



Dealing with trolls

Actor Urvashi Rautela addresses social media trolls who compare her to other actresses

LEISURE | P2

Gaza uncertainty

Israel dramatically expands its footprint in the Gaza Strip as it now controls more than 50 per cent of the territory

INTERNATIONAL | P10

Magnificent Seven sink

Magnificent Seven stocks sink Monday, extending a market rout that has wiped off around \$2 trillion from their combined value

BUSINESS | P11

CSK to take on PBKS

After a tumultuous start, Chennai Super Kings look to bounce back against Punjab Kings in their away IPL clash Tuesday

SPORTS | P12

LPG costlier by ₹50; excise duty on fuel up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 7: Domestic cooking gas LPG price Monday was hiked by a steep ₹50 per cylinder across India and CNG by Re 1 per kg, while the government raised taxes on petrol and diesel to shore up its revenues.

"The increase in cooking gas price will be for both Ujjawala - poor beneficiaries who got LPG connection free of cost - and general users, and will be effective from April 8. Rise in input cost has necessitated the hike," Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said.

Cooking gas for Ujjawala users will cost ₹553 per 14.2-kg cylinder from the current ₹503 in the national capital.

The same for general users will now cost ₹853. The rates, which vary from state to state depending on local incidence of taxes, were last revised in March last year when they were cut by ₹100.

Also, CNG prices were hiked by Re 1 per kg in the national capital and adjoining cities after the government last week raised input natural gas prices by almost 4 per cent.

Alongside, the government hiked excise duty on petrol

and diesel by ₹2 per litre each to raise about ₹32,000-crore additional tax revenue. However, there will be no change in retail prices as the increase will be adjusted against the price cut that was warranted because of falling international oil prices.

Puri said prices of crude oil - which is turned into petrol and diesel in refineries - have fallen to about USD 60 per barrel from USD 70-75, and a reduction in the retail selling price of petrol and diesel is possible if the international oil prices stay at those levels.

The minister defended the move, saying oil companies had been incurring losses on LPG sales and the increase in retail price and revenue from excise hike will be used to make up for that.

The special additional excise duty (SAED) on petrol has been increased from ₹11 per litre to ₹13, and that on diesel from ₹8 to ₹10 a litre. With this, the total incidence of taxes imposed by the central government on petrol has increased to ₹21.9 a litre (₹1.40 a litre basis excise duty, ₹13 SAED, ₹2.50 agriculture cess and ₹5 road and infrastructure cess) from ₹19.9 a litre. P8



RESCUE ACT: A crane being used to lift an injured elephant that was reportedly hit by a speeding vehicle in Nagaon district of Assam, Monday

PTI PHOTO

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



That's the price of petrol, diesel and LPG, dear—not the Sensex

State bags over ₹30K-cr projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 7: The state received investments worth ₹30,595 crore that would generate employment opportunities for 48,390 individuals, official sources said Monday.

On the first day of his two-day Delhi visit, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi held discussions with industry captains following which Odisha government secured investment intents from 14 companies, amounting to ₹3,000 crore, which has the potential to generate 21,390 jobs.

Moreover, 11 agreements worth ₹27,595 crore were signed with top business houses which would create an additional 27,000 employment opportunities.

Among the key highlights was the CM's visit to HCL Tech Campus in Noida, where he discussed opportunities for collaboration in IT and ITeS sectors with Roshni Nadar Malhotra, chairperson of HCL Technologies.

The discussions centered on expanding Odisha's footprint in technology-driven industries, alongside fostering innovation and economic development in the region. P3

'Tariffs are beautiful'

The country's stock markets suffered their worst session in 10 months Monday, as a wave of selloffs was triggered by US President Donald Trump's tariff announcement. The move heightened investors' fear over a prolonged trade war and tightening of global liquidity, prompting a shift away from riskier assets. Concerns over possible retaliation from China added to fears of a global slowdown. Asian markets bore the brunt of the fallout—Hong Kong's Hang Seng index plunged over 13%, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 fell nearly 8%, Shanghai SSE Composite dropped more than 7%, and South Korea's Kospi declined over 5%. European markets also faced intense selling pressure, with declines reaching up to 6% across major indices. While experts in US termed the crash worse than expected, those in India believe the country may face a relatively limited impact as compared to other countries, and advised investors to remain vigilant in the current climate. Adding to investors' woes, Trump posted on X, "Tariffs are a very beautiful thing to behold."

AGENCIES

Mumbai, April 7: Stock markets crumbled Monday with benchmark Sensex sinking by 2,226.79 points - its steepest single-day decline in 10 months - as a global market carnage following US President Donald Trump's tariff hikes and retaliation from China fanned fears of economic slowdown.

The 30-share BSE Sensex crashed 2,226.79 points or 2.95 per cent to settle at 73,137.90, recording its third day of decline. During the day, the index slumped 3,939.68 points or 5.22 per cent to 71,425.01.

The NSE Nifty tumbled 742.85 points or 3.24 per cent to settle at 22,161.60. Intra-day, the benchmark dropped 1,160.8 points or 5.06 per cent to 21,743.65.

All Sensex shares, except for Hindustan Unilever, ended with losses. Tata Steel fell the most by 7.33 per cent followed by Larsen & Toubro which cracked 5.78 per cent.

Tata Motors, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Infosys, Axis Bank, ICICI Bank, HCL Technologies and HDFC Bank were the other big



laggards. Hindustan Unilever ended marginally higher.

"The market tumbled as the carnage over high US tariffs and the retaliation by other countries may kickstart a trade war. Sectors like IT and metals have underperformed relative to the broader market due to the risk of high inflation with slower growth that may result in a potential recession in the US," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

In Asian markets, Hong Kong's Hang Seng index tanked more than 13 per cent, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 plunged nearly 8 per cent, Shanghai SSE Composite index dropped over 7 per cent and South Korea's Kospi sank over 5 per cent.

European markets too came under heavy selling pressure and were trading with up to 6 per cent decline.

US markets ended sharply lower Friday. S&P 500 dropped 5.97 per cent, Nasdaq composite slumped 5.82 per cent and the Dow tumbled 5.50 per cent on Friday. On June 4 last year, Sensex had nosedived 4,389.73 points or 5.74 per cent to close at 72,079.05. In the day trade, the barometer tanked 6,234.35 points or 8.15 per cent to 70,234.43.

Nifty had ended at 21,884.50, a sharp decline of 1,379.40 points or 5.93 per cent June 4, 2024. Intra-day it tumbled 1,982.45 points or 8.52 per cent to 21,281.45.

"Though the overall impact on India may be limited when compared with other countries, investors are advised to play cautiously during this fray," Nair said.

Meanwhile, even as the markets world over shudder over the imposition of tariffs, US President Donald Trump has doubled down on his move, calling the retaliatory duties a "beautiful thing" that the Americans would "realise someday".

The US President also threatened additional tariffs on China Monday, raising fresh concerns that his drive to rebalance the global economy could lead to a trade war.

WAQF FLIP-FLOP

Naveen reaffirms secular stance

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 7: Amid growing dissent within the BJD over the party's last-minute stand on Waqf (Amendment) Bill in Rajya Sabha, BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik Monday assured that his party has always stood by minority communities and will continue to do so.

His statement came after BJD's Rajya Sabha MP Munna Khan and his supporters met him at Naveen Niwas to express their discontent over the party's flip-flop on the Bill passed in both Houses of Parliament.

Patnaik, after hearing Khan and his supporters, reiterated that the BJD has consistently supported minority communities and remains committed to their welfare.

He emphasised that the BJD government had taken numerous steps for the upliftment of minorities and reaffirmed the party's secular ideology.

"The BJD will continue its fight for the interests of minorities. Biju Babu stood with mi-

norities, and I do too," Patnaik told the delegation. Senior BJD leaders Debi Prasad Mishra and Sanjay Das Burma were also present during the meeting.

However, in an unprecedented development, VK Pandian—once considered second only to Naveen Patnaik in party decision-making—faced backlash from Khan's supporters, who chanted slogans like "Pandian go back" and "Pandian leave Odisha" at Naveen Niwas.

Supporters of Khan, the only Muslim BJD MP in RS, blamed Pandian for the party's sudden decision to allow MPs to vote according to their conscience during voting on the Bill.

Initially, BJD had publicly announced that it would oppose the Bill in the Upper House. Party president Naveen Patnaik had reiterated this stance during a meeting of the party's Parliamentary Board. However, in a dramatic turn of events, the party's Rajya Sabha member Sasmit Patra announced that the party had "permitted its MPs to vote based on their conscience".

SC: Total breakdown of rule of law in UP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 7: Dismayed over the filing of FIRs by the state police in civil disputes, the Supreme Court Monday said there was a "complete breakdown of the rule of the law in Uttar Pradesh" as the criminal law was set in motion "day in and day out" in such cases.

"There is a complete breakdown of rule of law in Uttar Pradesh. Converting a civil matter into a criminal case is not acceptable," a bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and KV Viswanathan said.

The court directed the director general of the state police to file an affidavit before it within two weeks. Referring to its judgements, the bench said an FIR couldn't be filed in civil disputes and asked the station house officer or the investigating officer of a Gautam Budh Nagar district police station to file an affidavit explaining why the criminal law was set in motion.

"Something strange and shocking is happening day in and day out in Uttar Pradesh... everyday civil suits are being converted to criminal cases. It is absurd. Merely not giving money cannot be turned into an offence," the CJ said.

Continued to P4

Chimps use physics to pick tools: Study

AGENCIES

Cambridge, April 7: Chimpanzees may be more like human engineers than we ever imagined. A new study published in iScience, an open access journal from Cell Press, reveals that these great apes don't just randomly pick up sticks when hunting termites, they, rather, carefully choose plant materials based on how flexible and functional they are.

The research conducted jointly by scientists from the University of Oxford, the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, the Jane Goodall Institute, the University of Algarve, and the University of Porto to closely observed chimpanzees in Tanzania's Gombe Stream National Park and discovered



that these animals rely on an instinctive engineering in their tool-making that mirrors that of human tool evolution.

"This is the first comprehensive evidence that wild chimpanzees select tool materials for termite fishing based on specific mechanical properties," said lead author Alejandra Pascual-Garrido.

To test their theory, the researchers brought a portable mechanical tester to the park to measure the force needed to bend different plant materials. The results were telling: the plant species chimpanzees don't use were, on average, 175% more rigid than the ones they preferred. That means the chimps were consistently picking plants

that were easier to manipulate—suggesting an understanding of the physical qualities required for effective tools.

The researchers said this behavior hints at what they call "folk physics"—an intuitive grasp of how the physical world works. The chimps' tool-making abilities may stem from both trial-and-error learning and social learning, such as sharing tools or observing others in the community.

"This novel approach, which combines biomechanics with animal behavior, helps us better understand the cognitive processes behind chimpanzee tool construction," Pascual-Garrido added. "It gives us a window into how they evaluate and select materials based on how well they work."

leisure



MELLENCAMP'S KIDS GIVE HER PERSPECTIVE

American TV personality Teddi Mellencamp has revealed how her children have given her perspective. The 43-year-old star is currently in the midst of battling stage 4 cancer, but Teddi admits that her kids have given her a sense of perspective over recent weeks.

HEATHER GRAHAM FEELS HAPPIER THAN EVER

Hollywood actress Heather Graham thinks she's become more easygoing in recent years. The 55-year-old told People: "I feel like as I get older, I just care less about things that don't matter."



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will look for new opportunities to increase your competence, and for new ways to enjoy. If your relationship is under stress, it is about time you sorted out things. There is likelihood of making a short trip. If you are feeling under the weather, Ganesha says a long drive with your beloved may do you good.

TAURUS
Your skills in managing professional relationships will play a vital role today. The atmosphere, the impression you create is going to mean a lot. Be professional, but be warm and cordial. This day you will be particularly concerned about the way others see and evaluate you.

GEMINI
You need a break from your daily routine. You will feel fatigue in keeping up with the demands of everybody around you. You will try to regain your courteous and pleasant manner in the afternoon. You will be able to relax and unwind if you have the company of family and friends in the evening, says Ganesha.

CANCER
Dig out some old contacts today, says Ganesha! Go through your old diary; make an attempt to connect with a lost pal, for chances are high that you may benefit a great deal from an old connection! Your ability to gel with others will improve your performance at work.

LEO
You will feel tired and lazy in the morning at work today, however later on you will feel a surge of energy. Your self-confidence and motivation too will increase. Schedule all your important tasks and meetings in the afternoon, when you will be at your peak, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Today you will be in a very innovative and ingenious mood. Ganesha says a sight-seeing trip either to a museum or some historical monument is on the cards. Being lively and active will help you tone up your body. Entertaining yourself will be a good way to heal the wounds left in the wake of a broken relationship.

LIBRA
Ganesha says today is a day where your attention will be on your family. You will give prime importance to them and may even keep aside work to pay attention to the happiness and well being of your family members. This is a good opportunity to plan an outing with your family members.

SCORPIO
Sports-persons and athletes are in full form today as their energy levels soar. Engineers put in their best efforts to kick-start their new business ventures. Social recognition and prestige is on the cards today, foresees Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
You are in a mood to entertain your family and friends today, predicts Ganesha. Jovial and cheerful you, a family tour is on your mind. Meanwhile, you even decide to catch up on your work, and you may receive accolades for the work delivered.

CAPRICORN
You have paid the price for your mistakes in the past, so you will take every step after considering all the pros and cons. Career issues will hover your mind through out the day and you may think about opting for a job change, also. Compared to morning, evening will be calmer and you may spend some quality time with your near and dear ones.

AQUARIUS
You will plan the day very meticulously to ensure minimum wastage of time and energy, feels Ganesha. Now, you will have more time in spare and you will be utilise it for doing things that you like. Enjoy your free time rejuvenating yourself.

PISCES
It is possible that you have a very busy day and that you remain on your toes all day. In order to get your work done you will spend a greater part of your day in the office. On the other hand social responsibilities will contribute to some mental stress. Ganesha advises you to accept things in the right manner today.

Urvashi unfazed by online negativity

Mumbai: Actress Urvashi Rautela has addressed the social media trolls who compare her to fellow actress Nora Fatehi.

Responding to the trolls with grace, Urvashi sets the record straight, making it clear that she won't be fazed by online negativity. When asked if trolling affects her, the Sanam Re actress told this agency, "I don't take everyone's opinions personally. I'm not easily affected by negative comments. Of course, if someone says something rude, I don't let it bother me. I believe every actor brings their own uniqueness to the industry."

"For example, if people compare me to Nora Fatehi or anyone else, I don't mind because every artist has their own space. It's important for our generation to perform well, just like the actors of the past who paved the way for Bollywood's growth. It's our responsibility to give our best in every role and keep the industry thriving," she added.

On a related note, the sizzling dance number *Touch Kiya* from *Jaat* featured Urvashi showcasing her dance moves alongside the ruthless villain duo Randeep Hooda and Vineet Kumar Singh.

Jaat, starring Sunny Deol in the titular role, is all set to release in theatres April 10, 2025. **IANS**



Shruti's perspective on self-care

Mumbai: On World Health Day, Shruti Haasan reminded that healing comes in many forms.

Revisiting a heartfelt video from the *Saalaar* actress' YouTube channel, Shruti's perspective on self-care is as unique as her artistic identity.

In her own words, "Self-care is very important, and you should do it in whatever way makes you happy. People often tell me, 'You should really meditate,' but I don't know how to sit and blank my mind. I've found different ways to do it — like this thing called 'breath of fire,' where I channel into my third eye — but I do it with heavy metal because that's what centres me."

She continues: "Playing the piano is my meditation. Watching *Love Is Blind* is my meditation. It doesn't matter what it is — whatever feels like meditation to you, in terms of loving yourself and giving yourself the room to breathe and just be — I think that's where real self-care lies."

Work-wise, Shruti will soon be seen in Lokesh Kanakaraj's upcoming action extravaganza, *Coolie*. The highly-awaited drama will see superstar Rajinikanth as the protagonist. **IANS**



Sonu makes an urgent appeal

Mumbai: Actor Sonu Sood has broken his silence regarding his wife's recent injury in a car accident, urging everyone to prioritize safety on the roads.

In a heartfelt video shared on social media, the actor made an urgent appeal, stressing the importance of wearing seat belts at all times, even for passengers in the rear seat. Sonu captioned the video, "*Seat belt nahin..To aapka parivaar nahin !!!* Wear seat belts even if you are sitting in the rear seat."

In the clip, the *Fateh* actor could be heard saying, "This is a very important message. Last week, there was a major accident in Nagpur in which my wife and her sister were inside the car, and the condition of the car was seen by the whole world. That day, Sunita was sitting in the car, and my wife Sonali told her to wear the seat belt. She put it on, and just a minute later, the accident occurred. All three of them were safe because they wore seat belts."

Sonu added, "I request all of you—never sit in a car without a seatbelt. Most drivers wear seat belts just to show the police, but seat belt ensures your family's trust me, the seat belt ensures your family's safety."

Sonali Sood, wife of Sonu Sood, was involved in a severe accident on the Nagpur highway, March 24. **IANS**



Kiara to make her Met Gala debut

Mumbai: Mom-to-be Kiara Advani is all set to add another feather to her cap as she will be representing India at the prestigious Met Gala this year, marking her debut at the fashion's greatest event.

This moment is a significant milestone in Kiara's personal and professional journey. The Met Gala, known for its celebration of artistry and cultural significance, will now feature Kiara, whose influence continues to expand beyond the Indian film industry.

Her debut is not just about style—it is about rewriting narratives, embracing evolution, and showcasing the undeniable force of a woman in her prime.

Refreshing your memory, last year, Kiara represented the country at the Red Sea Film Foundation's Women in Cinema Gala Dinner at Cannes. Her mesmerizing look from Cannes, in a striking pink and black gown with intricate lace detailing, went

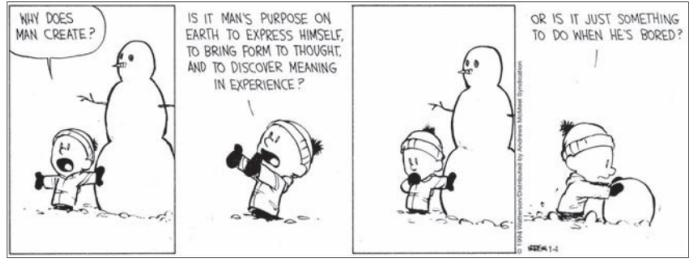
viral, garnering widespread praise and setting new trends in fashion.

On the personal front, back in March this year, Kiara and Sidharth Malhotra left everyone pleasantly surprised as the beloved Bollywood couple revealed that they were expecting their first child together. **IANS**

PEANUTS



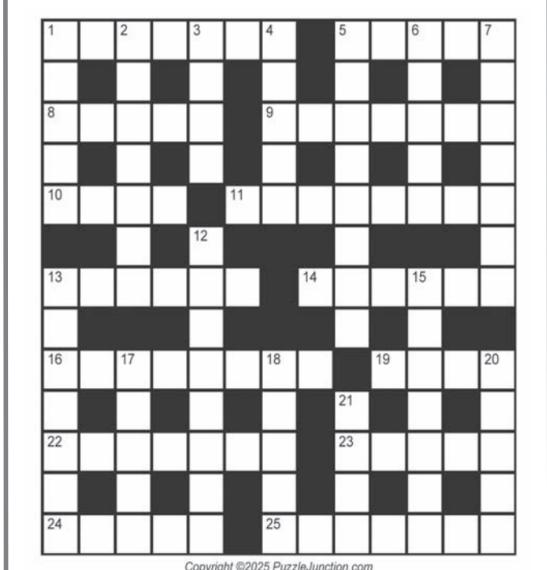
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



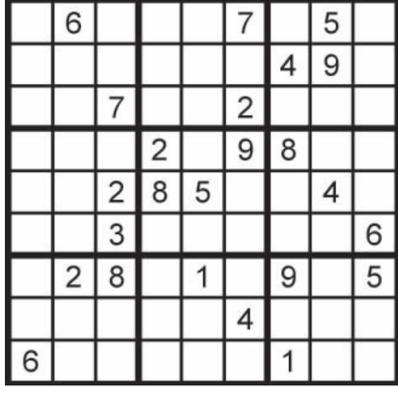
FUN POST CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Source of sudden wealth
 - 5 Colliery carriers
 - 8 Golf course
 - 9 Ice mass
 - 10 Equal
 - 11 Food poisoning
 - 13 Fortified wine
 - 14 Position
 - 16 Fantasy diversion
 - 19 Aromatic herb
 - 22 Strands
 - 23 Damp
 - 24 Hazardous
 - 25 Actress's role
 - 5 Ally, in sports
 - 6 Excuse
 - 7 Brownish-orange horses
 - 12 The right way
 - 13 Thin
 - 15 Fee paid for instruction
 - 17 Barrels
 - 18 Restaurant type
 - 20 Unit of petrol
 - 21 Self-satisfied

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

CM invites HCL to set up operations in state



Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, along with Industries Minister Sampad Chandra Swain, meets HCL Technologies chairperson Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Monday

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 7: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Monday invited HCL Technologies to set up its operation in the state and become part of Odisha's journey towards becoming a hub of business destination, an official release said.

Majhi said this while speaking at the Investors' Meet in New Delhi.

"We visited the HCL Tech campus in Noida and engaged in productive talks with their team. We have invited HCL Tech management to Odisha, specifically to Bhubaneswar and the Jagannath Temple in Puri. We presented them with a proposal to establish a campus and a university in the state," Majhi said.

Majhi, who arrived in New Delhi Sunday evening, visited HCL Tech's Noida campus in an effort to strengthen Odisha's IT and ITES ecosystem. Discus-

sions with company officials focused on GCCs, tech innovation and high-value jobs, boosting Odisha's inclusive growth and strategic partnerships, the release issued by the CMO said.

The Chief Minister said that the HCL Tech team was 'impressed' with the Odisha government's proposal and expressed keen interest in setting up its centre in Odisha. "They have given a positive response and we are hopeful that the campus will soon be established," Majhi said.

Majhi also held talks with HCL Technologies chairperson Roshni Nadar Malhotra.

"Discussions during this engagement centred around establishing collaborative opportunities within the IT and ITES sectors," the CMO release said, adding that Majhi emphasised Odisha's commitment to becoming a hub for technology-driven enterprises.

Following the HCL engage-

ment, the Chief Minister conducted a series of one-on-one meetings with various organisations such as Kiri Industries, Himadri Specialty Chemical Ltd, Chowgule Group, IREL, SLMG Beverages, Ruchi Soya Foods Ltd (Patanjali Ayurved Ltd), Inox GFL Group, OfBusiness and Quant Solar, aimed at expanding their operations in Odisha.

The release also stated that the state has secured investment intents from 14 companies, amounting to ₹3,000 crore, which has the potential to generate approximately 21,390 jobs.

Additionally, the Odisha government has also formalised 11 pacts valued at ₹27,595 crore, creating an estimated 27,000 employment opportunities.

"In summary, the total investment generated from these discussions amounts to ₹30,595 crore, with a potential to create jobs for approximately 48,390 individuals in Odisha," it said.

Govt to restructure Mission Shakti organisations: Parida

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 7: Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida Monday said the state government has decided to restructure all Mission Shakti organisations to connect every household under its fold.

Speaking to journalists, Parida said the Centre had asked to link each household with women self-help groups (SHGs). However, the previous (BJD) government did not pay heed to it, 'depriving' many families from the Mission Shakti programme, she said.

Therefore, the government has now started a process to include the left-out households under the programme, said Parida, who is also the minister in charge of Mission Shakti department.

"The previous government had also removed women members affiliated to a particular political party. So, now, all women irrespective of party line will get the opportunity to take part in the election for various functionaries in the Mission Shakti organisation," she said.

Fresh appointments will be made by replacing present presidents and secretaries in SHGs to create leadership at the grassroots level, Parida said.

Parida said new appointments will be made at Gram Panchayat Level Federations (GPLF), Cluster Level Federations (CLF) and Block level Federations (BLF) as well as district and state level organisations in the next month.

Reacting to this move of the BJP government, senior BJD MLA Pramila Mallik said, "The BJP government now wants to use women for political purposes. The government wants to insult those who became Lakhpati Didi due to their hard work."

Harit Yoga nurtures personal, planetary health: Union min



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 7: Union Minister of State for Ayush Prataprao Jadhav Monday launched Harit Yoga and said this form of yoga nurtures both personal and planetary health.

Harit Yoga is a sustainability-driven initiative combining yoga with tree planting and clean-up drives.

Jadhav said this while inaugurating Yoga Mahotsav 2025 here to mark the 75-day countdown to International Day of Yoga (IDY) June 21.

The event was organised by Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY), under the Ministry of Ayush, at Kalinga Stadium here.

He said that Harit Yoga is part of the 10 signature events of IDY 2025. Jadhav and other dignitaries planted medicinal plants to mark the launching of the signature event.

Speaking about the Harit Yoga initiative, he said, "Our health is inextricably linked to the health of our planet. Just as yoga nourishes our mind and body, tree plantation nourishes the Earth, ensuring a greener and healthier future for generations to come."

While addressing, the Union Minister said India has gifted

the capital for healthy living to the world in the form of yoga and the world has adopted it.

He said the UN General Assembly has unanimously adopted the resolution proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014 to celebrate June 21 as IDY. He said 10 successful years of celebration of IDY have passed. "Now, people in over 170 countries are celebrating India's gift to the world - yoga. It means about 85 per cent of the world has adopted the ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice," Jadhav said.

"The event has not been confined to a day's celebration. It has become part of life for many. Yoga is not just confined as a lifestyle, it has also become a preventive measure to remain physically healthy," Jadhav said. It has shown a path to people across the globe to remain healthy while staying indoors during the Covid-19 lockdown period, he said. In his latest 'Mann Ki Baat' address, the PM declared 'Yoga for One Earth One Health' as the theme of Yoga Day 2025, which shows India's effort to make the whole world healthy through yoga, the minister pointed out.

"This also indicates that healthy living is not only a desire of an individual, it should

be a collective effort of the world," the Ayush minister said. Mentioning sustainability and the environmental aspect of yoga, he linked Harit Yoga with PM's vision of 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam'.

"This initiative encourages individuals to plant trees as a symbolic act of nurturing both personal and planetary health," he said. He also highlighted the success of the 'Prakruti Parikshan Abhiyan' in which Prakruti Parikshan of more than 1.29 crore people was conducted earning a place in the Guinness Book of World Records. Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, who was present at the event, said, "Yoga inspires us to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Let us integrate yoga into our daily lives and draw strength from the divine energy of Lord Jagannath."

"We express gratitude to the Government of India and Ministry of Ayush for giving Odisha an opportunity to become part of IDY 2025 by organising the '75-day countdown' in Bhubaneswar," added Parida. Among others, Puri MP Sambit Patra also spoke on this occasion.

To mark the launch of Harit Yoga, more than 5,000 medicinal plants were distributed among the yoga enthusiasts.

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Highlights & Project Benefits

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 - The project will catalyse the development of Paradip Petroleum, Chemicals & Petrochemicals Investment Region (PCPIR).
- Product Portfolio**
 - Broad range of niche petrochemical products such as Phenol, Isopropyl Alcohol, PVC, LLDPE, PP, HDPE and Butadiene, boosting downstream industry in Eastern India.
- Economic & Social Benefits**
 - Catalyse MSME growth, employment generation, revenue enhancement, and industrial investment in Odisha.
- Special Incentives from Govt. of Odisha**
 - Odisha is partnering as stakeholder in the project, offering special strategic incentives and land parcel.

Min: Drinking water to all urban homes by March '27



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 7: Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra chaired a review meeting Monday to assess drinking water supply systems in urban areas. Following the meeting, the Minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to providing 24/7 access to quality drinking water for every household by March 2027.

Mahapatra stressed the

the Odisha Water Supply and Sewerage Board (OWSSB), WATCO, and the Public Health department to ensure effective implementation.

The introduction of smart meters was also discussed as a means to improve water distribution and revenue collection. A pilot project will be launched in selected urban areas, with statewide rollout planned in phases.

Measures to combat water scarcity during droughts were also explored. These include setting up control rooms and deploying additional water tankers when necessary.

Ongoing water projects were reviewed, with emphasis on strict adherence to deadlines and regular progress monitoring.

The initiative involves multiple stakeholders, including Housing and Urban Development principal secretary Usha Padhee, and WATCO director Guru Charan Das.

The goal is to secure a sustainable, uninterrupted water supply for urban populations, addressing both present challenges and future demands.

importance of optimising water usage, noting that only 17 per cent of river water is currently utilized while the rest flows into the sea. To address this, plans are underway to construct barrages and enhance water storage capacity.

The review covered various strategies, including the construction of barrages to ensure a more reliable and cleaner water supply. Discussions were held with key agencies such as

Low-pressure area forms over BoB: IMD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 7: Amid the prevailing heatwave conditions across the state, a low-pressure area has been formed over the central parts of the south Bay of Bengal (BoB) under the influence of a cyclonic circulation, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Monday.

The low-pressure area is likely to move northwestwards till April 8 and then move slightly towards the west-central BoB during the next 48 hours, senior IMD scientist Uma Shankar Dash said.

The IMD, in its mid-day bulletin, said that despite the formation of the low-pressure area in the BoB, dry weather prevailed over the districts of



Odisha.

"The maximum temperature rose by about 2-4 degrees Celsius at one or two places over the districts of North Odisha and no large change elsewhere over the districts," it said.

Stating that the maximum temperatures were above nor-

mal by about 2 to 3 degrees Celsius at a few places over the districts of coastal Odisha, the IMD said that the highest maximum temperature of 42 degrees Celsius was recorded at Boudh and the lowest minimum temperature of 21 degrees Celsius was recorded at Phulbani in the

plains of Odisha Sunday. Meanwhile, the IMD said last Friday that Odisha, along with Uttar Pradesh (its eastern region), Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, was likely to see 10 to 11 heatwave days during April and June this year.

According to the weather bureau, Odisha, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand West Bengal, Chhattisgarh Telangana, Andhra Pradesh northern parts of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are likely to experience more heatwave days than usual.

Although heatwaves are common in India during April and May, scientists say climate change is making them more frequent and intense.

FROM P1



"We will direct the IO to come to the witness box. Let the IO stand in the witness box and make out a criminal case... this is not the way you file chargesheets," the CJI said, "let the IO learn a lesson".

The bench said it seemed, lawyers in UP had forgotten there was something called a civil jurisdiction.

The top court was irked after a lawyer said the FIRs are filed as civil disputes take a long time to settle and asked, "Just because civil cases take long, you will file an FIR and set the criminal law in motion?"

The IO of the police station concerned at Sector-39 in Noida was directed by the top court to appear in the witness box in the trial court and justify the registration of the FIR in the case.

The bench was hearing a plea of the accused Debu Singh and Deepak Singh, filed through lawyer Chand Qureshi, against the Allahabad High Court refusing to quash the criminal case against them in a money dispute with one businessman Deepak Behal.

The top court stayed the criminal proceedings against the petitioners in a Noida trial court, but said the cheque bounce case against them would continue.

An FIR was filed against the duo in Noida under Section 406 (criminal breach of trust), 506 (criminal intimidation) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the IPC.

The plea in the top court was filed by Debu Singh and Deepak Singh, both sons of Baljeet Singh, against the judgement of September 3, last year of the Allahabad High Court. The High court dismissed their plea for quashing of the FIR.

Guv stresses empathy & excellence in nursing

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 7: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati Monday highlighted the vital role of empathy and professionalism in nursing, stating that the future of healthcare will heavily rely on nurses who embody both qualities.

He was speaking at the lamp lighting and oath-taking ceremony for freshers of Kalinga Nursing College, held here at the auditorium of the GKCM Odissi Research Centre.

Addressing the gathering, the Governor reminded students that their white uniforms are not just garments, but symbols of purity, trust, and commitment. "Your words and actions will touch lives in ways you may never fully realise," he said, urging them to let their service reflect both compassion and excellence.

Calling nursing a noble profession, Kambhampati said it



demands not only scientific knowledge and clinical skills but also empathy, patience, and unwavering dedication. "Nurses are often the first to respond, the last to leave, and always present beside those in pain. They bring comfort in distress, dignity in suffering, and hope in despair," he added.

Kambhampati commended Kalinga Nursing College and Kalinga Hospital for their commitment to nurturing capable and compassionate nursing professionals through quality

education, mentorship, and hands-on clinical experience.

He expressed confidence that the students would emerge as exemplary nurses upholding the highest values of the profession.

The event also featured a welcome address by SC Chaudhury, Trustee of Kalinga Hospital Foundation. The Governor presented a scholarship cheque to a student and felicitated several accomplished staff members of the college during the ceremony.

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	36.8°	36.4°
Min Temp	25.6°	24.5°
Humidity	71%	69%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST Mainly clear sky		

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	
SENSEX	73,137.90	↓ 2,226.79
NIFTY	22,161.60	↓ 742.85
DOLLAR	86.11	↑ 0.61
EURO	93.63	↓ 0.03
GOLD	₹87,350	↓ ₹590
SILVER	₹88,670	↑ ₹1279

CLASSIFIED

NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF THE CIVIL JUDGE (SENIOR DIVISION), KANTAMAL

NOTICE

Civil Suit No.06/2024
Jayakrushna Mishra & Others
Plaintiffs

Vrs.
Akula Mishra And Others

Retired Indian Economic Service,
At Present R/o. Flat No.5, I.E.S. Officers Co-operative Group Housing Society, Sector-4, Dwaraka, New Delhi-110078,
2. Kusumanjali Mishra, A/a. 58 Years, W/o. Prakash Mishra, Housewife, A/T. R/o. Adarsha Pada, Balangir Town, P.O./ P.S./ District: Balangir

Whereas the plaintiffs Jayakrushna Mishra & others have instituted the aforesaid suit No.06/2024 against you. You are hereby summoned to appear in this court in persons or by your pleader on dated 24th Apr, 2025 at 7.30 A.M. to answer the claim.

Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before mentioned, this suit will be heard and determined in your absence.

Sd./- Judge
C.J.S.D., Kantamal

Youth4Water Plus rolls out heatwave campaign



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 7: In response to the intensifying summer heat, Deputy Chief Minister Pravat Parida flagged off a Heatwave Awareness Van Campaign here at Gita Govinda Bhawan Monday.

Notable guests present on the occasion were WASH specialist, Unicef Shipra Saxena, Youth4Water Plus director Blorin Mohanty, founder of Bakul Foundation Sujit Mahapatra and Youth4Water Plus project coordinator Dharmananda Sundaray.

The initiative is led by Youth4Water Plus, supported by Unicef, in collaboration with Jeevan Rekha Parishad, KT Global School, Radio Bulbul, and others. The campaign will run from April 7 to June 6 across Bhubaneswar, Puri, and Cuttack.

The specially equipped van will act as a mobile awareness

unit, visiting vulnerable areas such as slums, construction sites, public transport hubs, temples, and educational institutions.

The campaign aims to reach over 1 lakh people using engaging tools like street plays (Nukkad Nataks), audio jingles, mascots, posters, and quizzes. Water kiosks will also be set up to promote hydration and reduce the impact of heat.

"Youth are key partners in this campaign. By reaching out to the most vulnerable, we ensure no one is left behind," said Sugata Roy, officer-in-charge, Unicef Odisha.

A trained team of Youth4Water Plus volunteers will lead community engagement and spread awareness on heat-related health risks and safety tips.

The launch event also featured the unveiling of a heatwave awareness poster and the release of an audio jingle.

IIT-Bhubaneswar develops train seat swap app

The 'Simply Swap' app offers a seamless digital solution for confirmed train passengers to exchange seats effortlessly—enhancing comfort, coordination, and convenience for group and family travel

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 7: In a major step towards enhancing the train travel experience in India, a team from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar has developed an innovative mobile and web application called Simply Swap.

The app aims to ease the process of swapping seats among passengers with confirmed train tickets, offering a tech-based solution to a common travel inconvenience.

The project was led by students Rustam Kumar and Sangam Mishra, under the mentorship of faculty members Srikanth Gollapudi and Srinivas Pinisetty. The idea for the application was inspired by Gollapudi's



own experiences while traveling with family, where getting seats together was often a challenge. He noticed that despite many passengers being open to exchanging seats, the lack of a streamlined system made the process difficult.

Simply Swap provides an easy-to-use platform for passengers to request and accept seat exchanges. Users can en-

ter their current seat number, coach, preferred location (such as a window or lower berth), and train details. Other travelers on the same train, who are also registered on the app, can view these requests and respond if the swap suits them. Once a mutual agreement is made, the app facilitates the coordination, removing the need for awkward in-person negotiations.

- Users can post swap requests by entering their current seat, desired seat, and train details, making the process quick and user-friendly
- The app aims to reduce travel-related stress and is being considered for integration with Indian Railways for wider adoption

The team believes that the app has the potential to revolutionise how train travel is experienced in India, particularly for families, elderly passengers, or those with specific seating needs.

The developers are also exploring the possibility of integrating Simply Swap with Indi-

an Railways' official services to ensure wider reach and secure authentication.

Currently, the team is in discussions with startups and venture capitalists for commercialisation. The app has already received encouraging feedback for its practical utility and user-friendly interface.

As India increasingly adopts digital solutions to improve public services, innovations like Simply Swap highlight IIT Bhubaneswar's commitment to creating technology that directly improves people's lives.

This initiative not only addresses a longstanding problem in Indian train travel but also sets an example of how academic institutions can drive meaningful, real-world impact.

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Ganjam tragedy: Woman, son, daughter die by suicide



POST NEWS NETWORK

Ganjam, April 7: A 45-year-old woman, her son and daughter allegedly died by suicide after consuming pesticide-laced rice in Ganjam district, police said Monday.

The incident took place at Palibandha village in Ganjam police station area.

The deceased were identified as S Mama Reddy, 45, her son Rakesh, 21 - a student of diploma in engineering - and daughter Meena, 18 - a class 12 student, a police officer said. The husband of the woman, S Rabindra Kumar Reddy, died around three years ago in a road accident in Chennai. The family was supposed to receive ₹15 lakh compensation next week for Rabindra's death.

Police seized pesticide sachets from the house which were suspected to have been used in the rice consumed by them, the officer said. The

pesticide is commonly used to preserve rice from insects. However, the exact motive behind the act remains unclear, and multiple angles are being explored, the officer added.

Villagers reportedly told the police that the family members were noticeably absent in a community gathering Sunday. Concerned neighbours later visited their house and discovered the three lying unresponsive. They rushed them to Ganjam and Chhatrapur medical centres before they were shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Bhubaneswar.

Former Sarpanch Dillip Kumar Chhotaray, who reached the hospital upon receiving the information, said Rakesh was frothing at the mouth during the journey. He added that Mama died first, followed by her son, and daughter who passed away around 3 am. "They were a quiet and kind family. No one

expected them to take such an extreme step," Chhotaray told reporters.

Speculation has arisen that the incident could be linked to a personal relationship involving one of the deceased. However, the simultaneous suicides of all three family members have raised significant questions.

Meanwhile, a pal of gloom descended on the village when the bodies were brought in the afternoon. The family's elderly matriarch (mother-in-law of Mama), S Lakshmi, 75, was seen sobbing uncontrollably. "We were a happy family. I don't know why they took such a decision," she said.

Villager S Ramachandra Reddy alleged that the ambulance failed to arrive at the Chhatrapur facility for over an hour, forcing them to use a private vehicle to shift the victims to the hospital at Behrampur.

IIC Sumitra Patra said investigations are on to find the causes of the deaths. "We are awaiting the post-mortem and forensic reports. The exact causes will be known once the reports are available," she said.

Chhatrapur MLA Krushna Chandra Nayak met the surviving member of the family, S Lakshmi, along with (BDO) Achyutananda Jani and Tehsildar Sukanta Chandra Mishra, and offered his condolences. As part of immediate relief efforts, an ex gratia of ₹90,000 was provided from the Indian Red Cross Society's emergency fund to Lakshmi.



BIDDING TALENT: Students pose with Odia primer 'Barnabodha' distributed among them at a programme organised by the district administration on the occasion of Odia fortnight in Sambalpur Monday

Woman held with 500 banned cough syrup bottles

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, April 7: A woman was arrested late Sunday night for allegedly being involved in the illegal trade of narcotic cough syrup, following a raid by Sambalpur police. Around 500 sealed bottles of the banned cough syrup 'Win-Cirex' were seized during the operation.

Acting on credible information received during the ongo-



ing Ram Navami celebrations, a team from the Town Police

Station raided a location within its jurisdiction and discovered the large cache of cough syrup, each bottle containing 100 ml of the banned substance.

The woman, a resident of Kumharpada under Dhanupali Police Station limits, was initially detained for questioning. When she failed to produce any valid documents for the possession, or sale, of the controlled substance, she was put under arrest.

Police also seized a mobile phone from her during searches. A case (No. 101/2025) has been registered at Town Police Station under Section 20(b) of the Excise Act. The accused has been forwarded to court.

Authorities are continuing investigations to trace the supply chain and identify other individuals involved in the illegal narcotics trade.

Forest guard critical fighting wildfire

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, April 7: A forest guard sustained critical burn injuries while attempting to control a wildfire near Birida under the Kuanrunda Forest Range, Monday morning.

The official, identified as Samara Oram, suffered over 75 per cent burns and is currently undergoing treatment in a private hospital's critical care unit. His condition is reported to be serious.

According to sources, Oram was part of a four-member team actively engaged in dousing the forest fire using extinguishers and blowers, in an effort to prevent the blaze from spreading deeper into the dense forested area. However, in a tragic turn of events, a sudden gust of wind reversed the fire's direction, overpowering the team's equipment and engulfing Oram in flames.

Forest department authorities were immediately informed, and senior officials rushed to the site. Oram was promptly evacuated and admitted to a private hospital in Rourkela as per emergency protocols. Attempts to contact Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Jasobant Sethi for comments were unsuccessful. With the rise in summer temperatures following a brief respite, the frequency of forest fires across the district has surged.

Kendrapara: Unemployment on rise as MGNREGA project completion rates dip

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, April 7: With MGNREGA failing to provide adequate employment, which has been exasperated by the absence of mines, industries, or major economic drivers, Kendrapara district has been plagued by unemployment, forcing its youth to migrate in search of work.

An analysis of last year's data reveals that the district's reliance on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is faltering with completion rates of approved projects steadily declining.

According to reports, though 222,650 households have collected job cards in hopes of securing work, many remain disappointed. During the 2024-25 financial year, only 73 families received the guaranteed 100 days of employment.

Moreover, the scheme's effectiveness has sharply declined, with project completion rates dropping from 86.38 per cent in the 2022-23 fiscal to 49.74 per cent in 2023-24. By the end of the last financial year, only 11.79 per cent of projects were completed.

In 2024, only 4,301 projects were initiated, of which 507 were completed. A total of 54,752 projects — including



25,867 pending from previous years and 28,885 awaiting approval — are now expected to be addressed in the current financial year. Officials believe that completing these projects could curb migration by providing local employment and advancing the district's development.

Quoting a state government economic and social survey, social worker Banambar Sahu claims the district ranks 26th in the state for economic development. "Basic necessities such as roads, drinking water, electricity, education, and healthcare remain inaccessible in many parts of the district. Despite ample human resources, unemployment continues to be a pressing issue," he says.

MGNREGA has been implemented to address this challenge, but local officials and representatives lack enthusiasm for the scheme. "Instead of encouraging workers to participate, they are allegedly

obstructing efforts, exacerbating the district's migration problem," he adds.

Prashant Kumar Nayak, a local intellectual, maintains that funds from the scheme are allocated to projects including Anganwadi centres, rural infrastructure, flood control, water conservation, rejuvenation of water sources, rural connectivity, coastal development, and improving drought-prone areas. "Completing these projects could significantly alleviate the district's developmental challenges," Nayak says.

However, the tardy pace of project completion and the failure to provide employment opportunities are only worsening the migration crisis, he adds.

Meanwhile, District Council Chief Development Officer Ajambar Mohanty claims that not all data from the last financial year has been gathered. "Many projects have been successfully implemented," he insists.

Manappuram heist: Key accused sent to jail

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, April 7: Subodh Singh, 28, the prime accused in the high-profile armed robbery at the Manappuram Gold Loan branch at Budharaja in Sambalpur, was sent to judicial custody after completing a 10-day police remand, Monday.

Earlier in the day, Singh was taken for a mandatory medical examination under tight security at the district headquarters hospital. He was later produced before the SDJM court which remanded him to judicial custody. He was then taken to the local sub-jail.

During his stay in police custody, Singh was thoroughly questioned in connection with the daylight robbery, which occurred January 3 at the Manappuram branch in one of the City's busiest areas. The robbers, reportedly carrying firearms, looted approximately 30 kg gold and over ₹4.5 lakh cash before fleeing the scene.

According to police sources, Singh provided several crucial leads during interrogation, shedding light on other criminal cases he is allegedly linked to, as well as revealing potential accomplices involved in the gold heist.

So far, Sambalpur police have arrested four persons, including Singh, in connection with the robbery. However, the stolen gold and cash have yet to be recovered.

MLA halts roadwork on Odisha-WB border

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhograi, April 7: Tensions flared along the Odisha-West Bengal (WB) border here Monday after Bhograi MLA Goutam Buddha Das intervened to stop a road construction project allegedly encroaching into Odisha's territory.

The dispute is over the construction of a 40-metre concrete road in Sagarasahi village under Bhograi block, an area claimed by Odisha. The Odisha government had earlier assured that the roadwork would be carried out from its end.

On Monday morning, officials from West Bengal's Public Works Department (PWD) allegedly entered the disputed area with a JCB machine to resume work on the road. Upon receiving information about the development, Das, along with Bhograi Tahsildar Surya Kumar Nayak, Panchayat Samiti Chairperson Prabir Kumar Giri and the Kamarda Police Station officer in charge, rushed to the site and halted the work immediately.

Das asserted that Odisha's identity, language and land must be protected at all costs. "As worthy children of our motherland, we will neither hand her over to outsiders nor surrender at their feet," he said.

The MLA criticised the West Bengal government for what he described as a strategic push into Odisha's border villages, particularly in the Jaleswar and Bhograi blocks of Balasore district, where boundary disputes remain unresolved in nearly 80 villages.

The road construction issue resurfaced prominently last



month when the West Medinipur district administration in West Bengal began constructing the road in the disputed area.

In response to repeated intrusions, the MLA promised that concrete road work in the affected village would commence within three days under Odisha's jurisdiction. A 20-member village committee has also been formed to act as vigilant guards along the border.

Das also urged locals to remain alert and committed to defending the state's territorial integrity. Nevertheless, the situation reflects a broader pattern of inter-state disputes involving Odisha, with recent flashpoints also reported along the Andhra Pradesh border.

Ram Navami tableau procession passes off peacefully in Rourkela

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, April 7: The City was bathed in hues of saffron this afternoon as the Ram Navami tableau procession, led by various 'akhadas', was conducted in a peaceful and grand celebration.

Upholding a unique tradition, the City holds the procession a day after the main Ram Navami festivities, turning a 2.5 kilometre stretch of Old Rourkela into a lively corridor of devotion, color, and community spirit.

From Bisra Chowk, where the carnival-like parade commenced, the streets came alive with dazzling lighting, synchronized drum beats, and a sea of saffron-clad participants and spectators. "I've watched this procession for the past 40 years, and I must say, this year is truly extraordinary," remarked Birendra Singh, a

local businessman who runs a spare parts shop at Bisra Chowk. When asked about what made this year special, he replied, "It's more vibrant, the energy is different. Everyone seems deeply immersed in the devotion of Lord Ram and Hanuman."

Out of the 23 akhadas in Rourkela, 17 participated in Monday's festivities, with the remaining five scheduled to join Tuesday at different venues across the city. "The spirit is undivided, and everyone gets their moment to celebrate," shared a member of one of the akhadas.

At sharp 3 pm, the first tableau turned into the main road from Bisra Chowk, marking the start of the main procession. Among the participants was Rabinder Yadav of the Bhoothnath Akhada, the City's oldest. "My grandfather and father began this tradition,



and now I carry it forward. Next year, my son will take part," he said.

Notably, groups of young girls displayed impressive 'stick work' performances in front of their respective tableaux. "It's a moment of pride for all of us," said Sunita, a

Class VIII student. Traditional Purulia Chau dancers and pulsating drummers added a cultural richness that thrilled the crowd.

Adding to the atmosphere of generosity and unity, numerous food and refreshment stalls lined the route.

Volunteers distributed free water, snacks, and 'Sharbat' without any form of discrimination. "It's something we Marwaris have done for years," said a woman from a prominent business family. "We believe such acts bring blessings—and now many others join in too."

On the security front, the administration left no stone unturned. With 23 platoons deployed along the route, eight inspectors, and four DSPs monitored the event closely. SP Rourkela coordinated operations from a control camp near Nalla Road, an area with a mixed community demographic. "We held two peace committee meetings and conducted flag marches beforehand to ensure clarity and cooperation," he explained.

The procession proceeded smoothly and remained entirely peaceful.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
 E-Tender Notice No. Sr.DMM/ SBP/Stores/Tender Publication/ 40255358/2025, Date: 03.04.2025
TENDER NO.: 40255358, **DESCRIPTION OF ITEM:** TRUCK MOUNTED ARTICULATED BOOM CRANE ETC.
 Tender Value: ₹66,08,000/-, EMD@2%: ₹1,32,160/-
 Tender Closing Date & Time: at 1500 hrs. of 23.04.2025.
 Complete information is available in website www.ireps.gov.in
 Sr. Divisional Materials Manager, Sambalpur
 PR-11/Q/25-26

Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. PWDK - 37/2024-25
 No. G2/3247 Dt. 29.03.2025
 e-mail : eepwdkeonjhar@yahoo.com

1 No. of the work	: 01 No. Civil and 01 No. Electrical Work
2 Estimated cost	: From Rs. 9.51 Lakh to Rs. 17.08 Lakh
3 Period of completion	: 01 (One) Calendar Month
4 Date and Time of availability of Bid document in the portal	: From 10.00 Hr 08.04.2025 to 17.00 Hr of 17.04.2025
5 Last date / Time for receipt of bids in the portal	: 17.00 Hr of 17.04.2025
6 Date of opening of Bid from Portal	: 10.30 Hr of 19.04.2025
7 Name and address of the officer inviting Bid	: Superintending Engineer, Keonjhar (R&B) Division, Keonjhar

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "http://tendersodisha.gov.in".
Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Keonjhar (R&B) Division
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FOCUS EDUCATION

A RAY OF HOPE



Since reclaiming power in 2021, the Taliban have systematically denied Afghan girls and women their rights to education, employment, and freedom of movement. Now, as internal divisions shake the regime, there is a real chance that the ban on girls' education may finally be lifted

With Gaza in ruins, the war in Ukraine at a critical juncture, and millions of Africans facing starvation, global attention has understandably shifted away from the plight of Afghan girls denied their right to an education. Yet, amid the prevailing gloom over the state of the world's most troubled regions, the Taliban's ban on girls' secondary education could be facing its biggest internal challenge yet.

Nowhere is the fight for the rights of girls and women more urgent than in Afghanistan, where the Taliban's return to power in 2021 has led to egregious human rights violations, including the exclusion of girls from secondary education. Now, after yet another Afghan school year has begun without girls beyond sixth grade, a rift within the regime offers hope that the ban may be reversed in the near future.

Despite the Taliban's efforts to project unity, tensions among its leadership ranks surfaced last month when Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai was forced to flee to Dubai. He was reportedly facing arrest for criticizing the ban on girls' education and the conduct of Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, the regime's supreme leader. With the interior and defense ministers also rumored to support easing the education ban, Akhundzada has deployed soldiers to Kabul airport to prevent other cabinet members from seeking asylum abroad.

At the root of the Taliban's leadership crisis is a series of failed efforts to overturn Afghanistan's anti-women policies. Immediately after reclaiming power three and half years ago, Akhundzada and his Kandahar-based hard-line faction reneged on the Taliban's promises that girls would be allowed to attend secondary school and that women would be permitted to work "within the framework of Islam." As late as the start of the 2022 school year, the

Taliban was still assuring the public that girls would be allowed to resume their education, only to reverse course within hours, citing the need for an "appropriate Islamic environment."

A wave of increasingly repressive edicts targeting Afghan girls and women soon followed. Women were barred from almost all forms of employment, excluded from almost all public spaces, and prohibited from traveling anywhere without a male chaperone. The Taliban's draconian dress code required women to wear burqas covering them from head to toe.

By 2024, these restrictions had become even more extreme. Women – already banned from speaking in public – were now prohibited from praying aloud or reciting the Quran, even in the presence of other women.

For a while, dissent within the Taliban remained muted. Then, at a graduation ceremony in the southeastern Khost province last month, Stanikzai openly condemned the regime's policies. "The restrictions imposed on women are the personal wish of some Taliban elders and are un-Islamic," he declared. The regime, he added, was being "unjust to 20 million people. There is no justification for this – not now or

in the future." Citing religious justifications for girls' education, Stanikzai reminded the audience: "During the time of the Prophet Muhammad, the doors of knowledge were open for both men and women. There were such remarkable women that if I were to elaborate on their contributions, it would take considerable time."

Stanikzai's remarks followed similar criticism from Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, who – in one of the first public breaches of Taliban unity – also denounced the ban on girls' education and the regime's refusal to engage with the international community on women's rights. Refugee Minister Khalil Rahmani had also been pushing for girls and women to attend secondary schools and universities at the time of his death in a December suicide attack in Kabul.

Against this backdrop, Afghanistan is grappling with deepening economic and humanitarian crises that have pushed more than 25 million people – over half the population – into poverty. The exclusion of women and girls from the workforce has exacerbated these economic challenges, fueling the growing rebellion against Akhundzada's extremist policies.

The apparent split within the

Taliban comes at an opportune time. United Nations human rights officials are considering classifying gender apartheid, defined as "inhumane acts committed within the context of an institutionalized regime of systematic discrimination, oppression, and domination by one group over another or others, based on gender, and committed with the intention of maintaining that regime," as a crime against humanity. Such a move would represent a milestone in the fight against the systemic oppression of women in Afghanistan and beyond.

Meanwhile, Afghan girls – many of whom were already in school when the Taliban returned to power – continue to fight for their education, defying the regime's restrictions to pursue their dreams of becoming doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers, and entrepreneurs. At great risk to themselves and their families, some attend underground schools, join local homeschooling initiatives, or seek remote-learning opportunities. A few have even managed to leave the country to study abroad.

But although the bravery of Afghan girls is undeniable, their efforts alone will not be enough to close the gap between the number of girls entitled to an education under international law and those who actually receive one. With the Taliban in disarray, the international community – especially Muslim-majority countries – must capitalize on internal divisions to pressure the regime to reverse the ban on girls' education.

Nowhere in the Quran or Islamic teachings is there any justification for denying girls the right to attend school. Now, there is a real chance that even the Taliban may finally heed this lesson.

The writer, a former prime minister of the United Kingdom, is UN Special Envoy for Global Education and Chair of Education Cannot Wait.

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Gordon Brown

AT THE ROOT OF THE TALIBAN'S LEADERSHIP CRISIS IS A SERIES OF FAILED EFFORTS TO OVERTURN AFGHANISTAN'S ANTI-WOMEN POLICIES



Be fearless and resolute, all obstacles will melt away before you.

THE MOTHER

Dhaka Woos Dragon

Of all the problems that India faces in its neighbourhood, the most pressing one seems to be emerging from Bangladesh which is going all out to woo China in its blatant disregard for India's strategic concerns. During his recent trip to China, Muhammad Yunus, the Chief Adviser of Bangladesh's interim government, stirred a controversy by claiming that Bangladesh is the "only guardian" of the Indian Ocean, as the seven Northeastern states of India are "landlocked." In a viral video, Yunus proposed that China consider establishing a base in Bangladesh, a move that is seen as a challenge to India's strategic interests. Not only that, during his talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Yunus obtained Chinese support for the modernization of Bangladesh's Mongla Port, a project valued at \$400 million. Furthermore, China committed \$350 million to expand the China Economic and Industrial Zone in Chittagong, along with an additional \$150 million designated for technical assistance. Another key topic of discussion between the leaders was the Teesta River, which is jointly shared by Bangladesh and India. A memorandum of understanding has been requested for Chinese support in the Teesta Barrage project.

Dhaka's embracing China raises serious red flags for India, especially over the security of the strategically important Siliguri Corridor, also known as the 'Chicken's Neck.' It is a narrow land corridor in West Bengal that links the Northeastern states of India to the rest of the country. Its geopolitical, strategic, and economic importance makes it a crucial asset for India. Northeast India's relative economic backwardness and other historical factors have contributed to unrest in many of the states in the past that are seemingly still being neglected. At present, the state of Manipur has been ripped apart by ethnic violence with no end to the crisis in sight. Additionally, the region's extensive and porous borders with China, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Bhutan make it vulnerable to external influences and cross-border infiltration.

Apart from China, the new government in Bangladesh has taken several measures to improve the country's ties with Pakistan. The ties are swiftly advancing in diplomatic and economic areas. Bangladesh has relaxed visa restrictions, trade has increased significantly, direct flights have resumed, and military cooperation between the two countries is also on the horizon.

While ousted Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government was close to India and sought cooperation from New Delhi in almost all sectors, Yunus' administration seems to be pivoting its focus towards Beijing and Islamabad. For almost twenty years, India's policy towards Bangladesh has been shaped by the leadership of Hasina. However, India's foreign policy establishment has failed to gauge the mood of Bangladesh's people who revolted last year against Hasina's secular, yet autocratic rule. The popular uprising ultimately led to Hasina's ouster and brought radical Islamists to power in that country. The transition was marked by widespread violence, especially against the country's Hindus and other minorities. In addition, India's decision to shelter Hasina and its lack of response to Bangladesh's formal request for her extradition to face charges related to alleged crimes against humanity remain a contentious issue between the two countries.

Seen in the context of Dhaka's overtures towards China and Pakistan, Yunus' remarks in Beijing were neither accidental nor impulsive. They should be understood within the framework of the strengthening ties between Dhaka, Islamabad, and Beijing. India needs to be cautious of all these developments, as it already runs all the risks of getting encircled by enemies from all sides. Diplomacy is an intricate exercise and has little room for rhetoric and chest thumping. The sooner India's foreign affairs apparatus understands this, the better. However, present indications do not point towards a more pragmatic approach by India towards these dark clouds.

WISDOM CORNER

Condemn me if you choose – I do that myself, – but condemn me, and not the path which I am following, and which I point out to those who ask me where, in my opinion, the path is.

LEO TOLSTOY

Freedom comes only to those who no longer ask of life that it shall yield them any of those personal goods that are subject to the mutations of time.

BERTRAND RUSSELL

Wherever religion is resorted to as a strong drink, and as an escape from the dull, monotonous round of home, those of its ministers who pepper the highest will be the surest to please.

CHARLES DICKENS

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1838:** The Great Western, the earliest regular transatlantic steamer, embarked on its maiden voyage from Bristol, England, to New York City.
- 1859:** German philosopher Edmund Husserl, founder of phenomenology, was born.
- 1904:** France and the United Kingdom sign the Entente cordiale. The treaty, which was initially designed to regulate the countries' colonial interests in Africa, later evolved into the Triple Entente to fight Germany in World War I.
- 1913:** The Seventeenth Amendment, which called for the direct election of U.S. senators by voters of the states, was ratified.
- 1920:** Venus de Milo, an ancient statue commonly thought to represent Aphrodite, was found in pieces on the Aegean island of Melos; it was later reconstructed and put on display in the Louvre, Paris.
- 1959:** One of the first modern programming languages is created. The Common Business-Oriented Language or COBOL was primarily designed by a woman, Grace Hopper. Also known as Amazing Grace, she is regarded as one of the pioneers in the field.
- 1973:** Pablo Picasso, one of the most influential artists of the 20th century, died in France at age 91.

LOL PULLING THE CAR

An out-of-towner drove his car into a ditch in a desolated area. Luckily, a local farmer came to help with his big strong horse named Buddy. He hitched Buddy up to the car and yelled, "Pull, Nellie, pull." Buddy didn't move. Then the farmer hollered, "Pull, Buster, pull." Buddy didn't respond. Once more the farmer commanded, "Pull, Jennie, pull." Nothing.



Then the farmer nonchalantly said, "Pull, Buddy, pull." And the horse easily dragged the car out of the ditch. The motorist was most appreciative and very curious. He asked the farmer why he called his horse by the wrong name three times. The farmer said, "Oh, Buddy is blind, and if he thought he was the only one pulling, he wouldn't even try!"

SPECTRUM COMMERCE

US tariffs & Indian MSMEs

On 2 April, the US launched a fresh tariff policy, which went into effect on 5 April, charging a 10% default tariff on every foreign commodity, along with an extra 26% tariff on Indian items beginning 9 April. This is based on US President Donald Trump's 'reciprocal trade' ideology, which targets countries like India, which are alleged to have high tariffs (e.g., 70% for motorcycles, 50% for apples). For Indian MSMEs—63 million firms accounting for 30% of GDP, 45% of exports, and employing more than 110 million—the policy poses serious disruption.



Pradyumna Kumar Choudhury

WITH 70% OF MSMEs HAVING LESS THAN 10% MARGINS, ACCORDING TO THE CII, THE TARIFF IS UNSUSTAINABLE

Indian MSMEs lead the way in exports to the US, India's largest market, with \$83 billion in FY24 merchandise, generating a \$46 billion surplus. Apparel and textiles (\$9.6 billion), gems and jewellery (\$11.88 billion), electronics (\$11.1 billion), and auto parts (\$7 billion) are leading sectors, which tend to operate on thin margins with government backing such as the

Interest Equalization Scheme. The 26% tariff threatens this balance, increasing costs and undermining competitiveness.

The tariff increase raises export prices, compelling MSMEs to either take a hit, cutting into profits, or transferring it, losing customers. A \$5 Tirupur T-shirt becomes \$6.30, making cheaper Bangladeshi alternatives more attractive, while Surat diamond trade loses out to Belgium or Israel as margins are squeezed.

Textiles, employing millions in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, face order cuts from US retailers like Walmart. Auto parts MSMEs in Pune and Chennai, supplying \$7 billion to Ford and GM, risk demand drops. Gems and jewellery (\$11.88 billion) and electronics (\$11.1 billion) may see US clients shift to Southeast Asia. Leather goods (\$1.5 billion) from Tamil Nadu could lose to Vietnam or Mexico.

With 70% of MSMEs having less than 10% margins, according to the Confederation

of Indian Industry, the tariff is unsustainable. Relying on loans and export incentives, a drop in US orders may lead to defaults, with the Interest Equalization Scheme's expiry in June 2025. Exporters ask for its renewal to cover 3-5% credit subsidies, though this might not be sufficient to counterbalance costs.

As upstream suppliers, MSMEs stand to lose orders should US companies source elsewhere (e.g., Vietnamese fabric versus Indian), rendering factories in Ludhiana or Coimbatore idle and leading to job losses.

Analysts project a \$6 billion to \$33 billion reduction in exports annually, with MSMEs losing \$2.7 billion to \$14.85 billion—0.16% to 0.8-0.9% of the GDP. India Ratings also foresees a 5-10 basis point GDP growth decline in FY26 to 6.6%.

With 110 million jobs, predominantly rural, MSMEs are vulnerable to scenarios such as 500,000 idle Tamil Nadu looms due to a 10% textile

export decline, pushing labour into informal sectors. Gujarat's jewellery and Maharashtra's automobile centers are also at risk, overstraining welfare systems. Export-exposed states such as Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Maharashtra will be the worst hit, further distancing themselves from less-exposed states such as Bihar.

The US tariffs also undermines Indian MSMEs' access to the US market and their financial health, especially in textiles, automotive parts, and jewellery sectors. However, it may induce trade diversion or local expansion if MSMEs innovate. Government intervention—through trade negotiations, subsidies, or export promotion—is essential. Without intervention, MSMEs will collapse, affecting jobs and the GDP. With resilience, they might convert this shock into a positive opportunity, redefining their international role.

The writer works for SIDBI. Views are personal.

Administrative arrogance

Sir, The Supreme Court's intervention has stopped the ongoing deforestation on 400 acres of land in Kancha Gachibowli near the Hyderabad Central University (HCU) campus to build IT parks. Trees in a large area have already been felled. This sacrifice of a large forest area on the altar of development has far-reaching consequences. The burning question is whether we need development at the cost of environmental degradation. It is an egregious error for the Telangana government to show such ignorance. This urban forest has enormous significance. Disregarding all public protests, and environmental laws, the government continued the clearing process. It is a blatant example of administrative arrogance. Do we need only concrete jungles in cities? In addition to providing shelter to birds and animals, urban forests play a very important role in lowering pollution and temperature. Faulty urban planning has adverse consequences. For example, five decades ago, Bangalore had about 70% green cover. Today, it has only about 3% green cover. Urban planning requires vision and farsightedness. Sustainable practices must be followed in development. The protesters who vehemently opposed the brazen act must be appreciated.

Venu GS, KOLLAM

Global call for action

Sir, World Health Day, 2025 carries a powerful message for the global community: "Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures." This year, the spotlight is on maternal and newborn health, underscoring the urgent need to end preventable deaths and support long-term well-being for women and infants worldwide. Despite advancements in medicine, pregnancy and childbirth still pose serious risks for many, with hundreds of thousands of women and millions of newborns dying each year—often from causes that are entirely preventable. The campaign calls for universal access to quality maternal care, skilled health workers at every birth, and a strong focus on mental health, nutrition, and inclusive support systems that listen to women and value every life. Governments, health systems, and individuals must collaborate to strengthen healthcare infrastructure, invest in early and compassionate care, and address inequalities that leave women and children vulnerable.

Krishna Kumar Vepakomma, HYDERABAD

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

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TIHAR JAIL TO GIVE INMATES LEMONS, HEAT SHIELDS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 7: Two lemons a day and “heat-resistant sheets” are part of the plan of Tihar Jail authorities to help inmates cool off as the summer approaches.

Delhi is currently in the grip of a heatwave, with the maximum temperature already expected to cross 40 degrees Monday. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow warning for a heatwave. A prison official said the anti-heat measures are a part of their seasonal plan.

“Be it summer or winter, we follow a proper plan for the inmates according to the Tihar Jail manual. We will provide two lemons every day to each inmate for three months – April, May, and June – to help keep their bodies hydrated,” the official told PTI. A sufficient quantity of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) has been procured to keep prisoners hydrated, he added.

The jail authorities have also planned to install heat-resistant sheets inside the cells to help maintain the temperature a few degrees lower.



“These sheets are very helpful during the summer as they keep the cell temperature normal and allow air circulation,” the person said. Established in 1958, Tihar Jail is one of India’s largest prison complexes, comprising nine prisons spread over more than 400 acres – along with one prison in Rohini and six in Mandoli.

Located in West Delhi, Tihar is close to the Tilak Nagar and Hari Nagar areas of the city. Originally designed to house approximately 10,025 inmates, it currently accommodates over 19,000, leading to severe overcrowding.

Meanwhile, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has announced plans to shift Tihar Jail to the outskirts of the city, allocating ₹10 crore in the

2025–26 budget for surveys and consultancy services related to the relocation. The official said that no inmate is treated as “special” inside the prison.

Inmates get only room-temperature water, and no water coolers are allowed inside the premises. “However, inmates can buy cold water from the canteen as needed. Cold or hot water is provided only on the directions of a doctor or through court orders,” the official said. Of the 16 jails, Jail No 6 and Jail No 16 are meant for jeeping female inmates.

Students made to clean toilets in B’lore school

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, April 7: Despite strict warnings from the Karnataka Education Department, an alleged incident of teachers engaging schoolchildren in cleaning of school toilets came to light in Bengaluru’s Yelahanka locality Monday.

Social activist Beltu Paramesh has filed a complaint with the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) and the Education Department, regarding the incident.

He has also submitted a video in this regard to the authorities. The complainant has urged the authorities to take action against the teacher and the headmistress for involving students in cleaning the toilets.

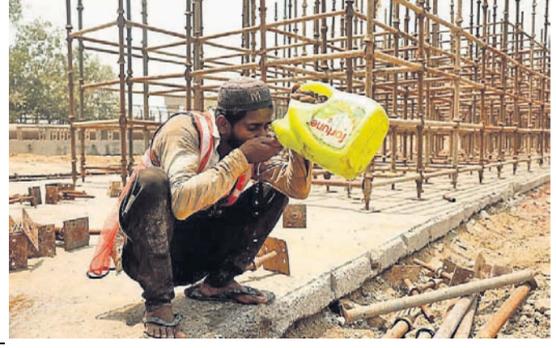
Meanwhile, the repeated occurrence of such incidents, despite serious warnings from the Education Department, has become a matter of concern for the authorities. Following earlier warnings, the Education Department had issued an order March 26, 2025 stating that if any incident of schoolchildren being made to clean toilets is reported, an FIR would be filed against the teachers or other concerned school personnel.

The School Education Commissioner had issued instructions to all government primary and high schools in this regard. The latest directive noted that previous instructions and warnings have been ignored, and the issue is being taken seriously. If such incidents are reported, strict action will be taken, including the filing of FIRs.

ILLNESSES, INCOME WOES

Outdoor workers reel under heatwave in Delhi

Delhi has expanded access to free drinking water in many public areas, but workers say other infrastructure, like shaded zones or cooling shelters, remains scarce



end up spending money on buying water and lemon juice.”

Highlighting the environmental factors contributing to rising temperatures, environmentalist Bhavreen Kandhari told PTI, “The expansion of concrete landscapes at the expense of tree cover has intensified the urban heat island effect, aggravating temperature to extremes.”

Kandhari suggested that a comprehensive, long-term strategy is needed that includes the protection and expansion of tree cover to enhance biodiversity and sustainable urban planning to mitigate excessive concretisation.

Meanwhile, a report by the NGO Sustainable Futures Collaborative has warned that while cities are taking short-term emergency actions like distributing water and adjusting work hours, long-term heat resilience strategies remain weak or absent.

These include occupational cooling, insurance for lost wages, heat mapping of urban hot spots and improving electricity reliability, their recently-released report suggested.

The IMD’s yellow alert also signals moderate health concerns, particularly for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, infants, and those with chronic conditions.

Narendra Shah, a 70-year-old rickshaw puller, is among the vulnerable populations most affected during heatwaves. Medical professionals have also warned that the impact of such heat exposure is often underestimated.

Dr Vivek Nangia, a senior pulmonologist, said, “First, the stage is heat cramps, second is heat exhaustion wherein people could develop dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and stage three is heat stroke, where people land up in hospitals and ICUs. It’s like a medical emergency.

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Pigeons cool off by a fountain at Jantar Mantar, in New Delhi. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a ‘yellow’ alert for the national capital, forecasting a heatwave till Wednesday

84% of 3 lakh patients screened in K’taka had low Vitamin D: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 7: Nearly 84 per cent people screened in Karnataka had low Vitamin D levels — a condition that affects immunity, metabolism and bone health — revealed the fifth edition of Health of the Nation 2025 report, launched Monday.

The all-India report prepared by Apollo Hospitals, based on health screening of over 25 lakh people across India, campaigns for preventive health. In Karnataka alone, three lakh patients were screened.

The insights are drawn from de-identified electronic medical records (EMRs) of preventive health checks, structured clinical evaluations, and AI-driven risk stratification across Apollo’s hospitals, clinics, diagnostics labs, and wellness centres, stated a press release issued by the hospital.

Dr Prathap Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals said, “Preventive healthcare is no longer a future ambition – it is the cornerstone of a nation’s well-being. This report affirms our collective responsibility to act early, screen deeply, and



empower every citizen with knowledge and access.”

According to Apollo Hospitals, preventive health checks in their affiliated institutions rose from 10 lakh in 2019 to over 25 lakh in 2024. The report has again revealed that millions in India are living with undiagnosed chronic conditions despite showing no visible symptoms, added the press release.

As per the fifth edition of the report, 26 per cent were found hypertensive and 23 per cent diabetic in India despite being as-

ymptomatic, underlining that a symptom-led healthcare model is no longer viable.

Concurrently, in Karnataka, 28 per cent were hypertensive, with 50 per cent in the pre-hypertensive range and 20 per cent diabetic and 25 per cent pre-diabetic.

“It is time to integrate preventive care into every educational curriculum, corporate benefits, and family routines. Only then, can we shift from treating illness to preserving health and ensure a resilient, healthier India for generations to come,” added Reddy.

The report also highlighted the three urgent health challenges – fatty liver disease, post-menopausal health decline, and childhood obesity.

“When 66 per cent of people screened have fatty liver, 85 per cent of them being non-alcoholic; it signals the urgency for new diagnostics and early detection at scale. Traditional screening is no longer enough,” pointed out Dr Suneeta Reddy, Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals.

Building their case for proactive engagement with preventive healthcare, the doctors said, due to cancer screenings they were able to establish that the median age for cancer detection in 2024 is a full decade earlier than global averages. According to the report, the median age for cervical cancer diagnosis was 49, for breast cancer 57 and lung cancer 61.

Based on these values, the report advocates lowering the age threshold for routine screening and driving awareness in urban and rural populations alike.

Environmentalists march

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chamarajanagar (Karnataka), April 7: Hundreds of environmentalists took out a march in this district Sunday, demanding the continuation of the night traffic ban in Bandipur National Park.

Holding placards and banners, the protesters walked from Kaggalahundi in Gundlupet to the Maddur checkpoint. Several farmers and students joined the march to support the demand.

The agitators urged the government not to give in to the Kerala government’s request to lift the ban on night-time vehicular movement, citing the safety of wild animals. The agitation received support from the Kannada Chalavali (Vatal Paksha), with its chief, Vatal Nagaraj, joining the protesters. Speaking to reporters, Nagaraj said that at a time when the tiger population in the state is dwindling, it is imperative to continue the night traffic ban in Bandipur. Bandipur is home to tigers, elephants, leopards, deer, and many other wild species.

Environmentalists fear that easing the night traffic ban could threaten several vulnerable species in Bandipur forest. The ban, in place for years, aims to prevent vehicle movement from disturbing or harming wildlife.

The Kerala government has been pushing for the ban to be lifted to facilitate smoother traffic between Kerala and Bengaluru via Mysuru and Chamarajanagar. According to environmentalist Joseph Hoover, the state government has indicated a willingness to relax the ban—an action he warns could severely harm Bandipur’s wildlife.

NIGHT TRAFFIC BAN IN BANDIPUR NATIONAL PARK



Metro to roll out India’s first 3-coach train corridor in Delhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 7: The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) is set to introduce the country’s first metro corridor designed for operations with three-coach trains on the upcoming Lajpat Nagar-Saket G Block route, officials said.

A part of Phase-IV of the Delhi Metro project, the corridor will span eight kilometer and be the second-smallest in the network, the DMRC said in a statement. The line aims to enhance last-mile connectivity and ensure seamless interchange with existing corridors, it said.

Unlike other metro lines that operate with four, six or eight coaches, the new corridor will use 3-coach trains, developed specifically for short-distance urban travel, the statement said. The smaller train configuration is expected to be a cost-effective and agile solution that ensures better frequency and operational efficiency while accommodating a significant number of daily commuters, it added.

The DMRC said the decision was based on a realistic assessment of passenger flow. While high-density routes need longer trains, the Lajpat Nagar-Saket stretch caters primarily to short-distance travellers requiring frequent and efficient services, it added. The corridor’s estimated Peak Hour Peak Direction Traffic (PHPDT) will allow for a comfortable commute without the need for overcapacity, the DMRC said.

The three-coach system is aimed at ensuring economic sustainability while maintaining high-quality urban transit standards, it said. Each coach will have a seating and standing capacity of around 300 passengers, bringing the total capacity of a three-coach train to approximately 900 passengers per trip, it added.

The corridor will have eight strategically located stations from Lajpat Nagar to Saket G Block to improve accessibility for key residential and commercial areas, the statement said. The station platforms have been designed with a length of 74 metres, optimised for three-coach train operations, it said.

“In March 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for this project. The construction work has now commenced, and the corridor is expected to be completed by 2028,” a DMRC official said.

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MOLESTATION OF TWO WOMEN

Such incidents happen in big city: K’taka Home Minister

AGENCIES

Bangalore, April 7: Reacting to the rise in incidents of sexual assaults and harassment in Bangalore during night hours, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara said Monday that “such incident happens here and there in a big city”.

He was responding to a media query about the sexual harassment case that came to light Sunday. Parameshwara said, “I have advised the Bengaluru Police Commissioner to remain vigilant every day. Police patrolling must be carried out effectively and in a disciplined manner in all localities of Bengaluru city.”

He added, “Public attention naturally gets drawn when such incidents are reported. We will not ignore them – the police department is working continuously.” The Minister further said, “Police personnel are working day and night, braving extreme weather con-

ditions. That’s why Bengaluru continues to remain peaceful.”

“Such incident happens here and there in such a big city, but we will take appropriate legal action in each case,” he stated.

“I have specifically instructed that the beat system be managed efficiently. I spoke to the Police Commissioner about this again this morning,” he reiterated.

A video showing two young women being targeted by a man in the early hours in a residential locality went viral on social media, raising serious concerns over women’s safety in Bengaluru.

The 17-second video shows two women walking down a deserted street flanked by houses on both sides. A tall, well-built man approaches from behind, pushes one of the women aside, sexually harasses the other, and then escapes. The video also captures the visibly shaken women standing briefly to catch their breath before quickly leaving the scene.



NC is against this (Waqf) Bill. We think it is unconstitutional and parties have gone to the Supreme Court... that is why (Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly) Speaker did not allow a debate as the issue has reached the Supreme Court. We are hopeful that the Supreme Court will do justice
FAROOQ ABDULLAH | NC PRESIDENT

INS SAHYADRI ARRIVES IN COLOMBO
Indian Navy warship INS Sahyadri, mission deployed in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), has arrived in Colombo on a visit, highlighting the strengthening of maritime ties between India and Sri Lanka, officials said Monday



of the day uote

The state government is making efforts to make the differently-abled financially self-reliant. We will provide them with skill training, employment and self-employment opportunities. A policy will be prepared for their employment. The Skill Development and Industries Department has been instructed to prepare a policy regarding employment and stalls



DEVENDRA FADNIS | MAHARASHTRA CM

We are aware of the incident. Our government is taking strict action and is continuously in touch with the Central government. I have instructed the health department to take strict action against such practices, if any, at other places (as well)



MOHAN YADAV | MP CM

Every section is suffering today. They are feeling cheated and are looking at the Congress with hope because democracy is being murdered. Thus, as a responsible political party, it is our duty to come forward and lead them towards light from today's darkness



PAWAN KHERRA | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

'Fake' cardiologist of MP held in Prayagraj

Bhopal/Damoh: Police Monday arrested Narendra John Camm, an alleged fake cardiologist who is being linked to death of seven patients at a missionary hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district, from adjoining Uttar Pradesh, a senior official said. On Sunday midnight, police registered a First Information Report (FIR) against the accused. The police officer said the accused will be interrogated on questions raised by the CMHO in his complaint.

6-year-old girl raped, murdered by uncle

Durg: A six-year-old girl was sexually assaulted and murdered allegedly by her uncle, who placed her body in a car in Chhattisgarh's Durg city, police said Monday. The 24-year-old accused was one of the three suspects the police had earlier detained for questioning in connection with the incident in the Mohan Nagar police station area Sunday, Durg Additional Superintendent of Police Sukhmandan Rathore told reporters.

Mysuru: BJP launches 'Janaakrosha Yatre'

Mysuru (Karnataka): The BJP Monday launched the 'Janaakrosha Yatre' (Public Anger March) from Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's home turf of Mysuru, protesting against a host of issues, including price rise and the four per cent reservation granted to Muslims in government contracts. The party plans to cover all districts in the state before culminating the yatra in Bengaluru May 4, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi said while flagging off the march.

Judicial custody of Ranya Rao extended

Bangalore: A court here Monday extended the judicial custody of Kannada actress Ranya Rao, and two others until April 21 in connection with a gold smuggling case. Ranya, businessman Tarun Raju, and jewellery dealer Sahil Jain are accused of orchestrating the illegal import of gold from Dubai to India.

Rahul's dig at govt over excise duty hike on fuel



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 7: The Congress Monday took a swipe at the government over the hike in excise duty on petrol and diesel, with Rahul Gandhi saying Prime Minister Narendra Modi finally gave a befitting reply to "tariffs".

Gandhi also said people suffering from inflation had been given another gift of "government loot". The government hiked excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹2 per litre each. The excise duty on petrol was hiked to ₹13 per litre and that on diesel to ₹10 a litre.

In a post in Hindi on X, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "Wah, Modi ji, Wah!! International crude oil prices have fallen by 41 per cent compared to May 2014 but your plundering government, instead of reducing the prices of petrol and diesel, has increased the central excise duty by ₹2 each." "You must not have been sat-

isfied after the small and big investors in the stock market lost ₹19 lakh crore in one go due to the deep 'Kumbhakaran-like' sleep on the tariff policy that your government has come to rub salt into the wounds!" he added.

Former Congress chief Gandhi also hit out at the government over the excise duty hike. He said in a post in Hindi on X, "Finally, Modi ji gave a befitting reply to 'tariffs!' Tax on petrol-diesel and gas cylinder prices were increased further."

"People suffering from inflation were given another gift of government loot!" the opposition leader in the Lok Sabha added.

While any change in taxes is normally passed on to consumers, there will be no change in the retail selling prices of petrol and diesel as the excise hike will be set off against the reduction in retail prices warranted from the fall in international oil prices. "PSU oil marketing

- Rahul Gandhi said people suffering from inflation had been given another gift of "government loot"
- The government hiked excise duty on petrol and diesel by ₹2 per litre each
- The excise duty on petrol was hiked to ₹13 per litre and that on diesel to ₹10 a litre

companies have informed that there will be no increase in retail prices of petrol and diesel, subsequent to the increase effected in excise duty rates today," the oil ministry said in a post on X.

International oil prices have slumped to their lowest since April 2021 as escalating trade tensions between the US and China stoked fears of a recession that could cut oil demand.

The government cut excise duty by ₹2 in October 2017 and by ₹1.50 a year later. But, it raised excise duty by ₹2 per litre in July 2019. It again hiked excise duty in March 2020 by ₹3 per litre each.

The excise duty was raised by ₹13 and ₹16 per litre on petrol and diesel between March 2020 and May 2020.

But in the following years, it rolled back the ₹13 and ₹16 per litre excise duty hike, as international oil prices soared. This helped bring down petrol prices from a record hike of ₹105.41 a litre in Delhi and the highest-ever diesel rate of ₹96.67.

Just before general elections were announced last year, the government had cut petrol and diesel prices by ₹2 a litre each. Petrol currently costs ₹94.77 a litre in Delhi and ₹87.67 is the price for a litre of diesel.

India, Portugal deepen ties: Murmu's visit boosts trade

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lisbon, April 7: India and Portugal have agreed to deepen bilateral ties, particularly in trade and investment, renewable energy and connectivity, as President Droupadi Murmu and her Portuguese counterpart Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa held talks here Monday.

During the talks held at the Portuguese President's official residence, Palácio de Belém, the two sides also agreed to strengthen cooperation in the United Nations and other multilateral forums. "We also discussed global and regional issues of common interest. We resolved to build further on our long-standing bilateral ties, especially in trade and investment, science and technology, information and digital technologies, renewable energy, connectivity and mobility, and to promote people-to-people contacts further," Murmu said.

Her visit comes in the backdrop of significant global economic change, with trade tariffs recently imposed by the US reshaping international commerce and India's growing engagement with Europe. Trade between India and Portugal is valued at \$1.5 billion and has been growing steadily, with a 50 per cent increase over the last five years.

A statement issued after their meeting said the two leaders discussed "all important aspects of our bilateral relationship".

President Murmu, who is on a two-day State Visit to Portugal, held a tete-a-tete with her Portuguese counterpart followed by delegation-level talks during which all matters pertaining to "mutual interests" were discussed.

"We agreed to strengthen our coordination and cooperation in the United Nations and other multilateral fora," she said.



Her visit comes in the backdrop of significant global economic change, with trade tariffs recently imposed by the US reshaping international commerce and India's growing engagement with Europe

Trade between India and Portugal is valued at USD 1.5 billion and has been growing steadily, with a 50 per cent increase over the last five years

The President said she had "a constructive and productive meeting" with President Marcelo Rebelo.

The "historic visit" is taking place 27 years after the last visit by an Indian President to Portugal at a time when both countries are celebrating 50 years of re-establishment of diplomatic relations.

The two leaders also jointly released commemorative stamps, beautifully highlighting the vibrant traditional costumes of both countries.

The stamps feature a Portuguese woman elegantly dressed in the vivid red 'Viana do Castelo' festive attire, alongside an Indian woman adorned in the intricately embroidered Black Kalbelia dress.

Murmu will also meet Prime Minister Luis Montenegro and President of the Parliament José Pedro Aguiar-Branco, and attend the ceremony of Handing over of keys to the Lisbon Cit at the Lisbon City Council.

43 youth trained at The Art of Living International Centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bangalore, April 7: The Art of Living recently trained 43 young men and women from across India in the first phase of a Security Training & Placement Program designed to empower rural youth with meaningful employment opportunities.

Held from March 17 to 25, the program brought together participants aged 18 to 35 from nine states, including West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, and Delhi. For many, this was their first time outside their hometowns—stepping into a space that offered both skills and a sense of purpose.



This unique initiative, offered under Sri Sumeru Suraksha LLP (a vertical of Sri Sumeru Realty Private Limited), focuses on preparing youth for blue-collar professions such as security services, housekeeping, driving, electrical work, and geriatric care. The program is part of a larger vision: to train 10,000 rural youth by 2026, helping bridge the employability gap and enhance financial security in underserved communities.

The training is carried out in three stages: a 10-day residential foundation module, a two-month on-the-job training (OJT) phase, and client placement support.

19-yr-old gang-raped by 23 over 6 days in Varanasi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Varanasi (UP), April 7: A 19-year-old woman was allegedly gang-raped by 23 people over six days, with the accused drugging her and taking her to several hotels as they passed her on for abuse, police said here Monday. Six of the accused have been arrested.

Additional Commissioner of Police, Cantonment, Vidush Saxena said the woman had gone out with some youths March 29. Her family filed a missing report on April 4 when she did not return home. When the police rescued her, she did not mention about the rape, he said. However, the survivor's family April 6 lodged a complaint alleging that she had been gang-raped.

The woman told the police that between March 29 and April 4, the accused allegedly took her to many hotels and hookah bars and gang-raped her, the officer said.

The police said 11 unnamed persons have also been booked. Out of 12 named accused, six were arrested Sunday, and efforts are on to nab the rest of the accused. The woman's mother in her complaint said that her daughter had gone to her friend's house March 29.

Omar's 'chance meet' with Rijiju sparks political row



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, April 7: A "chance meeting" between Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Union minister Kiren Rijiju at Asia's largest Tulip Garden here Monday triggered a political storm with opposition parties dubbing it as "Waqf law bonhomie".

Sources in the ruling National Conference said that Omar Abdullah was accompanying his father and former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah after the latter expressed a wish to visit the Tulip Garden which is in full bloom these days.

The sources said the father-son duo bumped into Rijiju, who had also come to visit

the garden early in the morning. The politicians from the opposite sides of political spectrum exchanged pleasantries before heading their separate ways, they said.

Rijiju posted the pictures with the Abdullahs on his X handle, triggering the controversy as Opposition parties accused the National Conference of laying out a red carpet for the BJP leader in the aftermath of Waqf Amendment Act.

The Opposition Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and Peoples' Conference targeted the National Conference over the meeting, and accused it of surrendering to the BJP without even a pretence over the passage of the Waqf Amendment Bill.

"Waqf Law bonhomie! So soon. Not even a pretence while the ruling party members indulge in a drama in assembly over the issue. Mr Rijiju piloted the Bill in Parliament as minority affairs minister," PDP leader Naeem Akhtar said.



MLAs raise slogans during the Budget session of the J&K Assembly, in Jammu

PTI PHOTO

SC warns of rise in criminal cases over failed relationships

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 7: The Supreme Court Monday said every consensual relationship, where a possibility of wedlock may exist, couldn't be given a "colour of a false pretext to marry" in the event of a fall out.

A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Satish Chandra Sharma observed a "growing tendency" of resorting to filing of criminal proceedings when relationships soured.

"We find that there is a growing tendency of resorting to initiation of criminal proceedings when relationships turn sour. Every consensual relationship, where a possibility of marriage may exist, cannot be given a colour of a false pretext

to marry, in the event of a fall out," it said. The observations came when the top court set aside an order of the Calcutta High Court which refused to discharge a former judicial officer in an FIR lodged in 2015 for the alleged offence of rape. The appellant before the bench was a former judicial officer who superannuated from the post of civil judge (senior division), city civil court, Calcutta.

An FIR was registered by the complainant who alleged that in 2014, during the pendency of a litigation arising out of a marital discord with her former husband, she came in touch with the appellant who was also separated from his wife.

She alleged the appellant had assured that he would marry



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

her and take complete responsibility of her and her son from the first marriage, once she was divorced. The complainant alleged that when her divorce

was finalised, the appellant started avoiding her, telling her not to contact him.

The bench said even if the allegations in the FIR and

The observations came when the top court set aside an order of the Calcutta High Court which refused to discharge a former judicial officer in an FIR lodged in 2015 for the alleged offence of rape

The appellant before the bench was a former judicial officer who superannuated from the post of civil judge (senior division), city civil court, Calcutta

chargesheet were taken at face value, it was improbable that the complainant had engaged in a physical relationship with the appellant only on account of an assurance of marriage.

Even if the relationship was considered to be based on an

offer of marriage, the woman couldn't plead "misconception of fact" or "rape on the false pretext to marry", the court said. The verdict added, "It is from day one that she had knowledge and was conscious of the fact, that the appellant was in a subsisting marriage, though separated." The bench said one might argue that the appellant was in a position of power to exert influence, however, there was nothing on record to establish "inducement" or "entice-ment".

The bench said such litigation amounted to an abuse of the process of the law, observing any further litigation would only prolong the suffering of both the parties, who were living their own separate lives.



Private schools have started their loot now that there is a BJP government in Delhi. From the very first day, they began increasing fees by a substantial margin

ATISHI | AAP LEADER

CROWN PRINCE OF DUBAI TO VISIT INDIA APRIL 8-9

The Crown Prince of Dubai, Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum, will visit India April 8-9, during which he will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, hold talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and participate in a business roundtable seeking to bolster India-UAE ties



of the day quote

Every complaint will be acted upon with certainty, and each issue will be resolved

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

The BJP government has emptied the pockets of the citizens not only by inflation and corruption but also through the great collapse of the share market

AKHILESH YADAV | SP CHIEF

We are deploying the electronic surveillance system on the borders, having two models...if anything happens (from the enemy side), you will be able to respond immediately

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

POST OF THE DAY

Thank you Smriti Irani ji for speaking against Modi 14 years ago. What a visionary lady

@TARUNSpeakss

SHORT TAKES

Indigo Flight lands due to bomb threat

Mumbai: A city-bound Indigo flight from Jaipur landed here under full emergency conditions due to a bomb threat, sources said. The flight landed safely at around 8.50 pm and the aircraft is currently parked at a remote bay as part of the security protocol, they said. There were 225 passengers in the flight, sources said. "Full emergency was declared for Indigo flight 6E 5324 from Jaipur to Mumbai of April 7 due to a bomb threat," said a source.

Running AC bus catches fire

Kolkata: A number of passengers sustained minor injuries when an air-conditioned bus caught fire while plying through Paikpara here Monday, police said. Two fire tenders were pressed into service to extinguish the blaze, which is suspected to have been caused by a short circuit, officials said.

B'lore: Techie found hanging in apartment

Bangalore: A software engineer was found hanging in his flat at Chikkabanavara in the city Monday, police said. Prashant Nair, who is suspected to have died by suicide, was working with Lenovo, police said. His wife Pooja Nair is also a software engineer. They got married 12 years ago and have an eight-year-old daughter.

Waqf law: DMK, Cong MP move SC

New Delhi: The DMK and Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi Monday challenged the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025. Till now more than 10 petitions have been filed in the top court challenging the validity of the Act. The ruling party Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu and Pratapgarhi are added to the growing numbers of petitioners, including AIMIM president Assauddin Owaisi, Congress MP Mohammad Jawed apart from the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) and Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, who have moved against the newly-enacted law.

Mamata vows to protect sacked Bengal teachers

The top court's ruling April 3 was in connection with the Calcutta High Court's order cancelling of the appointments by the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) in 2016 over an alleged school jobs-for-cash scam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 7: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Monday pledged to protect the rights of "eligible candidates" who lost their jobs after the Supreme Court verdict, and asserted that she would continue fighting for them as long as she is alive and even if it meant going to jail.

Speaking at a meeting with those who lost their jobs after the apex court verdict, Banerjee urged the affected teachers and staff to return to their respective schools and "voluntarily" resume duties.

"Even if I have to go to jail, I will keep fighting to ensure no deserving candidate is deprived of job - this is my promise, as long as I am alive," she said in an emotionally charged message at the Netaji Indoor Stadium here. Speaking at a packed gathering of affected teaching and non-teaching staffers, Banerjee said, "No one has received any termination letter yet. So continue with your work. You are free to offer voluntary service in the meantime." The top court's ruling April 3 was in connection with the Calcutta High Court's order cancelling of the appointments by the West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) in 2016 over an alleged school jobs-for-cash scam. The SC had observed that the appointments were vitiated by fraud.



Banerjee said the state administration would first seek "clarification" from the apex court, and if needed, file a review petition "to ensure the interests of eligible candidates are safeguarded". "If the clarification is not in our favour, we will make alternative arrangements within two months. No eligible candidate will be jobless. The government has not sent any termination letters. You can continue to teach voluntarily," she said.

"Who will manage the schools now? Who will handle all the other tasks? If someone is not in a position to provide jobs, they shouldn't have the authority to take them away either," the CM said. Banerjee, however, said the state government respects the top court ruling.

"We are not here to disobey the Supreme Court. We will act strictly within the legal framework. But I must say,

the administration wasn't given enough time to rectify the mistakes," she said.

She also announced the formation of a legal team comprising Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Kapil Sibal, Rakesh Dwivedi, Kalyan Banerjee and Prashant Bhushan, who would represent the state and the affected candidates in court.

"We will explore all legal avenues, including seeking clarification and modification of the judgment. We are ready with plans A, B, C, D, and E," the chief minister asserted and appealed to the aggrieved teachers to trust her government. "Continue teaching and educating without worry. If you suffer for two months now, you won't have to suffer for the next 20 years," she said.

Banerjee said the West Bengal government has plans ready to prevent any break in service for those who are eligible.

Rajasthan HC extends Asaram's interim bail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jodhpur, April 7: The Rajasthan High Court at Jodhpur Monday extended the interim bail of the self-styled godman Asaram till July 1 in a 2013 rape case.

He had surrendered in the Jodhpur Central Jail April 1 after the completion of his interim bail March 31. A division bench comprising Justices Dinesh Mehta and Vineet Kumar allowed Asaram's plea on the same conditions as laid down by the Supreme Court, which included prohibition on any sermon or gathering with his devotees.

Asaram's plea was heard April 2, in which the respondent's advocate P C Solanki objected to the reprieve and argued he had violated the bail conditions by holding sermons for the devotees at his Indore ashram. Solanki submitted in court video evidence to support his claim, following which the court sought an affidavit from Asaram.

Asaram's counsel Nishant Bora said the affidavit was submitted in the court Monday and added, "The court accepted the affidavit and granted our prayer for extension of interim bail till July 1." The self-styled godman was admitted at a private Ayurveda hospital on the night of April 1 after he surrendered in jail. The Supreme Court January 7 granted interim bail to Asaram on medical grounds till March 31 in the case. Asaram's interim bail was believed to be a major reprieve from any court he moved since his arrest in August 2013.



PM Modi ignoring TN's demand: Stalin



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 7: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin Monday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of ignoring Tamil Nadu's demand for resolving the fishermen issue and claimed that he did not seem to have taken up Katchatheevu islet retrieval with Sri Lanka during his recent visit there.

Modi has also not initiated measures to have the Tamil Nadu fishermen and their fishing boats released, Stalin said in the Assembly.

Stalin said, "This only shows that Tamil Nadu's demand for retrieving Katchatheevu has been ignored. It does not appear that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who went to Sri Lanka, raised the fishermen's release, too." "This is regrettable and disappointing," he added. On Saturday, in his meeting with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, Modi had pitched for resolving the fishermen issue between the two countries with a humane approach, and Sri Lanka released 14 Indian fishermen as a special gesture the next day. Leader of the Opposition

AIADMK and former Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami lashed out at the Chief Minister accusing him of 'blaming others' on Katchatheevu eyeing the next Assembly election to the state. "Katchatheevu was ceded to Sri Lanka in 1974 when the DMK was in power. It was the DMK that betrayed Tamil Nadu. But, the CM is blaming others with an eye on the next Assembly election," Palaniswami told reporters outside the Assembly.

"They are the ones who created the problem. They are the ones who are diverting it now," the former CM said. In the House, Stalin said although the Centre has 'let down' the fishermen, his government would continue to strive for their welfare. He announced a slew of schemes including a fishing harbour at Thanjachimadam, in Rameswaram, for ₹150 crore. A special programme to provide training including seaweed farming to 7,000 people, training to 15,300 fishermen to prepare fish and fish-based value-added products, training to 14,000 beneficiaries for mushroom farming and tourist boat operation at a cost of ₹53 crore, were among the initiatives announced by Stalin.

SNIPPETS

ED searches TN realty group started by DMK leader's kin

CHENNAI: The Enforcement Directorate Monday searched multiple premises spread across Chennai, Tiruchirappalli and Coimbatore as part of an investigation against a real estate group promoted by the brother of state minister and senior DMK leader, K N Nehru, official sources said. The realty company -- TVH Group -- was founded by KN Ravichandran. The federal probe agency has conducted searches as part of a probe linked to the TVH group, the sources said. Ravichandran is the brother of KN Nehru, the Tamil Nadu minister for municipal administration.

Badlapur accused death: HC says prima facie offence disclosed

MUMBAI: The Bombay High Court Monday ordered an FIR against five policemen for the custodial death of Badlapur sexual assault case accused Akshay Shinde, who was allegedly shot in a police van, and setting up of an SIT, noting that a prima facie offence is disclosed. A division bench rapped the Maharashtra government for its "reluctance" to lodge an FIR, stating that such action undermines the state's legitimacy and the common man's faith in the criminal justice system. When a prima facie offence is disclosed, it is mandatory to lodge a case, the bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Neela Gokhale noted.

'Traitor' jibe: Kamra moves Bombay HC against FIR

MUMBAI: Stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra has moved the Bombay High Court, seeking to quash an FIR lodged against him by the city police for allegedly passing a "traitor" jibe at Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. The continuation of the case would be a frontal attack on a "citizen's constitutional right to freedom of speech and expression," Kamra said.



Members of Blind Persons Association stage a protest outside the secretariat, in Shimla

We all live in glass houses and no one has clean windows!

Governments are greedy—whether it is for power, pelf, or public wealth. Give them a land to helm, and they seek the world to overwhelm. Turn the gaze yonder, and the most powerful come into view. Turn it nearer home, and watch the executive straining every nerve and sinew!

How else would one explain the Supreme Court coming into sharp focus for the second week running? The judgment came April 2.

"Prayagraj demolitions inhuman, illegal, shock conscience; orders ₹10 lakh for each," screamed national headlines. At the receiving end of the Supreme Court's wrath was the Yogi Adityanath government and the Prayagraj civic body. "The act of demolition was not only illegal but also violative of the most important fundamental right—the right to shelter," ruled a Supreme Court bench of Justice AS Oka and Justice Ujjal Bhuyan.

The harshest possible words flowed from the highest court of the land: "Unconstitutional, inhuman, this shocks our conscience, high-handed demolition—whither due process of law?" The anguish was writ large in the judgment, enough to make heads hang and hearts hurt. Did it?

The homes of an advocate, a professor, and three others—including two women—were razed by authorities March 7, 2021, following a mistaken identification that these stood on land belonging to the late gangster-politician Atiq Ahmed. The houses had been demolished at a day's notice, with the notice simply affixed to the walls of the properties.

"This affixing business must stop," said the court, terming the demolition a high-handed act, while ordering compensation of ₹10 lakhs to each of the affected homeowners. The appellants had approached the Supreme Court after the Allahabad High Court rejected their petition challenging the UP government's decision. The apex court's judgment came more than four years later.

In a country that took decades to switch from manual digging to machines for such a basic task, bulldozers have emerged as symbols of a nation on the move.

To monk-politician Adityanath, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, goes the distinction of weaponising this machine to deliver staccato bursts of instant, retributive justice. Bulldozing is now a brute form—with law as bait—and it has earned him the sobriquet 'Bulldozer Baba'. The 2022



Vidhan Sabha elections in Gujarat were marked by the deployment of both bulldozers and the BJP's rhetoric in election campaigning. Adityanath April 21, 2024 was given a unique guard of honour—by a horde of bulldozers—when he went to Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh for electioneering. The weaponisation of the bulldozer and its use for instant political justice may have begun in Uttar Pradesh but has rapidly proliferated across the country—more so in BJP-ruled states, where vote-cleaving is an accepted strategy.

Virtually addressing students of Columbia Law School April 4, Justice AS Oka of the Supreme Court said that even after 75 years, hate speech remains rampant. "In the court, we come across cases where these hate speeches are mostly against religious minorities or castes in the minority—

oppressed classes like the Scheduled Castes," he noted.

He also expressed great concern over the rising trend of hate speech for political reasons. Interestingly, it was April 1 that Delhi's Law and Justice Minister, Kapil Mishra, found himself in the dock, as a Delhi court directed the registration of an FIR based on a complaint alleging his role in the 2020 riots in Northeast Delhi. It's a work in progress—and there's lots more to follow.

The bulldozer brand of justice being propagated by the political class—with colluding enthusiasts from the country's corroded steel frame as willing handmaidens—may be advantageous in the short run but is causing grievous harm in the long one. The politician in power is increasingly getting accustomed to playing "I am the law, judge, jury, and executioner."

"As things stand, one person holds all the power to determine guilt, deliver verdict, and carry out punishment—the outcome is anybody's guess," points out a retired civil servant. He should know—for the list of those who once did the bidding of their political masters in Gujarat, but ended up behind bars after they refused to go along, is fairly long.

Notwithstanding the Supreme Court's stern stand, the Gujarat Police is hard at work preparing a list of "anti-socials," and, by official admission, had come up with 7,612 names. The list includes 3,264 bootleggers, 516 booked for gambling, 948 involved in property-related crimes, 179 in illegal mining, and 545 booked for assorted offenses.

An official statement from the state police says these individuals are under watch and that their illegal constructions, encroachments, and electricity connections are under scrutiny. Additionally, 59 of them have been booked under the Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act (PASA), 724 placed under preventive detention, and 12 illegal constructions demolished.

Information corroborated from major cities in the state suggests that the demolition of "illegal" establishments has already begun as part of a follow-up to the DGP's directive dated March 15. Police are said to be coordinating with civic bodies to "discipline anti-socials" through demolitions—or any other means—to instill the fear of law.

Nevertheless, a look inside their own clothing would do the cops a world of good. We all live in glass houses, and no one has clean windows!



To hold elections in 2026 without Jair Bolsonaro, is to negate democracy

JAIR BOLSONARO | FORMER PRESIDENT, BRAZIL

TRIBUTE TO WAR HEROES

Japan's Emperor Naruhito Monday visited Iwo Jima to pay tribute to those who died on the island where one of World War II's harshest battles was fought 80 years ago.



of the day quote

We are in constant consultations with our Iranian partners, including on the topic of the nuclear deal. Russia is ready to make every effort, to do everything possible to contribute to this problem's resolution by political and diplomatic means

DMITRY PESKOV | SPOKESMAN, KREMLIN

I am confident that within four to five years at the latest, we will achieve food self-sufficiency. We must be self-sufficient in energy and we have the capacity to achieve this

PRABOWO SUBIANTO | PRESIDENT, INDONESIA

I would like to reaffirm France's commitment to ensuring the stability of Egypt given the context of a worsening climate in the region and as the Egyptian economy faces challenges

EMMANUEL MACRON | PRESIDENT, FRANCE

TRUMP TARIFFS

EU prefers to talk than fight

Worries deepen about whether US President Donald Trump's trade war will torpedo the global economy

REUTERS

Luxembourg, April 7: European Union ministers broadly agreed Monday to prioritise negotiations to remove tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump over retaliation even as it prepared a first set of targeted countermeasures.

The 27-nation bloc faces 25% import tariffs on steel and aluminium and cars and "reciprocal" tariffs of 20% from Wednesday for almost all other goods under Trump's policy to hit countries he says impose high barriers to US imports.

Ministers overseeing trade met in Luxembourg on Monday to debate the EU's response, as well as discuss relations with China. Many said the priority was to launch negotiations and avert an outright trade war.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told a press conference in Brussels that the EU stood ready to negotiate a "zero-for-zero" tariff pact for industrial goods.

Talks with Washington to date have proven difficult. EU Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic described his two-



- EU to approve retaliation against steel and aluminium tariffs
EU ministers debate response to broader US tariffs
France says EU must consider tools that could hit US services

We need to remain calm and respond in a way that de-escalates. The stock markets right now show what will happen if we escalate straightaway. But we will be prepared to take countermeasures if needed to get the Americans at the table

REINETTE KLEVER | TRADE MINISTER, THE NETHERLANDS

hour exchange with US counterparts Friday as "frank" as he told them their tariffs were "damaging, unjustified".

The bloc is likely to approve this week an initial set of countermeasures on up to \$28 billion of US imports ranging from dental floss to diamonds, in response to Trump's steel and aluminium tariffs rather than the broader reciprocal levies.

But even that move has proven fraught, with Trump threatening a 200% counter-tariff on

billion) in 2024, against 532 billion euros of EU exports.

French Trade Minister Laurent Saint-Martin said there should be no taboos, including the EU's Anti-Coercion Instrument (ACI), which would allow it to target US services or to limit US companies' access to public procurement tenders in the EU.

"We cannot exclude any options on goods or services and, however we approach it, open the box to the European tool which is very comprehensive and which can be extremely aggressive," he said.

Simon Harris, foreign minister of Ireland, almost a third of whose exports go to the US, described the ACI as "very much the nuclear option" and said he believed the majority view in the EU was not to go near it, at least for now.

German Economy Minister Robert Habeck, whose Greens will not be part of the next governing coalition, said the EU should realise it was in a strong position - if it was united.

"The stock markets are already collapsing and the damage could become even greater... America is in a position of weakness," he said in Luxembourg. Habeck added that Trump lieutenant Elon Musk's hope of zero tariffs between Europe and the United States reflected this point.

But he added, regarding countermeasures: "If we have

Dragon accuses US of economic bullying

Bangkok: China Monday accused the US of unilateralism, protectionism and economic bullying with tariffs, while calling on representatives of American companies, including Tesla, to "take concrete actions" to resolve the issue.



every (EU) country coming out saying they have a problem here with red wine and there

with whiskey and here with pistachios, then we will end up with nothing."

SHORT TAKES

US sees worst measles outbreak in decades

Houston: A second unvaccinated child has died from measles in Texas, as the United States confronts its worst outbreak of the disease in more than 30 years.

Pak detains over 5K Afghan nationals

Lahore: Pakistan's Punjab government has detained over 5,000 Afghan nationals from different parts of the province to deport them to their home country.

PROTEST PRESSURE

Serbia's prez taps novice PM

REUTERS

Belgrade, April 7: Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic has nominated a politically inexperienced medical professor, Djuro Macut, to become prime minister after the previous occupant resigned during anti-government protests.

Demonstrations have spiralled since the collapse of a railway station roof in November killed 16 people, with protesters denouncing government corruption and incompetence in the biggest challenge to Vucic's 12-year grip on power.

The government denies the accusations and says Western intelligence agencies are backing a push to destabilise the Balkan nation of 6.6 million people.



Vucic announced his nominee in a public address late Sunday, saying Macut needs to propose a cabinet for a new government to be formed by April 18.

Opposition parties scoffed at Macut's nomination, saying he would be a figurehead for Vucic.

Rana's plea for extradition stay junked

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, April 7: The US Supreme Court has rejected 26/11 Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Rana's appeal seeking a stay on his extradition to India, moving him closer to being handed over to Indian authorities to face justice.

Rana, 64, a Canadian national of Pakistani origin, is currently lodged at a metropolitan detention centre in Los Angeles.

He is known to be associated with Pakistani-American terrorist David Coleman Headley, one of the main conspirators of the 26/11 attacks.

Rana had submitted an 'Emergency Application For



Stay Pending Litigation of Petition For Writ of Habeas Corpus' on February 27, 2025, with Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States and Circuit Justice for the Ninth Circuit Elena Kagan.

26/11 MUMBAI ATTACK ACCUSED

'Emergency Application for Stay Pending Litigation of Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus previously addressed to Justice Kagan', and requested that the renewed application be directed to US Chief Justice John Roberts.

renewed application had been "distributed for Conference" on April 4 and the "application" has been "referred to the Court."

A notice on the Supreme Court website Monday said that "Application denied by the Court."

Rana was convicted in the US of one count of conspiracy to provide material support to the terrorist plot in Denmark and one count of providing material support to Pakistan-based terrorist organisation Lashker-e-Taiba which was responsible for the attacks in Mumbai.

New York-based Indian-American attorney Ravi Batra had told PTI that Rana had made his application to the Supreme Court to prevent extradition, which Justice Kagan denied on March 6.

Iran-backed militias in Iraq ready to disarm

REUTERS

Baghdad, April 7: Several powerful Iranian-backed militia groups in Iraq are prepared to disarm for the first time to avert the threat of an escalating conflict with the US Trump administration, 10 senior commanders and Iraqi officials told Reuters.

The move to defuse tensions follows repeated warnings issued privately by US officials to the Iraqi government since Trump took power in January,



according to the sources who include six local commanders of four major militias.

The officials told Baghdad that unless it acted to disband the militias operating on its

Talks advanced between Iraq PM and militia chiefs - politician

Militias form key pillar of Iran's weakened Axis of Resistance

Groups have attacked Israel and US forces with rockets, drones

soil, America could target the groups with airstrikes, the people added.

Izzat al-Shahbandar, a senior Shi'ite Muslim politician close to Iraq's governing alliance, told Reuters that discussions between Prime Minister Mo-

ammed Shia al-Sudani and several militia leaders were "very advanced", and the groups were inclined to comply with US calls for disarmament.

The militias are part of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of about 10 hardline Shi'ite armed factions that collectively command about 50,000 fighters and arsenals that include long-range missiles and anti-aircraft weapons, according to two security officials who monitor militias' activities.

RESCUE OPS WIND DOWN

Myanmar's earthquake death toll exceeds 3,500

The 7.7 magnitude quake hit a wide swath of the country, causing significant damage to six regions and states

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bangkok, April 7: Long-shot efforts to find survivors from Myanmar's devastating March 28 earthquake were winding down Monday, as rescue efforts were supplanted by increasing relief and recovery activity, with the death toll from the disaster surpassing 3,500 and still climbing.

In the capital, Naypyitaw, people cleared debris and collected wood from their damaged houses under drizzling rain, and soldiers removed wreckage at some Buddhist monasteries.

Myanmar Fire Services Department said Monday that rescue teams had recovered 10 bodies from the rubble of a collapsed building in Mandalay, Myanmar's second biggest city.

It said international rescuers from Singapore, Malaysia and India had returned to their countries after their work to find survivors was considered completed.

The number of rescue teams operating in the residential areas of Naypyitaw has been steadily decreasing.



The 7.7 magnitude quake hit a wide swath of the country, causing significant damage to six regions and states. The earthquake left many areas without power, telephone or cell connections and damaged roads and bridges, making the full extent of the devastation hard to assess.

Heavy rains and winds disrupted rescue and relief operations Saturday night and added to the misery of the homeless forced to sleep in the open. The weather forecast for this week said scattered showers and thunderstorms are possible across the country.

Myanmar's military government and its battlefield opponents, meanwhile, have been trading accusations over alleged violations of ceasefire declarations each had declared to ease earthquake relief efforts.

EXPANDING BUFFER ZONE

Palestinians get squeezed into shrinking wedges of land

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tel Aviv, April 7: Israel has dramatically expanded its footprint in the Gaza Strip since relaunching its war against Hamas last month. It now controls more than 50 per cent of the territory and is squeezing Palestinians into shrinking wedges of land.

The largest contiguous area the army controls is around the Gaza border, where the military has razed Palestinian homes, farmland and infrastructure to the point of uninhabitability, according to Israeli soldiers and rights groups.

Israel now controls half of Gaza

This military buffer zone has doubled in size in recent weeks. Israel has depicted its tightening grip as a temporary necessity to pressure Hamas into releasing the remaining hostages taken during the October 7, 2023, attack that started the war.

But the land Israel holds, which includes a corridor that divides the territory's north from south, could be used for wielding long-term control, human rights groups and Gaza experts say.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last week that even after Hamas is defeated, Israel will keep security control in Gaza and push Palestinians to leave.

"They destroyed everything they could, they shot every-



thing that looks functioning... (the Palestinians) will have nothing to come back, they will not come back, never," a soldier deployed with a tank squad guarding the demolition teams said. He and four other soldiers spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

A report documenting the accounts of soldiers who were in the buffer zone was released

Monday by Breaking The Silence, an anti-occupation veterans group. A handful of soldiers - including some who also spoke to AP - described watching the army turn the zone into a vast wasteland.

"Through widespread, deliberate destruction, the military laid the groundwork for future Israeli control of the area," said the group.

The demolition close to the Israeli border and the systematic expansion of the buffer zone has been going on since the war began 18 months ago

Asked about the soldiers' accounts, the Israeli army said it is acting to protect its country and especially to improve security in southern communities devastated by the October 7 attack, in which some 1,200 people were killed and 251 taken hostage. The army said it does not seek to harm civilians in Gaza, and that it abides by international law.



We are committed towards the EV segment from the supply chain localisation point of view and charging infrastructure point of view as well. We are confident about the future of EVs in India

TARUN GARG | HYUNDAI MOTOR INDIA
WHOLE TIME DIRECTOR AND COO

RUPEE DROPS 32 PAISE

The rupee declined 32 paise to settle at 85.76 against the US dollar Monday amid the wide-spread global turbulence over escalated tariff war and fear of a global economic slowdown. A steep decline in crude prices and a weaker American currency failed to arrest the fall in domestic currency due to the withdrawal rush by foreign as well as domestic equity investors, forex traders said.



of the day quote

We've been in regular consultation with manufacturers in India. That is something that we are speaking to them on an ongoing basis. They are not overly concerned right now, but it also depends on how this whole situation plays out. It's a dynamic situation

S KRISHNAN | ELECTRONICS AND IT SECRETARY

Cochin Shipyard Limited stands as the pride of India, a testament to our indigenous shipbuilding excellence and self-reliance

SARBAMANDA SONOWAL | UNION MINISTER

India's healthcare sector is entering a new era where technology and talent are driving transformative change. Our latest data highlights a sharp rise in demand for roles across AI, digital health, and informatics, reflecting a sector-wide pivot toward innovation and patient-centric care

V SURESH | FOUNDIR CEO

Tariff impact: India's exports to US could decline by \$5.76bn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 7: India's merchandise exports to the US from sectors such as marine items, gold, electrical, and electronics are expected to decline by USD 5.76 billion this year due to increased American duties, according to the data analysis of think tank GTRI.

However, it added that India's competitive position in select product segments may help cushion some of the losses.

Sectors which can witness modest gains include textiles made-up, apparel, ceramic products, inorganic chemicals, and pharmaceuticals.

The US has announced an additional 26 per cent duty on Indian goods barring pharma, semiconductors and certain energy goods from April 9. The 10 per cent baseline tariffs are there from April 5-8.

"Using detailed trade data and tariff schedules, the analysis estimates that India could see a decline of USD 5.76 billion, or 6.41 per cent, in exports to the US in 2025," Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

In 2024, India exported USD 89.81 billion worth of goods to the US.

It said that several key product groups are likely to see reductions. Exports of fish and crustaceans may fall by 20.2 per cent; iron or steel articles by 18 per cent; diamonds, gold products by 15.3 per cent; vehicle and parts exports by 12.1 per cent; and electrical, telecom, and electronic products may decline by 12 per cent.

Other categories such as plastics, carpets, petroleum products, organic chemicals, and machinery are also expected to be negatively impacted, it added.



The study has evaluated sector-specific exposure, changes in tariff rates, and competitive dynamics involving key players like China, Mexico, and Canada.

According to the Delhi-based think tank, energy products, including petroleum, solar panels, and pharmaceuticals as well as copper, have been exempted from country-specific tariffs.

These high-value items accounted for USD 20.4 billion or 22.7 per cent of India's exports to the US in 2024. They will continue to face only the standard MFN (Most Favoured Nation) tariff.

Key industrial goods such as steel, aluminum, automobiles, and auto parts will face a 25 per cent tariff. These represent USD 2.2 billion, or 2.5 per cent of India's total exports to America, with no change to their MFN status.

"However, the largest impact falls on the remaining basket of goods. These exports valued at USD 67.2 billion or 74.8 per cent of total trade. They will now be hit with a 26 per cent tariff. While MFN tariffs still apply, this sweeping hike is

expected to reshape trade dynamics across a wide range of industries," GTRI Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

Explaining in detail, he said India's exports of electronics and smartphones to the United States reached USD 14.4 billion in 2024, accounting for a significant 35.8 per cent of its global shipments in this category.

While the average import duty on these products is just 0.4 per cent, Indian goods are now set to face a steep duty, raising concerns about the competitiveness of its exports in the American market, it said, adding India currently ranks as the fourth-largest supplier of electronics and smartphones to the US, behind China, Mexico, and Vietnam, with a 6.68 per cent share.

"We estimate that the impact of the tariff hike (on electronics and smartphones) could reduce India's exports to the US by 12 per cent, or roughly USD 1.78 billion," he said, adding India's exports of machinery and mechanical appliances are likely to decrease by 2 per cent or by USD 142.1 million in 2025.

These exports from India stood at USD 7.1 billion in 2024.

Automobile retail sales rise 6% in FY25: FADA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 7: Automobile retail sales in India rose 6 per cent to 2,61,43,943 units in FY25 with rural areas performing better than urban regions across passenger vehicle and two-wheeler segments, dealers' body FADA said Monday.

The last financial year saw growth in sales of passenger vehicles, two-wheelers and three-wheelers.

Registrations of commercial vehicles and tractors however saw a dip in FY25 as compared to FY24.

Overall retail sales stood at 2,45,58,437 units in the 2023-24 fiscal.

As per FADA, passenger vehicle retail sales witnessed an increase of 5 per cent to 41,53,432 units last fiscal as compared to 39,60,602 units in FY24.

Two-wheeler registrations rose 8 per cent to 1,88,77,812 units as compared to 1,75,27,115 units in 2023-24 fiscal.

"FY25 truly showcased how adaptable and resilient India's auto retail sector can be... Key highlight this year was the strong performance in rural areas," FADA President CS Vigneshwar said in a statement.

In the two-wheeler space, rural markets grew by 8 per cent, comfortably outpacing the urban growth, he added.

In the passenger vehicle vertical, rural sales growth stood at 8 per cent as compared to 3 per cent in urban areas, he said.

Three-wheeler sales rose 5 per cent to 12,20,981 units last fiscal as compared to FY24.

Three-wheelers saw a rural growth of 9 per cent last fiscal as compared to flat sales growth in cities.

Commercial vehicle sales declined marginally to 10,08,623 units last fiscal as compared to 10,10,324 units in the 2023-24 fiscal.

Tractor sales declined 1 per

cent year-on-year to 8,92,410 units last fiscal as against 8,83,095 units in FY24.

The industry body said that dealers across India are cautiously optimistic looking ahead to FY26, with FADA projecting mid- to high single-digit growth in the two-wheeler segment and low single-digit growth for both PV and CV segments.

Many dealers pin their hopes on a combination of upcoming model launches and renewed interest in electric vehicles, it said.

"Yet, significant headwinds dampen overall optimism. Financing remains a persistent challenge...dealers note that credit norms have tightened in recent months, and the need for further rate cuts by the RBI to bring down borrowing costs," it added. Adding to the uncertainty is the looming spectre of a global tariff war, which could spark stock market turbulence and erode returns on mutual fund SIPs, FADA said.

If investors see their disposable incomes shrink in tandem with market volatility, discretionary spending - like auto purchases - may well suffer, it added.

Within the PV segment, new launches and strategic marketing can offer a lift, but widespread concerns remain about subdued consumer sentiment, it noted.

In the CV segment, the dealers expect only a modest pickup in segments like school buses and passenger carriers while freight demand remains patchy, FADA stated.

"Overall, despite the prospect of incremental growth, lingering caution colours the outlook for FY26 as the health of the auto sector will hinge on how effectively stakeholders manage financing challenges, adapt to a shifting global trade environment and better inventory management," it added.

Gold tumbles ₹1,550 on trade war fears



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 7: Gold prices tumbled by ₹1,550 to ₹91,450 per 10 grams in the national capital Monday amid heavy selling by jewellers and stockists as well as weak global trend, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

On Friday, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had finished at ₹93,000 per 10 grams.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity plunged by ₹1,550 to ₹91,000 per 10 grams. It had closed at ₹92,550 per 10 grams in the previous market close.

"Gold price slipped...on Monday as panic selling in the equity market and other asset classes continues to weigh down on safe-haven precious metals," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

Continuing the losing streak for the fifth consecutive day, silver prices slumped by ₹3,000 to ₹92,500 per kg from Friday's closing level of ₹95,500 per kg.

In the past five sessions, the metal had tanked by ₹10,500 per kg.

On the global front, spot gold fell USD 10.16 or 0.33 per cent to USD 3,027.20 per ounce.

"Sentiment remained cautious with investors looking for further clarity from the US on its next course of action, especially amid escalating trade tensions," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency at LKP Securities, said.

PNB's new Zonal Manager



Bhubaneswar: Bhushan Sharma, General Manager, has joined as the new Zonal Manager of Punjab National Bank, Bhubaneswar Zone. Prior to this, he was working as Circle Head of Panipat Circle. Sharma started his career in 1995 in Oriental Bank of Commerce. During his successful journey he has worked in different capacities of the Bank in different geographies - Shamli, Panipat, Chandigarh, Ludhiana, Dubai, Bangalore, Kochi and Kanpur. PNB, the second largest nationalized bank, has a wide network of 5 circles and 346 branches across the Odisha. Sharma emphasised on expanding the branch network in the state and increasing the Bank's presence on the digital banking landscape of the state.

After Trump, EU seeks zero tariff from India on car imports

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 7: The European Union wants India to eliminate tariffs on car imports under a long-pending trade deal and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is willing to sweeten its current proposal to seal the talks, sources told Reuters.

India is open to the phased reduction of tariffs to 10% from more than 100%, two industry sources and a government official said. That is despite industry lobbying for India to retain at least a 30% tariff even if it starts reducing the levy, and also not tinker with import duties on EVs for four more years to protect domestic players.

The EU's demands come weeks after US President Donald Trump's administration sought a similar elimination of import duties on cars, including EVs, as part of bilateral trade talks with India, piling pressure on domestic carmakers.

Tariff cuts will be a victory for European carmakers such



as Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz and BMW, widening their access to India. It could also be a win for Elon Musk's Tesla which will begin sales of imported EVs in India this year probably from its Berlin plant.

"EU has come back asking for a better deal and India wants to make a better offer," said one of the industry sources.

India's commerce ministry conveyed the EU's demands and India's stance to officials from the heavy industries ministry and auto industry representa-

tives in a meeting last week, the three sources said.

The sources, who have knowledge of the talks, spoke on condition of anonymity because the negotiations are ongoing and private.

The European Commission declined to comment on specifics but shared a readout of its last round of talks with India in March.

"For many of the key areas, the EU and India have different approaches, objectives... This translates, in some cases, in different levels of ambition," Olof Gill, commission spokesperson for trade said in a statement.

India's commerce ministry and the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), which represents major carmakers on the world's third-largest car market, did not respond to emails seeking comment.

India's 4 million-unit-a-year car market is one of the most protected in the world and domestic carmakers have argued sharp tariff cuts would wipe out investment in local manufacturing by making imports cheaper.

Companies such as Tata Motors and Mahindra & Mahindra have especially lobbied against lowering import tariffs on EVs, saying it would hurt a sector in which they have invested heavily and in which they plan to pump more money.

Similar to its proposal to the U.S., India's auto industry has proposed an immediate reduction of tariffs on a limited number of petrol cars to 70% from more than 100% and then

carrying out cuts in phases to 30%. On EVs, carmakers want no tariff cuts until 2029 followed by a phased reduction on limited imports to 30%, the sources said.

While it was not immediately clear if India had already made its 10% tariff offer to the EU, analysts expect both sides to be more flexible in negotiations given the threat of a global trade war and recessionary impact of Trump's hefty tariff increases.

India and the EU have been in trade talks for several years and in February agreed to conclude the deal by the end of the year as they look to soften the impact of tariffs.

Antonio Costa, president of the European Council, said last week on social media platform X that it was time to "decisively advance in negotiations with India."

"If the EU is now feeling pressure to strike a deal with India we need to see how we can capitalise on that. It's all about leverage," said the first industry source.

Tariff storm ravages Magnificent Seven as Apple nears 1-yr low

REUTERS

New York, April 7: The "Magnificent Seven" stocks sank Monday, extending a market rout that has wiped off around \$2 trillion from their combined value as investors worry about the financial fallout of U.S. President Donald Trump's global tariff war.

The latest slide followed cuts in price target for Apple and Tesla shares from one of Wall Street's most bullish tech analysts, Dan Ives, who warned of a "tariff economic armageddon".

The cuts came as Trump doubled down on tariffs Sunday, telling investors to endure the consequences and ruling out trade talks with China for now.

Tesla shares slumped 7% to \$223, leading losses among the

"Magnificent Seven" - a group of high-performing tech stocks that powered Wall Street's rally for years but whose fortunes have taken a turn for the worse in the last few months.

The companies have collectively shed more than \$6 trillion in market value since their peak in late 2024.

Apple, Alphabet, and Microsoft were trading around one-year lows, with the iPhone maker falling 4.8%, while other "Mag 7" members fell between 1.5% and 4.8%.

The group has accounted for a large chunk of the more than \$5 trillion the S&P 500 index has lost in value over the past two trading sessions.

Wedbush analyst Ives said as a U.S. tech company Apple has the biggest exposure to Ameri-



can tariffs on Chinese goods as most iPhones are assembled in China.

He said the trade war would also deepen Tesla's challenges as the electric automaker grap-

ple with a growing brand crisis sparked by CEO Elon Musk's support of President Trump and far-right politics in Europe.

The warning underscores growing fears that tariffs could

squeeze margins and disrupt supply chains at a time when several technology companies are facing scrutiny over their big AI spending.

Ives cut his target for Tesla shares to \$315 from \$550, which was one of the highest on Wall Street. His new target is still nearly \$100 above the stock's latest trading price.

On Apple, Ives slashed his target by \$75 to \$250, calling the tariffs "a complete disaster" for the tech giant, which may have to raise U.S. iPhone prices to protect its lofty margins.

Apple had secured exemptions to U.S. tariffs on China during Trump's first term, but analysts are unsure if it can secure waivers this time despite announcing \$500 billion in U.S. investments over the next four years.

The company has for years kept the starting price of its iPhone Pro model at \$1,000. "The concept of making iPhones in the U.S. is a non-starter in our view at \$1,000," Ives said in a note. "Price points would move up so dramatically it's hard to comprehend."

On Tesla, which could be headed for another year of sales declines after a dismal first-quarter deliveries report, Ives said the trade tensions could push buyers in China to domestic rivals.

"The backlash from Trump tariff policies in China and Musk's association will be hard to understate and this will further drive Chinese consumers to buy domestic such as BYD," he said in a note published separately.

RCB pip MI in high-scoring fight

Patidar and Co beat Mumbai Indians by 12 runs to end winless streak at Wankhede

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 7: Royal Challengers Bengaluru survived a massive scare from a doughty Mumbai Indians to end their six-match winless streak at the Wankhede Stadium with a 12-run victory in the Indian Premier League Monday.

Set a daunting target of 222, Mumbai Indians staged a stunning late recovery to turn the tables on their opponents but the task proved too difficult in the end for the hosts, who have not lost a game here against RCB since 2015.

Kohli completes 13,000 runs to move into uncharted territory for any Indian in the format in a little over 400 matches

Mumbai Indians were reeling at 99 for four with their pursuit falling apart with the dismissal of Suryakumar Yadav (28), but skipper Hardik Pandya (42 off 15 balls) and Tilak Varma (56 off 29 balls) launched a stunning onslaught to bring them back into the contest.

Hardik went hammer and tongs while hitting three fours and four sixes, while Tilak also fought his way back into form, but the target proved far too much for Mumbai Indians who were again ordinary with the bat for a large part in their chase.

Rohit Sharma (17) was cleaned up by Yash Dayal (2/46) while swinging across an in-swinging delivery and MI's best batter Suryakumar struggled during his 28-run knock for which he consumed 26 balls.

On the other hand, Tilak brought up his maiden fifty of the season off 26 balls to make



IPL POINT TABLE

TEAM	M	W	L	NRR	PTS
DC	3	3	0	1.257	6
GT	4	3	1	1.031	6
RCB	4	3	1	1.015	6
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	5	1	4	-0.101	2
CSK	4	1	3	-0.891	2
SRH	5	1	4	-1.629	2

SCORECARD

Royal Challengers Bengaluru:

Phil Salt b Boult 4, Virat Kohli c Naman Dhir b Pandya 67, Devdutt Padikkal c Jacks b Puthur 37, Rajat Patidar c Ricketlon b Boult 64, Liam Livingstone c Bumrah b Pandya 0, Jitesh Sharma not out 40, Tim David not out 1. **Extras:** (LB-1, W-7) 8; **Total:** (For 5 wkts, 20 overs) 221; **Fall of wkts:** 1-4, 2-95, 3-143, 4-144, 5-213; **Bowling:** Trent Boult 4-0-57-2, Deepak Chahar 2-0-29-0, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-29-0, Will Jacks 1-0-10-0, Mitchell Santner 4-0-40-0, Hardik Pandya 4-0-45-2, Vignesh Puthur 1-0-10-1.

Mumbai Indians:

Rohit Sharma b Yash Dayal 17, Ryan Rickelton lbw b Hazlewood 17, Will Jacks c Kohli b Pandya 22, Suryakumar Yadav c Livingstone b Yash Dayal 28, Tilak Varma c Salt b Kumar 56, Hardik Pandya c Livingstone b Hazlewood 42, Naman Dhir c Yash Dayal b Pandya 11, Mitchell Santner c David b Pandya 8, Deepak Chahar c David b Pandya 0, Trent Boult not out 0, Jasprit Bumrah not out 0. **Extras:** (LB-1, W-6) 7; **Total:** (For 9 wkts, 20 overs) 209; **Fall of wkts:** 1-21, 2-38, 3-79, 4-99, 5-188, 6-194, 7-203, 8-203, 9-209; **Bowling:** Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-48-1, Yash Dayal 4-0-46-2, Josh Hazlewood 4-0-37-2, Suyash Sharma 4-0-32-0, Krunal Pandya 4-0-45-4.

a comeback after being retired out in the last game.

The fortunes swung when Hardik clobbered two sixes and as many fours off his first four balls off Krunal Pandya in the 14th over. Before Hardik cut loose, Tilak had raced to 30 off 15 balls to keep MI's faint hopes alive, which kept improving with every hit that the batters

unleashed.

In the final over, MI needed 19 runs to win but Krunal Pandya (4/45) took three wickets to shut the doors on them.

Earlier, RCB rode on scintillating fifties from Virat Kohli (67) and skipper Rajat Patidar (64) to post 221 for five.

Kohli ruled the roost with a 42-ball 67 which gave RCB early impetus in Jasprit Bumrah's (0/29) comeback game. Later on, Patidar's 32-ball 64 (5x4s, 4x6s) and Jitesh Sharma's 19-ball 40 (2x4s, 4x6s) ensured the RCB ended on a blazing note.

Dhoni affecting balance

Chennai Super Kings face confident Punjab Kings test as the 'Yellow Brigade' reel under worst season start with hat-trick of defeats

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mullanpur, April 7: The distinct lack of firepower in Mahendra Singh Dhoni's death overs batting is a sensitive area that Chennai Super Kings need to address ahead of their away IPL clash against Punjab Kings here Tuesday.

In one of their worst starts to an IPL season, CSK have now completed a hat-trick of defeats, all while chasing.

While Punjab Kings lost their previous game against Rajasthan Royals at home but on current form as well as on paper, Shreyas Iyer's side looks more well-rounded than CSK who are grappling with combination problems.

Dhoni's presence at the back-end, which once was considered a boon, is turning into bane for the 'Yellow Brigade'.

But such is the aura of the man playing his 18th IPL season (only one apart from Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma), that no one in the CSK ranks can probably walk up to the man and show him the mirror.

The opposition teams now expect to bat first and somehow score anything above 180 knowing that it would be an uphill task for CSK unless Shivam Dube fires.

Now Dube is a muscular hit and miss kind of a player and odds of his success with his template will always be 50-50.

Dhoni's greatness in all these years has been his immaculate sense of timing whether it is bidding adieu to captaincy or retiring from international game. Will he decide himself once again or wait for the nudge?



With Dhoni being the same player and no one to "bell the cat", CSK are in unusual mess with a mis-firing top-order where the skipper Rituraj Gaikwad has had to give up his opening slot.

No, that's not my role to put an end to it. I have no idea. I'm just enjoying working with him. He's still going strong. I don't even ask these days. You guys are the ones that ask (about retirement)," head coach Stephen Fleming's helplessness was evident after the 25-run

IPL FUTURE 'I've ten months to decide'

The legendary MS Dhoni stayed immune to the growing clamour around his future in the IPL, saying the decision to bring curtains on his career depends on how his body reacts to the demands of top-flight cricket and he has "10 months" to take a call. In this IPL, Dhoni has not been able to make the kind of impact that he usually does while batting in the lower middle-order. His lack of timing and ineffectiveness, evidenced in the 76 runs that he made from four matches, have prompted several experts to urge the multiple World Cup-winning skipper to move on. "I am still playing the IPL and it is one year at a time for me. I am 43 now and by the end of this IPL season, I will be 44," Dhoni said on entrepreneur Raj Shamani's podcast recently. "So, I have 10 months to decide whether I want to play one more year and it's not me to decide as it is my body that decides whether I can play or not," he added.

loss to DC where the former skipper didn't even try at times to go for big shots.

KKR, LSG look to sustain momentum

Kolkata: Defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders will host Lucknow Super Giants in the rescheduled match of the IPL 2025 Tuesday afternoon. KKR have a mixed campaign so far, with two wins and as many losses and are sitting fifth in the table.



LSG, on the other hand, also have the same number of wins and losses, placing sixth in the table. Both teams are coming into the match after winning their respective previous matches. KKR registered a huge 80-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad while LSG defeated five-time champions Mumbai Indians by 12 runs. In their previous encounter, KKR's costliest bowler Venkatesh Iyer finally got back to runs as his knock of 60 off just 29 balls with a whopping strike rate of 206 lit up the Eden Gardens. Angkrish Raghuvanshi, alongside skipper Ajinkya Rahane, also played exquisite strokes, mixing caution with aggression, with Rinku also providing a vital contribution to the win. But the only concern for KKR is their opening partnerships, as their openers Quinton de Kock and Sunil Narine have to put up their A game to further strengthen the batting lineup.

SHORT TAKES

Ishant Sharma penalised

Hyderabad: Gujarat Titans pacer Ishant Sharma has been fined 25 per cent of his match fees besides accumulating a demerit point for breaching the IPL Code of Conduct during the game against Sunrisers Hyderabad Sunday night. "Ishant Sharma admitted to the Level 1 offence under Article 2.2 and accepted the Match Referee's sanction," said the IPL in a statement. "For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the Match Referee's decision is final and binding," the statement added. Article 2.2 of IPL's Code of Conduct relates to "abuse of cricket equipment or clothing, ground equipment or fixtures and fittings during a match".

Tough road to Munich

New Delhi: As the UEFA Champions League is entering its final stages with the quarter-finals set to begin Wednesday, more drama will unfold in what has been an extraordinary tournament so far, full of surprises and excitement. The thrilling mid-week action has two exciting matches lined up. In one, defending champions Real Madrid will face off against an injury-depleted Arsenal, while Bayern Munich will take on Inter Milan in the other. In the first match Thursday, Real Madrid will be hunting for another victory against an Arsenal side that has been ravaged by injuries. Mikel Arteta faces a major dilemma as key players Ben White, Riccardo Calafiori, Gabriel Magalhaes, and Jurrien Timber have all been sidelined.

Babar, Rizwan dropped

Lahore: Captain Muhammad Rizwan and Babar Azam were Tuesday dropped from the Pakistan squad for the five-match T20 series in New Zealand. Salman Ali Agha replaced Rizwan as captain of the T20 outfit with all-rounder Shadab Khan being recalled and named his vice-captain. Rizwan has been retained as captain of the ODI squad after the team's disappointing show in the Champions Trophy. The selectors have avoided an overhaul in the one-day squad and retained majority of the players who flopped in the ongoing ICC event. Babar is also retained in the ODI squad but batters Saud Shakil and Kamran Ghulam have been axed. The selectors have also sidelined fast bowlers Shaheen Shah Afridi and Haris Rauf from the one-day squad.

Wildcard Brooksby stuns Tiafoe to lift US Clay title

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Houston, April 7: The qualifying wildcard entrant Jensen Brooksby, ranked No. 507 at the beginning of the week, won seven consecutive matches to claim his first ATP Tour title at the US Men's Clay Court Championships.

Beginning as a qualifying wildcard, the 24-year-old American completed his dramatic run with a 6-4, 6-2 final victory against second seed and 2023 Houston champ Frances Tiafoe.

With his first ATP trophy on his resume, Brooksby became the first American male to win an ATP title of 2025.

Throughout the week, he fought off five match points in three of his seven matches: one in his opening round qualifying match, three in his second-round match against No. 3 seed Alejandro Tabilo, and one in his semifinal match



It means a lot to come away with a title here. I think it's been the best week of my life, to be honest. You know, I hadn't won any of my three previous ATP Finals, and those were all three years ago

JENSON BROOKSBY

against top seed Tommy Paul. In doing so, Brooksby became only the eighth player since 2015 to match points in multiple matches en route to winning the title.

ISSF WORLD CUP

Rudranksh hits gold in 10m air rifle

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 7: Former world champion Rudranksh Balasaheb Patil struck his second individual International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup gold, shooting 252.9 in a pillar to post effort to win the men's 10m air rifle final Sunday, competition day four of the first Shooting World Cup leg in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The young Indian champ was constantly hunted down by the great and in-form Hungarian rifle shooter Istvan Peni, fresh from a men's 3P gold a couple of days back, but pulled out the big shots when it mattered in a sharp performance.

The host country's Marcelo Julian Gutierrez won a popular bronze, bowing out after the 22nd shot of the 24-shot eight-man final, with his score on 230.1 at that stage, 0.4 behind Peni and 1.6 behind leader Patil. With this India now jointly



lead the medal standings along with China, both nations picking up identical two gold, one silver, one bronze tallies till now. Eight more finals are yet to be played. USA have also won two golds and lie third while Hungary have won the other gold.

The men's air rifle qualifications had two relays and Indians topped both of them with Arjun Babuta's sizzling 634.5 over his 60 shots, in the first, the best of the lot. Rudranksh followed with an equally impressive 633.7, to top the second and finish second overall. The

third Indian in the medal hunt, Hriday Hazarika, shot 624.6 in the second relay, to finish in 22nd spot overall.

Among others to make the final eight besides Peni and Gutierrez, were former European junior champion Iliia Marsov (neutral athlete) and young Chinese talent Wang Honghao. Patil however, made his intentions clear with a 10.7 to start the final and hit the 9-ring only once, that too for his 19th shot by which time gold was almost certain.

In between he set the Tiro Federal Argentino de Buenos Aires shooting range on fire with eight shots of 10.5 or above and three perfect 10.9s to put lots of icing on the cake.

Monday will be the women's air rifle qualifications followed by the final at 10 pm IST. Day five will also see the first day of the women's Trap and men's rapid-fire pistol competitions get underway.

BADMINTON ASIA C'SHIPS

Shuttlers gear up for next challenge amid big withdrawals

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ningbo (China), April 7: As the Badminton Asia Championships 2025 kicks off on Tuesday in Ningbo, China, a mixed bag of experienced stalwarts and rising stars from India are set to launch their continental campaign with hopes of a strong showing.

However, the Indian squad will be missing some big names, with notable withdrawals including the women's doubles World No 9 pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand, along with the defending men's doubles champions Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty.

Despite the setback, the Indian challenge will be spearheaded by the trio of Lakshya Sen, HS Prannoy, and PV Sindhu — all determined to bounce back from a string of inconsistent performances in recent months.

India's top two men's singles players, Lakshya (World No 18) and Prannoy (World No 17), headline the singles draw. Sen, a bronze medallist at the 2021 World Championships, begins his campaign against Chinese Taipei's Lee Chia-Hao, who was a finalist at the All England Championships earlier this season. Prannoy, still regaining full form after a bout of chikungunya, will face a tough test in his opener against China's Guang Zu Lu.

In the women's singles, PV Sindhu returns to the court seeking momentum after slipping to World No 17. The two-time Olympic medallist opens her campaign against Indonesia's Ester Nurumi Tri Wardoyo. However, the road ahead is tough for the rest of the Indian contingent.

This year's edition of the Badminton Asia Championships, offering a prize pool of \$500,000. The tournament will run till April 13.

In men's doubles, India will be represented by the unheralded duo of Hariharan Am-sakarunan and Ruban Kumar Rethinasabapathi, along with Pruthvi Krishnamurthy Roy and Sai Pratheek K.

Kalinga Super Cup 2025 fixtures announced

The tournament to be held from April 20-May 3; Kerala Blasters to take on East Bengal FC in opener

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 7: Kerala Blasters will play against East Bengal FC in the opening match of the Kalinga Super Cup 2025 April 20 as the All India Football Federation (AIFF) announced the schedule of the tournament Monday.

The tournament, which will be played in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, from April 20 to May 3, will see participation from 16 clubs (13 from the Indian Super League and three from the I-League), in a single-elimination knock-out format. All matches will take place at the Kalinga Stadium.

The ISL teams were seeded for the round of 16 accord-

ing to their final league position in the 2024-25 season. Three I-League teams confirmed their participation - Churchill Brothers FC Goa, Inter Kashi, and Gokulam Kerala FC. They will face the top three ISL teams (Mohun Bagan Super Giant, FC Goa and Bengaluru FC). These three match-ups will be decided by a draw Wednesday.

The round of 16 will be played April 20, 21, 23 and 24, the quarter-finals April 26 and 27, the semi-finals April 30, and the final May 3. If the scores are level at the end of 90 minutes in the round of 16, quarter-fi-

nals and semi-finals, there will be no extra time, and a penalty shoot-out will determine the winner. If the scores are level at the end of 90 minutes in the final, there will be extra time, followed by a penalty shoot-out to determine the champion.

The winners of the Kalinga Super Cup 2025 will qualify for the 2025-26 AFC Champions League Two Preliminary



MATCH SCHEDULE

Round of 16 (Seeds in bracket):

- Sunday, April 20 — Kerala Blasters FC (8) vs East Bengal FC (9)
- Sunday, April 20 — Mohun Bagan SG (1) vs I-League Club - TBC
- Monday, April 21 — FC Goa (2) vs I-League Club - TBC
- Monday, April 21 — Odisha FC (7) vs Punjab FC (10)
- Wednesday, April 23 — Bengaluru FC (3) vs I-League Club - TBC
- Wednesday, April 23 — Mumbai City FC (6) vs Chennaiyin FC (11)
- Thursday, April 24 — NorthEast United FC (4) vs Mohammedan Sporting Club (13)
- Friday, April 24 — Jamshedpur FC (5) vs Hyderabad FC (12)

Quarter-finals:

- QF1 - Saturday, April 26 — KBFC/EBFC vs MBSG/I-League
- QF2 - Saturday, April 26 — FCG/I-League vs OFC/PFC
- QF3 - Sunday, April 27 — BFC/I-League vs MCFC/CFC
- QF4 - Sunday, April 27 — NEUFC/MSC vs JFC/HFC

Semi-finals:

- SF1 - Wednesday, April 30 — Winner QF1 vs Winner QF2
- SF2 - Wednesday, April 30 — Winner QF3 vs Winner QF4

Final: Saturday, May 3 — Winner SF1 vs Winner SF2

Round. East Bengal FC are the defending champions, having beaten Odisha FC in the 2024 final in Bhubaneswar.

Odisha FC (2023), FC Goa (2019) and Bengaluru FC (2018) have been the past champions of the Super Cup.