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir in the early hours of Sunday, officials said. Sepoy Vijay Kumar, posted with 26 Rashtriya Rifles, was on sentry duty when he shot himself at Dharmund military hospital at 3.40 am, the officials said. The reason behind his extreme step was not known immediately.



Participants ride a bullock cart during a state-level race, at Kurubarahalli near Chikmagalur, Sunday. PTI PHOTO

Swami Ramdev celebrates 31st Sannyas day with Navratri Yajna, Kanya Pujan



Haridwar, April 6: On the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami, Swami Ramdevji Maharaj celebrated his 31st Sannyas (renunciation) day at the Patanjali Yogpeeth auditorium in Haridwar, including a special Navratri Yajna (sacrificial fire ritual) and Kanya Pujan (worship of young girls). The ceremony was graced by Acharya Balkrishna, who lauded Swami Ramdevji's unwavering dedication to preserving and promoting India's rich cultural and spiritual heritage.

During the event, six scholars and one female devotee embraced Brahmacharya (celibacy) by receiving initiation under Swami Ramdevji's guidance. The proceedings underscored the significance of traditional rituals in fostering community bonding and spiritual growth.

In his address, Swami Ramdevji reflected on his 31-year journey in sannyas, emphasizing the profound impact of yoga and spiritual practices on personal and national well-being. He reiterated his commitment to integrating India's ancient traditions with contemporary practices, aiming to establish a harmonious blend that addresses both current and future challenges. The event also featured the release of scholarly works, including "Vedo Ki Shiksha" (Teachings of the Vedas), highlighting the organization's dedication to promoting spiritual and cultural education. Acharya Balkrishna elaborated on the importance of connecting ancient wisdom with modern scientific understanding, reinforcing the organization's mission to make India a spiritual superpower by 2050.

The day concluded with a grand feast for attendees, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose among participants. This celebration not only marked a personal milestone for Swami Ramdevji but also served as a testament to the enduring strength of India's spiritual and cultural traditions.

VIDEO OF CHEETAHS DRINKING WATER

KNP begins inquiry over staff indiscipline, violation of norms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, April 6: Authorities in Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park have initiated disciplinary action after a video showing a man offering water to a cheetah and her cubs went viral on social media.

In this incident, field staff violated the instructions and have shown indiscipline. Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (APCCF) Uttam Kumar Sharma said in a statement Sunday.

"Further, a video was made and shared in the media disregarding every discipline and instructions in this regard. Action is being taken against the concerned staff," Sharma added.

KNP is located in Sheopur district, some 420 kilometres from Bhopal.

Sharing details about the video, Sharma said cheetah Jwala and her four cubs were moving in the fields close to human habitation in Agra range near the boundary of KNP.

"The monitoring team, in general, has been instructed to try to deviate/lure the cheetah back inside the forest whenever such a situation arises so as not to create human-cheetah conflict. Whenever a cheetah goes into agriculture fields or



close to human habitation, additional staff is called from the concerned range. In this case too, additional field staff from range Agra was called," the APCCF said.

Since cheetah Jwala and her four cubs were continuously moving in the open agriculture fields in the sun and going towards human habitation, water was offered to lure them back towards the forest, he said.

"One of the drivers (a daily wager) of the vehicle hired for the duties of forest department in range Agra, Kuno WLD, gave water in a steel bowl to Jwala and her four cubs. There are clear instructions to move away from cheetahs as per training given to the monitoring team to

handle cheetahs in close proximity. Only authorised persons can go in close proximity to cheetahs to perform a specific task," Sharma said.

In the clip of about 40 seconds, a man is seen pouring water from a can into a pan, following which five cheetahs sitting in the shade nearby walk up to the utensil and start drinking water.

The man initially appears hesitant to venture close to the cheetahs, but those behind him, including the person shooting the video, urge him to let the big cats drink water.

The man then pours water into a pan and sits on his haunches near the cheetahs for some time.

NCRTC introduces new feature in Namu Bharat App for seamless commute

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: The NCRTC has introduced a new feature called the Journey Planner in the Namu Bharat App to make travel more convenient for commuters, a statement issued Sunday said.

This feature allows users to plan their complete journey across the Namu Bharat and Metro networks, choose the most suitable travel route and complete booking and payment on a single digital platform, the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) said in a statement. The Journey Planner feature enables commuters to plan their entire trip within the app itself. It suggests efficient routes between the selected start and end stations, offering details like the fastest travel options, estimated journey time and recommended interchanges, the statement said.

This includes suggestions across Namu Bharat, Delhi Metro and first and last-mile connectivity options, it stated.

It also has the feature to book tickets for both Namu Bharat and Delhi Metro through one platform and commuters no longer need to switch between different apps for separate bookings, the statement read.

The feature reduces the need for separate bookings, minimizes waiting time and improves the overall commuting experience with intelligent route planning, the NCRTC said.



In GST in 24-25, we have collected Rs 4,808 crore more than the preceding year, which shows 11.43% growth. This is 2 per cent more than the national level (9.44 per cent), and is demonstrative of our increasing internal financial strength

RAHUL ON VISIT TO BIHAR MONDAY

Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi will visit Bihar Monday to take part in a march in Begusarai, besides addressing two functions in Patna, state Congress president Rajesh Kumar said



MYANMAR QUAKE

India sends more humanitarian aid in C-17 aircraft

New Delhi, April 6: India Sunday sent 31 tonnes of humanitarian aid, including replenishment stores for an Indian army field hospital unit deployed in Myanmar, to augment New Delhi's efforts to provide succour to the quake-hit neighbouring country. The aid was sent in a C-17 Globemaster heavy-lift aircraft.

It took off from the Hindon air force station in Ghaziabad early Sunday, a senior official said. "#OperationBrahma@IAF_MCC C-17 plane departs for Mandalay with 31 tons of humanitarian aid, including replenishment stores for the Indian army field hospital unit," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar posted on X and also shared a few photos.

A 7.7-magnitude earthquake jolted Myanmar last week, with the toll rising to over 3,000 even as rescuers continue to search through the rubble for signs of life. India mounted its relief mission named 'Operation Brahma' as a swift response to the devastation caused by the earthquake that hit Myanmar as well as Thailand March 28. The field hospital, under 'Operation Brahma', continues its humanitarian mission in Myanmar as the local government and its agencies also soldiered on with their efforts in relief and rescue work.

Prez Murmu embarks on state visit to Portugal, Slovakia

New Delhi, April 6: President Droupadi Murmu set off on a state visit to Portugal and the Slovak Republic Sunday, marking the first such visit in nearly three decades.

Her tour comes at a time of significant global economic change, with trade tariffs recently imposed by the United States reshaping international commerce and India's growing engagement with Europe. In February, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and the College of Commissioners visited India. New Delhi has expressed hope of finalising the India-EU free trade agreement this year.

In a tweet on X, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said, "President Droupadi Murmu embarks on state visits to Portugal and the Slovak Republic. These are the first state visits to either country by the President of India in more than 25 years. The visits will further expand India's multi-faceted engagement with two important EU partners." Murmu's two-day "landmark" visit to Portugal, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between New Delhi and Lisbon, comes 27 years after an Indian president last visited the nation.

CENTRE'S STAND ON WAQF BOARDS

We don't want control, just lawful use: Nadda

Addressing an event organised at the BJP headquarters here to mark the party's 46th foundation day, Nadda said governments in Turkey and many other Muslim countries have taken the Waqf properties under their control



ensure that those managing it operate within the bounds of law and adhere to established rules. The properties and funds of the Waqf Board should be dedicated to promoting education, providing healthcare and employment opportunities for the Muslim community," the BJP chief said.

Before the address, Nadda hoisted the BJP flag at the party headquarters.

Several party leaders, including MPs and Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, were present.

Revisiting the BJP's political journey that began with the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in 1951, Nadda said today it has become the world's biggest political party and is in power in several states because it never deviated from its ideological foundation for votes, unlike the Congress which suffered a decline due to its 'ideological dilution'.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: The Centre does not want to control Waqf Boards but ensure that they operate within the bounds of law so that their assets are used in promotion of education, healthcare and employment for the Muslim community, BJP president JP Nadda said Sunday.

Addressing an event organised at the BJP headquarters here to mark the party's 46th foundation day, Nadda said governments in Turkey and many other Muslim countries have taken the Waqf properties under their control.

"We are only asking those operating (the Waqf Boards) to do it as per rules," he said.

"We do not seek to control the Waqf Board. Our goal is to

Stalin calls on PM Modi to 'allay fears over delimitation'

Modi should also ensure that a resolution is passed in the Parliament to make sure the rights of Tamil Nadu are not curbed, Chief Minister said



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Udhagamandalam (Tamil Nadu), April 6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi should allay the fears of people of Tamil Nadu surrounding the proposed delimitation exercise, Chief Minister MK Stalin said here Sunday.

Modi should also ensure that a resolution is passed in the Parliament to make sure the rights of Tamil Nadu are not curbed, he said at an official event here.

Stalin, after inaugurating a slew of projects and announcing new schemes to the popular tourist spot here, said he has sought an appointment with the Prime Minister to present the memorandum on the concerns surrounding the proposed delimitation.

"We have sought an appointment to present the memorandum on the delimitation... Since I am taking part in this government function I have conveyed to the PM about my inability to take part in his meeting and deputed our Ministers Thangam Thennarasu and Raja Kannappan. Through this meeting and through you, I hereby seek the Prime Minister to allay the fears of delimitation," Stalin said while addressing the gathering.

He was referring to Modi's visit to Tamil Nadu's Rameswaram Sunday where the PM inaugurated the new Pamban bridge.

"You (Modi) should also ensure that a resolution in this regard is passed in the Parliament. This (delimitation) not only leads to a reduction of Parliamentary seats, it is our right to ask and at the same time, it is also a cause of worry about our future," she said.

"Including Puduchery there would be 40 Parliamentary seats. But the ruling BJP government is trying to shrink our voices through delimitation."

Stalin said a Joint Action Committee meeting on fair delimitation was conducted March 22 in Chennai and saw the participation of Chief Ministers, Deputy Chief Minister and prominent leaders representing various political ideologies across India.

In his brief address to the gathering, Stalin emphasized that Prime Minister Modi must provide a clear guarantee that Tamil Nadu, along with other states that have effectively managed population growth, will not be penalized in the upcoming delimitation process.

"Their (Tamil Nadu's) share of parliamentary seats in percentage terms will remain untouched. He should make this promise publicly, allay the fears in the minds of the people of Tamil Nadu and follow it up with a constitutional amendment in Parliament. This is the only way to ensure a fair delimitation," Stalin said.

Give timeline for statehood restoration to J&K: Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 6: Jammu and Kashmir unit of Congress Sunday sought a timeline from the Union Home Minister Amit Shah for the restoration of statehood to the Union Territory.

The party also asked Shah, who will reach Jammu and Kashmir this evening on a three-day visit, to explain the alleged "utter failure" of his ministry to contain the spread of terrorist activities.

"The Home Minister should give a timeline during his visit for the restoration of statehood to J&K. The people want the statehood restoration at the earliest," Pradesh Congress Committee chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma said.

Asserting that his party has been pressing for restoration of statehood as per the repeated commitments by the centre government, Sharma said that "the dual system of governance under the Union Territory

is harmful to the interests of common people and is causing political unrest in J&K".

Describing the overall security situation in Jammu region as "grim", the Congress leader asked the Home Minister to explain alleged "utter failure" of his ministry to contain the spread of terrorist activities in the peaceful region in recent years.

Referring to the growing concern over the worsening security situation in various

parts of Jammu region, he said the UT is under direct control of the Home ministry since 2019.

"The terrorism was almost wiped out in the Jammu region by the previous governments. The killing of seven minority community members in Dangri (Rajouri) in January 2023 was followed by several sensational attacks on Army and other security forces in different parts of the region, leading to numerous casualties," he said.

Sharma said when the BJP was in opposition, they used to target Congress-led UPA government headed by Manmohan Singh for the cross border infiltration and terror incidents so it is now the saffron party's turn to answer to the nation why it failed to check terrorism for the last 11 years of its rule even as Congress "does not play politics on the issue of terrorism and is fully behind the army and security forces to eliminate the menace".

Ram Navami celebrated across country with large processions

Security heightened in several states, particularly in communally sensitive regions, as large rallies were organized by political groups, including BJP and TMC in West Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ayodhya/Kolkata/Rameswaram, April 6: People thronged temples and participated in colourful processions as Ram Navami was celebrated across the country Sunday, amid tight security in communally sensitive areas in several states including West Bengal, where BJP and TMC took out scores of rallies giving a political hue to the festival.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered prayers at the Ramanathaswamy temple in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu, and greeted the nation on this auspicious day. In a post on X, Modi shared his divine experience of seeing the Ram Setu during

his flight from Sri Lanka to India, coinciding with the Surya Tilak in Ayodhya. He described Lord Ram as a unifying force for the nation.

In Ayodhya, the Ram Temple witnessed a heavy influx of devotees who gathered to observe the Surya Tilak, where sun rays converged on the forehead of the Balak Shri Ram Lalla idol. Processions were held across the country, with devotees chanting 'Jai Shri Ram,' carrying saffron flags, and depicting scenes from the Ramayana in their floats. These celebrations were especially grand in cities like Varanasi, Lucknow, and Ranchi, where authorities ensured tight security to maintain peace.



West Bengal saw around 2,500 Ram Navami rallies, turning the religious event into a political battleground. BJP and TMC leaders participated in

various processions, with BJP leaders like Suwendu Adhikari laying the foundation for a Ram temple in Nandigram, and MP Sukanta Majumdar attending

rallies in Howrah. The state government deployed over 6,000 police personnel, along with drones and CCTV surveillance, to prevent violence after intelligence reports warned of potential disturbances. In Malda, Muslim residents showed their respect by showering flower petals on the passing processions, a gesture symbolizing unity in diversity.

In Delhi, Chief Minister Rekha Gupta attended a Ram Navami procession in the Khayala area, making a political statement about saffron's significance as a symbol of prosperity and well-being. She expressed that saffron represents the soil and the city's progress. Meanwhile, in Uttar Pradesh,

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath led prayers at the Gorakhnath Temple and emphasized gender equality, urging people to treat daughters with respect as a step toward a strong and empowered India.

Other regions like Telangana, Jharkhand, and Jammu and Kashmir saw massive participation in processions and prayers. In Hyderabad, BJP MLA Raja Singh led a Shobha Yatra, and in Ranchi, Chief Minister Hemant Soren attended prayers at the Ram Janaki Tapovan temple. In Telangana, CM A Revanth Reddy participated in traditional rituals at the Sri Sita Ramachandraswamy Temple in Bhadrachalam.

POST OF THE DAY

Can we have a next/new Prime Minister who when India is threatened by tariff wars, climate change etc can come forward & speak to us and the world explaining its impact and outlining corrective measures. No boring scripted teleprompters. No Hindu-Muslim rhetoric. Enough. @JhaSanjay

SHORT TAKES

MBBS student dies by suicide

Kochi: An MBBS student has been found hanging in her hostel room at Government Medical College in Kalamassery, near here, police said Sunday. The deceased, Ambili from Kasaragod, was a third-year medical student. According to police, her hostel mates found her hanging from the ceiling fan around 11 pm Saturday. Preliminary investigation suggests it to be a suicide and police registered a case of unnatural death.

4 killed, 3 injured in road accident

Buxar: At least four people were killed and three others injured when the car in which they were travelling collided with a truck in Bihar's Buxar district, police said Sunday. Talking to reporters, Station House Officer (SHO) of Industrial Police station Sanjay Kumar said, "The incident took place when the car in which victims were travelling hit a truck from behind on the Buxar-national highway near Harkishunpur village in the early hours of Sunday.

Tigress tranquilised, rescued in Maharashtra

Bhandara: A sub-adult tigress was tranquilised and rescued from the vicinity of a human settlement in Maharashtra's Bhandara district, days after another big cat was captured in the district, an official said Sunday. The tigress was rescued Saturday from an agricultural field in Gavrala village under the Lakhandur forest range. Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) Sanjay Mendhe said that the tigress had been moving closer to residential areas for the past few days, sparking demands for its capture, he said.



There will be a zero-tariff zone in the future with a free trade zone between Europe and North America
ELON MUSK | CEO, TESLA

SURPRISE APPEARANCE

Pope Francis was rolled into St Peter's Square in a wheelchair during a special Jubilee Mass for the sick, marking his first public appearance at the Vatican Sunday since his release from the hospital two weeks ago. "Good Sunday to everyone," the pope told the crowd



international

of the day quote

Every country must accept the return of its citizens in a timely manner when another country, including the United States, seeks to remove them
MARCO RUBIO | SECRETARY OF STATE, US

The economic consequences, here and across the globe, could be profound. We already have a balanced trading relationship with our American allies and work continues on a new economic prosperity deal
KEIR STARMER | PM, UK

Those who trivialise the far-right party are ignoring the fact that the Alternative for Germany's ideology is creating a breeding ground for people to feel uncomfortable in Germany and that they are actually in real danger
CHRISTIAN WULF | FORMER PRESIDENT, GERMANY

SHORT TAKES

Spl gesture: SL frees 14 Indian fishermen

Colombo: Sri Lanka Sunday released at least 14 Indian fishermen as a special gesture, a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi pitched for resolving the vexed fishermen issue with a "humane approach". The fishermen issue figured prominently during talks between PM Modi and Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake Saturday. "We also discussed issues related to fishermen's livelihood. We agreed that we should proceed with a humane approach in this matter," Modi said in his media statement after meeting Dissanayake.

70 pro-Awami League lawyers sent to jail

Dhaka: A court here Sunday sent to prison 70 lawyers known for their support for the Awami League party to face charges of "assault" and "attempt to murder" of fellow advocates during last year's mass uprising that toppled then prime minister Sheikh Hasina's government.

Anti-Trump protests rock US

The US president shook financial markets and upset nations around the world with a raft of trade tariffs this week

REUTERS

Washington, April 6: Thousands of protesters gathered in Washington, DC, and across the US Saturday, part of some 1,200 demonstrations that were expected to form the largest single day of protest against President Donald Trump and his billionaire ally Elon Musk since they launched a rapid-fire effort to overhaul government and expand presidential authority. People streamed onto the expanse of grass surrounding the Washington Monument under gloomy skies and light rain. Organizers told Reuters that more than 20,000 people were expected to attend a rally at the National Mall.

Some 150 activist groups had signed up to participate, according to the event's website. Protests were planned in all 50 states plus Canada and Mexico. Terry Klein, a retired biomedical scientist from Princeton, New Jersey, was among those who gathered by the stage beneath the Washington Monument.

She said she drove down to attend the rally to protest Trump's policies on "everything from immigration to the DOGE stuff to the tariffs this week, to education. I mean, our whole country is under attack, all of our institutions, all the things that make America what it is."

The crowd around the memorial continued to build throughout the day. Some carried Ukrainian flags and others wore Palestinian keffiyeh scarves and carried "Free Palestine" signs, while Democrats from the US House of Representatives blasted Trump's policies on stage.

Wayne Hoffman, 73, a retired money manager from West Cape May, New Jersey, said he was concerned about Trump's economic policies, including his widespread use of tariffs. "It's going to cost the farmers



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- Around 1,200 demonstrations planned in all 50 US states plus other countries
- First major opposition protest since Trump took office in January
- Protesters oppose government cuts, immigration crackdown, tariffs

tile. A few people cuss," said Kyle, who declined to give his last name. Some four miles (6 km) from Mar-a-Lago in West Palm Beach, more than 400 demonstrators gathered on a sunny day in protest. Drivers honked their horns in support of the pastel-and khaki-clad demonstrators as they passed by. "Markets tank, Trump golfs," read one sign.

Several hundred people gathered outside the headquarters of the Social Security Administration, a top DOGE target, near Baltimore to protest against cuts to the agency which delivers benefits to the elderly and disabled. Much of Trump's agenda has been restrained by lawsuits contending he has overstepped his authority with attempts to fire civil servants, deport immigrants and reverse transgender rights.

DOGE UNDER FIRE

With Trump's blessing, Musk's Department of Government Efficiency team has scythed through the U.S. government, eliminating more than 200,000 jobs from the 2.3 million federal workforce. At times, the effort has been haphazard and forced the recall of needed specialists.

On Friday, the Internal Revenue Service began laying off more than 20,000 workers, as much as 25% of its ranks.

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Israeli strikes kill 24, mostly women, kids



Gaza reels under heavy bombing as Netanyahu heads to US to meet Trump

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Deir al-Balah, April 6: Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip killed at least 24 people, including over a dozen women and children, local health officials said Sunday, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu headed to the United States to meet with President Donald Trump about the war.

Israel last month ended its ceasefire with Hamas and renewed its air and ground offensive, carrying out waves of strikes and seizing territory to pressure the militant group to accept a new deal for a truce and release of remaining hostages.

It has also blocked the import of food, fuel and humanitarian aid for over a month to the coastal territory heavily reliant on outside assistance.

"Stocks are getting low and the situation is becoming desperate," the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees said on social media.

The latest Israeli strikes overnight into Sunday hit a tent and a house in the southern city of Khan Younis, killing five men, five women and five children, according to Nasser Hospital, which received the bodies.

A female journalist was among those killed. "My daughter is innocent. She had no involvement, she loved journalism and adored it," said her mother, Amal Kaskeen.

The body of one child, 1 1/2-year old, took up just one

end of an emergency stretcher. "Trump wants to end the Gaza issue. He is in a hurry, and that is clear from this morning," asserted Mohammad Abdel-Hadi, cousin of a woman killed.

Israeli shelling killed at least four people in the Jabaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza.

Netanyahu Monday will meet with Trump for the second time since Trump began his latest term in January. The prime minister said they would discuss the war and the new 17 per cent tariff imposed on Israel, part of a sweeping global decision by the new US administration.

THE TOLL OF WAR

Hundreds of Palestinians since then have been killed, among them 15 medics whose bodies were recovered only a week later. Israel's military this weekend backtracked on its account of what happened in the incident, captured in part on video, that caused anger by Red Cross and Red Crescent and UN officials.

The war began when Hamas militants attacked Israel October 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people and taking 251 hostage. Fifty-nine hostages are still held in Gaza — 24 believed to be alive — after most of the rest were released in ceasefires or other deals.

Israel's offensive has killed at least 50,695 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were civilians or combatants but says more than half were women and children. It says another 115,338 people have been wounded. Israel says it has killed around 20,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Covid hiatus: Pyongyang marathon returns

The marathon is one of several events held to celebrate the April 15 birthday of Kim Il Sung, North Korea's founder and grandfather of current leader Kim Jong Un

REUTERS

Seoul, April 6: North Korea Sunday held its first Pyongyang International Marathon in six years, hosting foreign runners in the reclusive country that has largely closed its borders since the Covid-19 pandemic. Athletes from China, Ethiopia and other countries participated in the event, according to state TV. The marathon is one of several events held to celebrate the April 15 birthday of Kim Il Sung, North Korea's founder and grandfather of cur-



rent leader Kim Jong Un.

About 200 foreigners arrived Friday and Saturday in Pyongyang where those running practiced at a hotel for the Sunday race, said Simon Cockerell, general manager at Beijing-based Koryo Tours, in Instagram posts.

The Koryo Tours is an official partner of the Pyongyang Marathon, aiding the sign-up process for international competitors.

The isolated state sealed its borders in 2020 at the start of the pandemic but has been slowly lifting restrictions since 2023.

It has allowed Russian tourist groups into the country but its capital remains closed to regular tourism.

The marathon is a return course running through central Pyongyang, passing major landmarks and heading out into the countryside before coming back through the city to a stadium filled with 50,000 spectators, Koryo Tours said.

At the stadium, a huge crowd of North Koreans - some wearing masks - greeted the runners, and foreign participants took pictures of the spectators with mobile phones, state television footage showed.

Russian troops push into Sumy region

Moscow: Russia said Sunday that its troops had taken the village of Basivka in Ukraine's Sumy region, and were battering Ukrainian forces at a host of settlements in the area. More than two years after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Kyiv sent thousands of troops over the border into Russia's Kursk region in August last year though a Russian offensive over recent months has pushed most of Ukrainian forces out of Kursk. Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly suggested that Russian forces carve out a buffer zone along the border. Russia's defence ministry said that it had taken the village of Basivka, just over the border from Sudzha, and had struck Ukrainian forces at 12 other points in the Sumy region. It said that Russia had defeated Ukrainian units in the Russian settlements of Gornal, Guevo, and Oleshnya. The pro-Ukraine DeepState war map shows Ukraine in control of about 63 square kilometres (24 square miles) of Russian territory, down from as much as 1,400 square kilometres claimed by Kyiv last year.

WEEK'S BEST PICS



Paramotors fly during the Lusail Sky Festival, in Lusail, Qatar, April 3



Palestinian Muslims attend Eid al-Fitr prayer marking the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan, in Jabalia, in the northern Gaza Strip, March 30



A Balinese man reacts as he is hit with a burnt dried coconut leaves during a fire ritual ahead of the holy day of Nyepi, which is a day of silence for self-reflection to celebrate the Balinese Hindu New Year in Bali, Indonesia, March 31



Demonstrators post after they spray painted the facade of a Tesla dealership to protest against Elon Musk, in Berlin, Germany, March 31



A rescue worker inspects during a search operation at the site of a collapsed building, in the aftermath of a strong earthquake, in Mandalay, Myanmar April 1



“The new US tariff of 26 per cent on India is baffling. While it will have some adverse impact on India, its major negative impact will be on the US”
KAUSHIK BASU | FORMER WORLD BANK CHIEF ECONOMIST

STUDIO GHIBLI AI ART: A PRIVACY NIGHTMARE

While netizens are hooked on the viral trend of transforming personal photos into Studio Ghibli-style art using AI tools, experts warn that the trend conceals a darker reality where casual sharing can lead to unforeseen privacy breaches and data misuse. Cybersecurity experts caution that while these tools may appear harmless, the terms of services are often vague, raising questions about what happens to user photos after they are processed.



of the day quote

I think the market should grow. Anytime there's more competition, we've seen that the market grows



VIKRAM PAWAH | BMW GROUP INDIA MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CEO

Clarity was lacking earlier whether it would be EVs or hybrid or any other technology. Now, it is clear that all the policies favour the EVs



TARUN GARG | HYUNDAI MOTOR INDIA WHOLE TIME DIRECTOR AND COO

Huge opportunities are there for our exporters now. Vietnam's exports are about USD 6 billion and China's are USD 80 billion. Now their items will face higher duties in the US than that of Indian toys. All big toy firms are exploring opportunities to set up plants in India



MANU GUPTA | CEO OF PLAYGRO TOYS INDIA

FPIs pull out ₹10,355cr from equities on US tariffs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: Foreign investors withdrew ₹10,355 crore from the country's equity markets in the last four trading sessions this month due to sweeping tariffs imposed by the US on most nations, including India.

The outflow occurred after a net investment of ₹30,927 crore in the six trading sessions from March 21 to March 28. This infusion helped reduce the overall outflow for March to ₹3,973 crore, according to data from the depositories.

In February, foreign portfolios (FPIs) pulled out ₹34,574 crore, while the outflow was higher at ₹78,027 crore in January.

This shift in investor sentiment highlighted the volatility and evolving dynamics in global financial markets.

Going forward, market participants will closely track the long-term impact of the proposed tariffs, along with upcoming announcements from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regarding its monetary policy stance amid expectations of a potential rate cut, said Manoj Purohit, Partner & Leader, FS Tax, Tax & Regulatory Services, BDO India.

These developments will play a crucial role in shaping investment strategies for the upcoming cycle, he added.

According to the data, FPIs have pulled out ₹10,355 crore from Indian equities in the

last four trading sessions (from April 1 to April 4).

With this, the total outflow by FPIs has reached ₹1.27 lakh crore so far in 2025.

“The tariffs, which were much steeper than anticipated, raised concerns about their broader economic impact,” VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments, said.

He explained that the 10 per cent baseline tariff on all imports, along with a 25 per cent tariff on automobile imports and steep reciprocal tariffs on most countries (26 per cent on India) could lead to higher inflation in the US. There are also growing concerns that these measures might push the US economy towards stagflation.

This uncertainty triggered massive selling in the US markets, with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq losing over 10 per cent in just two days.

“The potential for a full-blown trade war could have far-reaching consequences, affecting global trade and economic growth. However, the steep decline in the dollar index to 102 is seen as favourable for capital flows into emerging economies like India,” Vijayakumar said.

Apart from equities, FPIs took out ₹556 crore from the debt general limit and withdrew ₹4,038 crore from the debt voluntary retention route.

RBI may again cut repo rate by 25 bps

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 6: The Reserve Bank is likely to cut key interest rates again by up to 25 basis points this week, as lower inflation provides support for an accommodative monetary policy stance, and there is a pressing need to stimulate growth at a time when the reciprocal tariffs announced by the US is posing a challenge to the global economy.

In February, the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee, headed by Governor Sanjay Malhotra, slashed the repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25 per cent. It was the first reduction since May 2020 and the first revision after two-and-a-half years.

The 54th meeting of the MPC, the rate-setting panel, is scheduled to start deliberations April 7, and the decision will be announced April 9.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has kept the repo rate (short-term lending rate) unchanged at 6.5 per cent since February 2023. The last time the RBI reduced the rate was during the Covid times (May 2020), and thereafter, it was gradually raised to 6.5 per cent.

Bank of Baroda Chief Economist Madan Sabnavis said the credit policy to be announced this week will come at a time when several things are happening around the world and within the economy.

The new round of tariffs imposed by the US would have some impact on growth prospects and the currency which

is something that the MPC will have to consider beyond the normal assessment of the state of the economy, he said.

“While it does look like conditions are rather clear for another 25 bps cut in repo rate this time with the inflation prospects being benign and liquidity having settled down, it is also expected that the stance will change to accommodative, meaning...that there could be more rate cuts in the offing during the course of the year,” Sabnavis said.

US President Donald Trump April 2 announced reciprocal tariffs ranging 11-49 per cent on about 60 countries, including India and China. It will come into effect from April 9.

There are challenges and opportunities for India as many of its competitor countries in exports, such as China, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Cambodia and Thailand, face higher duties, according to experts.

Rating agency Icra also expects the MPC to cut rates by 25 bps in its upcoming meeting while maintaining a neutral stance. “While the Central Bank's liquidity interventions are likely to continue with the target of offsetting the upcoming drain arising from the unwinding of the short positions in its forward book and the maturity of long tenor VRRs (Variable Rate Repo), we do not expect any major announcements around liquidity injections, such as a CRR cut in the MPC meeting,” it said.

Mcap of most valued firms slumps by ₹2.9L-cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: The combined market valuation of nine of the top-10 most valued firms eroded by ₹2,94,170.16 crore in the holiday-shortened last week, with Tata Consultancy Services taking the biggest hit amid a bearish trend in domestic equities. Last week, the BSE benchmark gauge Sensex tanked 2,050.23 points or 2.64 per cent, while the NSE Nifty declined 614.8 points or 2.61 per cent.

From the top-10 pack, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Reliance Industries, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Hindustan Unilever Ltd, State Bank of India and ITC faced erosion from their market valuation. Bharti Airtel emerged as the only gainer.

The market valuation of TCS tumbled by ₹1,10,351.67 crore to ₹11,93,769.89 crore.

The valuation of index bellwether Reliance Industries tanked by ₹95,132.58 crore to ₹16,30,244.96 crore and that of Infosys slumped by ₹49,050.04 crore to ₹6,03,178.45 crore.

Bajaj Finance's market capitalisation (mcap) declined by ₹14,127.07 crore to ₹5,40,588.05 crore and that of ICICI Bank dropped by ₹9,503.66 crore to ₹9,43,264.95 crore. Private sector lender HDFC Bank's valuation diminished by ₹8,800.05 crore to ₹13,90,408.68 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever Ltd dipped by ₹3,500.89 crore to ₹5,27,354.01 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of the State Bank of India slumped by ₹3,391.35 crore to ₹6,85,232.33 crore and that of ITC slipped by ₹312.85 crore to ₹5,12,515.78 crore.

SHORT TAKES

Amul's revenue may touch ₹1L-cr

New Delhi: India's leading dairy brand Amul's revenue is expected to rise more than 10 per cent to about ₹1 lakh crore this fiscal due to rising consumer demand for milk and its products. Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd (GCMMF) sells dairy products under the 'Amul' brand. Besides, its 18 district cooperative milk producer's unions sell on their own in local district markets. In an interview with PTI, GCMMF Managing Director Jayen Mehta said the total revenue of the Amul brand is likely to touch ₹1 lakh crore in 2025-26 fiscal against around ₹90,000 crore in the previous year. “At GCMMF, we are targeting a 14 per cent growth this fiscal to ₹75,000 crore,” Mehta said, anticipating demand growth. The turnover from direct marketing of Amul products by 18 member unions will be around ₹25,000 crore this fiscal, taking the total revenue to ₹1 lakh crore. During the last 2024-25 fiscal, Mehta said the GCMMF recorded an 11 per cent rise in its revenue to ₹65,911 crore, mainly driven by an increase in volumes across all categories. The GCMMF turnover stood at around 59,250 crore in 2023-24.

26 in fray to acquire Jaiprakash Associates

New Delhi: Billionaire Gautam Adani's group, mining mogul Anil Agarwal's Vedanta, and yoga guru Baba Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurveda are among the 26 suitors looking to acquire Jaiprakash Associates. Others who showed interest in acquiring Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL), currently under insolvency proceedings initiated to recover defaulted loans, include Ahmedabad-based Torrent Group, Jindal Power, Dalmia Cement, GRM Business, Oberoi Realty and Kotak Alternate Asset Managers Ltd, according to a filing by the company to stock exchanges. In the filing, JAL, which has business interests spanning real estate, cement manufacturing, hospitality, and engineering & construction, issued the provisional list of eligible Prospective Resolution Applicants (PRAs) under Regulation 36A (10) of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations 2016. JAL was admitted into the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) through the National Company Law Tribunal, Allahabad Bench, order dated June 3, 2024. The company was taken to insolvency proceedings after the conglomerate defaulted on payment of loans.

Rural growth outpaces urban for FMCG players

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: Rural market growth continued to outpace that from the urban market for the FMCG industry in the March quarter, and margins remained under pressure as prices of some key commodity inputs remained at peak levels, according to business updates by leading players.

Besides, on the channel side, traditional trade (Kirana shops) continued to be under pressure, while modern trade channels, e-Commerce and Quick commerce maintained their growth momentum, said listed FMCG companies like Dabur, Marico and AWL Agri Business (formerly Adani Wilmar) in their quarterly updates.

The persistent food inflation continues to impact demand in the urban market, which contributes nearly two-thirds of the total FMCG sales.

However, FMCG companies are hopeful of a profitable growth in FY'26 despite the current headwind, banking on factors which include moderating retail and food inflation as well as forecasts of a normal monsoon.

Homegrown FMCG firm Dabur, in its quarterly update for the fourth quarter of 2024-25, said: “During Q4, rural continues to be resilient and grew ahead of urban markets.”

“Overall, FMCG volume trends continued to be subdued



during the quarter,” said Dabur India.

AWL Agri Business said it “witnessed better growth in rural towns compared to urban markets, especially in the foods category.”

Marico said during the quarter FMCG sector experienced stable demand trends amidst the ‘improving trajectory in rural’ market.

It had mixed trends across mass and premium urban segments, said the company which owns brands such as Saffola, Parachute and Livon.

Dabur, which expects its revenue to decline in Q4 and a contraction of 150-175 basis points in operating profit margin due to inflation, said delayed and truncated winters during the quarter also had an impact.

Over the growth of Quick-Commerce channels, AWL Agri Business said its sales from this hyper local de-

livery system actually doubled y-o-y in the March quarter.

“Our quick commerce sales volume has experienced exceptional growth, marking the best quarter in two years with a remarkable 100%+ YoY increase in Q4,” it said, adding this growth reflects its strategic focus on operational improvements, particularly in product assortment, availability, and promotions and advertisements.

Dabur said in continuation of the previous trends, “organised trade channels, which include modern trade, e-commerce and quick commerce, maintained their growth momentum, while general trade continued to be under pressure.”

Moreover, Dabur and Marico, which have a presence in some foreign markets, expect a double-digit growth in constant currency terms in the March quarter.

Dabur's key international

markets, including the MENA region, Egypt, and Bangladesh, are likely to post strong performance, leading to robust double-digit growth. Dabur gets nearly one-fourth revenue from international business.

Marico's international business delivered mid-teen constant currency growth driven by broad-based growth across most markets.

Over the margins, the Maricowala family-promoted firm said a ‘contraction’ is expected to be largely in line with the preceding quarter.

“Among key inputs, copra and vegetable oil prices remained firm at peak levels, while crude oil derivatives remained rangebound,” said Marico.

Despite sharp input cost pressures and continued commitment towards A&P investments, Marico expects marginal operating profit growth on a year-on-year basis in this quarter.

“We expect to maintain the double-digit revenue growth momentum in FY'26,” said Marico over the outlook.

Dabur said it remains committed to driving profitable growth despite current headwinds in demand.

“Our internal efforts such as investing in brand building, enhancing go-to-market strategy and increasing operational efficiency will enable us to achieve this objective,” it said.

Women own 39.2% of bank accounts in India: Govt report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: Women own 39.2 per cent of bank accounts in the country and the proportion is even higher at 42.2 per cent in rural areas, according to a government report.

The Statistics and Programme Implementation Ministry (MoSPI) released the 26th edition of its publication titled “Women and Men in India 2024: Selected Indicators and Data” Sunday.

The publication offers a comprehensive overview of the gender landscape in India, presenting selected indicators and data across key areas like population, education, health, economic participation, and decision-making, all sourced from various Ministries/ De-

partments/Organizations. A MOSPI statement said that the report highlights that women own 39.2 per cent of all bank accounts and contribute to 39.7 per cent of total deposits.

Their participation is the highest in rural areas, where they make up 42.2 per cent of account holders.

It stated that there is a rise in DEMAT accounts over the years, indicating growing participation in the stock market. From March 31, 2021, to November 30, 2024, the total number of DEMAT accounts increased from 33.26 million to 143.02 million, marking more than a fourfold rise.

Male account holders have consistently outnumbered female account holders, but female participation has also



shown a growing trend.

The number of male accounts rose from 26.59 million in 2021 to 115.31 million in 2024, while female accounts increased from 6.67 million to 27.71 million during the same period.

Rising percentage of female-headed proprietary establishments across manufacturing, trade, and other services sectors over the years 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 has been observed, it stated.

The total number of electors increased from 173.2 million in 1952 to 978 million in 2024, with a notable rise in female voter registration.

Female voter turnout varied over the years, reaching 67.2 per cent in 2019 but slightly declining to 65.8 per cent in 2024.

The gender gap in voting has narrowed, with female turnout surpassing male turnout in 2024.

Over the years, there has been an increase in the number of startups recognized by DPIIT with at least one-woman director, reflecting a positive trend in female entrepreneurship. The total number of such startups rose from 1,943 in 2017 to 17,405 in 2024.

The primary and higher Secondary levels (students) have consistently high GPI (Gen-

der Parity Index), indicating strong female enrolment. Upper primary and elementary levels saw fluctuations but remained close to parity.

The LFPR (labour force participation rate) in usual status for ages 15 years and above has improved from 49.8 per cent (2017-18) to 60.1 per cent (2023-24), it stated.

“Women and Men in India 2024: Selected Indicators and Data” serves as a crucial resource, highlighting both progress in gender equality and persistent disparities. By analyzing socio-economic indicators and highlighting trends, it empowers policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders to develop gender-sensitive policies fostering sustainable and inclusive development.

Titans demolish Sunrisers

India shine in World Boxing Cup

Gill, Siraj, Washington dominate in GT's easy 7-wicket win over SRH



SCORECARD

Sunrisers Hyderabad: Abhishek Sharma c Tewatia b Mohammed Siraj 18, Travis Head c Sai Sudharsan b Mohammed Siraj 8, Ishan Kishan c Sharma b Prasad Krishna 17, Nitish Kumar Reddy c Rashid Khan b Sai Kishore 31, Heinrich Klaasen b Sai Kishore 27, Aniket Verma lbw b Mohammed Siraj 18, Kamindu Mendis c Sai Sudharsan b Prasad Krishna 1, Pat Cummins not out 22, Simarjeet Singh b Mohammed Siraj 0, Mohammed Shami not out 6. **Extras:** (LB-2, W-2) 4; **Total:** (For 8 wickets in 20 overs) 152; **Fall of wickets:** 1-9, 2-38, 3-50, 4-100, 5-105, 6-120, 7-135, 8-135; **Bowling:** Mohammed Siraj 4-0-17-4, Ishant Sharma 4-0-25-2, Prasad Krishna 4-0-25-2, Rashid Khan 4-0-31-0, Sai Kishore 4-0-24-2.

Gujarat Titans: Sai Sudharsan c Verma b Mohammed Shami 5, Shubman Gill not out 61, Jos Buttler c Klaasen b Cummins 0, Washington Sundar c Verma b Mohammed Shami 49, Sherfane Rutherford not out 35. **Extras:** (W-3) 3; **Total:** (For 3 wickets in 16.4 overs) 153; **Fall of wickets:** 1-15, 2-16, 3-106; **Bowling:** Mohammed Shami 4-0-28-2, Pat Cummins 3-4-0-26-1, Simarjeet Singh 1-0-20-0, Jaydev Unadkat 2-0-16-0, Zeeshan Ansari 4-0-33-0, Kamindu Mendis 1-0-12-0, Abhishek Sharma 1-0-18-0.

IPL POINT TABLE

TEAM	M	W	L	NR	PTS
DC	3	3	0	1.257	6
GT	4	3	1	1.031	6
RCB	3	2	1	1.149	4
PBKS	3	2	1	0.074	4
KKR	4	2	2	0.070	4
LSG	4	2	2	0.048	4
RR	4	2	2	-0.185	4
MI	4	1	3	0.108	2
CSK	4	1	3	-0.891	2
SRH	5	1	4	-1.629	2

caught at square leg off Shami, and Cummins then dismissed Jos Buttler for a three-ball duck with a back of a length delivery that nipped back in sharply, and Heinrich Klaasen die the rest behind the stumps. The two wickets gave SRH a glimmer of hope but skipper Shubman Gill and Washington Sundar joined forces to stitch a third-wicket partnership of 90 runs to pave the way for their team's win. Helping the GT duo to get their innings up and running after the early wobble was a horrendous sixth over from pacer Simarjeet Singh, who conceded 20 runs to ease the pressure on the visitors. Simarjeet was guilty of repeatedly bowling short and Washington took full advantage of it by pulling and hooking

TODAY'S MATCH
Indian Premier League
VS
Time: 07:30 pm
Telecast: Star Sports Network
Stream: JioHotstar

Hyderabad, April 6: Skipper Shubman Gill led by example with a classy half-century after Mohammed Siraj bowled with fire in his belly to return excellent figures of 4/17 as Gujarat Titans crushed Sunrisers Hyderabad by seven wickets in their IPL match here Sunday. Sent at number four, Washington Sundar too showed his class with a 29-ball 49 as GT registered their third win in four outings, even as SRH suffered their fourth defeat in five matches. The chase of 153 was completed with as many as 20 balls to spare, with Gill making an unbeaten 61 off 43 balls. Bowling first, GT restricted SRH to 152 for eight with left-arm spinner R Sai Kishore



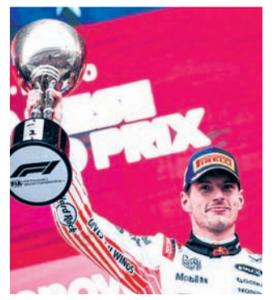
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Foz Do Iguacu (Brazil), April 6: The Indian boxing contingent came up with an impressive performance in their first-ever outing in the Elite level international meet organised by World Boxing as they bagged six medals, including a gold and silver in the World Boxing Cup Brazil 2025 at Foz Do Iguacu. Hitesh became the first Indian boxer to clinch a gold medal in the World Boxing Cup. His opponent, Odel Kamara of England, was injured and couldn't take to the ring in the 70kg finale. Abhinash Jamwal, the other Indian boxer to reach the final in the 65kg category, gave his best against local favourite Yuri Reis but could not do enough to get a favourable verdict and bagged a silver medal. Four Indian players bagged bronze medals, including Jadumani Singh Mandangbam (50kg), Manish Rathore (55kg), Sachin (60kg) and Vishal (90kg). Hitesh after becoming the first Indian boxer to clinch a gold medal in the World Boxing Cup, credited the 10-day prepara-

THE COUNTRY WINS SIX MEDALS AT THE WORLD BOXING CUP, THEIR FIRST MAJOR INTERNATIONAL OUTING SINCE THE PARIS OLYMPICS
THE STRONG PERFORMANCE WILL BOOST THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PLAYERS AS THEY START PREPARING FOR THE OLYMPIC CYCLE AHEAD OF THE 2028 LOS ANGELES GAMES

Verstappen bags 4th straight Japanese GP

Suzuka (Japan), April 6: Max Verstappen won Sunday's Japanese Grand Prix to break a "mini-slump" of two wins from 16 races but needed a drive that his Red Bull team engineer called "perfection" to get it done. It was Verstappen's fourth straight victory on the Suzuka circuit in central Japan and breaks the momentum of the McLarens of Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri, who won the season's first two races in Australia and China. "We still have work to do," Verstappen said. "But it does show if we nail everything we can be up there." He did just that. The four-time defending Formula 1 champion, Verstappen started from pole position after setting a course-record time in qualifying, which he called "insane." Norris placed second and Piastri was third. The track was dry despite rain earlier in the day to produce an incident-free race. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc finished fourth followed by George Russell of Mercedes and teammate Kimi Antonelli in sixth. Japanese driver Yuki Tsunoda finished 12th in his first drive with Red Bull's top team. "We keep pushing," Verstappen said. "Unbelievable. A great weekend for us." Norris leads the driver's standings after three races with 62 points to 61 for Verstappen. The weekend turned when Verstappen took the pole on his record lap Saturday in qualifying. And there was only one incident of note in Sunday's race — one that's being dubbed the "grass-cutting moment." Most of the leaders pitted around the 20-lap mark with Verstappen and Norris exiting the pits at almost exactly the same time with Norris forced to drive over the grass, unable to get by Verstappen and he tried to access the track. "He drove himself into the



It was fun, just pushing very hard at the end. The two McLarens were pushing very hard. We didn't give up improving the car and today it was in its best form. Of course, starting on the pole — that's what made it possible to win this race

I could see Max quite clearly for the whole race but just couldn't quite make any inroads. I don't need anyone to tell me what Max is capable of doing

grass," Verstappen said on the radio. Norris said he had no bone to pick with Verstappen. "He had the position and the right to do what he did," Norris said. Race stewards agreed. After the race, Verstappen saluted Japanese engine maker Honda, which this season will end its run of supplying the Red Bull team. And of course the win came on the Suzuka circuit, which Honda runs. Norris trailed right behind Verstappen for almost the whole race, unable to pass on the narrow Suzuka circuit. Sunday's start was clean with Verstappen taking the lead with the top starters on the grid falling into line behind him. Verstappen slowly stretched his lead and was two seconds ahead of Norris after 10 of 53 laps and kept the same advantage after 15.

Irani triumphs in 18th National Chess Championship for blind

Bhubaneswar, April 6: In a sensational finale to the 18th National Chess Championship for the Blind, at the SAI International Residential School, Cuttack, Gujarat's Darpan Irani was crowned the National Champion, edging past multiple-time champion Kisan Gangolli on a better tie-break score after both finished with 7.5 points. The championship saw intense competition, with the top four boards producing fiercely contested games in the final round. The most dramatic battle unfolded between overnight leader Aryan Joshi and Odisha's Soundarya Kumar Pradhan. Although Soundarya was slightly worse in the middlegame, Aryan's inaccurate play allowed Soundarya to seize control. In a critical moment, Aryan missed a chance to force a perpetual draw,

eventually losing the game. This pivotal result pushed Soundarya into fourth place, securing him a place in the Indian team for the Blind Chess Olympiad and the Individual World Championship. Meanwhile, Kisan Gangolli lived up to his reputation with a commanding win over BL Somender, and Darpan Irani outplayed Subhendu Patra on board three to seal the championship title. The fifth position went to Milind Samant of Maharashtra, who defeated K Marimuthu in the final round. With a prize fund larger than ever before, the championship made history with cash awards for the top ten players. The glittering prize distribution ceremony was graced by Chief Guest Deepankar Mohapatra, Director, Department of Sports & youth services, and Guest of Honour Amitabh Agnihotri, Principal, SAI Residential School.



Fans in Mumbai had a memorable night filled with nostalgia, skill, and footballing greatness. With legends rolling back the years, the match was a perfect celebration of football's timeless charm

Real Madrid Leyendas defeat Barcelona Legends

HOPS FC defeat Odisha 3-2 to continue battle for survival

Bhubaneswar, April 6: HOPS FC defeated defending champions Odisha FC 3-2 in an enthralling relegation battle at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar in IWL 2024-25 Sunday. The two teams were level 2-2 at the break. The visitors were faced with a difficult situation, where anything short of a win would see them get relegated at the end of the season. However, the Delhi side stepped up their game. Kiran Pisdar's (13' og) own goal had put HOPS in the lead, while Pooja (34', 90') netted a brace. Neha (14') and Pyari Xaxa (45+1') were the two scorers for Odisha FC. HOPS took the lead against the run of play, when Gladys Amfobea ran down the right in the 13th minute, and played a low cross across the goal. Kiran, attempting to clear the ball, turned it into her own net. Kiran redeemed herself a minute later, when she sent in a cross from the left that struck



the cross-bar and fell at the feet of Neha, who smashed it in. Odisha had the upper hand, but HOPS took the lead once again. Gladys, from the left this time, sent in another low cross that ricocheted off the far post, and was then tapped in by Pooja. Odisha FC drew level again in the first half injury time, when their Ghanaian forward

Jennifer Yeboah fed a through ball to Pyari, who finished it at the far post. Buoyed by the second equaliser, Odisha stepped on the gas and created frequent chances. Lynda Kom Serto had a couple of close chances after the hour mark. Her 65th minute long ranger went agonisingly over the cross-bar.

HISTORIC NAVI MUMBAI CLASH

Real Madrid Leyendas defeat Barcelona Legends

Fans in Mumbai had a memorable night filled with nostalgia, skill, and footballing greatness. With legends rolling back the years, the match was a perfect celebration of football's timeless charm



giants reigned their iconic rivalry on April 6 at the DY Patil Stadium in Mumbai, as part of the much-anticipated 'Legends Faceoff'. The venue was buzzing with energy, as thousands of passionate fans packed the stands to witness footballing royalty in action. The electric atmosphere, filled with cheers and chants, added to the grandeur of this historic occasion. Morientes opened the scoring for Real Madrid Leyendas in the 14th minute, capitalizing on a well-worked move orchestrated by Luis Figo and Michael Owen. The second half of the much-awaited Legends Faceoff saw the intensity rise as FC Barcelona Legends pushed hard to break through the Real Madrid defence.

With the crowd roaring them on, they turned up the heat, launching wave after wave of attacks. Just as Barcelona looked closest to scoring, Real Madrid Legends doubled their lead in the 69th minute. A moment of brilliance from David Barral saw him skip past two legendary defenders—Carles Puyol and Frank de Boer—before calmly slotting the ball past the goalkeeper. The strike further energized the Madrid camp and left the crowd at DY Patil Stadium in awe. Fans in Mumbai had a memorable night filled with nostalgia, skill, and footballing greatness. With legends rolling back the years, the match was a perfect celebration of football's timeless charm.