

## ₹4K-cr connectivity boost

### Odisha will soon get America-like highways: Gadkari

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 17:** Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari Thursday laid the foundation stones for 17 projects and inaugurated two others worth ₹4,173 crore in the state, and said Odisha will soon get America-like highways.

At an event organised at Baramunda Ground here, Gadkari laid the foundation stones for 13 national highway projects worth ₹2,905 crore. As part of these projects, new roads will be built and existing ones will be widened in Khurda, Puri, Ganjam, Kandhamal and Nayagarh.

He also laid the foundation stones for four bridges worth ₹427 crore. These bridges, having a combined length of 4.82km, will be built on the Berhampur-Gopalpur and Rourkela-Biramitrapur highways under the CRIF.

Gadkari inaugurated the



**INFRA PUSH:** Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari lays the foundation stones for 17 projects and inaugurates two others during an event organised in Bhubaneswar, Thursday. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Deputy CMs KV Singh Deo and Pravati Parida, Forest Minister Ganesh Ram Singhkhuntia, Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan, Commerce and Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhusan Jena and MPs Aparajita Sarangi (Bhubaneswar) and Sambit Patra (Puri) are seen

PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK

four-laning of the Talcher-Kamakhyanager section of NH-149 and another section of NH-53. The projects have been executed at a cost of ₹800 crore. He also inaugurated vehicle underpasses of NH-16 at Balikuda, Sikharpur and Badachana worth ₹45 crore.

"The Centre will provide world-class infrastructure to Odisha, and the people here will soon get America-like highways. The state has ports, minerals

and forests. Road connectivity will boost its tourism potential," he said. Noting that the Centre has undertaken highway projects worth ₹2 lakh crore in the state, Gadkari said projects worth ₹60,000 crore have already been completed.

Work for projects worth ₹60,000 crore is underway, while projects worth ₹75,000 crore are in the pipeline, he said.

Referring to demand made by

Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi, Gadkari said his ministry has already approved the capital region ring road project. "We're waiting for the Union Cabinet's nod. The ring road from Rameswaram in Khurda to Tangi in Cuttack will be executed at a cost of ₹7,000 crore," he said.

Gadkari said the Centre has approved widening Bhubaneswar-Puri highway to six lanes at a cost of ₹1,200 crore.

Addressing the function, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi put forth the proposal to widen the Bhubaneswar-Puri highway to eight lanes. He also urged Gadkari to take necessary steps for widening the proposed coastal highway to four lanes.

Gadkari said the second Ranchi-Sambalpur corridor will be built at a cost of ₹8,000 crore, and Chandikhol-Paradip corridor will be completed by December 2026.

## Waqf: No denotification of properties for now

A day after the Supreme Court indicated that it may stay some provisions of the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, the Centre Thursday assured it that waqf properties, including 'waqf by user', would not be denotified and that no appointment will be made to the Central Waqf Council and waqf boards till the next date of hearing. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, urged the top court that a law passed by Parliament 'with due deliberations' should not be stayed without hearing the government. The court granted a week's time to the Union government to file a preliminary response to the pleas challenging the validity of the Act and posted the matter to May 5. The passage of the Act has been marked by protests and loss of at least three lives in West Bengal, where Muslims account for over 27 per cent of the state's total population

"During the course of hearing, the Solicitor General states that the respondent (Union of India) would like to put in a short response within seven days. He further states and assures that till the next date of hearing, no appointments will be made to the council and boards under Sections 9 and 14 (of the Act)," the bench said.

The SC noted Mehta, appearing for the Centre, has also said that till the next date of hearing, waqf properties, including 'waqf by user' already registered or declared by way of notification, shall not be disturbed and denotified. The SC then granted a week's time to the Centre to file a preliminary response to the pleas challenging the validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 and posted the matter to May 5.

"If your lordships will say something about 'waqf by user', what will be the fallout?" Mehta said, adding, "We, as a government, and Parliament, are answerable to the people."

The CJ said if the registration of any waqf property had taken place under the erstwhile 1995 Act, then those properties can't be denotified till further hearing.

The SC Wednesday proposed to stay certain key provisions of the Act, including the power to denotify properties declared as waqf by courts and inclusion of non-Muslims in Central Waqf Council and waqf boards.

On Thursday, Mehta asked whether the SC might consider staying, directly or indirectly, the Act based upon some prima facie or tentative reading of some of the sections. He said, "If your lordships are going to stay a statutory provision, it by itself is rare. We will have to take your lordships to the history of legislation, followed by amendment."

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 17:** The Centre Thursday assured the Supreme Court that it will neither denotify waqf properties, including 'waqf by user', nor make any appointments to the Central Waqf Council and waqf boards till May 5.

The assurance of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta came when he informed a bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and KV Viswanathan that the waqf law was passed by Parliament with 'due deliberations' and it should not be stayed without hearing the government.

The Centre also strongly opposed the SC's proposal to pass an interim order against the denotification of waqf properties, including 'waqf by user', apart from staying a provision allowing inclusion of non-Muslims in the Central Waqf Council and waqf boards.

## SC RELIEF FOR 'UNTAINTED' WEST BENGAL TEACHERS

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 17:** In a major relief, the Supreme Court Thursday extended till December 31 the services of terminated West Bengal teachers found 'untainted' by the CBI.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar considered West Bengal's submissions that the terminations adversely impacted teaching in various state-run and aided schools.

The order came on the pleas of the state government, which

moved court after the April 3 verdict. The top court judgment invalidated the appointment of 25,753 teachers and staffers in various schools, calling the entire selection process 'vitiated and tainted'.

On Thursday, it also took note of the state government saying fresh recruitment would take time.

Several districts in the state witnessed widespread protests as a section of teachers and non-teaching staffers, rendered unemployed post the Supreme Court verdict, clashed with the police. **P9**

## SHORT TAKES

### Hindi mandatory in Maha primary schools

**Mumbai:** Maharashtra government has decided that Hindi as a third language will be mandatory for students in classes 1 to 5 in Marathi and English-medium schools across the state, in a departure from the practice of studying two languages. Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray slammed the move, adding his party will oppose the decision vehemently and ensure that it is not implemented. The three-language formula for classes 1 to 5 is a part of the new curriculum implementation under the NEP, 2020. **P8**

### Dhankhar slams SC deadline for Prez

**New Delhi:** Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar Thursday questioned the judiciary setting a timeline for the President to take decisions and act as a 'super Parliament', saying the Supreme Court cannot fire a 'nuclear missile' at democratic forces. Dhankhar's strong words to the judiciary came during his speech to Rajya Sabha interns, days after the Supreme Court sought to fix a timeline for the President to grant assent to the Bills reserved for her consideration by the Governor. **P8**

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



A big mistake. Instead of vegetable vendors, we should've checked Aadhaar cards of people approaching the SC

DADLS-15

**MESSAGE OF HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF ODISHA ON THE OCCASION OF GOOD FRIDAY**

Good Friday is a solemn holy day commemorating the crucifixion of Lord Jesus Christ who gave the mankind the message of love, sacrifice, brotherhood and forgiveness. His life was dedicated to freeing humanity from miseries.

I along with Christian sisters and brothers of the State participate in the observance of Good Friday with a resolve to move forward on the path of love, compassion and sacrifice shown by Lord Jesus.

*(Signature)*  
(Hari Babu Kambhampati)

**ଶୁଭ୍ ପ୍ରାଇଡେ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା**

ଶୁଭ ଶୁକ୍ରବାର ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟ ଧର୍ମାବଲମ୍ବୀମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ପବିତ୍ର ଦିବସ । ମାନବ ସମାଜର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ପାଇଁ, ଯୀଶୁଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟଙ୍କ ସର୍ବୋଚ୍ଚ ତ୍ୟାଗ ବିଶ୍ୱରେ ଶାନ୍ତି ଓ ଭାଦୃତ୍ୱର ମହାନ ଚିନ୍ତାଧାରାକୁ ବ୍ୟାପକ କରିଛି । ଆସନ୍ତୁ, ଏହି ପବିତ୍ର ଦିବସର ବାର୍ତ୍ତାକୁ ପାଳନ କରି ଏକ ଆଦର୍ଶ ସମାଜ ଗଠନ ଦିଗରେ କାମ କରିବା ।

*(Signature)*  
(ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାଝୀ)  
ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

OIPR-15001/13/0546/2526

# leisure



## PENN BADGLEY: FAME IS 'EXTREMELY UNNATURAL'

Hollywood actor Penn Badgley, who gained the spotlight with his work in *Gossip Girl* at age 20 and then *You*, said he had to really grapple with accepting the downsides of fame in order to also enjoy the "extreme privileges".

## BLAKE, BALDONI'S LEGAL BATTLE TAKES A NEW TURN

The legal battle between Blake Lively and Justin Baldoni intensifies as the validity of a subpoena used to obtain key evidence is questioned. Baldoni's legal team argues the subpoena, dated before any legal action, may be unenforceable, potentially undermining Lively's case.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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 FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*

**ARIES**  
 You will feel like going for a little excursion to some place today. It could be to some historical place that you have not visited before. However, Ganesha suggests, in keeping with your responsibility of being a family-man, you should pay heed to the needs of your loved ones. So a trip to the nearest park would be more desirable.

**TAURUS**  
 Your relationship with your parents is likely to turn sour today, says Ganesha. You need to ensure that differences and misunderstandings and do not creep in between you all. If, at all, that does occur, the best way to sort out issues is talk directly to them. There are chances that you will be too free and forceful in expressing your feelings and emotions.

**GEMINI**  
 You need to beach your emotions and concentrate only on your work. Your day will be spent in meeting the demands of your family members. You will attend important meetings, be they personal or professional, in the afternoon, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
 You will be attracted to the opposite sex and a love affair may ensue. You will turn more open and generous. You will have a realisation and handle issues with understanding. Ganesha is with you.

**LEO**  
 Your day will be filled with interesting activities. You will be able to put across and prove your point of view today. In the afternoon you will be able to finish your work. You ought to make the most of the day, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
 From a tedious, weary morning, the day will gradually turn out to be very thrilling in the evening, says Ganesha. In the afternoon, though, you may hit a roadblock, and you will feel stressed out. However, all that stress will melt away in the evening in the company of your near and dear ones.

**LIBRA**  
 Ganesha says today is a day where you will have to make important decisions so be careful before making them. Those of you who are working professionals may find themselves favored by topmost officials who will be pleased with you and may give you promotions or a bonus. Ganesha says beware of people who wish to take advantage of your generosity and amiable disposition.

**SCORPIO**  
 An eventful day lies ahead of you, says Ganesha. The first half of the day would be packed with routine activities, fighting cut-throat competition on field. However, you become a fashionista in the second half as you plan to attend a social function and take the centre stage.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
 Activities like aerobics and gymnastics are likely to take your energy level higher. You may experience a transition period during the noon. Ganesha foresees an average day at work for you. Try to balance your family and work, without neglecting any one of it.

**CAPRICORN**  
 Love is in the air for you, today. You will take your sweetheart out for a romantic dinner, shopping or anything of that sort and pamper him/her to the hilt. But, don't spend like a sailor as you have limited sources of income, advises Ganesha. Busy in social gatherings and parties, you will make a mark on everyone's mind with your wit and humour.

**AQUARIUS**  
 Today, you will pay attention to the smallest and the simplest things of life. You will learn to appreciate the beauty of life and imperfections of people, while showering your love upon your near and dear ones, says Ganesha. People around you will surely be pleased with your amicable approach.

**PISCES**  
 It is a great day to be social and catch up with friends and make travel plans with near and dear ones. You find peace, comfort and pleasure in any travel that you undertake today. There might be some reasons that might result in mild mental stress but if you are cautious and prepared than nothing will be able to usher you in harm's way. Do not fuss too much over little things and enjoy your journey, says Ganesha.

## CHINTA O CHETANA'S 48TH BAISHAKHI FESTIVAL - DAY III



Radheshyam Tarai from Ganjam delivered a stunning Kuchipudi performance inspired by the Ramayana at Rabindra Mandap, Bhubaneswar, Thursday. Dressed in female attire, Tarai showcased his flawless skills, earning thunderous applause from the audience

PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK

# Shweta on comfort code

**Mumbai:** Actress Shweta Tripathi has opened up about a mindset she feels more people need to embrace, which is comfort. For her, it starts with dressing for yourself and not the world. Shweta told the agency, "An underrated habit or mindset I believe more people should embrace... Yeah, comfort. Comfort. Like, you know how we always hear "be yourself"? But what does being yourself even mean? I think understanding that is the first step. "And that means—if you're feeling good in what you're wearing, then

dress up for yourself, not thinking about what someone's aunt, grandma, or your Instagram followers are going to think. Wear what you want to wear. People will always have something to say anyway, and that's not going to stop," she added. For Shweta, who is popularly known as her character Golu from the series *Mirzapur*, revealed what her perfect day off looks like. "You know, it really depends on my mood. Sometimes, like if I'm going to the Prithvi Theatre, I feel this urge to be culturally artistic. So then I'll do a bit of mismatch dressing, throw on a kurta with a belt, and my dupatta. I love wearing bindis. I love my accessories, my jewelry—a lot of it myself. And I also get my designer friends to make stuff for me."

IAN S

## Deepika's diplomatic take



**Mumbai:** Deepika Padukone has always had great onscreen and offscreen chemistry with two of Bollywood's biggest stars—Ranbir Kapoor and Ranveer Singh. In 2013, she set hearts racing with her now-husband Ranveer in *Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela*, while the same year, her iconic pairing with Ranbir in *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani* redefined love for audiences. Over the years, Deepika has had the unique experience of working closely with both actors, admiring their craft from the front row. A throwback clip from a promotional event for *Tamasha* in 2015, where Deepika starred alongside Ranbir, has recently resurfaced on social media, sparking widespread attention. During the event, a fan asked Deepika to

choose between her co-star Ranbir Kapoor and her then-boyfriend Ranveer Singh as the better actor. Deepika's response was both witty and thoughtful: "It's like asking if you prefer your mother or your father," she said, to which Ranbir jokingly replied, "I want to be the father." Deepika explained, "We're constantly comparing—whether it's films, actors, or co-stars. We need to appreciate each person for who they are and the work they bring." While some fans humorously urged her to "pick your man," others applauded Deepika's mature and reasoned perspective, highlighting her ability to respect both actors for their unique qualities.

AGENCIES



## The untold love story of Simi Garewal

They say true love stories are often incomplete, and one such quietly poignant tale is that of actress Simi Garewal and industrialist Ratan Tata. Their relationship, once deeply romantic and almost leading to marriage, stands as a touching reminder of how love, timing, and life's twists don't always align—even for the most extraordinary individuals. Ratan Tata, the former chairman of Tata Sons, is admired not just for his business achievements, but also for his honesty, intelligence, and humility. Born in 1937 into the presti-

gious Tata family, he studied at Cornell and Harvard, and though he considered marriage several times, he ultimately chose a life of solitude—an aspect of his personal life that has long intrigued the public. On the other hand, Simi Garewal carved her own legacy in Indian cinema with iconic roles in *Karz*, *Siddhartha*, and *Mera Naam Joker*. Later, her talk show *Rendezvous with Simi Garewal* made her a household name, admired for her elegance, wit, and fearless interviewing style. Like Tata, she also chose to remain unmarried. Their bond, rooted in admiration, mutual respect, and emotional depth, remains one of the lesser-known yet most beautiful chapters in their lives. Reflecting on Tata, Simi once said, "Ratan and I go back a long way. He's per-

fect—he's got a sense of humour, is modest, and is the perfect gentleman. Money was never his driving force." Though their romance did not culminate in marriage, it was deeply meaningful. Their story reflects the kind of love that doesn't always need a conventional ending. Both Simi and Ratan have lived lives defined not by relationships but by impact—on cinema, business, and beyond. Their bond, though private, continues to resonate as a symbol of quiet, enduring affection that defied expectations.

AGENCIES

### PEANUTS



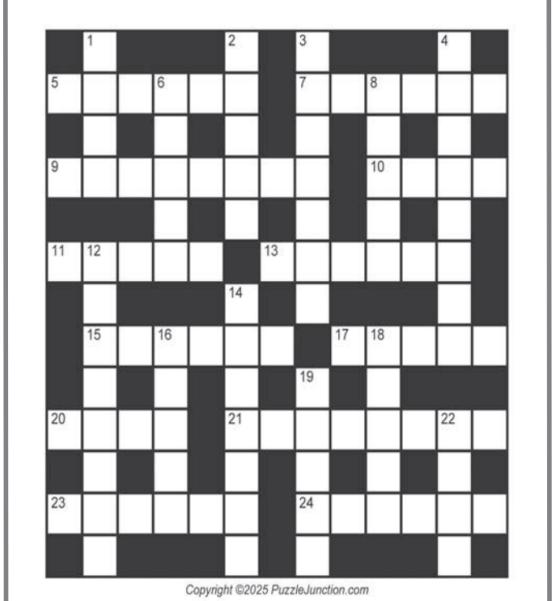
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



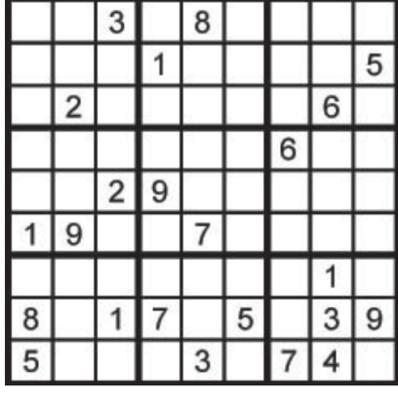
### FUN POST CROSSWORD



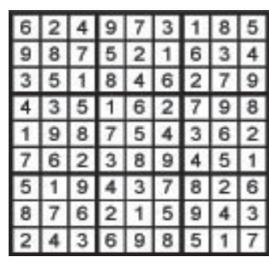
- Copyright ©2025 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 5 Choice bit
  - 7 Ask over
  - 9 Slaughter
  - 10 Fail miserably
  - 11 Bitter
  - 13 Breakfast cereal
  - 15 Playful aquatic animals
  - 17 Venomous snake
  - 20 Autocrat until 1917
  - 21 Muse of epic poetry
  - 23 Peaceful
  - 24 Dutch exports
  - Down**
  - 1 Greek letter
  - 2 Timepiece
  - 3 Repulsive
  - 4 Food poisoning
  - 6 Seaweed dish
  - 8 Feelings
  - 12 American
  - 14 Chinese dish (4,4)
  - 14 Windpipe
  - 16 Brusque
  - 18 Dentist's tool
  - 19 Apartments
  - 22 Litter members

### 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



# WSC KEY TO YOUTH SKILLING: GADKARI

### Union Minister Nitin Gadkari highlights the World Skill Center's contribution to equipping Odisha's youth with industry-ready skills during his visit



### 'Mahatab's vision shaped Odisha'

**CUTTACK:** Union Minister Nitin Gadkari praised former chief minister Harekrushna Mahatab for his visionary leadership, which played a crucial role in shaping Odisha. Speaking at a memorial lecture on Infrastructure Development and Odisha at Ravenshaw University, Gadkari said, "You can donate eyes but not vision. Mahatab ji had a vision that shaped Odisha." He highlighted Mahatab's significant contributions, particularly in the construction of the Hirakud Dam, which was initiated by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1948 and inaugurated in 1957. Describing Mahatab as a multifaceted personality, Gadkari called him a scholar, poet, and social reformer who advanced education and social equity in the state. He also shared that Mahatab authored 'History of Odisha' while imprisoned in Maharashtra. Gadkari urged youth to be inspired by Mahatab's life, adding, "We have the strength to become Vishwaguru."

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 17:** Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari praised the World Skill Center (WSC) in Bhubaneswar for its role in preparing Odisha's youth with industry-relevant skills during his visit Thursday. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi accompanied him during the tour, along with other senior officials. Impressed by the infrastructure, Gadkari called WSC a model institution for industry-ready training. "WSC is playing a vital role in skilling youth and boosting employability," he said after inspecting advanced labs in Vertical Transportation, Advanced Welding, Automation, and Robotics. Chief Minister Majhi welcomed the Union Minister and joined him in visiting the facilities. The visit also included Skill Development & Technical Education Minister Sampad Chandra Swain, Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi, Khurda MLA Prashant Jagadev, and other dignitaries. Top officials from WSC and the Odisha Skill Development Authority (OSDA), including CEO Rashmita Panda, Chief Skills Officer Bruce Poh, COO Pinaki Patnaik, Principal T Thambirajah and Deputy Principal Jeetamitra Satpathy were present on the occasion. Minister Swain said skill development is a national priority under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, and WSC is significantly contributing to the mission. "Students trained here are securing jobs both in

India and abroad," he said. "The WSC is envisioned as a hub for advanced, hands-on training to bridge the gap between education and employment, ensuring youth are equipped for global industry demands," the minister added.



**MERGER MEET:** Samajwadi Party (SP) national president Akhilesh Yadav greets Pushpanjali Das, ex-corporator of ward no-28 (BJD), and her associates who joined SP at a merger meeting in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

# 2 criminals hurt in Cuttack encounter

### TWO POLICEMEN SUFFERED MINOR INJURIES IN THE INCIDENT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Cuttack, April 17:** Two persons with criminal antecedents were injured in an encounter with police in Cuttack district, a police officer said Thursday. The incident occurred Wednesday night on National Highway 16 near Choudwar's Indranipatna area in Cuttack district, the police officer said. Cuttack Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Khilari Rishikesh Dnyandeo said that the incident happened when the police personnel



lari Rishikesh Dnyandeo said that the incident happened when the police personnel

were chasing them in an effort to arrest the duo. "They were riding a motorcycle. Then they took a turn towards Indranipatna on NH-16 to evade arrest. After travelling some distance, they stopped the motorcycle and started firing on the police team, which then retaliated after giving them a warning," the DCP said. The injured persons were identified as Katash Rout and Subhranshu Parida.

Katash has at least 15 criminal cases registered against him, while Parida is allegedly involved in over 50 cases, ranging from extortion to armed robbery. They were admitted to Srimam Chandra Bhanja (SCB) Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. The police seized firearms and live ammunition from them. Two policemen also suffered minor injuries in the incident, the police said.

### Sudarsan Pattanaik calls on Prez

**NEW DELHI:** Padma Shri awardee and internationally acclaimed sand artist Sudarsan Pattanaik met President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan Wednesday, her office confirmed Thursday. "Renowned Indian sand artist Sudarsan Pattanaik called on President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan," the President's office posted on X, along with a photo from the meeting.

# KIMS brings advanced heart surgery to Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 17:** The Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) is leading the way in Odisha by offering complex heart surgeries with minimally invasive techniques—eliminating the need for open-heart surgery. Consultant Cardiac Surgeon at KIMS Amit Kumar Agarwal recently performed a minimally invasive mitral valve replacement on a 55-year-old patient, Kalia Gouda, with severe mitral valve stenosis. Unlike traditional procedures that require cutting through the chest bone, this advanced technique involves making a small incision on the side of the chest, allowing the surgeon to operate between the ribs without cutting them. By adopting these methods,



KIMS is helping patients avoid the need to travel out of state for advanced cardiac care. "Minimally invasive and robotic surgeries are the future of cardiac care," said Agarwal. The benefits are significant: reduced postoperative pain, barely visible scar. This approach also allows patients to recover faster and with fewer

complications. The cost of such procedures is notably lower at KIMS compared to other centers in Odisha, making it accessible to a wider range of patients. KIMS is currently performing a variety of minimally invasive heart surgeries, including coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) and repairs of septal defects.

# Fun@Work opens new unit at Symphony Mall

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 17:** Three years after its operation at Bhavani Mall in Shaheed Nagar here, Fun@Work has opened its new unit at Symphony Mall near Hanspal Square. The grand opening was graced by Barabati-Cuttack MLA Sofia Firdous. Gracing the occasion, Fun@Work managing director Shmarekha Talukdar said, "After three years of co-working experience, Fun@Work is now starting a new chapter, opening a new unit that will help take networking and productivity to new heights. It is set to become the most attractive co-working destination in Bhubaneswar for its customers." With its appearance and functionality in mind, the new unit has sensitively blended aesthetics and professionalism inside. "Startups, freelancers and enterprise teams alike will find a great environment here, with collaboration areas and private meeting rooms, as well



as optimal parking facilities," a statement issued by the company said. To succeed, this co-working unit has partnered with top brands to deliver the best experience, with high-speed internet, modern conferencing facilities and exclusive networking events where members can get the best service, it added. The new unit, with a prime location in City, offers optimum parking facilities—a rare opportunity for an urban co-working setup. Easy accessibility ensures that members

can focus on their work. With a strong foundation and a vision for innovation, Fun@Work is not just opening a new space—it is setting a new benchmark in the way entrepreneurs work, the release said. This expansion is a testament to the brand's success and its future vision. With this expansion, the total workspace in Bhubaneswar now exceeds 20,000 sq ft, and the brand plans to expand its presence in other metro cities like Kolkata and Gurugram by the end of this year.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate, Khordha, Odisha, date-16.04.2025, affidavit No.- 1166. I, Soumyajyoti Mishra, S/o- Prafulla Kumar Mishra, Address: At/ P.O.- Dadhimachhagadia, P.S.- Sadara Khordha, Dist.- Khordha, State-Odisha, PIN- 752056, declare that I have changed my son's name from SAMADARSHI SATYA SAMBHAB to SAMADARSHI SATYA SAMBHAB MISHRA. Henceforth, he shall be known as SAMADARSHI SATYA SAMBHAB MISHRA for all purposes. Soumyajyoti Mishra

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate, Chandevpur, Dt.17.2.25 I, Chintamani Biswal, S/o- Murali Biswal, At-Chhatrapur, PO: Patanamishrapur, PS- Naikanidih, Dist-Bhadrak declare that my daughters name wrongly named as Sumitra Biswal in Aadhaar will be known as Susmita Biswal henceforth for all purpose.

# Hidden cost of rising dependence on CT scan

**C**T scans are a vital part of modern medicine. Found in every hospital and many clinics, they give doctors a fast and detailed look inside the body — helping to diagnose everything, from cancer and strokes to internal injuries. But a new study suggests there may be a hidden cost to our growing reliance on this technology. The study, published in Jama Internal Medicine, warns that CT scans performed in the US in 2023 alone could eventually lead to over 100,000 extra cancer cases. If the current rate of scanning continues, the researchers say CT scans could be responsible for around five per cent of all new cancers diagnosed each year. That figure has raised concerns. Especially when you consider that the number of CT scans done in the US has

jumped by 30 per cent in just over a decade. In 2023, there were an estimated 93 million CT exams carried out on 62 million people. The risk from a single scan is low — but not zero. And the younger the patient, the greater is the risk. Children and teenagers are especially vulnerable because their bodies are still developing, and any damage caused by ionising radiation may not show up until many years later. That said, over 90 per cent of CT scans are performed on adults, so it's this group that faces the largest overall impact. The most common cancers linked to CT exposure are lung, colon, bladder and leukaemia. For women, breast cancer is also a significant concern. What makes this latest estimate so striking is how much it has grown. In 2009, a similar



analysis projected around 29,000 future cancers linked to CT scans. The new number is over three times higher — not just because of more scans, but because newer research allows for a more detailed analysis of radiation exposure to specific organs. The study also makes an eye-catching comparison: if things stay as they are, CT-related cancers could match the number of cancers caused by alcohol or excess weight — two well-known risk factors. Not all scans carry the same level of risk. In adults, scans

of the abdomen and pelvis are thought to contribute the most to future cancer cases. In children, it's head CTs that pose the biggest concern — especially for babies under the age of one. Despite all this, doctors stress that CT scans are often life-saving and remain essential in many cases. They help catch conditions early, guide treatment and are crucial in emergencies. The challenge is making sure they're only used when really needed. Newer technologies could help reduce the risk. Photon-counting CT scanners, for example, deliver lower doses of radiation, and MRI scans don't use radiation at all. The researchers suggest that better use of diagnostic checklists could also help doctors decide when a scan is necessary, and when a safer alternative like MRI or ultrasound might do

the job. It's worth noting that this study doesn't prove CT scans cause cancer in individual people. The estimates are based on 'risk models' — not direct evidence. In fact, the American College of Radiology points out that no study has yet linked CT scans directly to cancer in humans, even after multiple scans. Still, the idea that radiation can cause cancer isn't new. It's scientifically sound. And with the huge number of scans being done, even small risks can add up. CT scans save lives, but they're not risk-free. As medical technology evolves, so too should the way we use it. By cutting down on unnecessary scans, using safer alternatives where possible, and keeping radiation doses as low as practical, we can ensure CT scans continue to help more than they harm. (THE CONVERSATION)

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	35.8°	34.8°
Min Temp	25.6°	24.2°
Humidity	72%	79%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
<b>FORECAST</b> Partly cloudy sky with possibility of thunderstorm/lightning		

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	
SENSEX	78,553.20	▲ 1508.91
NIFTY	23,851.65	▲ 414.45
DOLLAR	85.41	▼ 0.17
EURO	97.10	▼ 0.48
GOLD	₹94,082	▼ ₹1081
SILVER	₹94,440	▼ ₹1803

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FOCUS INDO-BANGLA TIES

# NO SIGN OF REVIVAL



**India is presently using the carrot and stick policy. The suspension of transshipment facility has hit Bangladesh hard, especially its garment industry, which is its major export industry**

presently using the carrot and stick policy. The suspension of transshipment facility has hit Bangladesh hard, especially its garment industry, which is its major export industry. Thousands of workers are scared of losing their jobs. Bangladesh media has reacted sharply for incurring the displeasure of New Delhi and the consequent cancellation of the facility.

Finally, New Delhi should treat the deterioration of India-Bangladesh ties as a consequence of Chinese attempt to sting India through her neighbours. India can no longer ignore the hard fact that China is her biggest threat. New Delhi should deal with China, but not get carried away by Beijing's deceptive benevolence of granting easy visas to 85,000 Indians. Beijing's overtures are a desperate reaction to American tearing tariffs of 245% on Chinese exports. Some of us have written trees of articles to alert South block to the lurking menace of China. The External Affairs Minister, thankfully, has recently publicly acknowledged that India could no longer ignore that China is a problem. New Delhi's robust geopolitical strategy towards China should be to restore friendship and normalcy with all her neighbours except Pakistan which is incorrigible at its best.

India-Bangladesh relations consist of multiple interconnected ties. Bangladesh should seek to snap them at its own peril. India should also be sensitive to the current political instability in Bangladesh which would pass. Let the wise words of former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee continue to ring in the South Block: "We can change our friends, but we cannot change our neighbours."

*The writer is Professor of Practice, NIIS Group of Institutions.*

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The latest in India-Bangladesh ties is the ban on imports of yarn from India by Bangladesh through land and ports. It may have been done in retaliation to New Delhi stopping the transshipment facility for Bangladeshi goods through ports and airports. This act by India has apparently been provoked by Mohammed Yunus' 'Freudian slip' or deliberate statement during his tour to China. He said that Northeast India is landlocked, while Bangladesh is the guardian of the ocean for the region and could be the gateway for China's influence in Northeast India.

Mohammad Yunus, an 84-year-old, has been an academic, with little experience in politics. He earned unrivalled reputation through the Grameen Bank, an institution he created to lend money to poor rural women entrepreneurs to do business and earn their living. This scheme became such a big success that Yunus was awarded with the Nobel Prize. His international reputation persuaded the Bangladesh military to install him as the 'titular head' of the government. Bangladesh military still has the remote.

Be that as it may, under pressure from the military and from pro-Pak and pro-China forces, Yunus is behaving strangely. He did show some of his own self when he appealed to rioters to stop tormenting the Hindu minorities. But that was a natural human display of sympathy and solidarity. The physical violence may have subsided, but Hindus continue to live in fear and insecurity. This is a major cause of concern for New Delhi. Second, Yunus, due to his geopolitical inexperience, is playing into the manipulation of China. Beijing is deviously sneaking into South Asia, to encircle India by a hostile neighbourhood.

Beijing mollycoddled Nepal



DK Giri

**BEIJING IS DEVIOUSLY SNEAKING INTO SOUTH ASIA, TO ENCIRCLE INDIA BY A HOSTILE NEIGHBOURHOOD**



Shlomo Ben-Ami

**Far from fighting to uphold the system that it leads, the US is taking a wrecking ball to it. China just needs to sit back and watch**



Whenever in your life, you meet with a hardship, take it as a boon from the Divine's Grace and it will become so

THE MOTHER

## Thucydides Trap

US President Donald Trump is not known for respecting science and history. From promoting unproven treatments for COVID-19 to insisting that any discussion of shameful elements of America's past is "divisive," he prefers to manipulate them for political ends. One wonders whether he realizes, when he waxes nostalgic about America's historical "greatness," that he is usually referring to times when the United States was a geopolitical weakling.

Trump's invocation of the Monroe Doctrine is a case in point. When President James Monroe asserted in 1823 that the Western Hemisphere was solely the domain of the US, America was far from establishing itself as a global power. And while it has been used to rationalize US intervention and imperialism since then, Monroe's original vision was focused on keeping European colonialism at bay. It certainly would not justify Trump's ambition to assert US sovereignty over Canada, Greenland, and the Panama Canal, even as his embrace of geopolitical spheres of interest effectively legitimizes efforts by other powers - Israel and Turkey in Syria, Russia in Ukraine - to seize territory by force.

Similarly, Trump justifies his embrace of high tariffs by pointing out that they were a feature of the Gilded Age, when rapid industrialization fueled prosperity in the US. But, again, he is referring to a period - the late 1870s to the early 1900s - when America's global clout was relatively modest. While the US was already a rising economic power, it was not yet "at its richest" by any means. Inflation-adjusted GDP per capita is around six times higher today than in the 1890s - which was also a period of peak economic inequality.

Moreover, after the McKinley tariffs of 1890 - named for their Republican architect, then-Representative William McKinley - increased average duties on all imports from 38% to 49.5%, the party was soundly defeated in that year's midterm elections, in one of the biggest partisan swings in US history. The tariffs also indirectly contributed to the Panics of 1890 and 1893, which, at the time, was the worst economic downturn the US had ever experienced.

Invoking the era before 1913, when the federal income tax was introduced, Trump has also floated the idea of using tariffs to finance the entire US government budget. This reflects not only a gross misunderstanding of how tariffs work - Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick says it would amount to "let[ting] all the outsiders pay," even though tariffs are paid by importers - but also a total disregard for historical experience and mathematical reality.

Tariff revenues could not cover the US government's expenses in the early 1900s, and they certainly could not do so today, no matter how many civil servants the unelected billionaire Elon Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency fire, or how many agencies they gut or programs they defund. After all, America's biggest budget items are Social Security (enacted in 1935) and Medicare (created in 1965), which Americans have no interest in losing.

The foreign-aid commitments, responsibilities to NATO and other allies, and investments in scientific research that the Trump administration decries amount to a much smaller share of the US public budget. More important, they bring tremendous dividends, in the form of US global influence, stability, and prosperity. In fact, the Pax Americana that reflected and perpetuated American "greatness" was always based on a broadly beneficial, but primarily self-serving, system of economic, military, and cultural projection - precisely the system that Trump is now destroying.

The Trump administration has effectively declared open season on the scientific institutions that have made it the world's leading innovation powerhouse. It has subdued Ivy League universities, purged the Department of Health and Human Services, and moved to slash funding for world-renowned scientific research institutions, including the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Energy, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. As the US cuts funding for research and development, China is pouring money into it, having invested \$52 billion in R&D last year - up 10% from 2023.

Moreover, the Trump administration is dismantling US foreign-aid programs, including the US Agency for International Development, a leading tool of US soft power. Trump has also withdrawn the US from the World Health Organization and the Paris climate agreement, while embracing coercive bilateral deal-making, such as his effort to control Ukraine's endowment of critical minerals.

The US appears eager to turn even Europe, its closest partner, into an enemy, potentially driving it to pursue deeper engagement with China. In light of its plans to borrow heavily to finance increased defense spending, the European Union might even find itself sharing China's desire to dethrone the dollar as the leading global reserve currency. If the dollar does fall, however, it will be the Trump administration, not Europe or China, that pushed it. Already, Trump's tariffs are fueling a crisis of confidence in the greenback, reflected in rising yields for US Treasuries.

For years, commentators have been fretting about the so-called Thucydides Trap: When an incumbent hegemon (the US) fears a rising challenger (China), war becomes inevitable. But Trump has now turned the concept on its head. Far from fighting to uphold the system that it leads, the US is taking a wrecking ball to it. China just needs to sit back and watch.

*The writer, a former Israeli foreign minister, is Vice President of the Toledo International Center for Peace.*

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SPECTRUM ECONOMY

## GDP calculations gone awry

In public discourse, the inviolability of GDP figures is rarely questioned. These numbers serve as a key barometer of economic health, and a symbol of national wealth, though GDP does not measure wellbeing of society. If GDP is inflated through accounting gimmicks, it misleads policymakers, camouflages distress and creates a deceptive image of the economy's vivacity.

India's GDP may be on an upward trajectory as propagated, but a conceptual battle is raging in the country between economists and statisticians over how accurate India's data actually is. Recently, Hotmail co-founder Sabeer Bhatia made a derisive attack on India's GDP computation, calling it a case of basic math gone awry and does not capture the nation's genuine progress. He remarked, "The whole country is lying, our GDP is all wrong." He argued that current metrics focus too heavily on financial transactions rather than real, productive effort and stressed that mere financial transactions shouldn't be equated with actual work or productivity. He contrasted this with the US model, where economic value is linked to the time spent working and the results of that effort. GDP is measured through

production/output, expenditure and income methods. Under the production/output approach, we first compute the value added by the three major sectors - Agriculture, Industry and Services. The sum of value addition is called GVA. Further, if we add product taxes and subtract product subsidies from GVA, we get GDP. Product taxes include GST, excise duties, VAT, and import and export duties. Product subsidies include subsidies on food, petroleum and fertilizers. Thus, the difference between GDP and GVA is based on the growth rate in taxes and subsidies.

A sharp divergence between real GDP and real GVA growth is found which is a matter of serious concern. Due to the high amount of indirect taxes like GST, excise on petroleum products and reduction of subsidies, GDP is found to be higher than GVA. Both increase of indirect taxes and reduction of subsidies are regressive and adversely affect the poor. It means GDP grows even when the poor suffer.

The US calculates GDP, and by extension, GDP per hour worked, using a combination of approaches, including the expenditure approach, the income approach, and the output approach. India presents its GDP num-

bers in two forms: current prices and constant prices. GDP at current prices - or nominal GDP - provides the value of output at the prices prevailing at the time. GDP is usually more meaningful at "constant" prices or in "real" terms - netting out the effect of price changes measured through price deflator. This deflator is a statistical tool derived from our inflation data, and is also the core reason for the economists' third issue with India's GDP data. India's former CEA Arvind Subramanian argues that we are using the wrong deflator and so our real GDP growth is actually significantly lower than what the government is presenting.

The IMF, in its annual staff report on India released in January 2020 too had raised doubts over India's methodology to calculate GDP numbers, saying certain changes to historical series and discrepancies between GDP by activity and GDP by expenditure have made the growth calculation process complex. It has further pointed out discrepancies in calculating deflation, which is used to convert GDP at current prices to constant prices.

In 2015, India refurbished its GDP computation methodology. The CSO adopted the UN-recommended GVA method, changed

the base year to 2011-12, and switched to data from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs' MCA21 database. Theoretically, this brought India in line with global best practices. But there was a problem. The new database included over 500,000 companies, many of which were found to be non-existent or inactive in a 2016 survey by the NSO. This may have contributed to overestimation of GDP growth rates, especially in the corporate sector. Former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan had criticized the way the new GDP series was introduced, citing concerns about its opacity and haste.

In September 2023, Princeton professor Ashoka Mody in an article titled "India's Fake Growth Story" claimed that India's GDP calculation and growth story is fake. He pointed out that the NSO did not adhere to the international best practice while correcting discrepancies in its official data between two methods of estimating GDP - the production/output method and the expenditure method. Further, India's abysmal position in various international indices with low per-capita income indicates that our GDP is overestimated.

*The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist.*



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

**IF GDP IS INFLATED THROUGH ACCOUNTING GIMMICKS, IT MISLEADS POLICYMAKERS, CAMOUFLAGES DISTRESS AND CREATES A DECEPTIVE IMAGE OF THE ECONOMY'S VIVACITY**

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

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

### Overstepping authority

Sir, The Constitution has laid out a clear framework where governors have limited discretion and role in the government. The established norm is that as an independent and bipartisan authority, a governor needs to discharge his duties impartially, irrespective of his political affiliations. But for over a decade now, India has witnessed the weaponisation of the governor's office. State after state not ruled by the BJP has had governors sitting on bills indefinitely, attempting to overrule state decisions and generally making life difficult for duly elected governments. They have become extensions of the politics of the ruling party. In that light, the Supreme Court recently pulling up Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi for overstepping his role by unduly delaying assent to multiple bills, was significant and it reopened the debate on the role of Raj Bhavans across the country. The governor's position was created after Independence because there was a fear that India's unity would be in danger in the absence of Delhi-appointed Governors at that time. India has travelled a long way since then and perhaps it's time to rethink the very need of this office..

**Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI**

### Forensic training

Sir, The application of scientific principles to criminal cases is of great significance because it contributes immensely towards timely justice. Besides, innocent people should not suffer for no fault of theirs. By the same token, the abysmal conviction rates in criminal cases need to be corrected, and foolproof collection of evidence, its interpretation and reporting cannot be stressed more. DNA match test, fingerprint collection and analysis, and toxicology are extremely important. Apart from MD in forensic medicine, there are several Master of Science (MSc) courses that impart knowledge to students. The National Forensic Sciences University, established in 2009 at Gandhinagar, and elevated to national university status in 2020, is in the forefront of forensic training offering MSc in different branches of forensic science. As Home Minister Amit Shah told a conference recently, nine such campuses are on the anvil which is good news.

**Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA**

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1775: Paul Revere, a renowned silversmith, is better remembered as a folk hero of the American Revolution who this night in 1775 made a dramatic ride on horseback to warn Boston-area residents of an imminent attack by British troops.
- 1906: San Francisco was rocked by an earthquake caused by slippage along the San Andreas Fault. About 3000 people died in the disaster. Over 80 percent of the city was destroyed by the quake and resulting fires.
- 1942: U.S. Lieutenant Colonel James H. Doolittle led 16 B-25 bombers on a spectacular surprise attack on Tokyo and other Japanese cities; the Doolittle Raid, as it became known, caused little damage but boosted Allied morale.
- 1949: Ireland becomes an independent republic. Six counties in the northern part of the island remained in the Commonwealth, leading to a decades-long ethno-nationalist conflict that culminated in The Troubles.
- 1956: Abandoning her Hollywood career, American actress Grace Kelly wed Rainier III, prince de Monaco, in a civil ceremony; an opulent religious ceremony took place the following day. The wedding celebrations for the Prince of Monaco and the glamorous U.S. actress were broadcast around the world and enthused the population of war-torn Europe.
- 1980: Zimbabwe achieved independence from the United Kingdom.

# Heavy rain, thunderstorm in several parts of Himachal

**AN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD CHILD, IDENTIFIED AS ABHISHEK KUMAR, DIED AFTER A TREE FELL ON A HUT WHILE HE WAS SLEEPING INSIDE**



**The weather department has issued an "orange" alert of hailstorm and heavy rain and snow at isolated parts of the state Thursday and Friday and warned of thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds in 12 districts**

**Shimla, April 17:** Heavy rain accompanied by thunderstorms and hailstorms lashed several parts of Himachal Pradesh, uprooting trees and disrupting power supply as several areas in Shimla remained without electricity for hours.

Pine and other trees fell on the huts of the migrants due to heavy storm at night in Hamirpur's Barsar.

An eight-year-old child, identified as Abhishek Kumar, died after a tree fell on a hut while he was sleeping inside. The child was taken to Barsar Civil Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

Gondla in Lahaul and Spiti received 1 cm of snow since Wednesday evening.

Seobagh in Kullu district recorded the highest rainfall of 28.8 mm followed by Lahaul-Spiti's Kukumseri 23.8 mm and Narkanda 18 mm, the

MeT office Thursday said. Horticulture and Revenue Minister Jagat Singh Negi said that hailstorms were witnessed in several areas, causing damage to crops like apple and other fruits which were in flowering stage. The loss is being estimated, he added. The minister said

that roads have been blocked due to falling of trees.

Some houses have been damaged according to reports, said Negi and added the restoration work is going on.

The weather department has issued an "orange" alert of hailstorm and heavy rain and snow at isolated parts of the state Thursday and Friday and warned of thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds in 12 districts. The thunderstorms and hailstorms Wednesday uprooted trees, blew off the roofs of makeshift houses and caused power outages in several areas, including Shimla where power supply was restored this morning after nearly 10 hours.

Some vehicles were also crushed under trees in Shimla. Mandi recorded 17.6 mm rainfall, Dharamshala 17 mm, Chamba 16 mm, Kalpa 15.6 mm and Kufri 15 mm while the tourist resorts of Kasauli received 14.4 mm rain, Dalhousie 10 mm, Shimla 9.6 mm and Manali 6.8 mm, the MeT office said.

There was a significant fall in the minimum temperatures. Lahaul and Spiti's Keylong was the coldest at night with a low of 0.5 degree Celsius. However, no major change was seen in the maximum temperatures.

Una was hottest during the day recording a high of 37.2 degrees Celsius.

The rain deficit during the ongoing pre-monsoon season from March 1 to April 17 is 38 per cent as the state received 93.2 mm of rain against normal rainfall of 151.3 mm.

## TN sees increased tourist footfalls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

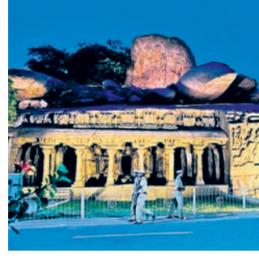
**Chennai, April 17:** Tamil Nadu has been witnessing an increase in tourist activity and the state welcomed over 30.80 crore tourists, including 11.62 lakh foreign nationals during 2024, the government informed Thursday.

Last year, over 30.68 crore domestic tourists visited the state where hospitality is deep-rooted in its ancient traditions, a policy note on Tourism tabled in the Assembly by Minister R Rajendran, holding the portfolio, said.

The number of tourist arrivals in 2023 was 28.71 crore, including 11.75 lakh foreign tourists. "Tamil Nadu stood at second place in India in attracting domestic tourists in 2024," the note stated.

"Tourist visits to Tamil Nadu serve as a vital component of the state's growth. The state's diverse geography, rich cultural heritage and picturesque environment position it as a highly sought-after destination for both domestic and international tourists, contributing significantly to its economic development," it said.

Later, winding up the debate on the demand for grants to his department, Rajendran said a detailed project report will be prepared to ensure modern infrastructure at the popular tourist destinations across the state for Rs 100 crore.



# TN melts 1,000 kg temple gold, earns ₹17.81cr interest

*Gold articles offered to the temples but not used for the deities were converted into 24-carat bars by melting them in the government mint, Mumbai, and invested in the State Bank of India under the Gold Investment Scheme*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, April 17:** Over 1,000 kg of gold articles offered to 21 temples across Tamil Nadu by devotees but lying unused were melted and converted into 24-carat bars and deposited in banks. This investment of gold bars is fetching it an annual interest of Rs 17.81 crore, the government said Thursday.

Gold articles offered to the temples but not used for the deities were converted into 24-carat bars by melting them in the government mint, Mumbai, and invested in the State Bank of India under the Gold Investment Scheme.

"The interest accrued from the investment is used for the development of the temples concerned," a policy note on the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department tabled in the Assembly by Minister PK Sekar Babu, holding the portfolio, said.

Three committees headed by retired justices have been



constituted, one each for the three regions in the state to oversee the implementation of the scheme.

Giving details on the investment of gold bars as of March 31, 2025, the note said, "10,74,123.488 pure gold obtained in grams from 21 temples fetched Rs 1,781.25 lakh as interest accruing per year determined according to the value of gold at the time of investment."

Among the shrines, the Arulmigu Mariamman Temple in Samayapuram, Tiruchirappalli district, contributed the

maximum of 4,24,266.491 grams (about 424.26 kg) of gold for the investment scheme.

Permission has been granted to melt the 'unused and unusable' silver items in the temples under the control of the HR&CE Department into pure silver bars by the government-approved private silver smelting companies on the premises of the temples in the presence of zonal committees headed by three judges. "Accordingly, steps are currently being taken to melt the unused silver items in the temples," it said.

## Bomb threats to chief secy, Mandi DC offices; authorities on alert

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Shimla/Mandi, April 17:** After the deputy commissioner's office in Mandi received a bomb threat email Wednesday, Himachal Pradesh Chief Secretary Prabodh Saxena said Thursday that a similar threat mail was sent to his office in Shimla on the same day.

The email referred to the chief secretary's office located inside the Secretariat complex in Shimla, claiming that something is going to happen in Tamil Nadu and the timing to execute the threat in Himachal Pradesh would be adjusted accordingly, sources said.

Speaking to the PTI, Saxena said that two threat mails were received Wednesday, one at his office in Shimla and the other at the deputy commissioner's (DC) office in Mandi.

The origin of both the emails is being traced, and if necessary, help would be sought from the central agencies to arrest the culprits, Saxena said.

"Both the offices were vacated and sanitised on Wednesday. While nothing suspicious has been found so far, the authorities have been put on high alert," the chief secretary said, adding that security has been strengthened at both the locations.

Similar threats were received by some schools and airlines in the recent past but fortunately nothing untoward happened, he added.



## TN leaders pay tributes to Dheeran Chinnamalai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, April 17:** Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi, Chief Minister MK Stalin and others paid tributes to freedom fighter Dheeran Chinnamalai on his 269th birth anniversary Thursday.

Grateful nation pays heart-felt tribute to Dheeran Chinnamalai on his birth anniversary, Ravi said.

Stalin and his cabinet colleagues paid floral tributes to a decorated portrait of Chinnamalai at Guindy here, where the freedom fighter's statue is installed.

TNCC President K Selvapuruthagai among others were present.

**FREEDOM FIGHTER'S ANNIVERSARY**  
AIADMK general secretary and Leader of Opposition in the assembly, Edappadi K Palaniswami and party leaders also paid floral tributes to Chinnamalai at the venue later.

Paying glowing tributes to Chinnamalai, Governor Ravi hailed him as "a legendary freedom fighter and valiant son of Maa Bharati."

"He was a towering force of resistance against British colonial tyranny. With unwavering courage, strategic foresight and unflinching resolve, he laid a strong foundation for India's freedom movement," a Raj Bhavan social media post quoted him as saying.

"At a defining moment in our history, his visionary leadership sparked a spirit of defiance that galvanized his contemporaries and continues to inspire generations," he added.

His legacy lives on and continues to guide the nation toward a resilient, self-reliant and prosperous developed India, shaped by the very ideals he so bravely upheld, Ravi added.

In a post on 'X,' Stalin said the prevalence of anti-colonial mindset in Tamil Nadu even today was possible due to the seeds sown by Chinnamalai after he fought against the British.

Palaniswami also hailed Chinnamalai for his valiant efforts.



# TN to install Thiruvalluvar's statue at JNU

**THE INITIATIVE AIMS TO PROMOTE THE TIMELESS VALUES OF THIRUVALLUVAR'S LITERARY MASTERPIECE, THE THIRUKKURAL, AMONG STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, April 17:** Tamil Nadu Minister for Tamil Development, Information and Publicity, MP Saminathan, has announced that a statue of the revered Tamil poet, philosopher, and saint Thiruvalluvar will be installed at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in Delhi at an estimated cost of Rs 50 lakh.

According to the minister, the statue will be erected near the International Auditorium on the JNU campus. The initiative aims to promote the timeless values of Thiruvalluvar's literary masterpiece, the Thirukkural, among students and scholars across the country.

The announcement follows an earlier commitment made by JNU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit during a function commemorating Tamil poet Subramania



Bharathi, where she stated that a statue of Thiruvalluvar would be established on campus.

Thiruvalluvar is the author of the Thirukkural, an ancient Tamil text consisting of 1,330 couplets that cover the moral, economic, and emotional dimensions of life, grouped under three main sections: Aram (Virtue), Porul (Wealth), and Inbam (Love).

It may be noted that a 41-metre-tall (135 ft) stone statue of Thiruvalluvar already stands on a small island off the coast of Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu. Sculpted by renowned architect V. Ganapati Sthapati, who also designed the Iraiivan Temple in Hawaii, the statue was inaugurated on January 1, 2000, by then Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi to mark the new millennium. On January 1, 2025, during its silver jubilee celebrations, the Tamil Nadu government officially

designated the monument as the 'Statue of Wisdom'.

The statue's combined height, including its 38-foot (12-metre) pedestal, is 133 feet, symbolising the 133 chapters of the Thirukkural. The pedestal represents the 38 chapters of Virtue, while the statue itself embodies the themes of Wealth and Love. Thiruvalluvar's right hand, with three fingers pointing skyward, signifies the unity of the three sections of the Kural.

Positioned at 61 metres (200 feet) above sea level, the monument also features a graceful bend at the waist, reminiscent of the cosmic dance poses of Hindu deities like Nataraja. The entire structure weighs approximately 7,000 tonnes.

The proposed statue at JNU is expected to serve as a cultural bridge and an enduring symbol of Tamil heritage in the national capital.

# PANGI DECLARED FIRST NATURAL FARMING SUBDIVISION

**TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF THE REGION, CHIEF MINISTER ASSURED SUFFICIENT FUNDS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF MAHILA MANDAL BHAWANS AND DECLARED THAT SACH WILL BE GIVEN THE STATUS OF SUB-TEHSIL**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chamba, April 17:** In a first, the state-level Himachal Day celebrations were held Tuesday in the remote and picturesque Killar region of Pangi Valley in Chamba district, where Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu declared it the state's first natural farming subdivision.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was the first Prime Minister to visit Pangi way back in 1984.

A large number of people gathered at the helipad ground to witness and participate in the 78th Himachal Day celebrations.

Chief Minister Sukhu conveyed his greetings to the people on this occasion. He remembered the immense contributions of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the first Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, Y S Parmar, in se-

curing statehood for the state.

While addressing the function, CM Sukhu announced that the Udaipur-Killar road improvement is a top priority of the government and the matter has been taken up with the Union government, resulting in the tender process nearing completion.

He directed the administrations of Lahaul-Spiti and Chamba districts to complete all necessary formalities and expedite the road construction work.

He announced to make Pangi subdivision as the state's first natural farming subdivision and sanctioned Rs 5 crore revolving fund for this purpose.

He announced a Rs 60 per kg minimum support price for naturally grown barley and set up a milk processing plant in Pangi.

To strengthen power supply in the valley, he said the government is working on projects



of Rs 62 crore.

He said Rs 5 crore is being spent on laying an 11 KV line from Tindi to Shaur and announced Rs 45.50 crore for laying a 33 KV line from Thiro to Killar.

Taking into account the

unique challenges of the region, he assured sufficient funds for the construction of Mahila Mandal bhawans and declared that Sach will be given the status of sub-tehsil.

To improve transportation services, he announced 20

new bus permits for the valley, along with a 40 per cent subsidy on bus purchases and a four-month exemption from road tax.

Further, the Chief Minister announced the opening of a Rajiv Gandhi Day Boarding School in Pangi Valley and the development of the Civil Hospital in Killar into Adarsh Swasthya Sansthan. He declared a 50 per cent waiver on registration fees for homestays and announced Rs 1.5 crore for the improvement of link roads in the valley.

The Chief Minister said that former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi shared a deep connection with the Pangi valley and was the first PM to visit the place in 1984, after which the development of the region gained momentum.

He said the government has made efforts to revive the economy by introducing changes in

policies and laws, resulting in significant improvements in Himachal Pradesh's financial condition.

The government has fulfilled six out of its 10 guarantees and has taken several steps to strengthen the rural economy.

The government is offering a minimum support price for milk, as well as for wheat, maize, and turmeric cultivated through natural farming.

A total of 1.58 lakh farmers practicing natural farming have been certified in the state.

CM Sukhu said under the Agriculture Interest Subvention Scheme, a one-time settlement policy will be introduced this year through banks to benefit farmers whose land is on the verge of auction.

Under this policy, farmers will be able to repay agricultural loans of up to Rs 3 lakh, with the government paying 50 per cent of the interest.



Our government aims to bring a smile to the face of every victim by providing justice

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

CRPF TO RAISE SPECIAL COBRA BATTALION

The Central Reserve Police Force has decided to raise a special COBRA battalion for counter-terrorist operations in Jammu and Kashmir, 17 years after this jungle warfare unit was raised in the paramilitary to undertake operations in Naxal-affected states



of the day quote

SP can go to any extent for Dalit votes. Therefore, along with Dalits, backward and Muslim communities should also avoid being misled by them and falling prey to their political tricks

MAYAWATI | BSP CHIEF

In his recent address, Pakistan's Army Chief, General Asim Munir, unequivocally emphasized the deep-rooted ideological divide between India and Pakistan

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CM

Last year, when I met the railway loco pilots, I was deeply worried to know their conditions

-- 14-hour shifts, continuous night duty, no adequate rest, no food break and no toilet facilities

RAHUL GANDHI | LEADER OF OPPN

Mansarovar Yatra to resume soon

The move to resume the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and flight services is part of efforts by India and China to repair the ties hit by the over four-year military standoff along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: India Thursday said there is a possibility of resumption of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra soon and preparations for it are underway.

India and China have been looking at resuming the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra as part of efforts to improve ties after the two countries completed disengagement of troops at the two remaining friction points of Demchok and Depsang under the framework of a pact sealed in October last year.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said both India and China have agreed in-principle to resume flight services between the two sides as well and that relevant modalities are being worked out.

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"We will soon issue a public notice on the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and there is a possibility of resumption of the Yatra soon," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

"The Yatra will happen this year and we are making preparations. More information will be put out for the public soon," he added. The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra has not taken place since 2020. On resumption of flight services, Jaiswal said: "In principle, both countries have agreed that flight operations will resume."

for the flight services to resume. The two civil aviation authorities have met and are discussing the relevant modalities, including the updated framework," he said.

Last month, India and China explored ways to rebuild ties and agreed to initiate efforts to promote people-to-people exchanges, including arrangements for resumption of direct flights as well as Kailash Mansarovar Yatra this year. In a meeting in Beijing, the two sides also discussed resumption of dialogue mechanisms in a "step-by-step" manner to utilise them to address each other's priority areas of inter-

Judiciary can't direct Prez of India, act as super Parl: Dhankhar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar Thursday questioned the judiciary setting a timeline for the president to take decisions and act as a "super Parliament", saying the Supreme Court cannot fire a "nuclear missile" at democratic forces.

Dhankhar's strong words to the judiciary came during his speech to Rajya Sabha interns, days after the Supreme Court sought to fix a timeline for the president to grant assent to the bills reserved for her consideration by the governor.

"So, we have judges who will legislate, who will perform executive functions, who will act as super Parliament and absolutely have no accountability because the law of the land does not apply to them," Dhankhar said. The vice president also described Article 142, which grants plenary powers to the Supreme Court, as a "nuclear missile against democratic forces available to the judiciary 24x7".

"Article 142 has become a nuclear missile against democratic forces (and) available to (the) judiciary 24x7," he said. Article 142 of the Constitution gives the Supreme Court the power to issue orders that ensure "complete justice" in any matter before it.

This power is also known as the Supreme Court's "plenary

power". "There is a directive to the president by a recent judgment. Where are we heading? "What is happening in the country? We have to be extremely sensitive. It is not a question of someone filing a review or not. We never bargained for democracy for this day. President being called upon to decide in a time-bound manner, and if not, becomes law," Dhankhar said. The vice president said his worries were at a "very highest level" and he had never thought in "my life" that he would have the occasion to see it. He reminded the audience that the president of India is in a very elevated position.

"(The) president takes an oath to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution. Others, including ministers, the vice president, parliamentarians and judges take an oath to abide by the Constitution," Dhankhar said. "We cannot have a situation where you direct the president of India and on what basis? The only right you have under the Constitution is to interpret the Constitution under Article 145(3). There it has to be five judges or more..." he said.

Stressing the principle of separation of powers, he underlined that when the government is elected by the people, the government is accountable to Parliament and to the people in the elections.

SHORT TAKES

Deaf-mute girl rape: Man held within 24 hrs

Rampur (UP): A man was arrested within 24 hours of allegedly raping an 11-year-old deaf-and-mute girl, who was found in a field here bleeding from her private parts and with bite marks on her body, according to officials. The accused, Daan Singh (24), was arrested following a brief exchange of fire with police Wednesday night in which he was injured, the officials said. The girl, who is undergoing treatment at a hospital, is in severe shock and her condition is stated to be critical, they said.

Grenade attack on YouTuber's house

Chandigarh: An Army jawan posted in Jammu and Kashmir has been arrested for allegedly imparting online training to the man who hurled a grenade at the residence of a Jalandhar-based YouTuber last month, Punjab Police said Thursday. A court in Jalandhar sent the jawan, Sukhcharan Singh, to five-day police remand, police officials said. The main accused, Hardik Kamboj, hurled the hand grenade at the house of YouTuber Rozer Sandhu on the intervening night of March 15 and 16. However, the grenade did not explode.

6 killed in collision between bus, auto

Patan (Gujarat): Six persons travelling in an autorickshaw were killed after their vehicle collided with a state transport bus in Gujarat's Patan district Thursday, police said. An official said the accident occurred near Sami village on the Sami-Radhanpur highway around 11.30 am. The state transport bus was going towards Kutch from Himmatnagar, while the three-wheeler was coming from the opposite direction, said Patan District Superintendent of Police V K Nayi.

BEST e-bus catches fire

Mumbai: An electric BEST bus caught fire late Thursday night near Churchgate station in south Mumbai, though no one was hurt in the incident, a civic official said. The incident took place at 9:50pm outside platform number 4 of Churchgate station on Maharshi Karve road and the blaze was doused some time later after four fire engines and other fire brigade vehicles were deployed, he said. The fire was triggered by short circuit in the battery section of the bus, the official informed.

SNIPPETS

Noted Scottish-born Indian author Bill Aitken dies at 90

Dehradun: Noted Scottish-born travel writer Bill Aitken, known for his writings on Indian mountains, rivers, and railways, died here at a hospital Wednesday night. He was 90. According to a friend, Aitken was brought to Dehradun a few days ago for treatment after having a fall at his home in Mussoorie but he made little improvement. Born in Scotland in 1934, Aitken travelled across India following his arrival in the late 1950s, especially in and around Himalayan ashrams of Kausani and Mirtola. He lived between Delhi and Mussoorie since the 1970s. However, his travels took him to lesser-known parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Haryana and through the diverse landscapes of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.

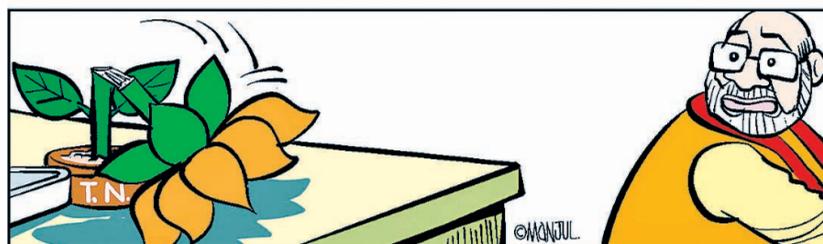
EU naval force proposes joint exercise with India

New Delhi: European Union Naval Force Operation ATALANTA has proposed conducting a joint exercise with the Indian Navy next month seeking to boost interoperability and efforts to counter piracy and other maritime threats. European Union Naval Force Operation ATALANTA -- EUNAVFOR ATALANTA -- is the EU military operation to contribute to the maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean and in the Red Sea. Interacting with reporters at the embassy of the Delegation of the European Union to India here, its Operation Commander Vice Admiral Ignacio Villanueva Serrano Thursday said he recognises the Indian Navy as a "major actor" in the area in which it operates.

Dawoodi Bohra delegation meets PM, lauds Waqf Act

New Delhi: A delegation of Dawoodi Bohras met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to express their gratefulness to him for the Waqf (Amendment) Act, which has accommodated some of their key demands. Officials said the community members told Modi that it was their long-pending demand as they reposed faith in his vision of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas'. They were accompanied by Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijju in the meeting. In a post on X, Modi said, "Had a wonderful meeting with members of the Dawoodi Bohra community! We talked about a wide range of issues during the interaction."

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Madras HC orders FIR against TN minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 17: The Madras High Court Thursday directed the Tamil Nadu police to file a case against state Forest Minister K Ponnudiyi, following his recent controversial remarks and warned of contempt if they failed to do so.

The judge, Justice N Anand Venkatesh, made the observations orally. Ponnudiyi created a controversy recently with his Shaivism-Vaishnavism re-

CONTROVERSIAL REMARKS

marks made in the context of a sex worker at a public meeting, drawing widespread criticism, including from his own party MP Kanimozhi.

On Thursday, the Court cautioned the police that if they do not register the FIR against the DMK leader, it will initiate suo motu (on its own) contempt against them. When the suo motu revision case against Ponnudiyi relating to a disproportionate

wealth case came up for hearing, Justice Anand Venkatesh expressed concern over the remarks made by the DMK leader.

Earlier in the day, the judge asked the Advocate General to get instructions from DGP as to whether any FIR was registered against Ponnudiyi and posted the case to this evening. When the case was taken up for hearing in the evening, the judge asked AG "where is the FIR". Can this court take that FIR has been registered.

Working closely with Belgium on Choksi's extradition, says India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: India Thursday said it is working closely with Belgium for extradition of fugitive diamondaire Mehul Choksi. Choksi was arrested in Belgium's Antwerp Saturday based on a formal request from the Indian government.

"Based on our extradition request, he was arrested. We are working closely with the Belgium side on his extradition so that he can face trial in the country," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

The fugitive diamondaire and his nephew Nirav Modi allegedly siphoned off Rs 15,500 crore of public money from the state-run Punjab National Bank (PNB) using fraudulent letters of undertaking. In May 2021, Choksi went missing from Antigua but was traced and returned to it later.

It was alleged that Choksi, his firm Gitanjali Gems and others "committed the offence of cheating against PNB in connivance with certain bank officials by fraudulently getting the LoUs (letters of undertaking) issued and got the FLCs (foreign letter of credit) enhanced without following prescribed procedure and caused a wrongful loss to the bank".

Hindi mandatory 3rd language for Classes I-V in Maha

The three-language formula for Classes I to V is a part of the new curriculum implementation under the National Education Policy 2020

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 17: Maharashtra Government has decided that Hindi as a third language will be mandatory for students in Classes I to V in Marathi and English-medium schools across the state, in a departure from the practice of studying two languages.

Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray slammed the move, adding his party will oppose the decision vehemently and ensure that it is not implemented.

The three-language formula for Classes I to V is a part of the new curriculum implementation under the National

Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

The state school education department has declared a phase-wise implementation plan of the new curriculum framework designed as per the NEP 2020 recommendations for school education.

"I want to make it clear that MNS will not tolerate this decision. We will not allow the central government's current efforts to 'Hindi-fy' everything, to succeed in this state," Thackeray said in a post on X.

"Hindi is not a national language. It is a state language like other languages in the country. Why should it be taught in Maharashtra from the very beginning? Whatever your trilingual



formula is, limit it to government affairs, do not bring it to education," he said. "Why have you started imposing the language of another region on Maharashtra? The very principle of linguistic regionalization

is being undermined," the MNS chief said.

"We are Hindus but not Hindi! If you try to paint Maharashtra as Hindi, then there is bound to be a struggle in Maharashtra," Thackeray said.

from the next academic year. The new syllabus as per NEP will be implemented for Class I in 2025-26.

For Classes II, III, IV and VI, the policy will be implemented in 2026-27, for Classes V, IX and XI from 2027-28, and for Classes 8, X and XII from 2028-29, the GR said. All schools in the state, other than Marathi and English medium, are currently following the three-language formula. For such schools, the language of the medium, English and Marathi will be taught, said the GR. For Std VI to X, the language policy will be as per the state curriculum, it said. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the state has already implemented the NEP.



Our defence capabilities are like a credible deterrence, to maintain peace and tranquillity. Peace is possible only when we remain strong

RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

NOTTO WRITES TO STATES, UTS TO IMPLEMENT SWAP ORGAN TRANSPLANT

The National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO) has written to all the states and union territories for the implementation of SWAP donor transplantation, saying it has the potential to augment the number of organ transplants in the country



of the day quote

Dulat's revelations are nothing new for me. This father-son duo (Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah) went to meet them (Prime Minister Narendra Modi) August 3 (2019). Farooq Sahib did not even go to Parliament (August 5, 2019). He stayed back. So there is nothing surprising for me

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

The Naxalites who dream of spreading red terror from Pashupatinath to Tirupati are today confined to just four districts. The biggest contribution in this is of CRPF. The menace (of Naxalism) will end in the country by March 31, 2026, as stated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

We set up a committee of DMS and SDMs who conducted inspections in private schools and submitted their reports. The court made the observations based on those findings

ASHISH SOOD | DELHI EDU MINISTER

POST OF THE DAY

Your grandparent's furniture used to last 100 years. But, the furniture you bought yesterday would last max 5 years. This does not apply just to your furniture-- but to new houses as well. Take the example of a new FLAT. Compare it to older ones. Thick walls, heavy doors, big kitchens, larger floor areas; the old units check all boxes. But, you would very rarely see such features on the newly built apartments. Point being: Things were BUILT TO LAST. NOW they are being built to be bought. So which ones do you think makes sense to own?

@Akshat\_World

SHORT TAKES

Renowned author Rose Kerketta dies

Ranchi: Eminent writer and tribal rights activist Rose Kerketta breathed her last here Thursday, a family member said. Kerketta, 85, was suffering from various ailments after contracting COVID-19 during the pandemic phase. She is survived by son Sonal Prabhanjan and daughter Vandana Tete. "My mother passed away around 10.30 am. She has been bed-ridden since 2023 and had almost stopped eating for the last 10 days," Tete told PTI. Kerketta's collection of stories 'Pagha Jori-Jori Re Ghat' was among her popular literary creations.

CBI books Durgesh Pathak, Kapil Bhardwaj

New Delhi: The CBI Thursday conducted searches at the premises of former AAP MLA and party's Gujarat polls co-incharge Durgesh Pathak after registering an FIR against him for allegedly receiving foreign donations for his party in contravention of FCRA norms, officials said. Besides Pathak, the agency booked another office bearer of the party Kapil Bhardwaj (now deceased) in the case. The FIR was registered on a complaint from the Ministry of Home Affairs which had alleged that the party had received foreign donations in contravention of the provisions of Foreign Contribution (Regulations) Act (FCRA) 2010 (as amended in 2020).

Mamata hails top court order on sacked teachers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 17: The 'untainted' teachers of state-run and state-aided schools in West Bengal — whose services were temporarily extended by the Supreme Court Thursday — expressed dissatisfaction over what they described as mere "short-term relief," even as Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee welcomed the order and said there was now a "sense of relief."

The Supreme Court Thursday extended till December 31 the services of terminated teachers found untainted by the CBI. The order came on the pleas of the state government, which moved court after the April 3 verdict. The top court judgment invalidated the appointment of 25,753 teachers and staffers in various schools, calling the entire selection process "vitiating and tainted."

The SC directed the state government to initiate a fresh recruitment process by May 31 and complete it by December 31. Addressing a press conference at the state secretariat Nabanna shortly after the court ruling, Banerjee said, "The court has given time till December. This is a relief for now. We were concerned about their salaries as the earlier ruling had barred salary disbursement. We were looking for an alternative way. The court has responded positively to our plea so that they don't suffer."

"We are happy with the SC order... there is a sense of relief. I would request the teachers not to worry, the issue will be resolved," Banerjee told reporters. Hailing the SC order, Education Minister Bratya Basu asked the jobless 'eligi-



THE SUPREME COURT THURSDAY EXTENDED TILL DECEMBER 31 THE SERVICES OF TERMINATED TEACHERS FOUND UNTAINTED BY THE CBI

THE ORDER CAME ON THE PLEAS OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT, WHICH MOVED COURT AFTER THE APRIL 3 VERDICT

THE TOP COURT JUDGMENT INVALIDATED THE APPOINTMENT OF 25,753 TEACHERS AND STAFFERS IN VARIOUS SCHOOLS, CALLING THE ENTIRE SELECTION PROCESS "VITIATING AND TAINTED"

ble' teachers not to worry as the apex court acknowledged the point made by West Bengal Board of Secondary Education that invalidation of jobs of thousands of 'untainted' teachers will severely disrupt the academic functioning of state-run and state-aided schools.

The jobless eligible teachers, however, asserted that only permanent reinstatement would bring them justice. Pankaj Roy, one of the nearly 26,000 teaching and non-teaching staff whose appointments through the 2016 SSC recruitment drive were annulled, told PTI, "With all respect to the Honourable Supreme Court, let's voice our

dissatisfaction over the order which has allowed us to attend classes only till December 31. What happens after that? The SC has asked the state to issue a fresh notification. We've already made it clear that we will not sit for fresh exams after clearing the 2016 recruitment test as eligible candidates."

Roy, a political science teacher at a secondary school in North Bengal, had observed a three-day hunger strike last week outside the WBSSC office in Acharya Bhavan, demanding the publication of a list distinguishing 'tainted' from 'untainted' candidates from the 2016 recruitment batch. He also urged the WBSSC to clarify to the apex court that eligible teachers should not be dismissed.

Dhritish Mondal of Jogyo Sikshak Manch (Eligible Teachers' Platform) echoed the sentiment, saying, "We are not tainted candidates. This is even acknowledged in the SC order. Then why should our services be extended only till December 31? As per service rules, we should serve till we reach the superannuation age of 60. If the WBSSC knows who is tainted and who is not, why can't they tell the SC clearly?"

MURSHIDABAD VIOLENCE

Calcutta HC reserves order on extending CAPF deployment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 17: The Calcutta High Court Thursday reserved its order on the continuation of central forces in violence-hit Murshidabad district.

The court suggested that a three-member panel, comprising one member each from the National Human Rights Commission, the West Bengal State Human Rights Commission and the State Legal Services Authority, should visit the affected pockets of the district to oversee the restoration of peace and rehabilitation of people displaced due to the violence.

A division bench of Justices Soumen Sen and Raja Basu Chowdhury heard a petition moved by the Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari, who claimed that bomb blasts took place during communal riots in the Muslim-majority

district and prayed that the National Investigation Agency (NIA) be handed over the probe into the violence.

Another petitioner pleaded for steps by the state government for the return of people displaced by the violence to their homes. The lawyer appearing for the Centre prayed before the court that deployment of CAPF (central armed police forces) in Murshidabad be extended, considering the sensitivity of the situation on the ground.

Around 17 companies of central forces currently remain deployed in the trouble-torn pockets of Suti and Samserganj-Dhulian in the district. While making its submission before the court, the state government placed a report and claimed that the law and order situation in the district is currently under control.



Otters in a pond at the Sarthana Nature Park zoo, in Surat, Gujarat

PTI PHOTO

ANOTHER MEERUT SHOCKER

Woman, lover kill her hubby; try to pass it off as snakebite

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Meerut, April 17: A man was killed allegedly by his wife and her lover who later placed a live venomous snake under his body to cover up the crime, police said Thursday.

The post-mortem report blew the lid off their plot as it showed that the man had been strangled. The woman, Ravita (27), and her lover Amardeep (19), who was a friend of her husband, have been arrested, according to a police statement.

Circle Officer Abhishek Kumar Patel said the incident took place in Akbarpur Sadat village under the Behsuma police station area. "Amit Kashyap (30), alias Mickey, was found dead at his home on Sunday morning. A venomous snake was found



near his bed, leading to the assumption that he had died of a snakebite," Patel told PTI.

However, the post-mortem report stated that he died due to asphyxiation, he said. "Following the report, we initiated a detailed investigation into the case," the officer said.

According to police sources, Amit married Ravita eight years ago and the couple had three children. Amit worked as a mason along with Amardeep, who eventually got involved in an illicit relationship with Ravita. Tensions between Amit and Ravita began after he found out

Amit Kashyap (30), alias Mickey, was found dead at his home Sunday morning. A venomous snake was found near his bed, leading to the assumption that he had died of a snakebite

about his wife's affair. There were frequent arguments between the two. Ravita told Amardeep about these arguments and he stopped working with her husband around five months ago, the sources said. The duo told police that about a week ago, they decided

to eliminate Amit and make it look like he died due to snakebite, Circle Officer Patel said. On April 12, Amardeep bought a snake for ₹1,000 from a snake charmer and hid it in a bag, he said.

Later that night, after Amit had fallen asleep, Ravita called Amardeep to her house and the two strangled her husband to death. Then they put the live snake under Amit's body to make it look like he was bitten by the reptile while he was asleep, the officer added.

"The snake was trapped under the body and bit it several times, which led to the confusion during the preliminary investigation," Patel said. Ravita and Amardeep have been taken into custody. Further legal proceedings in the case are underway, he said.

Herald case: ED seeks to confiscate ₹661cr assets



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: In a recently-filed chargesheet in the Associated Journals Limited-Young Indian-National Herald money-laundering case, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has sought confiscation of assets worth ₹661 crore that it has attached during the course of the investigation, according to official sources.

The federal probe agency has also appended the statements of Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in the prosecution complaint (chargesheet) that it had recorded in 2022 during their questioning and it is understood that they have denied any wrongdoing, saying the takeover of Associated Journals Limited (AJL) by Young Indian (YI) was not for commercial purposes, the sources told PTI.

The chargesheet names 78-year-old former Congress president and Rajya Sabha MP Sonia Gandhi as the accused number one and her son, Rahul Gandhi (54), as the accused number two, besides five others.

It was filed by the ED before a competent court here that tries criminal cases against law-

Robert Vadra questioned for third consecutive day

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate recorded the statement of Robert Vadra, the businessman brother-in-law of Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, for about six hours on the third consecutive day Thursday in a 2008 Haryana land deal-linked money laundering case. By the end of Thursday's session, he was questioned for about 16 hours in total. Vadra (56) has termed the ED action a "political witch hunt" against him and his family. He reached the ED office in central Delhi shortly after 11 am on Thursday, accompanied by his wife Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, an MP from Kerala's Wayanad. Robert Vadra left the agency office around 6:15 pm.

makers April 9. The court has fixed April 25 as the next date of hearing in the case, when it may take or reject cognisance of the chargesheet.

The sources said the agency has sought punishment against the accused for the offence of money laundering under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and prayed for the confiscation of assets worth ₹661 crore that it had attached in November 2023. These confiscated assets, post the successful trial, will go to the government exchequer by way of auction or any other such process, they added.

World's first on-site 3D-printed bunker built in Leh for military use

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 17: With the help of the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad, a Hyderabad-based deep-tech startup, Simpliforge Creations, has built the world's first on-site 3D-printed bunker in Leh for military use.

Project Prabal envisions military bunkers in different configurations in remote locations at higher altitudes, said Professor K V L Subramaniam of IIT-Hyderabad, under whose guidance the project was conceptualised.

"The demonstration project that we did is located in Leh, at an altitude of 11,000 feet above sea level, and we completed the construction under what is called HALO conditions — high altitude and low oxygen," Subramaniam told PTI.

According to him, thanks to a lot of planning, they managed to achieve the project in under two weeks, including the transportation of the printer to the remote spot. "The location was highly inhospitable, where we had to function at 40 to 50 per cent oxygen levels. Lack of oxygen meant both man and machine had to perform at lower efficiency levels," said the professor.

The team is also behind the world's first 3D-printed temple inside Charvitha Meadows, a gated villa community at Burugupalli in Siddipet, Telangana. But the military project took several attempts before they could perfect the concrete mix required for high-altitude printing, added Subramaniam.

"We tried to simulate the conditions prevalent in the chosen location to get the mix right," said the professor. As it was a defence construction, they were also required to design a specially geometric-patterned façade, which would minimise the ricochet of bullets, said Subramaniam. "We created undulations on the surface, which, incidentally, is possible only with 3D printing—so that bullets would not bounce off the structure," he added.

# international



**We know we are in a difficult moment. Most certainly, I am well aware of what I represent, and what I am defending**  
GIORGIA MELONI | PREMIER, ITALY

## GANDHI'S BUST UNVEILED IN SOUTH AFRICAN PROVINCE

In the Free State province of South Africa, where Indians were banned by apartheid legislation for more than a century, a larger-than-life bust of Mahatma Gandhi now stands proudly at the Anglo-Boer War Museum in the provincial capital of Bloemfontein



### of the day quote

**Autism destroys families. More importantly, it destroys our greatest resource, which is our children. These are children who should not be suffering like this**  
ROBERT F. KENNEDY JR. | HEALTH SECRETARY, US



**Mr. Poilievre is not Justin Trudeau. I'm not Justin Trudeau either. In this election the question is who is going to face Mr. Trump**  
MARK CARNEY | PRIME MINISTER, CANADA



**In the coming period, we will be under pressure regarding the event in Moscow in which we have announced our participation**  
ALEKSANDAR VUCIC | PRESIDENT, SERBIA



## Myanmar frees around 4,900 prisoners to mark traditional new year

*At least 19 buses with prisoners aboard left Yangon's Insein prison and were welcomed outside the gate by excited family members and friends who had been waiting since early morning*

**Bangkok, April 17:** The head of Myanmar's military government granted amnesty to around 4,900 prisoners to mark the country's traditional new year, state-run media reported Thursday, and an independent watchdog said they included at least 22 political detainees.

At least 19 buses with prisoners aboard left Yangon's Insein prison and were welcomed outside the gate by excited family members and

friends who had been waiting since early morning.

The Political Prisoners Network — Myanmar, an independent watchdog group that records violations of human rights in Myanmar's prisons, said in a statement that by its initial count, 22 political prisoners had been freed. Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing, the head of the ruling military council, pardoned 4,893 prisoners, MRTV reported. Thirteen foreigners will also be released and deported from Myanmar, it said in a separate statement.

Other prisoners received reduced sentences, except for those convicted of serious charges such as murder and rape, or those jailed on charges under various other security acts.

If the freed detainees violate the law again, they will have to serve the remainder of their original sentences in addition to any new sentence, according to the terms of their release.



Mass amnesties on the holiday are not unusual in Myanmar.

Myanmar has been under military rule since Feb 1, 2021, when its army ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government. The takeover was met with massive nonviolent resistance, which has since become a widespread armed struggle. The country is now in civil war.

Some 22,197 political detainees, including Suu Kyi, were in detention as of last Friday, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, an independent organisation that keeps detailed tallies of

Other prisoners received reduced sentences, except for those convicted of serious charges such as murder and rape, or those jailed on charges under various other security acts

If the freed detainees violate the law again, they will have to serve the remainder of their original sentences in addition to any new sentence, according to the terms of their release

Mass amnesties on the holiday are not unusual in Myanmar

arrests and casualties linked to the nation's political conflicts.

Many political detainees had been held on a charge of incitement, a catch-all offence widely used to arrest critics of the government or military and punishable by up to three years in prison. Among those imprisoned for incitement who were freed Thursday was the film director who works under the

## Bangladesh, Pak hold first foreign secretary-level talks

**Dhaka seeks apology for 1971 atrocities**



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dhaka, April 17:** Bangladesh raised "historically unresolved issues" and sought a public apology from Pakistan over the 1971 atrocities as the two countries held their first foreign secretary-level talks in 15 years here Thursday.

Dhaka also asked Pakistan to pay \$4.3 billion as its share from the combined assets at the time when East Pakistan split from Pakistan in 1971 to form an independent Bangladesh. The Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) between Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Jashim Uddin with his visiting Pakistani counterpart Amna Baloch takes place days ahead of Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar's visit to Dhaka April 27 and 28.

"We have raised the historically unresolved issues with Pakistan," Uddin told reporters after the FOC.

He said the issues included "the repatriation of stranded Pakistanis, equitable distribution of undivided assets, transfer of foreign aid funds sent for the victims of the 1970 cyclone, and a formal public apology for the genocide committed by the then Pakistani military in 1971".

name of Steel and is also known as Dwe Myittar. He was arrested in March 2023 and had been held in Insein Prison.

This year's celebrations of Thingyan, the new year's holiday, were more reserved than usual due to a nationwide grieving period following a devastating March 28 earthquake that killed about 3,725 people and levelled structures from new condos to ancient pagodas.

In a new year's speech, Min Aung Hlaing said his government will carry out reconstruction and rehabilitation measures in the quake-affected areas as quickly as possible. He also reaffirmed plans to hold a general election by the end of the year and called on opposition groups fighting the army to resolve the conflicts in political ways.

During the holiday, the violent struggle between the army and pro-democracy forces continued with reports of clashes in the countryside but the number of casualties was unclear.

## Iran's Khamenei sends letter to Putin ahead of talks with US

REUTERS

**Moscow/Dubai, April 17:** Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei sent his foreign minister to Moscow Thursday with a letter for President Vladimir Putin to brief the Kremlin about nuclear negotiations with the US, which has threatened to bomb the Islamic Republic.

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened Iran with bombing and to extend tariffs to third countries that buy Iranian oil if Tehran does not come to an agreement with Washington over its disputed nuclear programme. The United States has moved additional warplanes into the region.

The Trump administration and Iran held talks in Oman last weekend that both sides described as positive and constructive. Ahead of a second round of talks set to take place in Rome this weekend, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Wednesday that Iran's right to enrich uranium is not negotiable.

Russia, a longstanding ally of Tehran, plays a role in Iran's nuclear negotiations with the West as a veto-wielding UN Security Council member and a signatory to an earlier nuclear deal Trump abandoned during his first term in 2018.

"Regarding the nuclear issue, we always had close consultations with our friends China and Russia. Now it is a good opportunity to do so with Russian officials," Araghchi told Iranian state television.

## Russian SC suspends ban on Taliban

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Moscow, April 17:** Russia's Supreme Court Thursday suspended the over two decades old ban on Afghanistan's ruling Taliban, paving the way for the establishment of full-fledged relations between Moscow and Kabul.

Russia had proscribed the Taliban movement as a terrorist outfit in 2003. However, since the hasty withdrawal of the US troops in August 2021, the Taliban has gained control over Afghanistan.

"By decision of the Russian Supreme Court, the previously established ban on the activities of the Taliban movement, included in the unified federal list of organizations recognized as terrorist, is suspended," the judge was quoted as saying according to state-run TASS news agency.

The apex court's decision comes into force immediately. The advocate and representatives of the Taliban were present for the in-camera hearing.

In December 2024, the Russian Duma amended the law which allowed the temporary lifting of the ban on the Taliban to facilitate interaction with the group. "We are grateful for the decision, it will help strengthen cooperation," the Afghan embassy in Moscow was quoted as saying by the Russian news agency.

### SHORT TAKES

#### Russia strikes Dnipro

**Kyiv:** Russian forces launched a massive drone attack on the southeastern Ukrainian city of Dnipro, killing three people including a child and wounding dozens, officials said Thursday. The strike was the latest in a string of Russian attacks that have caused civilian casualties and intensified in recent weeks, as the United States continues efforts to negotiate a ceasefire between Moscow and Kyiv. Thirty people, including five children, were wounded in the attack, said Serhii Lysak, head of the Dnipropetrovsk regional administration.

#### Xi arrives in Cambodia

**Phnom Penh (Cambodia):** Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived in Cambodia Thursday for a two-day state visit that serves as an opportunity to further strengthen already robust relations. The visit, Xi's first since 2016, will conclude a three-nation Southeast Asian tour that included stops in Vietnam and Malaysia. China has been increasing its influence in the region over the past decade, largely by exercising its substantial economic leverage. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet recently described Beijing as "an important and indispensable friend of Cambodia that has helped support the country's economic and social development."

#### Putin thanks Hamas

**Moscow:** President Vladimir Putin has thanked Palestinian group Hamas for releasing three Russian hostages captivated during the October 2023 attack on Israel. Putin welcomed Russian citizen Alexander Trufanov and two of his family members released from Gaza captivity at the Kremlin late Wednesday night, Interfax agency said. "The fact that you are now free is a result of Russia's many years of stable relations with the Palestinian people, with the representatives of different organisations," Putin was quoted as saying by Interfax. "Here we have to offer a word of gratitude to the leadership and to the political wing of Hamas for a gesture made to us in carrying out this humanitarian act," Putin said.

#### Israeli strike kills family of 10 in Gaza

**Deir Al-Balah (Gaza Strip):** Israeli strikes on the Gaza Strip overnight into Thursday killed at least 23 people, including a family of 10, local health officials said. The United Nations meanwhile raised alarm over the mounting impact of Israel's six-week-old blockade preventing all food and other supplies from entering the territory.

## Trump challenges judges' deportation order probes



REUTERS

**New York, April 17:** The Trump administration is appealing efforts by two judges to investigate whether government officials defied their rulings over the deportation of migrants to El Salvador, escalating a confrontation between the executive and judicial branches

The Justice Department Wednesday night said it would appeal Washington-based US District Judge James Boasberg's finding that there was probable cause to believe the government had violated his order to return alleged members of a Venezuelan gang who were deported to El Salvador March 15 under an 18th-century wartime law. Boasberg said administration officials could face criminal contempt charges.

Also late Wednesday, government lawyers asked the Fourth US Circuit Court of Appeals to stop US District Judge Paula Xinis in Greenbelt, Maryland from ordering US officials to provide documents and answer questions under oath about what they had done to secure the return of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a migrant who was wrongly deported to El

The Trump administration faces more than 150 legal challenges to its policies

Democrats and some legal analysts say officials in some cases are dragging their feet in complying with unfavorable court orders, signaling a potential willingness to disobey an independent, coequal branch of government

Salvador.

In both cases, the Trump administration has denied it violated court orders and accused judges of overstepping their authority.

"A single district court has inserted itself into the foreign policy of the United States and has tried to dictate it from the bench," the Justice Department lawyers wrote in its filing with the Fourth Circuit. "Emergency relief is needed."

The Trump administration faces more than 150 legal challenges to its policies. Democrats and some legal analysts say officials in some cases are dragging their feet in complying with unfavorable court orders, signaling a potential willingness to disobey an independent, coequal branch of government.

Administration officials have responded with blunt criticism of Boasberg and Xinis, both

of whom were appointed by Democratic President Barack Obama. After Boasberg blocked the deportations of the Venezuelan migrants, Trump called for his impeachment.

That prompted a rare rebuke from US Chief Justice John Roberts, who said appeals, not impeachments, were the proper response to disagreements with court orders.

The judiciary is not the only US institution to come under pressure. The Trump administration has targeted others that have long cherished their independence from partisan politics, such as universities and law firms.

Either the government or lawyers for the migrants could seek to have the US Supreme Court review any unfavorable rulings by appeals courts in the cases of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a Maryland man who was removed March 15 despite an order blocking his deportation to El Salvador, and the 238 alleged Venezuelan gang members.

The Supreme Court has weighed prior questions in both cases before, and issued rulings that both sides portrayed as victories.

In the case of the Venezuelan migrants, the high court April 7 ended Boasberg's order blocking deportations under the wartime Alien Enemies Act, but said individuals must be given the chance to challenge their deportations in court before they are removed.

And the Supreme Court April 10 told the Trump administration to "facilitate" the return of Abrego Garcia from El Salvador's Terrorism Confinement Center, but said Xinis' prior order that the administration also "effectuate" his return was vague and may exceed her authority.

### 124 LIGHT YEARS AWAY

## Strongest hints yet of life detected on distant planet

*'K2-18 b' is an exoplanet over 8.5 times as massive as Earth, where previously molecules containing carbon, such as methane (CH4) and carbon dioxide (CO2), have been found*

AGENCIES

**Washington, April 17:** Hints of molecules known to be produced by marine organisms have been detected on an exoplanet, providing "the strongest evidence yet" of life outside the Solar System, researchers have said, cautioning that more data is needed.

'K2-18 b' is an exoplanet over 8.5 times as massive as Earth, where previously molecules

containing carbon, such as methane (CH4) and carbon dioxide (CO2), have been found. The exoplanet lies 120 light-years from Earth and orbits the star 'K2-18'.

In this study, the researchers, led by those from the University of Cambridge, UK, analysed data recorded by NASA's James Webb Space Telescope and found fingerprints of 'dimethyl sulphide' and 'dimethyl disulphide' - known to be produced on Earth by microbes, such as a marine phytoplankton.

The molecules provide "the strongest evidence yet that life may exist on a planet outside our solar system", even as how they formed on K2-18 b remain unknown, the team said in a statement.

However, lead researcher, Nikku Madhusudhan, professor of astrophysics and exoplanet-



tary science at the University of Cambridge, said that while the results are exciting, it's vital to obtain more data before claiming that life has been found on another world.

He added that while he is cautiously optimistic, there could be previously unknown

chemical processes at work on K2-18b that may account for the observations.

"We report new independent evidence for (dimethyl sulphide) and/or (dimethyl disulphide) in the atmosphere at 3-sigma (statistical) significance, with high abundance (over 10 parts

**The exoplanet lies 120 light-years from Earth and orbits the star 'K2-18'**

per million by volume) of at least one of the two molecules," the authors wrote in the study published in the Astrophysical Journal Letters.

In a 2023 study, published in the Astrophysical Journal Letters, the team documented evidence of "abundant" levels of carbon-containing gases - methane and carbon dioxide - in the atmosphere of K2-18, which was found to be rich in hydrogen.

"The abundant CH4 and CO2, along with the nondetection of ammonia (NH3), are consistent with chemical predictions for an ocean under a temperate

H2-rich atmosphere on K2-18 b," the authors wrote in the 2023 study. The team had also detected "potential signs" of dimethyl sulphide. The molecule is considered to predict life in a Hycean world, which is a type of exoplanet entirely covered by an ocean beneath a hydrogen-rich air.

"We didn't know for sure whether the signal we saw last time was due to (dimethyl sulphide), but just the hint of it was exciting enough for us to have another look with the James Webb Space Telescope using a different instrument," Madhusudhan said. The latest results are an "independent line of evidence, using a different instrument than we did before and a different wavelength range of light, where there is no overlap with the previous observations", he explained.



India is confident...we will navigate these global disruptions with policy agility and long-term vision  
NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | UNION FINANCE MINISTER

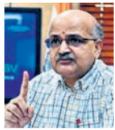
## RUPEE ENDS 26 PAISE HIGHER

The rupee strengthened for the fourth consecutive session and closed 26 paise higher at 85.38 against the US dollar Thursday, hitting the April 3 closing level, on the back of foreign fund inflows in domestic equities and broad weakness in the greenback. The unit has pared all its losses since April 2, when US President Donald Trump announced sweeping reciprocal tariffs on multiple countries.



## of the day quote

We will be bigger than Germany and Japan in three years' time. By 2047, we could be the second largest economy (USD 30 trillion)  
BVR SUBRAHMANYAM | NITI AAYOG CEO



With a growing portfolio of pioneering technologies, we remain committed to supporting nation-building through cutting-edge solutions  
RAJENDRA PETKA | TATA MOTORS PRESIDENT AND CTO



We are committed to growing exports, but you know, export should be planned with the development of the product. Now, it's very difficult when the product is already set to look for countries because everybody has its nuances, either technological or safety or something related to the powertrain and emissions. So, at the end of the day, for all new cars, export is a very important part of our planning  
PETR JANEBA | BRAND DIRECTOR, SKODA AUTO INDIA



# Markets surge for 4th day; Sensex reclaims 78k-level

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 17: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty surged nearly 2 per cent Thursday, registering their fourth day of rally as investors turned buoyant after foreign investors returned to domestic equities amid expectations of a breakthrough in US-Japan trade negotiations over reciprocal tariffs.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,508.91 points or 1.96 per cent to reclaim the 78,000 level. It finally settled at 78,553.20. During the day, it soared 1,572.48 points or 2.04 per cent to 78,616.77.

As many as 2,427 stocks advanced while 1,522 declined and 157 remained unchanged on the BSE. The NSE Nifty surged 414.45 points or 1.77 per cent to 23,851.65. In four days, the BSE benchmark jumped 4,706.05 points or 6.37 per cent, and the Nifty surged 1,452.5 points or 6.48 per cent.

"Benchmark indices posted sharp gains Thursday to end the week on a high note, posting four consecutive sessions of gains. Broader Mid and Small caps also closed higher. Markets opened lower on weak global cues after sharp overnight losses in US indices. After initial jitters, markets quickly bounced back to



steadily climb higher throughout the day as the focus shifted to domestic factors and ongoing earnings. Banks continued to drive the benchmarks higher with private lenders leading the gains ahead of the earnings announcements," Satish Chandra Aluri, Analyst, Lemonn Markets Desk, said.

From the Sensex firms, Eternal, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, Sun Pharma, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finserv, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Reliance Industries were among the biggest gainers.

On the other hand, Tech Mahindra and Maruti were the laggards. The BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.56 per cent and

smallcap index went up by 0.52 per cent.

All BSE sectoral indices ended higher. Bankex jumped 2.56 per cent, telecommunication (2.22 per cent), financial services (2 per cent), services (1.47 per cent), teck (1.19 per cent), energy (1.13 per cent), auto (1.01 per cent) and healthcare (0.91 per cent).

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 3,936.42 crore Wednesday, according to exchange data. On Tuesday, FIIs bought equities for Rs 6,065.78 crore.

In Asian markets, South Korea's Kospi index, Tokyo's Nikkei 225, Shanghai SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang

Seng settled higher.

European markets were trading in the negative territory.

Investors are expecting positive outcomes from ongoing negotiations between the US and Japan on reciprocal tariffs. Both countries are currently engaged in trade talks regarding reciprocal tariffs, aiming to reach a deal as soon as possible.

"A strong rally in large-cap stocks was observed today, primarily driven by financials, amid expectations of improved margins stemming from changes in savings deposit interest rates. Positive sentiment was further supported by a reversal in FII flows, although the sustainability of this trend remains uncertain. Nonetheless, optimism surrounding the domestic market persists, bolstered by the expectation of a favourable outcome from US-India trade negotiations and a relatively minimal disruption from the US-China trade tensions. Additionally, a moderating inflation trajectory towards more comfortable levels is further enhancing market sentiment," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.94 per cent to USD 66.47 a barrel.

Stock markets will remain closed Friday for 'Good Friday'.

# India trade deficit with China widens



REUTERS

New Delhi, April 17: India recorded a trade deficit of \$99.2 billion with China in the 2024/25 fiscal year that ended in March, trade data showed, driven by a surge in imports of electronics goods and consumer durables.

The data comes as U.S. President Donald Trump announced a 90-day pause last week on most tariff hikes for major trading partners including India, while sharply increasing levies on Chinese goods, stoking fears that Chinese firms may divert goods to other markets.

In March alone, goods imports from China jumped over 25% year-on-year to \$9.7 billion, led by electronics, electric batteries and solar cells. Total imports from China rose to \$113.5 billion in 12-months through March, according to detailed trade data released by commerce ministry Wednesday.

Meanwhile, India's exports to China fell 14.5% to \$1.5 billion in March from a year earlier,

with total exports dropping to \$14.3 billion in the 12-month period, data showed.

"This is a wake-up call for India, as the rising imports reflect deeper structural dependencies of the Indian economy," said Ajay Srivastava, founder of Global Trade Initiative, a Delhi-based trade policy think tank.

India's rising exports of electronics goods, pharmaceuticals and engineering goods are also fuelling imports from China, due to their heavy dependence on imported components, he said.

India's exports to China are now lower than in 2013/14, despite a significantly stronger rupee back then, Srivastava said, and warned that imports could rise by about 20% in the current fiscal year as Chinese firms are re-routing exports to several markets, for exports to the U.S.

China emerged as India's second biggest trading partner in 2024/25, with two-way trade of \$127.7 billion, after the United States, the data showed.

## SHORT TAKES

### New Zonal Head of Union Bank of India

Bhubaneswar: General Manager Harekrishna Das has taken over the charge of Zonal Head of Union Bank of India, Bhubaneswar Zone. Prior to this he was working as General Manager Rusu Banking and Financial Inclusion Department at the Bank's Corporate Office, Mumbai. Das had joined the Bank in 1995 as a Rural Development Officer and gained vast experience in various capacities in different places of UP, West Bengal, Sikkim, Haryana, Gujarat, Chandigarh and Maharashtra.



### LIC Housing Finance appoints new CFO

New Delhi: LIC Housing Finance has appointed Lokesh Mundhra as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) effective Thursday. In a regulatory filing, LIC Housing Finance said Sudipto Sil, who was serving as CFO, has been transferred and redesignated as Marketing Head of Western Region at Mumbai with effect from April 17, 2025. "The Board of Directors ... has approved appointment of Lokesh Mundhra, as a CFO and Key Managerial Personnel of the company with effect from April 17, 2025," LIC Housing said. Mundhra, a Chartered Accountant, has served under various roles at LIC of India for last 32 years. He has worked in various departments including finance & accounts, personnel, legal, estates, with last six years in the investment department.

### IndusInd Bank's new Deputy CFO

New Delhi: IndusInd Bank Thursday appointed its Chief Accountant Santosh Kumar as a Deputy Chief Financial Officer (CFO). In a regulatory filing, IndusInd Bank said Whole-time Director (Executive Director) & Dy CEO Arun Khurana will be relieved from the additional charge of CFO. "The Board of Directors at their meeting held today i.e. April 17, 2025 approved elevation of Santosh Kumar, Chief Accountant as Deputy Chief Financial Officer and Special Officer - Finance & Accounts and designated him as a 'Key Managerial Personnel' of the Bank, with effect from Friday, April 18, 2025," IndusInd Bank said.

# TRUPTI KIA OPENS NEW SHOWROOM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 17: Trupti Kia, one of the leading automobile dealers in Odisha, inaugurated its new showroom at Puri Bypass Road in Bhubaneswar, Thursday. This marks the company's second outlet in the capital city, strategically aimed at catering to customers from Old Bhubaneswar and nearby Puri.

The inauguration ceremony witnessed the presence of key dignitaries from Kia India, in-

cluding Senior Advisor Kyoung Min Kim and Regional General Manager Supreeth R. Also present were Area Sales Manager Anshuman Dash and Trupti Kia's Managing Director Badri Narayan Samantaray.

Speaking on the occasion, General Manager Gopal Singh said, "We are committed to delivering an exceptional customer experience, and this new outlet will significantly strengthen our market presence and help us achieve a greater market share."



# AI to dramatically increase data storage demand: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: A recent report has shown that 94.5 per cent of data centre professionals globally, including a significant number in India, expect AI to dramatically increase their data storage needs, highlighting a surge in demand that challenges sustainability efforts.

The decarbonising data report by Seagate Technology reveals that in India, 63.3 per cent of respondents manage between 500 petabytes and 5 terabytes of data, reflecting the vast scale of storage requirements driven by AI growth.

The rising data volumes, slowing power efficiency gains, and increasing AI adoption are putting pressure on organisations to manage carbon emissions, infrastructure expansion, and total cost of ownership (TCO) - all at once.

The findings are based on insights from 330 data centre professionals responding across 11 markets, including Australia, China, France, Germany, India,



Japan, North America, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United Kingdom.

The report highlights that 90 per cent of Indian respondents are concerned about the environmental impact of data storage, with half identifying high energy consumption as their top issue. Despite this, only a small fraction prioritise environmental factors in purchasing decisions, showing a gap between awareness and action.

Jason Feist, Senior Vice President of Cloud Marketing at Seagate, said, "Data centres are under intense scrutiny - not only because they support modern AI workloads, but because they

are becoming one of the most energy-intensive sectors of the digital economy."

He emphasised the need to optimise for both cost and sustainability, rather than treating them as trade-offs.

Key barriers to adopting sustainable data storage in India include limited physical space, unreliable electricity sources, and the high cost of building data centre infrastructure.

The report also notes a disconnect in lifecycle management: while 92.2 per cent globally acknowledge the importance of extending storage equipment life to reduce waste, only 15.5 per cent consider it a top purchasing factor.

In India, 13.3 per cent of respondents are uncertain about the sustainability benefits of lifecycle extension.

The Seagate's report urges a unified approach across the data centre ecosystem, advocating technological innovation, lifecycle extension, and shared accountability to meet rising AI demands sustainably.

# Trump threatens to try and fire Fed chief Powell

REUTERS

Washington, April 17: U.S. President Donald Trump said Thursday that Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell's termination "cannot come fast enough," while calling for the U.S. central bank to cut interest rates, the sort of pressure that Powell just a day before had pledged to resist as the Fed grapples with an outlook complicated by Trump's own policies.

Trump, in a post on his social media platform Truth Social, reiterated his stance on rate cuts, saying that Powell "should have lowered interest rates, like the (European Central Bank), long ago, but he should certainly lower them now."

The ECB cut its key rate a quarter of a point Thursday in response to a growth outlook that had "deteriorated owing to trade tensions" in the wake of Trump's efforts to raise U.S. import taxes, while euro-area inflation is expected to continue falling.

In the U.S. Trump's plans

have also led to a lower growth outlook, with economists polled by Reuters putting recession odds at 45%. But it has also raised the prospect of higher inflation that policymakers said they are guarding against.

"I don't see any need to change the setting of the fed funds rate anytime soon...It's really about collecting information, understanding better what's happening in the economy during the rest of this year, understanding kind of how the uncertainty plays out," New York Fed President John Williams said on Fox Business on Thursday. "I think we have a period of higher inflation this year and a slower growth path for this year relative to last year. So that's a combination you have to think carefully about."

The Fed's benchmark interest rate is currently 4.25%-4.50%, where it has been since December following several rate cuts late last year.

Trump's comments come a day after Powell said at an event



at the Economic Club of Chicago that the Fed's "independence is very widely understood and supported in Washington and in Congress where it really matters," drawing applause from the high-level group of business executives for a pledge to set interest rates independent of political pressure or partisan considerations.

Trump has at times threatened to try to fire Powell, as he is attempting to do with members of other independent policy bodies in a move currently

before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Powell Thursday said the Fed is watching the case carefully but does not think any decision will apply to the central bank, whose credibility in managing monetary policy is considered important not just to the U.S. economy, but in global markets tuned to Fed decisions.

Powell's term as chair expires in May 2026, regardless. It was unclear from Trump's language whether he is resigned to waiting that time out, or hoping for a Supreme Court decision

that lets him remove Powell sooner.

Trump in his post said Powell was "always too late and wrong", and critiqued the speech Powell made Wednesday, calling it "another, and typical, complete mess!"

Powell Wednesday warned Trump's tariff policies risked pushing inflation and employment further from the central bank's goals, which it manages jointly under a mandate from Congress.

The Fed was "well positioned to wait for greater clarity," Powell said, indicating the Fed was not prepared to move policy in any direction or at any pace until Trump's tariff plans - rolled out in dramatic announcements but often delayed and still unclear in key respects - are finalized and the impact on the economy more obvious.

Fed officials are now referring to Trump's tariff rollout as an economic "shock" of a sort with no clear historical parallel.

Some Fed policymakers fear the impact on jobs could come fast, and have said they would be prepared for swift cuts in that case. Others are concerned Trump's policies and erratic handling of the issue could cut inflation expectations loose and force higher interest rates.

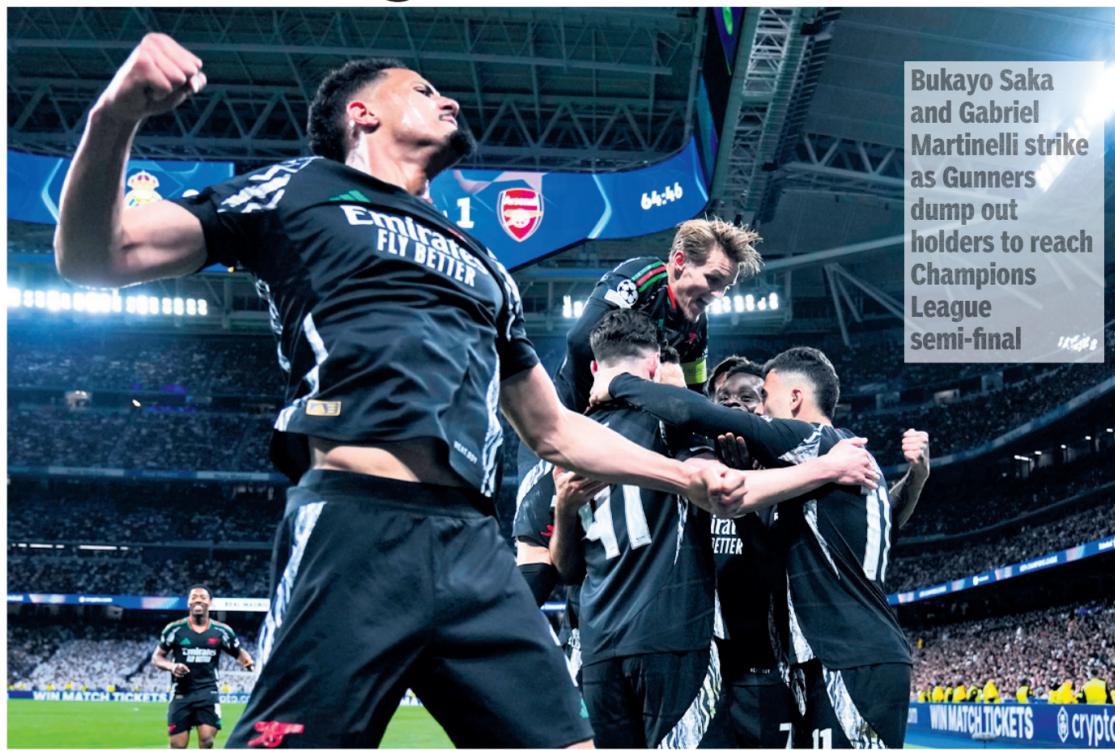
That dilemma, of an economy potentially pulled away from both of the central bank's goals, is what is now distinguishing the Fed from its major overseas counterparts.

The Fed did act in tandem with other central banks last year as inflation eased globally and lowered the US benchmark policy rate a full percentage point at three successive meetings.

But progress on returning inflation to the Fed's 2% target stalled through the fall, prompting policymakers to pause further cuts until it was clear price pressures would begin easing again, a finding confounded since Trump's January 20 inauguration and the policy shifts that followed.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

# Gunners ground Galacticos



**Bukayo Saka and Gabriel Martinelli strike as Gunners dump out holders to reach Champions League semi-final**

Madrid, April 17: Arsenal defeated defending champion Real Madrid 2-1 Wednesday to reach the Champions League semifinals for the first time since 2009 in a match where VAR played a key role in two penalty decisions.

Arsenal advanced 5-1 on aggregate after winning 3-0 in London last week, keeping alive its chances of winning Europe's top club competition for the first time. It will face Paris Saint-Germain in the semifinals.

There was no historic comeback for Madrid this time. No late goals, no high drama, no magic at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium.

The 15-time European champions fell short of the last four for the first time since 2020, ending its shot at a third Champions League title in four seasons.

"There was a lot of talk coming here about (Real Madrid) coming back, because they've done it so many times before, but we had so much belief and confidence from that first game to come here and win," Arsenal's Declan Rice said. "We had it in our minds and now we've done it in real life."

**Momentum shift**

Madrid's hopes of staging another comeback took a big hit when a five-minute VAR review overturned a penalty for a hold on Kylian Mbappé in the first half with the game tied 0-0.

Arsenal earlier had been awarded a penalty after a video review, but Bukayo Saka missed his spot kick.

Saka was able to put Arsenal ahead from inside the area after Mikel Merino's pass in the 65th minute, and Madrid couldn't manage more than an equaliser by Vinicius Júnior a couple of minutes later after a defensive blunder by William Saliba.

Gabriel Martinelli completed the scoring three minutes into stoppage time, also after an assist by Merino.

"This is one of the best nights in my football career, for sure,"

**Arteta's perspective**

"We have to hold our heads

high because we did very well in this competition in recent years," Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said. "This year we have to endure and suffer. In sport, this can happen because there are no invincible teams. I was clear with my players. We have to keep our heads up, we have to learn from it and fight for the next game."

Arsenal had a chance to increase its advantage after being awarded a penalty about 10 minutes later, but Saka's chip from the spot was saved by Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

The penalty was awarded after Raúl Asencio held Mikel Merino inside the area during a corner kick in an action that was missed by French referee Francois Letexier. But he was called over to the pitchside monitor by the VAR to review the incident and then pointed to the spot.

## Inter edge Bayern to seal semifinal spot

**Milan:** Former Bayern Munich defender Benjamin Pavard scored against his old club to help Inter Milan to a 2-2 draw against the German team Wednesday, sending the Nerazzurri through to the Champions League semifinals 4-3 on aggregate. It was Pavard's first goal for Inter, after the France international joined from Bayern in 2023. "There's certainly a lot of emotions as it's my first goal, moreover it's at San Siro," said Pavard, who last scored almost exactly two years ago to the day. "So there were a lot of emotions but I had to stay in the match, I couldn't think of the goal, I had to remain focused." Harry Kane had leveled the quarterfinal early in the second half but Inter swiftly turned the game around with goals from Lautaro Martínez and Pavard on a blustery night in Milan. Eric Dier headed in the equaliser on the night, in the 76th minute, to set up a nervy finale. Inter will face Barcelona in the semifinals. It beat the same opponent in the final four in 2010 on its way to winning the Champions League and securing the treble under José Mourinho. Simone Inzaghi's men are in contention to repeat that feat this season. "We're not putting limits on ourselves," Pavard told broadcaster Amazon Prime. "We have a great team, we have really great players, with staff that have been working well for two years." Inter had stunned Bayern last week, winning 2-1 to inflict the German team's first home defeat in the competition in almost four years. Bayern coach Vincent Kompany said he had "some regrets" over the two legs, with his team missing a number of chances and thus missing out on the possibility of lifting the Champions League trophy in its own stadium May 31.

# Bowlers set up MI's 4-wicket win over SRH

AGENCIES

Mumbai, April 17: A disciplined effort by their bowling unit, led by Jasprit Bumrah and skipper Hardik Pandya, helped Mumbai Indians defeat Sunrisers Hyderabad by four wickets in a low-scoring encounter in Match 33 of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 at the Wankhede Stadium.

This was the same wicket on which the Mumbai Indians had bowled out defending champions Kolkata Knight Riders for 116 a few days ago. Thursday, they reaped the juice in the pitch after electing to bowl first and restricted Sunrisers Hyderabad to 162/5 in 20 overs. The hosts then rode on vital contributions by Ryan Rickelton (31), Will Jacks (36), Rohit Sharma (26) and Suryakumar Yadav (26) and Tilak Varma (21 not out) to reach 166/6 in 18.1 overs and win by four wickets with 11 balls remaining.

They could have had a better win margin if skipper Hardik Pandya had not lost his wicket going for a glory shot with two runs needed.

It was the Mumbai Indians' third win in IPL 2025 and took them to six points and seventh spot in the standings as they escaped from the logjam at four points towards the bottom of the points table. Sunrisers Hy-

## IPL STANDINGS

TEAM	M	W	L	NRR	PTS
DC	6	5	1	0.744	10
GT	6	4	2	1.081	8
RCB	6	4	2	0.672	8
PBKS	6	4	2	0.172	8
LSG	7	4	3	0.086	8
KKR	7	3	4	0.547	6
MI	7	3	4	0.239	6
RR	7	2	5	-0.714	4
SRH	7	2	5	-1.217	4
CSK	7	2	5	-1.276	4

## TODAY'S MATCH

**Indian Premier League**

 VS 

**Time: 07:30 pm**

Telecast: Star Sports Network  
Stream: JioHotstar

derabad remain on four points.

**Brief scores:**

Sunrisers Hyderabad 162/5 in 20 overs (Abhishek Sharma 40, Heinrich Klaasen 37; Will Jacks 2-14, Jasprit Bumrah 1-21) lost to Mumbai Indians 166/6 in 18.1 overs (Will Jacks 36, Ryan Rickelton 31; Pat Cummins 3-26) by four wickets.



# BCCI removes assistant coach; support staff set for overhaul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: The Indian cricket team's assistant coach Abhishek Nayar has been sacked just eight months into the assignment amid speculation of a rift with a high-profile member of the support staff even though Test debacles against New Zealand and Australia are being cited as the reason for his ouster.

If board sources are to be believed, Nayar has already been intimidated of the BCCI's decision to part ways with him.

"While India's recent Test debacles (against New Zealand and Australia) has led to the churning but there is also a feeling in the BCCI that Nayar became a scapegoat in the turf war between an important member of the support staff and



Abhishek Nayar

a senior star player," a BCCI source told PTI.

Fielding coach T Dilip, and Strength and Conditioning coach Soham Desai are also on their way out after completing more than three years in their respective positions.

The new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) of the BCCI

has capped the support staff's tenure at three years.

It is learnt that India's first ever Strength and Conditioning coach Adrian Le Roux is likely to return for a second stint. The South African is widely credited for ushering in a new fitness culture in the then Sourav Ganguly-led Indian team during the 2003 World Cup.

BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia, when contacted by PTI, chose to sidestep the query.

"Certain things are being finalised. You will receive a press note from BCCI in some days," Saikia said when asked about the development.

The 41-year-old Nayar, a former all-rounder who played three ODIs but was largely a domestic stalwart with 103 first-class games, didn't respond to a text message sent by PTI.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: Two-time Olympic medal-winning javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra started his season on a high by winning the Potch Invitational Track event in Potchefstroom, South Africa.

Chopra topped the six-man field, hurling the spear to a distance of 84.52m at the World Athletics Continental Tour Challenger event Wednesday.

The Indian star finished ahead of 25-year-old South African Douw Smit, whose best throw was 82.44m.

But Chopra's effort was below his personal best of 89.94m, while Douw came close to his personal best of 83.29m.

Chopra and Smit were the only two athletes to cross the 80m mark in the competition.

# Neeraj Chopra begins season with 84.52m

Another South African Duncan Robertson finished third with an effort of 71.22m.

Chopra has been training in Potchefstroom under his new coach Jan Zelezny of Czech Republic, who is a three-time Olympic champion and the world record holder.

The 27-year-old parted ways with his long-time German coach Klaus Bartonietz last year.

Chopra is scheduled to begin his elite-level campaign at the Doha Diamond League May 16.

He won back-to-back Olympics medals in the 2020 Tokyo (gold) and 2024 Paris Games (silver). His personal best of 89.94m was achieved in 2022 and he has been trying to breach the 90m mark for considerable time.

## CALANCE OPEN

# Tapendra Ghai build 4-shot lead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: Gurugram's Tapendra Ghai produced the day's best score of eight-under 62 to build an imposing four-shot lead after the third round of the Rs 1 crore Calance Open here Thursday.

The 29-year-old Ghai (64-67-62), who won his only title on the PGTI in 2018, took his total to 17-under 193 after his penultimate round that helped him gain three spots from his over-night tied fourth place.

Delhi's Honey Baisoya (67), Ludhiana's Pukhray Singh Gil (68) and Chandigarh's Yuvraj Sandhu (69) were all in tied second place with matching totals of 13-under 197.

Ghai, who was the first-round leader before he slipped three shots in round two, was in terrific form with the putter on a day when everyone else struggled with the short putts at the Qutab Golf Course.

# Tanvi Khanna, Anahat Singh in quarterfinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kuala Lumpur, April 17: Indian squash player Tanvi Khanna caused a major upset, defeating top seed N Ching Cheng of Hong Kong in the opening round of the World Championship Qualifying Event (Asia) here Thursday.

Tanvi, ranked 134th in the world defeated the Hong Kong player, ranked 76th, 3-1 (11-7 11-8 8-11 12-10) to book a place in the quarterfinals.

She will take on Helen Tang of Hong Kong (World rank 97) in the last-eight.

In another opening round match, leading India player Anahat Singh (No.63) easily defeated Philippines' lower-ranked Philipines' lower-ranked Jemyca Aribado (No 126) 3-0 (11-4 11-5 11-7).

Anahat will take on Japanese opponent Akari Midorikawa in the quarterfinals.

Second seeded Akanksha

Salunkhe (No 70) overcame Japan's lower-ranked Risa Sugimoto 3-0 (11-4 11-3 11-8) to set up a quarterfinal clash against sixth seed Wai Yhann Au Yeong of Singapore.

In men's competition, Veer Chotrani, ranked 63rd in the world, defeated lower-ranked Malaysian rival Ong Sai Hung 3-0 (11-7 11-8 14-12) to enter the quarterfinal.

**Tanvi defeated the Hong Kong player, ranked 76th, 3-1 to book a place in the quarterfinals. Anahat will also take on Japanese opponent Akari Midorikawa in the quarterfinals**

# FIGHT AGAINST DOPING India gets Athlete Passport Management Unit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: Sports minister Mansukh Mandavija inaugurated an Athlete Passport Management Unit (APMU) at the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) here Thursday, making India the 17th country in the world to have a dedicated system for tracking blood and steroidal profiles of athletes over a period of time.

The APMU will serve as a specialised body responsible for monitoring and managing biological passports of athletes. A biological passport compiles data on an athlete's variables such as blood parameters, hormonal levels, and other physiological markers to detect doping.

The APMU keeps a tab on "anomalies or trends indicative of doping" without directly identifying banned substances. "APMU is a key milestone



in India's fight against doping, enabling the longitudinal tracking of Athletes Biological profiles through the Athlete Biological Passport (ABP) system. This innovative mechanism will help in detecting doping patterns and protect the fairness of sports by identifying unethical practices," Mandavija said at the inauguration.

Mandavija said India's APMU will also help neighbouring countries that don't have enough resources to set up similar systems.

The NDTL's APMU aligns

with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) guidelines, strengthening anti-doping programme globally.

India joins countries like China, the USA, Germany, France, Australia and Japan among others to have an APMU at its WADA-accredited dope testing facility.

The inauguration was also attended by Sujata Chaturvedi, Secretary (Sports), Kunal, Joint Secretary (Sports), and other officers of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports including PL Sahu, Director and CEO, NDTL.

## LIMA WORLD CUP

# RAIZA DHILLON FINISHES FIFTH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lima (Peru), April 17: Paris Olympian Raiza Dhillon finished a creditable fifth after entering her first ISSF World Cup final in the women's skeet event on a day when India maintained their impressive run in the tournament here.

At the end of second competition day, India were second in the medals tally with two gold, one silver and a bronze. China lead the standings.

Raiza, a former junior world championship silver medalist and a bronze winner at the Asian Championships last year, enjoyed a solid final in a strong field before bowing out at the halfway stage of the 60-shot decider with 26 hits to her name.