



## Gentle reminder

As an act of self-love, actor Rashmika Mandanna shares a gentle reminder to appreciate and thank yourself

LEISURE | P2



## Ceasefire broken

Russia and Ukraine blame each other for breaking a one-day Easter ceasefire announced by President Vladimir Putin

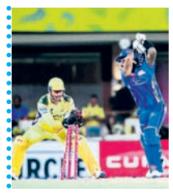
INTERNATIONAL | P10



## FPIs turn net buyers

Foreign investors infuse nearly ₹8,500 crore in the country's equity markets last week

BUSINESS | P11



## MI hammer CSK

Rohit, Suryakumar guide Mumbai Indians to comfortable nine-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings

SPORTS | P12

## SHORT TAKES

### Veteran CPI leader Dibakar Nayak dies

**Bhubaneswar:** Veteran Communist leader and former CPI Odisha secretary Dibakar Nayak died here Sunday, party sources said. He was 72. Nayak, who was ailing for some time, breathed his last at the CPI state headquarters Bhagavati Bhawan in the Kharvel Nagar area in the city, they said. Leaders from different political parties including BJD coordination committee chairman Debi Prasad Mishra, BJD MLA RP Swain, BJD MLA Ganeswar Behera, CPI(M) leader Janardan Pati and many others paid their floral tributes at Nayak's mortal remains kept at Bhagavati Bhawan. Born in Sendchitira village in Bhadrak district, Nayak was also a former editor of the party publication 'Nua Dunia'.

### Kashyap booked over remarks on Brahmins

**Jaipur:** An FIR was registered against film director Anurag Kashyap at Bajaj Nagar police station in Jaipur for his remarks on Brahmins on a social media platform, an officer said Sunday. The case was registered based on a complaint lodged by Anil Chaturvedi, a Barkat Nagar resident, Saturday night. According to Bajaj Nagar Sub-Inspector Ram Kripal, the complainant alleged that the director posted abusive words about Brahmins while replying to a social media user. Kashyap's film Phule was set to be released this month, had courted controversy over its portrayal of caste.

### Lightning claims 2 lives in Bolangir

**Saintala/Belpada:** Two persons lost their lives in separate incidents of lightning in areas under Saintala and Belpada blocks in Bolangir district Sunday. The deceased were identified as Snehalata Budek, 65, from Tushtapali village under Saintala block and Gangadhar Dharua, 30, a tractor driver, at Saramuhan village under Belpada police limits. Lightning struck Snehalata while she was grazing a herd of goats on a farmland. In the second incident, Gangadhar was struck by lightning while tilling a farmland on his tractor during a thunderstorm in the afternoon.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



No, the Supreme Court isn't like the minorities. You can't keep abusing it

## 2 minors thrashed, made to drink urine in Balanga

**Balanga, April 20:** Two minors were beaten to pulp and made to drink urine after being tied to a pole by a violent mob following a clash between two groups during a religious festival under Balanga police station area in Puri district late Saturday night. Three persons have been arrested in connection with the assault. Police said a 'Jaman' festival in Kotakusanga village turned violent during a religious procession. The ceremonial parade, carrying the village deity through Pradhan Sahi and Behera Sahi, sparked a

# Flash flood kills 3 as rain wreaks havoc in J&K's Ramban



RAIN MAYHEM: Vehicles stuck in the debris as people make their way after heavy rain triggered flash floods, in Ramban district of J&K, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ramban/Jammu, April 20:** Heavy rainfall due to cloudbursts triggered flash floods and landslides in several areas of Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district early Sunday, leaving three people dead and damaging scores of houses and roads, while more than 100 people were rescued.

Traffic on the strategic Jammu-Srinagar National Highway was suspended as the road was blocked at nearly a dozen places between Nashri and Banihal due to landslides and mudslides, officials said.

Hundreds of commuters were left stranded on the 250-kilometer highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country.

A cloudburst struck the Seri Bagna village, resulting in the deaths of three persons, including brothers Aqib Ahmad and Mohd Saqib. The rescue operation in the village was continuing when the last reports were received, officials said.

With the latest fatalities, five people have lost their lives in rain-related incidents in the Jammu region in two days. Two people, including a woman, were killed and another woman was injured when they were struck by lightning in the Arnas area of Reasi district late Saturday. More than 100 trapped villagers were rescued by police personnel who rushed to the site despite the continuous downpour, they said. **More P9**

# Storm over remarks on SC

**■ A political storm has erupted over controversial remarks made by BJP MPs Nishikant Dubey and Dinesh Sharma targeting the judiciary and blaming the CJI for "religious wars" in India, placing the ruling party in a tight spot. The comments came following the Centre's assurance to the Supreme Court that it would not implement certain contentious waqf law provisions before the next hearing after the court raised questions over them. Commotion brewed last week after V-P Jagdeep Dhankhar made critical comments about the top court, accusing it of overreach over its recently issued directive setting deadlines for the President to clear passed Bills. While the BJP swiftly distanced itself from the remarks, with party president JP Nadda Saturday calling them "personal opinions" and reaffirming the party's respect for judicial institutions, Congress slammed the move as mere "damage control." The controversy has spotlighted growing tensions between the legislature and the judiciary, and the BJP's apparent struggle to contain internal voices that challenge constitutional institutions.**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 20:** The Congress Sunday described the BJP dissociating itself from the criticism of the Supreme Court by its MPs Nishikant Dubey and Dinesh Sharma as damage control and asserted that the minimum action against them should be their expulsion from the party.

Congress MP and senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi also called for contempt of court proceedings against Dubey, saying that hopefully the attorney general will give consent for criminal contempt without delay.

The Opposition party also asked why no action had been taken against the two MPs and why no showcause notices were issued to them.

Congress General Secretary in-Charge, Communications Jairam Ramesh said the distancing of the outgoing BJP president from the atrocious remarks made by two MPs on the Chief Justice of India (CJI) carried little meaning.

"These MPs are repeat offenders when it comes to hate speech and are very often used

## LEGAL EXPERTS SLAM DHANKHAR, DUBEY

**L**egal experts Sunday denounced Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar and BJP MP Nishikant Dubey's disparaging remarks against the judiciary, terming those irresponsible and asserting that the dignity and decorum of the top court should be maintained. Last week, Dhankhar questioned the judiciary setting a timeline for the president to make decisions and acting as a super Parliament, saying the Supreme Court cannot fire a nuclear missile at democratic forces. Close on the heels of the Vice President's comments, BJP MP Nishikant Dubey launched a broadside against the Supreme Court, saying Parliament and assemblies should be shut if the apex court had to make laws. He also blamed Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna for religious wars in India. **More P9**

by G2 to attack communities, institutions, and individuals.

The outgoing BJP president's clarification is nothing but damage control," Ramesh said in a post on X.

"It will fool nobody. This is Entire Political Science reflecting itself as Entire Political Hypocrisy," he said.

"But the outgoing BJP president is totally silent on equally unacceptable remarks on the judiciary that are continually made by one of its very distinguished appointees to a high constitutional position," Ramesh said and asked what he had to say

## 7-year-old tribal girl raped; one arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, April 20:** In a shocking incident, a seven-year-old girl was raped by a man under Hindol police limits in this district while the minor girl was watching her elder brother collect ice apples Saturday evening. The accused Shiba Sahu, 32, of Badalo village under Motanga police limits in the district was arrested Sunday and taken into custody for interrogation.

The accused committed the crime when he had been to his aunt's house under Hindol police limits. A case has been registered at Motanga police station in this regard.

The survivor, who belongs to the Scheduled Tribe (ST) community, was rescued by his elder brother and brought back home.

The incident occurred when the survivor accompanied his nine-year-old brother to collect ice apples in the area. Shiba spotted her when she was standing and watching his brother. He picked her up near a tree and raped her. Later, he



dumped her in a critical condition and fled.

The girl, lying under a palm leaf, started crying out of pain. Alarmed, her brother rushed to the spot and brought her back home in critical condition and informed their mother.

Family members admitted her to Hindol Sub-Divisional Hospital first and later shifted her to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) for advanced treatment. A police team accompanied by a scientific team reached the spot and launched an investigation. Later, a police official led by SDPO Satya Kumar Nanda launched a manhunt and arrested the accused. Further investigations are underway.

# Stargazers, the sky will 'smile' back at you

## RARE PLANETARY CONJUNCTION



**Venus, Saturn, and a slender crescent moon will align low on the eastern horizon just before sunrise April 25, forming a glowing celestial smirk**

lower, and a thin, crescent moon a bit lower and farther north," NASA Solar System Ambassador Brenda Culbert-

son told KSNT News in Kansas. "The thin, crescent moon looks like a smile. To some people, the triangle of bright objects may appear as a smiley face."

The best time to view the spectacle is between 5:30-6:30 am, just before sunrise washes the scene away. Both Venus and Saturn will be easily visible with the naked eye. A telescope or binoculars can enhance the view of the moon's craters and the planets' faint glow.

For those with a clear view of the eastern horizon, there's a bonus—Mercury may peek into view just below the smiley formation. However, due to its

proximity to the horizon and smaller size, it may be harder to spot without ideal conditions.

The event comes hot on the heels of another sky show: the annual Lyrids meteor shower. The Lyrids peak overnight from April 21 to 22, with up to 15 meteors an hour streaking across the sky under dark, moonlit conditions.

Triple conjunctions like this are uncommon and fleeting. Culbertson advises anyone hoping to catch the cosmic grin to scout a location with a clear eastern view well before dawn.

"It's a great excuse to get outside and look up," she said.

AGENCIES

# leisure



## CHRISTENSEN TO RETURN FOR AHSOKA SEASON 2

Actor Hayden Christensen is set to reprise his role of Anakin Skywalker in the second season of the *Star Wars* series *Ahsoka*. According to the entertainment news outlet *The Hollywood Reporter*, the actor confirmed his return at the *Star Wars* Celebration in Tokyo.

## ELORDI PLANNED BREAK BEFORE WUTHERING HEIGHTS OFFER

*Euphoria* star Jacob Elordi says he planned to take a break from acting but changed his mind when he got approached for *Wuthering Heights*. Elordi, also known for *The Kissing Booth*, was approached by filmmaker Emerald Fennell for the project, with whom he has previously collaborated for *Saltburn*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Boy! Are you ambitious today or what! You plan meticulously and perform impeccably. However, you will progress at snail's pace. But don't lose heart, as Ganesh shows his blessings on you, dear one.

**TAURUS**  
There will be a positive surge in your career prospects today. However, this progress may not be in the direction that you expected. Financial opportunities and success will knock at your door, a rare combination of guests. You will also achieve material progress, predicts Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
You will spend your time figuring out other people and their motivations today. You will probably spend time discussing issues of security and finance with your family members today. You will gain love and appreciation from people owing to your caring nature, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You will display a special attention towards beloved ones. This is an apt time for a frank chat on vital issues with your life-partner, says Ganesh. You never allow heart to dictate terms to mind, yet today will be sentimental with your wife. Today is the day to feel myriad emotions, says Ganesh.

**LEO**  
Your day will be one of mixed results. On one hand you will be dissatisfied with your spouse or business partner, on the other hand you will make fantastic returns on your speculations. You will be able to maintain a balance owing to the advise of some friend, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
You will take your destiny in your own hands today. You possess the vision to penetrate the masks that people wear to hide their true selves. You will carefully select the friends to spend your time with, and you will also make plans for success.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says today is a good day for government related work. Those of you who are government employees will be able to get good results for their work. Your work will be rewarded and your performance and efficiency will be praised. You will be able to have a heart to heart talk with your loved one.

**SCORPIO**  
Free your mind from negative thoughts. You need to be in high spirits to work with your team and delegate equal responsibilities to your team mates. Know their calibre and designate accordingly. Trust them with their work and the rest would fall in place.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
The morning seems to begin on a lazy note today, as your energy level is equal to zero. Thus, you may try to decentralise your activities and divide it between your co-workers. But make sure the responsibilities are delegated in the right hands or you may have to regret your decision.

**CAPRICORN**  
You will want to expand the horizon of your business. But, you will be confused about the path to take for the expansion. You want to reach to the sky, but such a dilemma will keep you in a double mind. Listen to what your heart says, as it will guide you to the right direction, feels Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
The monotony of your routine will get little bit of colour with the help of your wit and humour. Your jovial nature will lighten the burden of work from the shoulders of one all, says Ganesh. People love to be in your company and that is the reason why you are on the top of every guest list.

**PISCES**  
You will experience mixed feelings today. On one hand tension and stress about how to set a deteriorating situation right will keep you worried, and on the other hand you will be in a mood to accept things for what they are. What you learn now will be very vital in your development, and will help you progress and become a better person in the future, says Ganesh.

# Rashmika embraces self-love

**Mumbai:** In an act of self-love, actress Rashmika Mandanna bought flowers of herself. The *Animal* actress dropped two pictures of herself on IG, posing with a beautiful red rose. She was seen wearing a printed kurta, with a white flower placed in her bun. Rashmika captioned the post, "When was the last time you got yourself flowers? Just a gentle reminder to appreciate and thank yourself often... because you deserve all the love and kindness in the world," along with a red heart emoji. In another update, the makers of *Rashmika* and *Dhanush* starrer *Kuberaa* have unveiled the primary track from the much-awaited drama, *Yaara* Sunday. Along with *Dhanush*, the song also features director Sekhar Kammula, and composer Devi Sri Prasad (DSP). The Hindi version of the track is sung by Nakash Aziz, with lyrics from Raqueeb Alam. Made under the direction of Sekhar Kammula, *Kuberaa* is touted to be a grand orchestra of human emotion, drama, and spectacle. Aside from *Dhanush* and *Rashmika*, the flick also stars *Nagarjuna*, and *Jim Sarbh* in important roles. At the moment, *Rashmika* is busy shooting her forthcoming horror comedy, *Thama*, alongside *Ayushmann Khurrana*. Helmed by *Aditya Sarpotdar*, the project marks the *Munjya* director's primary association with both *Rashmika* and *Ayushmann*.

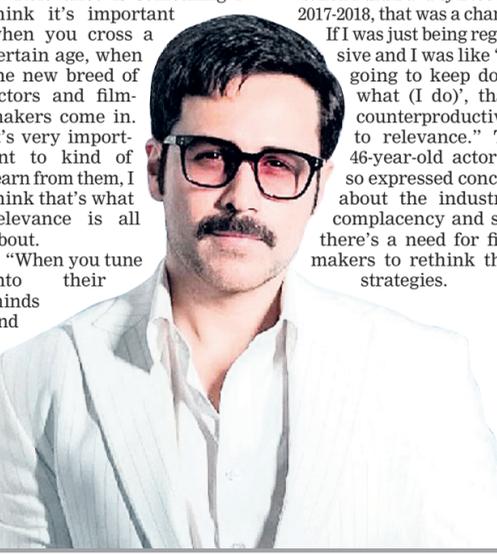


## Temple controversy Urvashi's U-turn after outrage

**Mumbai:** Urvashi Rautela has recently landed in controversy following a comment she made during an interview. In a now-viral video clip, the actress mentioned a temple in Uttarakhand, which many interpreted as her claiming that it was built in her honour. The statement quickly sparked backlash, with social media users accusing her of self-glorification and making exaggerated claims. In an effort to clarify, Urvashi and her team have issued a statement urging the public to consider the full context before jumping to conclusions. Addressing the criticism, Urvashi explained, "There is a temple in my name in Uttarakhand, not Urvashi Rautela's temple. People hear 'Urvashi' and 'temple' and assume it's dedicated to me personally. Please listen to the video properly before reacting." She emphasised the importance of verifying facts before making baseless allegations or derogatory comments, stressing that everyone deserves respect and understanding. The clarification suggests that the actress was referring to the Urvashi Mandir, a site associated with Hindu mythology and not a shrine dedicated to herself. However, the phrasing in the original interview — where she appeared to link the temple with her own identity — triggered a wave of confusion and ridicule.

## Emraan on staying relevant

**Mumbai:** Actor Emraan Hashmi believes the key to staying relevant in the world of cinema is to be open-minded and learn from the younger generation, understanding how they think and work. Hashmi said it is important to reinvent oneself and that can happen by collaborating with contemporary filmmakers. "Relevance is something I think it's important when you cross a certain age, when the new breed of actors and filmmakers come in. It's very important to kind of learn from them, I think that's what relevance is all about. "When you tune into their minds and



## Stardom lost under shadows of underworld

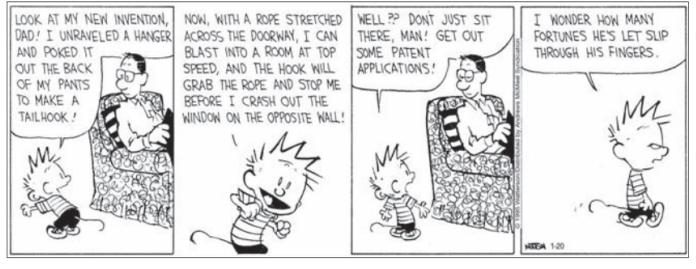
**Mumbai:** Becoming a star in Bollywood is a dream for many, but maintaining that stardom is the real challenge. Monica Bedi, a talented actress and dancer, once mesmerised audiences with her charm and performances alongside big stars. However, her journey took a dramatic turn, shifting from fame to infamy. Born January 18, 1975, in Hoshiarpur, Punjab, Monica moved to Norway with her family in 1979. Though she had no initial interest in acting, her passion for classical dance led her to Mumbai. There, she trained under Gopi Guru, where veteran actor Manoj Kumar discovered her talent and launched her in *Kiritaman*. Unfortunately, the production didn't last long, and Monica moved on to other projects. Her debut in the film *Taj Mahal* brought her recognition, especially in Telugu cinema. In Bollywood, she made her mark in *Suraksha* (1995) opposite Saif Ali Khan. However, with no mentor or proper guidance, Monica accepted several low-performing films that hurt her career. A fateful meeting with underworld don Abu Salem in Dubai changed her life. Their relationship gave her a brief resurgence with roles in *Pyaar Ishq Aur Mohabbat* and *Jodi No. 1*, but it eventually led to legal troubles. In 2002, both were arrested in Portugal for using fake documents and later deported to India. Monica served a jail sentence, marking a dark phase in her life. After her release, she attempted a comeback through reality shows like *Bigg Boss 2* and TV serials including *Saraswatchandra*. She also ventured into Punjabi cinema and continues to perform on stage. However, despite her efforts to rebuild her image and career, the shadow of her past still lingers. Monica Bedi's ties with the underworld not only disrupted her rise in Bollywood but also cast a long-lasting stain on her professional reputation.



### PEANUTS



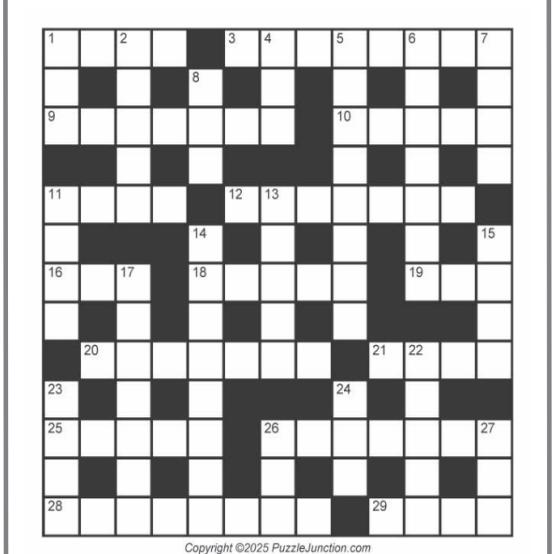
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



### FUN POST CROSSWORD



- Across**  
1 Hibernia  
3 Dress shop  
9 Delicate  
10 Foolish  
11 Skin problem  
12 Colossus  
16 Driving hazard  
18 Molten rock  
19 Brit's raincoat  
20 Italian dish  
21 Walk in water  
25 Scent
- Down**  
26 Say in passing  
28 Promised land  
29 "Beowulf" beverage  
7 Balanced  
8 Kind of iron  
11 Bistro  
13 Hammond output  
14 Not up to par  
15 Flu symptom  
17 Alluring beauty  
22 Crop up  
23 Frolic  
24 Aardvark's morsel  
26 More, in Madrid  
27 Silent assent

### 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.

	7	9						
			9			5		
2				6	3		1	
				4				
		5				1		
	4		2	1	6	8		
					2	4		5
		6					1	
	2	4		8	9			

### SOLUTIONS

**CROSSWORD**

M	O	R	O	N	I	C	B	R	A	W	L	O
A	E	E	A	U	L	O						
C	O	L	L	A	P	S	E	D	P	I	T	
A	E	T	T	H								
W	O	N	B	L	O	C	K	A	D	E		
T	B	E	O									
W	I	S	D	O	M	G	R	U	M	P		
E	A	C	K	A								
A	S	T	E	R	O	I	D	R	I	A		
P	A	N	P	T	L							
O	W	N	P	R	E	C	I	P	I	C	E	
N	G	I	M	S	A	R						
S	T	O	V	E	A	G	A	I	N	S	T	

**SUDOKU**

1	7	2	8	5	6	9	4	3
3	5	9	1	4	2	7	6	8
4	6	8	9	7	3	2	1	5
2	1	5	3	8	9	4	7	6
9	4	3	7	6	5	1	8	2
7	8	6	2	1	4	3	5	9
8	9	4	6	3	7	5	2	1
5	2	1	4	9	8	6	3	7
6	3	7	5	2	1	8	9	4

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Guests unveil a book during Dr Gopinath Mohanty Memorial Lecture organised by Odisha Sahitya Academy at Sookhana Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



# downtown

## Ratna Bhandar at risk of collapse: Min

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 20: Law and Works Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan Sunday raised an alarm about the safety of Sri-mandir's Ratna Bhandar saying that it is at risk of collapse due to "years of neglect and deterioration".

Speaking to media Sunday, Harichandan emphasised an urgent need for restoration of the temple vault to preserve the historically and religiously significant structure.

The Ratna Bhandar, which has stood for nearly two centuries, is home to priceless treasures dedicated to Lord Jagannath. However, recent structural assessments have revealed concerning signs of 'severe damage'. Harichandan said that had the repair work not commenced, the chamber would have collapsed at any moment.

"The situation is critical. The condition of the chamber has been deteriorating for years, and if immediate repairs had not been started, we would have lost this ancient treasure," the minister stated.

He asserted that the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is overseeing the restoration work which is being undertaken with care to ensure the temple's sanctity and historical integrity are preserved.

The minister also highlighted the limited time frame for the restoration, as the temple's rituals must be respected during the process. Despite time constraints, Harichandan assured that the restoration efforts would be thorough, with the goal of preserving the Ratna Bhandar for the next 100 to 200 years.

Harichandan's disclosure has raised widespread concerns about the condition of Ratna Bhandar, prompting renewed calls for continued vigilance and support for the ongoing restoration efforts.

Meanwhile, the minister announced that 'Dhadi Darshan' system will be in place after the shifting of the Ratna Bhandar hundi (box). He, however, said that the temple managing committee will take the final call in this regard by the end of this month. It is important that the government and the temple committee agree on the suggestions, he added.

Harichandan said, "There is a link between shifting of the Hundi of Ratna Bhandar and 'Dhadi Darshan'. The system will be in place within two-four days of Hundi shifting."



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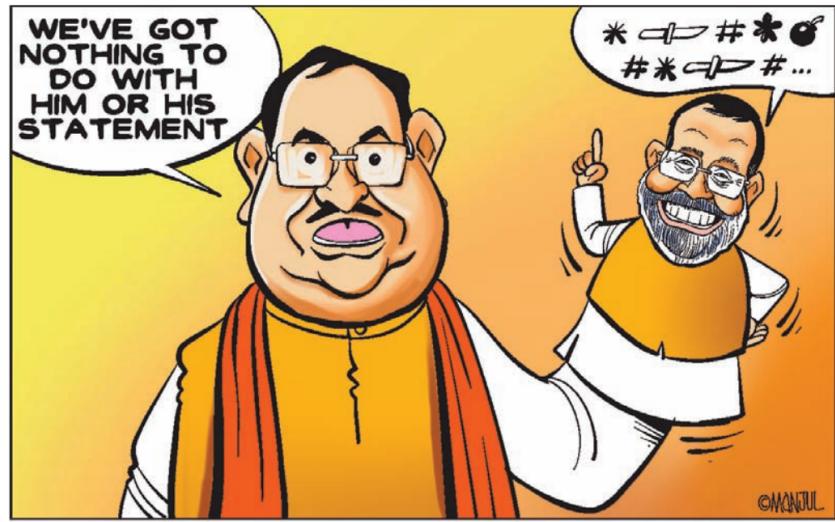
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PRITHIVIRAJ HARICHANDAN | LAW AND WORKS MINISTER

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## POLITICKLE by MANJUL

## Minister launches Khelo India centres in all dists

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 20: In a significant step towards strengthening sports infrastructure at grassroots level, Sports Minister Suryabanshi Suraj Sunday inaugurated 30 Khelo India centres in all the districts of the state.

These centres, established in collaboration between Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, and state Sports and Youth Affairs department, aim to nurture sporting talent at the grassroots level.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony held at Kalinga Stadium here, Suraj emphasised that these centres are designed to provide necessary sports infrastructure in different disciplines such as football, volleyball, hockey, athletics, kho-kho, kabaddi and others.

"Each Khelo India centre will offer training and coaching facilities to help young athletes hone their skills," said the minister. He added that this initiative would ensure that sporting



talent from every district, beyond the major cities, gets the opportunity to flourish.

Each Khelo India centre will receive an annual grant of ₹5 lakh from the government for smooth operations. Former national and state-level athletes will serve as coaches, imparting professional training to aspiring players, Suraj said.

Highlighting the state's commitment to development of sports, the minister informed that these centres will also focus on promoting local sports. Principal Secretary of Sports

and Youth Services department Bhaskar Jyoti Sarma outlined the objectives and operational framework of Khelo India centres. District-level officials, athletes and coaches also participated in the event virtually and expressed gratitude for this landmark initiative.

During the interaction, the minister encouraged young athletes and coaches to work towards creating a golden future in sports and discussed the roadmap for overall development of sports in Odisha.

## Construction worker falls to death; family alleges foul play



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 20: In a tragic incident, a construction worker, believed to be in his 40s, died after falling off the edge of an under-construction three-storey building in Nandan Vihar under Infocity police station Saturday night. The family members of the deceased, however, suspected a foul play in the incident.

The deceased, identified as Biranchi Narayan Singh, was working as a labourer at the construction site.

According to his co-workers, Singh's foot slipped, resulting in the fatal fall. Infocity police inspector-in-charge (IIC) Mahendra Kumar Sahu confirmed the incident. Police responded promptly, and the body was sent to Capital Hospital for a post-mortem.

Singh's family, however, suspected a foul play, alleging that Singh had a dispute with the building owner over an unpaid sum of ₹60,000. They claimed that Singh had received multiple threat calls from the owner prior to the incident.

The Infocity police have registered a case of unnatural death and are investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident.

## FAILED BID TO SETTLE SCORES

## Man attacks self, 3 booked

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 20: In a bizarre incident, a man shot himself in the early hours of Sunday under Balipatna police station to falsely implicate two relatives of a woman who had filed a sexual assault case against him in 2024. The man, with assistance from two of his associates, who have been arrested, orchestrated the self-inflicted attack, police said.

"Main accused Dipti Ranjan Mohapatra is currently undergoing treatment at Capital Hospital and will be arrested once he recovers," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Jagmohan Meena. Police seized one empty cartridge, three mobile phones, a 9-mm pistol, and four live bullets from the accused.

According to the DCP, Dip-



ti filed a complaint Sunday, claiming Sambit Mohapatra and Rajkishore Behera opened fire at him while he and his associates, Amaresh Pradhan, 36, and Tofan Bisoi, 33, were attending a Ramleela event in Balipatna. Dipti cited prior enmity as the motive.

However, investigations revealed Dipti's criminal history, including a sexual assault case filed against him by Mahila police June 6, 2024. After securing bail, Dipti conspired

Amaresh Pradhan, 36, and Tofan Bisoi, 33, the associates of main accused Dipti Ranjan Mohapatra were arrested and produced in court

to frame the victim's relatives. He collaborated with Amaresh, who procured the firearm from Tofan Bisoi. Forensic analysis confirmed Dipti shot himself at a close range, sustaining an arm injury.

Balipatna police charged Dipti under Sections 109 and 3(5) of the BNS, along with Sections 25 and 27 of the Arms Act. Amaresh and Tofan were presented in court Sunday. The police are probing the firearm's source.



**BLISTERING HEAT:** A cyclist covers his head with a piece of cloth as Bhubaneswar simmers on a hot summer afternoon Sunday

PTI PHOTO

## CM's nod to new OISF battalion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 20: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has approved a proposal for the creation of another battalion of Odisha Industrial Security Force (OISF) in the state, an official said.

Majhi approved the proposal Saturday. A total of 1,040 posts have also been created for this new battalion, the official said.

The state already has one battalion of OISF. Its total number of posts is 1,807. After the creation of the new battalion, the number of posts in the two battalions will be 2,847.

"Keeping in view the growing industrial activities in the state and to maintain law and



order in different industrial hubs, the state government has decided to add another battalion of OISF," a senior police officer said.

During a recent meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Majhi had said that the state was planning to recruit 3,000 security personnel for the OISF.

## UNESCO: Only 60% countries have school food laws, standards

Only 60 per cent of countries have legislations and standards governing food and beverages in schools, according to Global Education Monitoring Report by UNESCO.

The report has been published in partnership with Research Consortium for School Health and Nutrition led by London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, which is the research initiative of the School Meals Coalition.

"Only 93 out of 187 countries have legislation, compulsory standards or guidance on school food and beverages. However, only 29 per cent of these 93 countries had measures restricting food and beverage marketing in schools and only 60 per cent have standards governing food and beverages," according to the Global Educa-

tion Monitoring (GEM) Report.

The GEM team noted that a survey-based assessment of school-based food and nutrition education in 30 low- and middle-income countries found that integration within the school system was mostly through extracurricular or project-based activities rather than as a standalone subject or across the curriculum.

"In only three of 28 countries assessments were regularly conducted and used. The assessment information included changes in attitudes and perceptions about food and nutrition, knowledge, food practice, nutritional status, habits and diets," according to the report.

"Most school meal programmes have education goals, alongside nutrition, health and social protection objectives.



However, fewer programmes focus on preventing or mitigating obesity," it read.

Another survey focused on school meal provision found that 72 per cent of countries reported some limitations on food marketing on school

grounds and 52 per cent had national-level prohibitions on foods permitted on or near school grounds.

"A review of nutrition policy engagement with food system transformation in high-income countries highlighted

that, while most policy actions focused on communication for healthy choice behaviour change, most outcomes in the food environment domain focused on food labelling, product reformulation, providing healthy food in schools and

### HIGHLIGHTS

93 out of 187 countries have legislation, compulsory standards or guidance on school food and beverages

Only 29% of these 93 countries had measures restricting food and beverage marketing in schools

In only three of 28 countries assessments were regularly conducted and used

Fewer programmes focus on preventing or mitigating obesity

of the food environment and on regulatory and legislative reforms," according to the report.

It called for a whole-school approach, combining school meal provision with nutrition education, physical activity and extracurricular initiatives. It also called for efforts on food literacy to transform into a life-long learning pursuit through formal, non-formal and informal learning.

"There is a need to build capacity at all levels through education and training across a range of sectors, including health, nutrition, agriculture and food systems. Despite clear interdependencies, the linkages between education and nutrition remain under-researched, including in data collection and monitoring of programmes and outcomes," according to the report.

PTI

# Rain, thunderstorms likely to continue till April 27: IMD



Maximum temperatures likely to rise by 2-4°C in the state over the next three days despite unsettled weather

agada, Nabarangpur, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nuapada, Kalahandi, and Kandhamal. Light to moderate rain is also expected during these hours.

The IMD has urged residents to remain indoors during thunderstorms and follow safety guidelines provided by local authorities. Despite the unsettled weather, the maximum temperatures in the state are expected to rise by 2 to 4 degrees Celsius after the next three days.

Meanwhile, heatwave-like conditions continue in the western parts of Odisha. Jharsuguda recorded the highest temperature in the state at 43.5°C, followed by Bolangir (42.4°C) and Titilagarh (42.0°C). In the coastal region, Bhubaneswar saw a high of 37.5°C, while Cuttack recorded 40.1°C.

The IMD has advised people to remain alert as the combination of rain and rising temperatures may affect daily activities in the coming week.

**Bhubaneswar, April 20:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast continuous rain and thunderstorms across Odisha until April 27. A



**GREEN CRUSADER:** Chinmayee Das from Angul district spreads the message of planting saplings in a unique way with the slogan "Plant Trees, Save Lives" along the Sachivalaya Marg in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

## Guv praises Raghurajpur's art

**Bhubaneswar:** Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati, accompanied by First Lady Jayashree Kambhampati, visited Raghurajpur, a heritage village in Puri district, Sunday. Famous for its Pattachitra paintings and Patra Chitra palm leaf engravings, the village is a prime example of Odisha's rich cultural heritage. The Governor spent over an hour engaging with local artisans, observing their craft, and learning about the intricate processes behind Pattachitra art. He expressed deep appreciation for the artists' commitment to preserving these ancient traditions and visited the village museum to explore its artistic legacy. "This village is a living testament to Odisha's cultural richness," Kambhampati said. "The skill and dedication of these artisans are truly inspiring." The visit was further enriched by a captivating Gotipua folk dance performance, showcasing the state's diverse artistic expressions.



## CM to hear grievances in Sambalpur today

Over 1,000 citizens registered to raise issues directly with the Chief Minister as part of a decentralised governance drive

The initiative is part of the state's broader effort to decentralise governance, allowing up to 1,000 registered citizens to present their concerns directly to the CM.

In a post on X, CM Majhi reaffirmed the government's commitment to addressing public issues promptly, saying, "The people's government is dedicated to reaching out and resolving the problems of the common people. Since the new government assumed power, many grievances have been swiftly heard and resolved. The Chief Minister's grievance



hearing in Sambalpur will be organised April 21." Registrations for the hearing, which opened April 17 via the official grievance portal and

mobile app, highlight the government's focus on transparency and timely resolution of public concerns.

More than 10 state ministers, Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja, and top officials from Western Odisha are expected to attend. Following Sambalpur, a similar session is planned for Berhampur, as announced by Revenue Minister Suresh Pujari.

This initiative is part of the state's new policy to extend grievance redressal beyond Bhubaneswar, bringing governance directly to the people across Odisha.

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	37.5°	40.1°
Min Temp	28.0°	26.0°
Humidity	81%	86%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST		
Partly cloudy sky		

## Odisha Lekhika Sansad marks 32nd Annual Day



POST NEWS NETWORK

Odisha Lekhika Sansad president Shakuntala Baliarsingh highlighted the role of literature in empowering women.

A special souvenir, Smaranka, published by the Sansad, was released by the dignitaries. The event also saw the launch of several books, including Neelendri Ra Ashru and Odisha re Sharadiya Durga Puja by Sharat Kumari Mishra, and Puri Ra Sanskritika Itihasa, edited by Sadashiva Mishra.

In recognition of literary contributions, 26 women writers from across the state were honoured for the year 2024-25.

Awards presented included the Odisha Lekhika Sansad Samman, Utkal Bharati Kuntala Kumari Samman, and Padmashree Binapani Mohanty Memorial Samman, among others.

## LS Speaker Birla applauds Odisha student's JEE feat

Om Prakash Behera from Bhubaneswar secures AIR 1 in JEE Mains 2025 with 100 percentile



for the nation."

"I congratulate Om Prakash, his parents, teachers, and Kota's educational institutions for this proud achievement. His journey will inspire lakhs of students," Birla said.

On X, the Speaker posted, "Om Prakash Behera from Odisha has achieved a historic feat by securing AIR-1 in JEE Main 2025. His success reflects hard work, discipline, and determi-

nation."

He also praised the role of Om's family, saying, "The sacrifice and commitment of his parents are equally inspiring."

Om, currently studying at a top coaching institute in Kota, shared his preparation strategy during the meeting. He highlighted the importance of staying focused, avoiding distractions, and following a structured plan.

"I stayed off mobile phones and focused on high-weightage topics. My parents reminded me to stay grounded and be ready for any result," Om said. His success has sparked celebrations in both Odisha and Kota. With JEE Advanced ahead, Om Prakash now sets his sights on the IITs, while already earning national admiration for his outstanding performance.

## OPTCL workers' union holds 7th annual meet

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 20:** The Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL) labourers' and workers' union hosted its 7th annual conference Sunday here at the Press Club of Odisha.

The event saw the presence of key dignitaries, including union advisor Pabitra Mohan Mohapatra, BJP leader Jagannath Pradhan, former MP Ramachandra Khuntia, and Chandra Sekhar Pradhan, chief general manager of the Odisha energy sector.

During the conference, Akshaya Kumar Tripathy, joint general secretary of Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) and general secretary of the All Odisha Electricity Workers' Federation (AOEWF), raised concerns about the exploitation of workers, including linemen and security staff.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Panposh, I Ravi Kumar Sahu, S/o. Rajendra Prasad Sahu, R/o. Village/P.O.: Kalunga, P.S.: Brahmanitarang, Dist.: Sundargarh, Odisha, PIN - 770031 declare that both the names Ravi Kumar Sahu and Ravi Kumar stands for the name of one and same person i.e. myself.

## LOST

I, Sarala Sahoo, aged about 50 years, wife of Biramani Sahoo, At: Kumutipatana Jagannath Colony, P.S.: Talabania, P.O. and Dist.: Puri, informed to Public that my document i.e. my previous original Regd. Sale Deed No. 45, Dtd.04.01.1995 in favour of Sukantibala Senapati has been lost in front of my house situated at Jagannath Colony, Kumuti Patana on 05.04.2025. If it will be available please to inform me. Sarala Sahoo

# Dynamic Balasore duo redefines fitness after 60

Challenging age stereotypes, two senior citizens—aged 64 and 68—pursue bodybuilding with passion and discipline, proving fitness knows no age limit

MANOJ KUMAR JENA, OP

**Bhubaneswar, April 20:** In a society where ageing is often seen as a time to slow down, two remarkable men from Balasore — Manoj Bihari Das (64) and Tarun Kumar Chatterjee (68) — are breaking stereotypes and setting new fitness goals well into their sixties. Their journey into bodybuilding stands as a powerful testament to willpower, discipline, and the idea that it's never too late to chase your dreams.

For Manoj Bihari Das, a retired Block Education Officer, retirement was not a cue

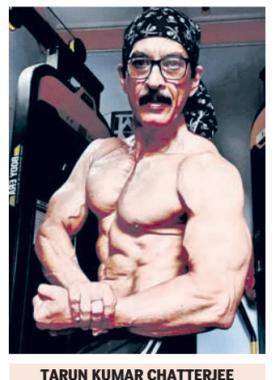
to rest, but a chance for reinvention. While many choose leisure post-retirement, Das embraced rigorous training, surprising those around him.

"I trained for three to four hours every day and followed a strict diet for two years. It was difficult, but I was determined to prove that age is no barrier to fitness," he said.

His efforts culminated in a proud moment this March, when he secured third place in the Masters Division — a category for athletes above 45 — at a national-level bodybuilding championship in Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh. Grateful for his



MANOJ BIHARI DAS



TARUN KUMAR CHATTERJEE

achievement, Das credits his family's unwavering support and the guidance of his mentor, Chatterjee.

"My wife and daughters stood by me throughout. And

I owe a lot to Tarun sir, who motivated me to believe in myself," he added.

Tarun Kumar Chatterjee, a seasoned bodybuilder, began his fitness journey shortly

after matriculation. Over the years, while managing a full-time banking career, he bagged titles such as 'Odisha Shree' and 'Odisha Kumar.' However, life's responsibilities distanced him from the gym for a time.

"After retiring, I returned to fitness — first as an advi-

sor in a local gym, then as a competitor again. At 66, I won third place in a national-level Masters event. And in 2022, I clinched gold at the Asian Bodybuilding Championship in the Masters Division," Chatterjee shared.

Both men now serve as living inspiration — not just for senior citizens, but for anyone doubting their own potential. They strongly advocate natural training methods and caution against shortcuts like steroids.

"Discipline, clean eating, and consistency — that's our formula," they said.

With unwavering passion, the duo continues to push boundaries. "Age is just a number. Real transformation begins when you stop making excuses," they said, smiling.

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# Ancient Jain idol stolen from Koraput village

Residents claim heritage plunderers are on prowl in the southern district



Thursday night by unidentified thieves who were suspected to have used a multi-utility vehicle to arrive at the place. This was based on the tyre marks found at the spot where the idol had been kept. They said the heavy stone idol is estimated to be worth more than ₹2 crore in the gray market.

IIC Runu Majhi of Sadar police station said that a case (No. 64/25) has been registered following the receipt of the complaint. He said the police are working on various leads to trace the idol and the lifters.

Locals said that despite multiple theft cases reported across various police stations

in the district, the police are yet to apprehend any suspect, or recover the stolen artifacts. They claimed that professional lifters are targeting ancient stone carvings and heritage icons in rural parts of Koraput, posing a serious threat to the district's cultural legacy.

Notably, in a similar case reported August 4, 2022, three stone idols were stolen from the revered site of Budha Bhairavi shrine near Raniduduma in Nandapur.

Though a complaint had been filed in that regard at the Nandapur police station, neither the idol nor the culprits have been found so far.

Across Koraput, numerous ancient idols are found lying unprotected in open areas of villages, worshipped by locals without adequate security. The district administration, temple trust boards, endowment and archaeology department have often faced criticism for their failure to safeguard these heritage assets.

This has triggered increasing frustration among the locals who warned that if swift and concrete measures were not taken, historically significant idols meant for research and conservation could slowly vanish from the region. They have urged the police and administration to intensify efforts to nab the culprits and protect the district's cultural treasures.



MYTHOLOGICAL PLAY: Artistes enact a scene from 'Mahiravan Badha' of Ramayan during Ramlila at Baunsuni in Boudh district Sunday

# Chh'garh woman's murder mystery solved; lover held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, April 20:** Police here Sunday arrested a man in connection with the murder of a 25-year-old woman from Chhattisgarh whose decomposed body was discovered in a forest near Rengabandh village, under Malkangiri block, April 12.

The incident, which initially sparked widespread concern, has now been resolved following a joint investigation by Odisha and Chhattisgarh police.

Malkangiri Superintendent of Police Vinod Patil identified

the victim as Mangaladei Nag of Murchhunda village in Chhattisgarh, and the accused, Umesh Nag.

Patil said Mangaladei had been into a relationship with Umesh of Pandum village in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district for over a year. During the course of their relationship, they reportedly had multiple instances of physical intimacy, leading to Mangaladei's pregnancy.

The couple travelled to the Malkangiri District Headquarters Hospital March 20,



where an ultrasound confirmed Mangaladei's pregnancy. The couple subsequently requested a medical termination, which was refused by doctors, Patil added.

Facing rejection and unwilling to accept responsibility, Umesh allegedly lured Mangaladei to the forest near Rengab-

andh village and murdered her. He then allegedly attempted to destroy evidence to conceal the crime.

After the body was found, police launched an investigation in collaboration with a forensic team and the Sukma police. The victim's identity was confirmed after officers visited her home and showed personal items found with the body to her family members, who recognised those.

Following arrest, Umesh was produced in a court Sunday, the SP said.

# ₹4L each to kin of 3 kids who drowned

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, April 20:** Following intervention by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the district administration here paid ₹4 lakh each in compensation to the families of three children who died after falling into a dug up stone quarry near an Anganwadi center under Hatadihi block that lacked basic sanitation facilities.

The district Collector has also initiated departmental action against the responsible officials in this regard.

The NHRC intervened in the matter following a petition filed by advocate and human rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy. He said the Commission took cognisance of the matter after receiving a detailed report in this regard from the district Collector, and communicated to him in writing April 17, 2025.

Tripathy, in his petition, said that April 30, 2024, three minor girls Payar Patra, 3, Bharati Patra, 4, and Lipsa Patra, 3, of an Anganwadi centre under Hatadihi block drowned in a nearby stone quarry after they went there to relieve themselves. They slipped into the quarry and drowned. He alleged in his petition that the kids were forced to go to the unsafe place as the Anganwadi center didn't have a toilet, resulting in their

tragic death. Tripathy also cited another incident in which an Anganwadi assistant, Surochana Swain, died of snake bite while on duty at Anganwadi Center no-2 in Bilipada under Dampada block in Banki area of Cuttack district September 11, 2024.

The petitioner urged the NHRC to obtain comprehensive reports from the district Collectors of Keonjhar and Cuttack and the state Chief Secretary. He demanded strong action against negligent officials responsible for safety lapses at Anganwadi centers, and adequate compensation for the victims' families as well as ensuring safety at the Anganwadi centres. Following NHRC intervention, the Cuttack administration reported that ₹4 lakh had already been paid to the family of the deceased Anganwadi worker.

The NHRC observed that the three girls drowned while attending to nature's call in the quarry due to the lack of toilet facility at their center.

In response, the Department of Women and Child Development, Odisha, informed the Commission that several initiatives had been taken to address infrastructure gaps at Anganwadi centres. Moreover, toilet construction had been undertaken in 53 per cent of the state's Anganwadi centers by October 31, 2024.

# Minor Mayurbhanj girl abducted by 2 fake transgenders, rescued in Jajpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur/Jajpur Road, April 20:** A four-year-old girl who had been abducted from a fair in Thakurmunda area of Mayurbhanj district three days ago, was rescued safely from a house in Jajpur Road area Sunday morning by the police with the help from local transgender community leaders.

The police have arrested two persons - Lipu Nayak of Telkoi and Niranjana Raul of Ramchandrapur in Keonjhar district, who allegedly disguised themselves as transgender women to carry out the abduction. They have been booked under BNS Sections 137 (2) and 326 (2).

According to police, April 17 night, the child had visited the traditional Uda Parba festival in Thakurmunda with her mother, Sipi Patra, of Malatpada village under Karanjia police jurisdiction. Around 10pm, she reportedly wandered away and could not be located despite a frantic search. A formal missing person's complaint was filed the next day at Thakurmunda police station, leading to the registration of a case (No. 38/2025).

Given the sensitive nature of the case, a dedicated police team was formed. CCTV footage from various locations was reviewed, and a key lead emerged when a camera cap-



tured an individual dressed in transgender attire, boarding a bus with a child matching the victim's description. Authorities soon made the footage public and appealed to citizens for assistance.

Further investigation led police to believe the abductors had taken the child to Jajpur Road. Acting on this lead, Thakurmunda police coordinated with members of Palalahada-based transgender community, who in turn reached out to the Jajpur Road Transgender Association. Inspector-in-Charge Sabitri Dalai worked closely with the association's president, Kajal Nayak, and secretary, Lovely Sahu, to trace the child.

Their collaborative efforts led to the discovery of the girl in Ward No. 8 of Kachhudi Sahi, where she was found in an abandoned house in the custody of two men posing as trans

women. The suspects, Lipu and Niranjana, were detained and questioned before being handed over to Thakurmunda police for further legal action.

Speaking to reporters, Kajal Nayak expressed concern over such impostors tarnishing the reputation of the transgender community. She urged authorities to take stringent action against those who commit crimes under false pretences.

Nevertheless, the case has triggered widespread debate in the region, recalling a similar incident in Bhubaneswar where a one-and-a-half-year-old was abducted from the arms of a visually impaired mother outside Ram Mandir, only to be rescued later.

Meanwhile, police are investigating the motive behind the abduction, and the possible existence of a larger child-lifting network in the area.

# Water crisis grips Bolangir village as project delayed

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bolangir, April 20:** Residents of Kushmel village in Bolangir district are grappling with a worsening water crisis amid scorching temperatures as a key drinking water project remains incomplete.

The village, located in Loisingha block and home to nearly 4,000 people, has faced acute water shortage for over three years. Work on a new supply project, intended to source water from the nearby Suktal river, began two years ago but has seen little progress. Only partial infrastructure, including a head tank and a few stand posts, has been completed.

Locals allege the contractor abandoned the project leaving crucial work unfinished. "It's been over two weeks without water. We're forced to collect it from neighbours or travel kilometres to irrigation points," said Upendra Biswal, a resident of the village.

Sarpanch Kaustubh Sahu admitted to the crisis and expressed frustration with administrative delays. He noted that over ₹10 lakh had been spent on other development work this year, yet the water issue persists owing to inordinate delay in the project work.



Though temporary relief is being provided through four water tankers, villagers have warned of protests if permanent solution is not implemented

Though temporary relief is being provided through four water tankers, villagers have warned of protests if permanent solution is not implemented. The crisis extends beyond Kushmel, affecting 10 villages under the same panchayat.

Despite repeated appeals, no significant response has come from elected representatives. With summer intensifying, residents have called for urgent action to resolve the long-standing issue.

# Tribals earn pittance from Chironji sale as traders make hay

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, April 20:** The forests and hills surrounding Keonjhar district are a year-round source of livelihood for the tribal communities living in the district.

Throughout the seasons, they collect and sell various forest produce to sustain their families.

During the summer, demand for Chironji or Almondette, which is known as Chara Koli in local parlance, has a high demand in village markets and urban centres.

Chara Koli is a tangy-sweet forest berry which is available in the district in abundance. Natural treats like Chara Koli as well as ice apple, jackfruit, and mango, are especially popular during hot weather.

While the outer layer of Chara Koli is widely enjoyed, it's the seed of the berry that holds far more commercial value. However, due to a lack



of awareness, tribals collectors often sell a bundle for just ₹20, unaware that the seed alone fetches significantly higher prices in bigger markets.

These berries are usually gathered by hand from forests and hills, before being carried in baskets or bags to local roadsides and markets. Traders, recognising the demand, buy the berry cheaply

and transport it both within and outside the district, making substantial profits. Though tribal sellers typically earn just ₹20 per kilogram, the processed seed is sold for three to four times more.

The seeds are washed, dried, and either hand-processed or machine-processed to extract the edible core. These are then used in sweets,

laddus, porridge and snack mixes.

Their demand extends not just across India, but internationally as well. At present, these seeds prices rival, or even surpass, those of cashews and pistachios, fetching more than ₹1,000 per kilogram in some markets.

Educationist Ramakanta Swain noted that deforesta-

tion and climate change are major factors behind the declining presence of Chironji trees in backyards of houses and forests. Without greater awareness and protection efforts, he warned, the availability of such natural produce will continue to dwindle.

Retired Forest officer Alekh Chandra Patra added that given the rising demand outside the region, administrative intervention is essential. He stressed the need for awareness programs, sustainable harvesting practices, and value-added processing units to ensure both conservation and income generation.

By protecting trees like chironji, palm, and jackfruits, and creating structured processing systems, tribal communities could significantly boost their income while ensuring broader access to these forest-based products, they opined.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER**  
**SAMBALPUR IRRIGATION DIVISION, SAMBALPUR**  
E-mail id: sidsambalpur@gmail.com

**e-Procurement Notice No. SESID-01/2025-26**  
**Bid Identification No. SESID-01 (01-28)/2025-26**  
No. 1485 Date: 10.04.2025

No. A-38: Bid documents consisting of work, estimated amount put to tender, cost of tender paper, EMD, time of completion, class of contractor, the set of terms & conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in> complete online process only.

1. Nature of Works	: Canal Works
2. Nos. of Works	: 28 Nos.
3. Bid Identification No.	: SESID-01 (01-28)/2025-26
4. Estimated Cost	: 8.45 - 31.78 Lakhs
5. Earnest Money Deposit	: Referred to DTGN
6. Cost of Tender Paper	: Referred to DTGN
7. Period of Completion	: Referred to DTGN
8. Date and Time of availability of Bid Document in the portal	: Dt. 23.04.2025 at 11.00 A.M. to Dt. 02.05.2025 upto 17.00 P.M.
9. Last Date/Time for receipt of Bids in the portal	: Dt. 02.05.2025 upto 17.00 P.M.
10. Date of Bid Opening	: Dt. 03.05.2025 at 11.00 A.M.
11. Clarification seeking date	: Dt. 23.04.2025 at 11.00 A.M. to Dt. 02.05.2025 upto 17.00 P.M.
12. Date of Lottery (if required)	: To be intimated later
13. Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Superintending Engineer, Sambalpur Irrigation Division, Sambalpur, A/P.O.: Khetrajpur - 768003, Dist.: Sambalpur Email Id: sidsambalpur@gmail.com

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in said website.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer  
Sambalpur Irrigation Division, Sambalpur  
OIPR-32530/11/0004/2526

FOCUS SOCIETY

# CAMPUS CRACKDOWN



**Universities and institutions of higher education have traditionally served as spaces for emancipatory, independent, and critical thinking—forms of thought that inherently question and resist hegemonic authority and status quo**

intellectuals reflects a deeper malaise rooted in insecurity, fear of dissent, and an urgent drive to consolidate ideological control. This broader assault reveals a fundamental truth: the ruling elites no longer trust their ability to maintain legitimacy through democratic consent. Instead, they turn to coercion and control, enforcing a culture of compliance aimed at dismantling critical thought and silencing those who dare to question or challenge the status quo.

What ruling classes fear is not merely academic critique, but education itself—as a democratising force capable of awakening political consciousness, empowering people to interrogate systems and conditions of exploitation, and imagine just, alternative futures. By silencing campuses, the ruling classes seek to silence the future—eroding democratic rights and reinforcing a social, political, economic and cultural order grounded in inequality and repression.

History bears witness to the vital role that universities, institutions of higher learning, and intellectuals have played in the revolutionary upsurges of societies against patriarchy, feudalism, monarchy, colonialism, apartheid, capitalism, and imperialism. The more repression is imposed, the more it fuels tireless and enduring resistance—resistance that persists until power is ultimately challenged, overturned and defeated. Therefore, let universities and their campuses stand as territories of resistance—spaces where the struggle for a progressive transformation of society takes root, aiming to build a future free from all forms of inequality and exploitation. True knowledge does not domesticate—it emancipates.

*The writer teaches at the London Metropolitan University.*

The increasing attacks on higher educational institutions and universities reflect a deeper malaise within the ruling classes. President Donald Trump's criticisms of American universities and attacks on universities such as Columbia and Harvard, along with the Indian government's actions targeting institutions like Jawaharlal Nehru University and Jadavpur University, are notable examples of growing threats faced by centers of learning and inquiry. These examples are not limited to the US and India; universities across Europe and other regions are facing similar threats from ruling elites. These threats extend beyond funding cuts, political intimidation, bureaucratic harassment, government and legal pressure. Students, teachers, and researchers are increasingly facing physical danger—not only to their lives and livelihoods but also to their passionate commitment to the production and dissemination of knowledge.

The Education Under Attack 2024 report, published by the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, revealed that approximately 6,000 attacks on educational institutions occurred in 2022 and 2023—representing a nearly 20% increase compared to the previous two years. More than 10,000 students, teachers, and academics were harmed, injured, or killed in these incidents, many of which took place in regions affected by wars and armed conflict.

Attacks on intellectuals and institutions of higher learning are nothing new. Feudal landlords, monarchs, colonial rulers, reactionary religious forces, and dominant ruling classes have long felt threatened by reason, science, and secular knowledge that challenge prevailing power structures. Universities and insti-

tutions of higher education have traditionally served as spaces for emancipatory, independent, and critical thinking—forms of thought that inherently question and resist hegemonic authority and status quo. These institutions not only produce and disseminate knowledge but also play a vital role in deepening democracy and advancing decolonisation. The scientific ethos and egalitarian culture that define higher education are often deeply unsettling for ruling elites, as they disrupt entrenched hierarchies and systems of control.

The new wave of attacks on universities and higher institutions of learning began with the commodification, commercialisation, marketisation, privatisation, and modularisation of higher education. This was followed by a systematic effort to undermine the humanities, social sciences, and liberal arts—disciplines increasingly devalued under the pretext of employability and the utilitarian logic of skill-based knowledge transfer. These assaults were not accidental but carefully orchestrated to align education with the needs of capitalism and the

ruling classes. The aim was to reshape universities into institutions that produce a compliant workforce stripped of the capacity to critically examine exploitative working conditions or challenge systemic inequalities. Governments and university administrations have, to a large extent, succeeded in this endeavour by closing down departments and programmes in the humanities, social sciences, and liberal arts.

Despite the antagonistic environment shaped by a compliance-driven culture of surveillance over students and faculty, smear campaigns branding university communities as radical, leftist, elitist, or anti-national, and the systematic curbing of academic freedom through funding cuts, students and staff have continued to defy these pressures. The students and staff have refused to transform their universities into machineries of compliance. They remain committed to generating knowledge and cultivating consciousness that challenge conformity and promote emancipatory praxis.

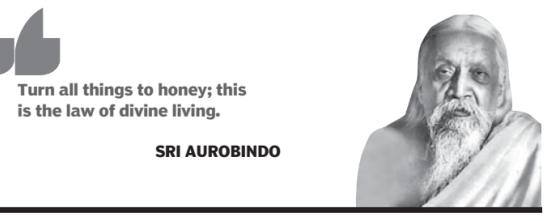
So, the renewed intensity in attacks on higher educational institutions, universities, and



Bhabani Shankar Nayak

**BY SILENCING CAMPUSES, THE RULING CLASSES SEEK TO SILENCE THE FUTURE—ERODING DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND REINFORCING A SOCIAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL ORDER GROUNDED IN INEQUALITY AND REPRESSION**

## Time Will Tell



Turn all things to honey; this is the law of divine living.

SRI AUROBINDO

A set pattern of attacks on the Supreme Court of India has emerged last week from two sources – one from a Constitutional authority and another from a couple of ruling party MPs. First it was Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar who criticised the Supreme Court over a ruling that established a timeline for the President of India to sign bills passed by state legislatures. He was referencing the landmark 8 April verdict of the top court in the case of Tamil Nadu vs. the Governor, which was perceived as a victory for states throughout India. Calling for the judiciary to be held accountable, Dhankhar referred to Article 142 of the Constitution as a “nuclear missile against democratic forces” that is accessible to the judiciary at all times. Article 142 states that “The Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.” This indicates that the article grants the Supreme Court the discretion to issue any order or judgement it deems necessary to achieve full justice in any case it reviews. The VP went on to add that the Supreme Court was acting like a “super Parliament.”

Two days after these scathing remarks from the VP, two BJP MPs Nishikant Dubey and Dinesh Sharma also launched an attack on the Supreme Court. While Dinesh Sharma, a former deputy chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, stated that neither the Parliament nor the President can be directed by anyone, Nishikant Dubey, one of the more vocal members of the BJP in the Lok Sabha, launched a broadside against the top court, arguing that if the apex court is responsible for making laws, then the Parliament and the state assemblies should be shut down. He went to the extent of alleging that Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna was responsible for “civil wars” in the country.

In an apparent damage control attempt, the BJP has distanced itself from the comments made by its MPs. However, it remains silent regarding equally unacceptable statements about the judiciary made by VP Dhankhar, one of its prominent appointees to a high constitutional position and who came to public notice while he was Governor of West Bengal. While in that position, as a devoted political party worker, he did not spare any opportunity to hinder the normal functioning of the state government of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Those attacking the Supreme Court over its perceived “overreach” perhaps fail to understand that for a healthy democracy to function all its three pillars -- the legislature, the executive and the judiciary -- have to perform their duties in tandem and free of each other. Parliament makes laws and the government executes that law but in the absence of checks and balances in the form of the judiciary and in a much more limited manner, the Press and civil society, elected governments generally tend to become autocratic. This has been the practice in all the thriving democracies the world over. Just a day before, the US Supreme Court halted the Donald Trump administration's move to deport Venezuelans from the US under an old unused war time law. This shows that in a proper working democracy, even the world's most powerful man, the PoTUS, is not immune to the judiciary's powers in the system of checks and balances.

History is replete with examples of what absolute power of people's elected representatives, once they take the seat of power in the government, can do to a country and its people. Two of the classic examples are of Germany electing Adolf Hitler as Chancellor only once and the resultant worldwide destruction and the second is of modern day Russia electing Vladimir Putin who has started a war in Europe and has changed that country's Constitution that enables him to remain as President for life. In contemporary era, strongmen leaders like Viktor Orban of Hungary and Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel have been reined in by their judiciary for their acts of omission and commission.

In India, the government has, on several occasions, pushed its limits of power, bypassing all other institutions. The Demonetization of the Rs 1000 and Rs 500 currency carried out by the government in November of 2016 without the Parliament's approval is a landmark example of the political excesses that affected negatively the growing economy of the country.

The critical comments directed at the Supreme Court over the past week suggest that the judiciary is being taught a lesson for its timely interventions. However, one must not forget that when Parliament is bypassed and the executive is weak and incapable to fulfil its responsibilities, it is the judiciary's duty to step in. The independence of the judiciary and all other institutions is sacrosanct for any democracy to flourish. However, the country needs to watch how truly strong the judiciary is in its beliefs and convictions in this instance. Too many times in the recent past the country has seen how judges, looking strong and resolute, later crumble and cower before powerful politicians. Only time will tell.

## WISDOM CORNER

I love you when you bow in your mosque, kneel in your temple, pray in your church. For you and I are sons of one religion, and it is the spirit.

KAHILIL GIBRAN

There are two kinds of teachers: the kind that fill you with so much quail shot that you can't move, and the kind that just gives you a little prod behind and you jump to the skies.

ROBERT FROST

In oneself lies the whole world and if you know how to look and learn, the door is there and the key is in your hand. Nobody on earth can give you either the key or the door to open, except yourself.

JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1782:** Friedrich Froebel, German educational reformer and the founder of the kindergarten, was born in Oberweissbach, Thuringia.
- 1830:** James Starley, an inventor and the father of the bicycle industry, was born in Albourne, Sussex, England.
- 1966:** The Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie I, believed to be the Second Coming of Christ by many Rastas, arrived in Jamaica for a visit—an event since celebrated annually in Rastafari as Groundation Day.
- 1967:** Dictator Georgios Papadopoulos assumes power in Greece. During his six-year reign, thousands of political opponents were incarcerated and tortured.

## SPECTRUM CORRUPTION

# Will Qatari gold sink Netanyahu?

Can an Israeli prime minister dismiss the country's internal security chief? The Israeli Supreme Court considered that question on 8 April, when it placed a pause on PM Binyamin Netanyahu's firing of Ronen Bar, the head of Shin Bet since October 2021. Seemingly expecting a different verdict, however, Netanyahu had announced beforehand that he would ignore any adverse ruling.



Konstanty Gebert

**FROM 2018, AND WITH THE EXPLICIT APPROVAL OF NETANYAHU'S GOVERNMENT, THE QATARI GOVERNMENT TRANSFERRED \$30 MILLION PER MONTH TO PROP UP THE HAMAS REGIME IN GAZA**

Typically, such flagrant disregard for the judiciary, whose authority Netanyahu seems determined to undermine, would have triggered a constitutional crisis. It still could, since the court has frozen Bar's dismissal only until 20 April, demanding that the government strike a compromise with the country's independent attorney general, who has opposed Bar's dismissal on the grounds that Netanyahu has a conflict of interest.

The situation is complicated, though, because Shin Bet's disastrous failure to anticipate Hamas' attack on 7 October, 2023, is certainly reason enough to fire Bar. He has even admitted as much, but has also called for a state commission of inquiry into the matter. Netanyahu, keen not to be implicated in the failure himself, adamantly opposes this. Moreover, Bar alleges

that Netanyahu, facing criminal prosecution for corruption, fraud, and abuse of power, tried to pressure him into convincing the court to delay the date of his testimony in the trial. So, while there are valid reasons for Netanyahu to “lose trust” in Bar, there are also valid reasons to suspect a conflict of interest. And here, the most damning and contentious issue of all is Bar's investigation of “Qatargate” – a complicated case of bribery and leaks involving Netanyahu's closest aides. Notably, Netanyahu decided to fire Bar immediately after this investigation began.

To summarize the case, two of Netanyahu's personal aides, Yonatan Urlich and Eli Feldstein, were arrested on suspicion of accepting bribes from Qatar in return for leaking statements to Israeli media tailored to burnish the sheikhdom's image. A third aide, who has conveniently departed to Serbia, is wanted for questioning; the editor-in-chief of the Jerusalem Post is suspected of having been the go-between; and a businessman has admitted to transferring funds to Feldstein from a known Qatari lobbyist in the US.

Leaks from the prime minister's office are often believed to come from Netanyahu himself, since he is known to have leaked

classified information that was damaging to political opponents in the past. Though nothing suggests that he was personally aware of “Qatargate,” he admits that some leaks made by Urlich reflected his instructions.

Qatar allegedly paid the leakers to present the country as a trustworthy partner in the on-and-off indirect negotiations over the fate of the Israeli hostages in Gaza. Qatar has been known to use bribes to advance its interests elsewhere – as became apparent in the 2022 arrests of European Parliament members who were accused of taking Qatari money for this purpose. But in Israel, Qatari money has different associations.

From 2018, and with the explicit approval of Netanyahu's government, the Qatari government transferred \$30 million per month to prop up the Hamas regime in Gaza. The money, transported in suitcases to avoid possible US anti-terror sanctions, was used to pay the salaries of civil servants and welfare benefits, thus freeing up other Hamas funds for terrorism. Qatar's support for Islamists has often made it a pariah in the Arab world. Netanyahu's own rationale for allowing the payments was that Hamas' regime supposedly served Isra-

el's interest. With terrorists in charge of Gaza and corrupt, incompetent Fatah bureaucrats in charge in Ramallah, Israel had a convenient excuse to avoid negotiations on the Palestinian issue. All this would have been exposed by Bar's proposed state commission of inquiry.

Lawyers for the suspects have not responded directly to the allegations, but they stress that Qatar is not an “enemy state,” implying that no treason was involved. They also point out that under Israeli law, only civil servants can be bribed. Strictly speaking, the prime minister's aides do not qualify.

The battle lines are drawn. According to Justice Minister Yariv Levin, the Netanyahu government is defending “millions whose rights are being trampled on and whose democratic choice they made at the ballot box is being taken from them by a handful of arrogant and detached judges.” Yet polls show that 63% of Israelis fear for the future of the country's democracy, and that they trust the Supreme Court, the attorney general, and Shin Bet more than the Netanyahu government by a two-to-one margin.

*The writer is a Polish journalist.*

PROJECT SYNDICATE

## 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)



## China's future growth

Sir, This refers to “China's ascent,” *Orissa POST*, April 20. The singular reason China is where it is today: the US and the West handed over hundreds of billions of dollars of technology—know-how, intellectual property, even whole factories—throughout the course of four decades. That transformed China from one of the world's poorest countries to one of the richest. The assertion that the 21st century belongs to China, surpassing the US in both technology and economy, is a complex one with evidence supporting both sides. While China's rapid economic growth and technological advancements are undeniable, its future dominance is still debated. The view that China was the emerging geopolitical power, with developing nations tucked under its wings, is looking similarly shaky. It is now unclear whether China's GDP will ever surpass the US and nations around the world are rethinking their ties to Beijing and the debt trap that is the Belt and Road Initiative. Add to this, with a debt-to-GDP ratio of greater than 300%, and as per government consumption estimates, the Chinese economy is as much as 30% smaller than what management statistics say, and it's also slowing down. Also, China is showing the inevitable limits of a state directed economy and society, when political diktats begin to trump open-market economic self-interest. One can't grow the economy forever under state-controlled enterprise and subsidised infrastructure, EVs, and real estate, particularly while tightening political control over both the masses and the leading entrepreneurs.

*N Sathasiva Reddy, BANGALORE*

## Caustic remark

Sir, This refers to “Dubey: Close down Parl if SC has to make law,” *Orissa POST*, April 20. This type of caustic remark from a BJP MP deserves strong condemnation. If the BJP seriously does not want to show disrespect to the apex court, MP Nishikant Dubey should be suspended from the party for six months for his contemptuous remark. There is no denying that Parliament can certainly make law but the apex court has the right to see that the intention of the legislature is not violated to suit the interests of the ruling party.

*Arun Gupta, KOLKATA*

PAWS & PARADISE

# Prabhash, Pavak relocated to Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary

These six-year-old male cheetahs, originally brought from South Africa's Waterberg Biosphere Reserve to Kuno National Park in February 2023, arrived at Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary, which spans Neemuch and Mandasaur districts, after a road journey



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhopal, April 20:** Two South African cheetahs, Prabhash and Pavak, who were translocated to Kuno National Park more than two years ago, found a new home Sunday when Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav released them into the Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary. These six-year-old male cheetahs, originally brought from South Africa's Waterberg Biosphere Reserve to Kuno National Park in February 2023, arrived at Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary, which spans Neemuch and Mandasaur districts, after a road journey. CM Yadav released them in the sanctuary at Basigaon Khemla this evening. He said four more cheetahs, proposed to be bought from Botswana in southern Africa, will also be released in Gandhi Sagar sanctuary. "A new history has been written in Gandhi Sagar in view of cheetah relocation. Prabhash and Pavak were released. I want to congratulate the people

of the state and country," Yadav said on the occasion. Earlier, Yadav highlighted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had spearheaded a successful effort to reintroduce cheetahs to Asia in September 2022. The PM made Madhya Pradesh a cheetah state on his birthday, Yadav said. The cheetahs were introduced in KNP September 17, 2022. Due to that experiment, the growth of the cheetah, an extinct species in Asia, is a matter of research for the entire world, Yadav said, adding that the growth rate of cheetahs in Madhya Pradesh is about 80 per cent. "It is our good fortune that the most favourable conditions for the restoration of cheetahs in all of Asia exist in our country, particularly in Madhya Pradesh," he asserted. The CM said his government will work for air and road connectivity, which will enhance opportunities for employment. "It was our project to gradually increase the number of

cheetahs, We will be getting four new cheetahs from Botswana in the month of May. We will try to release them here (Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary), which will take the number here to six," Yadav said. Earlier in the day, the two cheetahs were transported by road to Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary, located over 250 kilometres from Kuno, where the ambitious intercontinental translocation of the big cats was launched nearly three years ago. Eight Namibian cheetahs—five females and three males—were released into Kuno National Park on September 17, 2022, marking the first-ever intercontinental translocation of these big cats. Twelve more cheetahs were translocated from South Africa to Kuno in February 2023. Currently, Kuno National Park houses 24 cheetahs, including 14 India-born cubs, while two have now been relocated to Gandhi Sagar Sanctuary.

# Amaravati to be world's first RE-powered city

With an ambitious plan to harness 2,700 megawatts (MW) of green energy, the city aims to meet all its electricity needs through sustainable sources like solar, wind, and hydropower

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Vijayawada, April 20:** Amaravati, the planned capital of Andhra Pradesh, is set to create history as it targets to become the world's first city to be powered entirely by renewable energy as town planners look to build an ultra-modern yet environmentally sustainable 'people's capital'.

With an ambitious plan to harness 2,700 megawatts (MW) of green energy, the city aims to meet all its electricity needs through sustainable sources like solar, wind, and hydropower, officials said.

Andhra Pradesh chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu's dream new capital city project firmly aligns with India's broader commitment to clean energy and climate action.

The foundation stone for the greenfield capital city on the banks of Krishna river is expected to be laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi sometime this month. The Rs 65,000-crore project is spread across 217 square kilometers, with Andhra Pradesh Capital Region spanning an area of 8,352 sq km.

The country's newest capital coming up between Vijayawada and Guntur will not only showcase India's innovation in green urban planning but also reinforce its leadership in



the global clean energy transition, they said. The 2,700 MW capacity will not only ensure zero dependence on fossil fuels but also set a global benchmark for urban sustainability. By integrating cutting-edge energy infrastructure into its smart city design, Amaravati is positioned to be a model for future cities across the globe.

Officials said by 2050, Amaravati is projected to require 2700 MW (2.7 Gigawatt) of power, with a minimum of 30 per cent sourced from renewable energy, including solar and wind energy.

Tapping solar power through compulsory roof-top solar pow-

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er systems covering minimum one-third roof top area in all government housing projects has been made an integral part of the building permissions to projects, they said, adding all major building projects, including the Amaravati Government Complex, will adhere to green building standards, ensuring energy efficiency, reduced carbon footprint, and optimal resource utilization. Additionally, public transport - including the Amaravati

Metro and an electric bus fleet - will run on renewable energy. The city will also feature widespread EV charging infrastructure for public and government use.

It also envisions exploring further solar tapping potential in public spaces such as parks, walkways, and roadside bus depots.

"Amaravati is being built as a sustainable, future-ready capital city with a strong emphasis on renewable energy and energy-efficient infrastructure," an official said.

Town Planners have already installed 415 kW of rooftop solar panels across 16 Anganwadis, 14 e-health centers, 13 public schools, and a multi-faith funeral center.

"All government and commercial buildings will be mandated to install solar panels and adopt net metering," he said. "A district cooling system is being planned for government complexes to optimize energy use and reduce cooling demands."

Cooling is a critical consideration for Andhra Pradesh, which faces the highest number of heat wave days in South India with temperature as high as 47.7 degrees in 2024. Cooling demand includes those for buildings (air-conditioning), cold-chain, refrigeration, transport and industries.

# BJP to run Waqf Act awareness campaign

In Madhya Pradesh, there are more than 14,986 properties of the state Waqf Board, which are registered properties spanning 52,752 acres, as documented in official records



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhopal, April 20:** Madhya Pradesh BJP chief VD Sharma said Saturday that the state unit will run a state-wide awareness campaign regarding the Waqf (Amendment) Act. He said that BJP workers make people aware of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, including how this crucial step of the Centre will ensure positive changes in society. "The campaign will be run by different units of the BJP," he said. He added that to make an

elaborate plan for this purpose, the MP BJP leadership has started meetings with the members of the different units of the party. "During meetings, BJP workers will be taught about the entire plan of the campaign so that when they visit people, they should be ready with facts about Waqf properties in those particular areas," he said. Sharma also chaired a meeting of the members of

the Scheduled Tribe (ST) and Scheduled Caste (SC) at the party headquarters in Bhopal. "During the campaign, people will be taught how the Waqf properties have been illegally encroached and misused by some selective individuals. There is no account of income related to Waqf, and a new trend has started where they can stake a claim on any property," claimed Sharma.

He said that the party has taken the step after the Supreme Court started to hear petitions challenging the Waqf (Amendment) Act.

Notably, after getting clearance from both Houses of Parliament, and then getting assent of President Droupadi Murmu on April 5, the Centre has implemented the Waqf (Amendment) across the country from April 8.

In Madhya Pradesh, there are more than 14,986 properties of the state Waqf Board, which are registered properties spanning 52,752 acres, as documented in official records.



Smoke rises from the burning wheat stubble at a farm at Narmadapuram Road, on the outskirts of Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

# Andhra issues notification to fill posts of 16,347 teachers

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati, April 20:** The Andhra Pradesh government Sunday released a notification for conducting a 'Mega District Selection Committee' to fill 16,347 teacher posts across the state.

The Department of School Education released the notification to fill the vacancies through District Selection Committee (DSC).

Director of School Education V Vijay Rama Raju said the aspirants can submit applications online and pay the fees from April 20 to May 15.

Candidates can apply through the School Education Department's official websites <https://cse.ap.gov.in> and <https://apdsc.apcfss.in>.

The online mock test for Mega DSC will be available from May 20. The candidates can download the hall tickets from May 30. The Computer-Based Tests (CBT) will be held from June 6 to July 6.

The initial answer key will be released two days after the last examination. The candidates can raise objections to the initial key within seven days of its release. The final



key will be released seven days after the last date of receiving objections, and the merit list (marks) will be announced seven days after the release of

the final key.

The notification, having complete information on the Mega DSC-2025, including the relevant Government Orders, post details, exam schedule, syllabus, and helpdesk details is available on the website.

According to the Director of School Education, 14,088 vacancies at the district level and 2,259 vacancies at the state/zonal level will be filled.

The vacancies at the district level comprise 7,487 school assistants, 6,599 secondary grade teachers and two physical education teachers.

# N Chandrababu Naidu turns 75

TDP leaders hold grand celebrations

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati, April 20:** Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and Telugu Desam Party's national president N Chandrababu Naidu turned 75 Sunday.

His birthday was celebrated lavishly by the party cadres across the State.

TDP leaders, workers and CM Naidu's supporters participated in the celebrations held at various places in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. They also visited temples to pray for their leader's health and long life.

The party leaders cut a 75-kg cake at TDP headquarters at Mangalagiri to celebrate CM Naidu's birthday. TDP state president Palla Srinivasa Rao, Agriculture Minister Atchen Naidu and several senior leaders were present. The leaders and workers

also went around a photo exhibition organised at the party headquarters with the theme "visionary leader".

TDP cadres on the Alipiri pathway to Tirumala temple broke a large number of coconuts and offered prayers for CM Naidu's long life and good health.

CM Naidu's birthday celebrations were also organised at the TDP office, NTR Trust Bhavan in Hyderabad. Former Andhra Pradesh minister Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy, Nandamuri Subasini and other leaders participated in the celebrations.

CM Naidu's wife, Nara Bhuvaneshwari, posted a message on social media to greet him.

CM Naidu's son and Education and IT Minister Nara Lokesh also greeted him. Lokesh called CM Naidu his inspiration.

# Tiger panic ends with surprise return of missing man

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Umaria (Madhya Pradesh), April 20:** Panic swept through the villages near Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve this week as a 45-year-old man mysteriously vanished, sparking fears of another deadly human-wildlife encounter in the already tense region.

Munnalal, a resident of the Manpur police station area in Umaria district, had gone missing Tuesday. With the area witnessing a rise in tiger sightings and recent fatal attacks, rumours swirled that he may have fallen victim to a tiger. The local community was shocked by his mysterious disappearance, and when news and rumours went viral on social media Friday that another man was taken away by a tiger, the authorities came into action. An intensive joint search op-

eration was launched by forest officials and police teams. The forest echoed with the sounds of search parties for three days. Vehicles combed the undergrowth, and even two elephants were brought in to help sweep dense areas of the reserve. Local villagers joined in, offering clues and pointing searchers toward possible locations.

"We treated it as a high-priority case," said Mukesh Merskole, the investigating officer. "There were heightened concerns due to recent tiger activity, and the area's history of attacks only intensified the urgency." Adding to the fear was the recent capture of a tigress blamed for a series of violent encounters, including the tragic death of a 14-year-old boy and a serious injury to a woman who had ventured into the buffer zone to collect mahua flowers, a common activity among tribal families. The



same tigress was also responsible for killing livestock and pets in surrounding villages before being tranquilised and captured for observation.

The anxiety over Munnalal's fate, however, came to an unexpected and mysterious end Saturday morning. To everyone's astonishment, Munnalal

signs of contact with wildlife, has deepened the mystery. No tiger tracks, drag marks, or signs of struggle were discovered during the exhaustive search. While the community has breathed a collective sigh of relief, the questions surrounding his disappearance remain unanswered.

"This is a reminder of the complex and sometimes unpredictable nature of life near protected wildlife areas," a senior forest officer noted. "While the fear of tiger attacks is real, not every disappearance is linked to wildlife. We're grateful this one ended safely."

The incident needs to be viewed in a broader context, as it highlights the existing challenges being faced in balancing wildlife conservation with human safety. This happens especially in regions where tigers and humans often cross paths.



**The anti-Muslim rhetoric and running of bulldozers on the houses, mosques and schools of the community pushed them to the edge. The government cannot prove the legality of their action, which was finally banned by the Supreme Court**

**FAROOQ ABDULLAH** | NATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

## SNOWFALL BLANKETS KARGIL

Snowfall for the second consecutive day on Sunday in Ladakh and adjoining areas has affected normal life in Kargil, officials said, as authorities announced closure of all schools for next three days owing to inclement weather



## of the day quote

The Samajwadi Party is trying to spoil it in every way to fulfil its narrow political interests

**MAYAWATI** | BSP SUPREMO



The situation in Murshidabad is extremely worrisome. People are being killed, looted and forced to flee. Even children are not being spared. Despite all this, the chief minister has remained silent

**NITIN AGARWAL** | MINISTER, UTTAR PRADESH



You (PM Narendra Modi) will have to take back this law. The way our farmer brothers have shown the path, we will continue to agitate the same way. Until the law is withdrawn, there will be peaceful protest in the country

**ASADUDDIN OWAIISI** | AIMIM PRESIDENT



## MODI-VANCE MEETING

# Will PM raise Indian student deportation issue: Congress

The Opposition party also asked if the prime minister would convey India's concerns over the US' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and the World Health Organisation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 20: Ahead of US Vice President JD Vance's visit, the Congress Sunday asked whether Prime Minister Narendra Modi would convey to him India's concerns over the manner in which Indian citizens were being deported and the "complete destruction" of the multilateral rules-based trading system anchored in the WTO.

The Opposition party also asked if the prime minister would convey India's concerns over the US' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Vance, his Indian-origin wife Usha and their three children -- Ewan, Vivek, and Mirabel -- are scheduled to land at the Palam airbase at 10 am Monday on a four-day visit.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh asked in a post on X if the prime minister would convey India's concerns over the manner in which Indian citizens were being deported and Indian students made to live in an atmosphere of fear in the US after their parents spent their



**Vance, his Indian-origin wife Usha and their three children -- Ewan, Vivek, and Mirabel -- are scheduled to land at the Palam airbase at 10 am Monday on a four-day visit**

people". Will the prime minister convey India's concern over the US' withdrawal from the WHO, which plays an important role in global public health research and management, Ramesh further asked.

He also asked if Modi would convey India's determination to ensure that any further bilateral trade liberalisation did not adversely impact Indian farmers, industry, and MSMEs.

Modi will host a dinner for Vance and Usha in the evening after holding talks with the American leader on a range of key issues, including trade, tariffs, regional security and ways to expand the overall bilateral engagement. Vance's first visit comes weeks after US President Donald Trump imposed and then paused sweeping tariffs against about 60 countries, including India.

New Delhi and Washington are now holding negotiations to seal a bilateral trade agreement that is expected to address a variety of issues, including tariffs and market access.

life savings to support their education in America.

Will the prime minister convey India's concern over the complete destruction of the multilateral rules-based trading system anchored in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), from which India has gained greatly, he asked.

Ramesh further questioned if Modi would convey India's concern over the US' withdrawal from the 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement, "which is so very essential for managing global warming that threatens the livelihoods of crores of our

## SHORT TAKES

### YSRCP leader held for illegal explosives trade

**Bapatla (Andhra Pradesh):** YSRCP leader Dasam Hanumantha Rao along with a driver have been arrested for illegal possession, transportation, and sale of explosives following police raids in the district Sunday, police said. The police, while inspecting survey lands at Nagarajupalli village in Martur, found that Rao was operating an unlicensed explosives business under a false lease arrangement for profit. Authorities seized 625 kg of SALVO Super E-90, 15,500 meters of SALVO Card-10, 800 SSOD pieces, and 500 kg of Thunder Bolt explosives from the site.

### Ex-Karnataka DGP Om Prakash found dead

**Bangalore:** Former Director General of Police of Karnataka, Om Prakash, was found dead at his residence in Bengaluru Sunday under mysterious circumstances, police said. The body, found with injuries, was discovered in his house, raising suspicions of foul play. Prakash's spouse, Pallavi, informed police about the incident, they said. Senior police officials rushed to the spot immediately upon receiving the information. The body was discovered lying in a pool of blood on the ground floor of his three-storied house in the upscale HSR Layout.

### 7-year-old allegedly raped in UP's Hathras

**Hathras (UP):** A man allegedly raped a seven-year-old girl in a village in Sikandrara Kotwali area of Uttar Pradesh's Hathras district, police Saturday said. The accused has been arrested, they said. A case has been registered on the complaint of the victim's mother, said Circle Officer (CO) Shyamveer Singh. The accused man Bhupendra (21) was arrested and presented in the court Saturday from where he has been sent to jail, he added. Bhupendra lured the girl Friday night and took her to the roof of a neighbour's house and raped her, police said.

### Dalit man found dead near BJP office

**Amethi (UP):** The body of a 40-year-old Dalit man was found near the office of a Bharatiya Janata Party leader in Gauriganj here Sunday, police said. They said the deceased, Chandra Kumar Kori alias Babban (40), was a resident of Ward No 5 in Gauriganj.



Indian Air Force's Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team (SKAT) performs on the second day, at Army Ground, Namkum, in Ranchi district, Jharkhand, Sunday

## Scribe's question on Raj, Uddhav patch-up buzz irks Dy CM Shinde

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 20: Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde got annoyed when a mediaperson sought his reaction on the speculation of reconciliation between estranged cousins Uddhav and Raj Thackeray, and asked the reporter to instead talk about the government's work.

While Shinde was at his native Dare village in Satara district Saturday, a reporter from TV Marathi asked for his comment on the buzz of rapprochement between Shiv Sena (UBT) head Uddhav Thackeray and Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) president Raj Thackeray.

Shinde got irritated and brushed aside the reporter's boom. "Talk about work," said the Shiv Sena leader, who is not known to lose his composure in public.

Reacting to the episode, Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut said it is obvious that Shinde would get angry. He also targeted Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

"Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis will not show his anger, but from within, there will be a churn in his stomach. We know how fake the BJP's happiness is. They don't want it (the alliance)," Raut told reporters.

Speaking to reporters Saturday, Fadnavis had said, "If they come together, we are happy. Estranged people should come together, and if their disputes end, it is a good thing...I feel the media is reading too much between the lines, so it is better to wait for some time."



# Nishikant Dubey targets ex-CEC SY Quraishi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 20: After causing an uproar with his remarks against the Chief Justice of India, BJP MP Nishikant Dubey Sunday fired a salvo at SY Quraishi, saying he was not an election commissioner but a "Muslim commissioner", after the latter criticised the Waqf (Amendment) Act as a "sinister and evil plan of the government to grab Muslim lands".

Quraishi is a former Chief Election Commissioner of India. Dubey's religious barb at the former CEC came a day after his vitriolic attack on the Supreme Court and Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, blaming him for "religious

## MURSHIDABAD VIOLENCE

# Prime accused in murder of father-son duo arrested



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 20: One of the prime accused in the murder of a man and his son in violence-hit Murshidabad district in West Bengal was arrested, police said Sunday.

This was the fourth arrest in the killing of the two at Jafrabad in Shamsheganj, a senior officer said.

The arrested person, identified as Ziaul Sheikh, a resident of Sulitala Purbapara, the neighbouring village of Jafrabad, has been on the run since the crime took place April 12.

Sheikh was arrested by the Special Task Force (STF) of the West Bengal Police along with the Special Investigating Team (SIT) from his hideout in Chopra in Uttar Dinajpur district Saturday, he said.

"This person is one of the prime accused who had conspired and instigated a mob to carry out vandalism at the residence of the deceased and killed Haragobindo Das and his son Chandan Das April 12," the officer told PTI.

The police have all the evidence, CCTV footage, and his mobile phone tower location to prove his presence at the crime spot April 12, he said.

Earlier, the police had arrested two brothers, Kalu Na-

**The arrested person, identified as Ziaul Sheikh, a resident of Sulitala Purbapara, the neighbouring village of Jafrabad, has been on the run since the crime took place April 12**

dar and Dildar, and Inzham UI Haque in connection with their involvement in the killing of the two.

Kalu was arrested from Murarai in Birbhum district, his brother Dildar was held from the Bangladesh border area under the Suti Police Station jurisdiction.

The third accused was apprehended from Suripara, a neighbouring village of Jafrabad.

"We have lodged over 100 FIRs in the Murshidabad violence cases. We have so far arrested 276 people in these cases," the officer added.

At least three people were killed in connection with violence amid recent protests over the amendments to the Waqf Act.

# Experts push for 'right to cool', heat safety for informal workers

A Greenpeace India report last year found that 61 per cent of street vendors lost more than 40 per cent of their daily income during extreme heat while 75 per cent lacked access to cooling infrastructure near workplaces

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 20: Climate experts have proposed urgent measures, including paid heat leave, free water ATMs at labour hubs and legal recognition for the 'right to cool', to protect India's informal workforce during the extreme summer months.

More than 80 per cent of Delhi's workers, including

street vendors, construction labourers and ragpickers, face severe health risks and income loss due to extreme heat. The women among them are disproportionately affected, the experts said.

Amruta, a campaigner at Greenpeace India, highlighted that heat waves were no longer just weather events but disasters for those without shelter, water or rest spaces.

A Greenpeace India report last year found that 61 per cent of street vendors lost more than 40 per cent of their daily income during extreme heat while 75 per cent lacked access to cooling infrastructure near workplaces.

Hisham Mundol, chief advisor at Environmental Defense Fund - India, said informal workers bore the brunt of heat waves and rising cases of dehydration, heatstroke and chronic illnesses such as kidney dam-



age underscored the urgent need for intervention.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted above-normal maximum temperatures for large parts of northwest, central, and eastern India between April and June.

With 82 per cent of working women in India engaged in informal labour, gender-respon-



sive urban planning is critical. Amruta of Greenpeace India said women faced compounding risks -- lack of shaded vending zones, unsafe toilets and caregiving burdens.

"Gender-responsive urban planning could include measures such as (free) public toilets with water and hygiene facilities that are accessible

Amruta, a campaigner at Greenpeace India, highlighted that heat waves were no longer just weather events but disasters for those without shelter, water or rest spaces

and safe rest zones near transport hubs and marketplaces. A feminist approach to urban planning recognises the importance of end-to-end connectivity in public transport -- ensuring not just access to buses and metros but safe, affordable and dignified commutes from home to the workplace and back," she told PTI.

Mundol said urban planning needed to be improved universally but it was also true that the circumstances of women

impacted them uniquely. "Better facilities for all such as shelters, drinking water and other public facilities are needed and sensitive thought has to be applied to make sure they are equally accessible and welcoming for women," he said.

Pradeep Shah, co-founder of the social project initiative Grow-Trees.com, emphasised planning with gender-disaggregated data could create shaded, child-friendly workspaces, enhancing safety and resilience.

While the India Cooling Action Plan (2019) acknowledged cooling as a developmental need, the experts said it fell short in ensuring equitable access.

"Cooling disparities must be addressed as a basic right. A 'right to cool' under Article 21 would mandate shaded bus stops, cooling shelters, and thermal comfort for all," Amruta said.



Let's wait and see who resolves the Munambam issue. I believe that once the Waqf (Amendment) Act is implemented, a solution to the Munambam issue will also emerge

IAF'S MIG-29, JAGUAR TO JOIN UAE AIR COMBAT DRILL

The Indian Air Force is participating in a premier multinational air combat exercise in the United Arab Emirates which will take place from April 21 to May 8. The IAF is fielding MiG-29 and Jaguar aircraft in the exercise 'Desert Flag-10' hosted by the UAE Air Force, the Ministry of Defence said in a statement.



of the day quote

Together, let us strive to build a Bharat anchored in compassion and equality, fostering a harmonious society for all

Himachal Government is the most corrupt among the Congress governments in the country and tops the list in financial mismanagement

What the 'AAP-da sarkar' could not do in so many years, we did it in 10 weeks. Drains are being cleaned, tons of silt is being cleared. We are working on holidays, festivals, every day

Legal experts slam Dhankhar, Dubey's remarks on judiciary

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 20: Legal experts Sunday denounced Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar and BJP MP Nishikant Dubey's disparaging remarks against the judiciary, terming those irresponsible and asserting that the dignity and decorum of the top court should be maintained.

Last week, Dhankhar questioned the judiciary setting a timeline for the president to make decisions and acting as a "super Parliament", saying the Supreme Court cannot fire a "nuclear missile" at democratic forces.

Close on the heels of the Vice President's comments, BJP M Nishikant Dubey launched a broadside against the Supreme Court, saying Parliament and assemblies should be shut if the apex court had to make laws. He also blamed Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna for "religious wars" in India.

His comment came following the Centre's assurance to the top court that it would not implement some of the contentious provisions of the new waqf law till the next day of hearing after the court raised questions over them.

Reacting to the comments, senior advocate and Bar Council of India chairman Manan Kumar Mishra said the judiciary is supreme and the dignity and decorum of the Supreme Court should be maintained.

"The controversy has been given a full stop by the BJP president. The judiciary is



Close on the heels of the Vice President's comments, BJP M Nishikant Dubey launched a broadside against the Supreme Court, saying Parliament and assemblies should be shut if the apex court had to make laws



Last week, Dhankhar questioned the judiciary setting a timeline for the president to make decisions and acting as a 'super Parliament', saying the Supreme Court cannot fire a 'nuclear missile' at democratic forces.

supreme. Whatever order has been passed by the Supreme Court is final and under Article 142 empowers the top court to do complete justice in any matter. If anybody is aggrieved, there is a scope for review. Such issues should not be discussed on roads and dignity and decorum of the Supreme Court should be maintained," he said.

Going into damage control immediately after Dubey's deprecating comments, the BJP disassociated itself from his criticism of the Supreme Court, with party chief JP Nadda rejecting the remarks as Dubey's own views. He also affirmed the party's respect for the judiciary as an inseparable part of democracy.

Reacting on Dhankhar's statement, former Supreme Court Bar Association president Vikas Singh said the vice-president, as a high con-

SC lawyer seeks contempt proceedings against Dubey

A Supreme Court lawyer representing one of the litigants in the Waqf Act case has written to Attorney General R Venkatramani seeking consent to initiate contempt proceedings against BJP MP Nishikant Dubey over his "grossly scandalous" remarks "aimed at lowering the dignity" of the top court. This comes a day after Dubey launched a broadside against the Supreme Court, saying Parliament and state Assemblies should be shut if the apex court had to make laws. He also took a swipe at Chief Justice India (CJI) Sanjiv Khanna, holding him responsible for "civil wars" in the country. In his letter to the attorney general, advocate Anas Tanveer said Dubey's remarks are "deeply derogatory and dangerously provocative".

stitutional functionary, should not make such a comment and every institution has to be respected.



Elephants play football during the Suwari Utsav as part of Rongali Bihu celebrations, in Kamrup district of Assam, Sunday

Cong to hold pressers in 57 cities to 'expose BJP's lies'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 20: Top Congress leaders will fan out across the country to hold press conferences between April 21 and 24 to "expose the BJP's lies" in the National Herald case, its media and publicity department head Pawan Khara said Sunday.

He described the National Herald publication as a "living monument of the freedom struggle".

The Opposition party has been ramping up efforts to

blunt the BJP's mounting attack against it in the wake of the Enforcement Directorate naming former Congress chiefs Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in its chargesheet in the National Herald case of alleged money laundering.

Congress workers across the country held protests over the issue in the past week. Its general secretaries and in-charges in various states met in Delhi Saturday to chalk out strategy to counter the "politically motivated" charges.

Urinated on, sexually assaulted by 2 men, alleges Dalit youth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 20: A 19-year-old Dalit youth from Sikar district of Rajasthan has alleged that he was beaten, urinated on and sexually assaulted by two men, police said Sunday. They said the incident took place in Sikar's Fatehpur area April 8 but an FIR was lodged in the matter April 16 after the teenager's family lodged a police complaint.

"We have registered an FIR in the matter. Medical examination of the victim has been done and his statement has been recorded. The matter is being investigated," Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Arvind Kumar said.

A case has been registered under relevant sections of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, he said.

According to the complaint, the youth stepped out to watch a wedding procession in his village April 8 when the two accused called him to a bus stand



on the pretext of some work. The two then took him to a secluded location and hit him, including on his private parts, forced him to remove his clothes and performed unnatural sex on him, the complaint stated.

"They were drunk. They hit me with a bottle, urinated on me and used casteist slurs," the victim alleged, adding that the accused also recorded a video of their acts and "threatened" to share it on social media if he told anyone about the incident.

According to the complainant, the accused intended to harm his father, who is currently abroad.

POST OF THE DAY



Dilapidated buildings, peeling walls, blaring horns, and buses older than the democracy itself. Kolkata is a museum of rusted charm. That's not decay, it's character. Not chaos, it's the vibe. Nostalgia here outweighs the reality.

@theskindoctor13

SHORT TAKES

'Free Gaza, Free Palestine' posters surface in Sambhal

Sambhal: Posters bearing "Free Gaza, Free Palestine" messages were found pasted on walls of shops in the Narauli town of this Uttar Pradesh district, prompting a police investigation. The posters also included an appeal to a particular community to boycott Israeli goods. Banyathair SHO Ramveer Singh told PTI Sunday that the police had launched a probe and identified about six to seven individuals based on CCTV camera footage.

16 militants held in Manipur

Imphal: A total of 16 members of several proscribed outfits have been arrested in the last 48 hours in Manipur, police said Sunday. Two cadres of the banned United National Liberation Front (Pambei) were apprehended from Napetpalli Andro road near Nongdam village in Imphal East district Saturday. They were allegedly involved in extortion, a senior officer said.

6 soldiers injured in road accident

Jammu: Six Army personnel were injured after their vehicle skidded off the road and plunged into a roadside ditch in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district Sunday, officials said. The accident occurred near Chopra market in the town, 65 km away from Jammu, when a bus carrying the soldiers was on its way to a nearby camp, the officials said.

Gurudwara vandalised in Canada's Vancouver

Ottawa: A gurudwara in Canada's Vancouver has been vandalised with pro-Khalistan graffiti, with its leaders blaming a small group of Sikh separatists for the act, according to a media report. The local police said it was investigating graffiti sprayed on Saturday at the Ross Street Gurudwara, Vancouver Sun reported.

Flash floods in J&K's Ramban; 3 dead

Volunteers defied fear to reach out to victims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ramban (J&K), April 20: Amid frightening thunderstorm and cloudbursts, hundreds of village volunteers were the first respondents to reach out to the victims of flash floods and landslide that struck several villages in Jammu and Kashmir's Ramban district early Sunday, leaving two minor brothers and an elderly man dead.

Dozens of houses and a stretch of Jammu-Srinagar National Highway near Panthiyal were damaged, while a number of villages were inaccessible, cutting off from the district headquarters.

Deputy Commissioner Baaseer-ul-Haq Chaudhary is closely monitoring the ongoing operations in the affected areas, where educational institutions will remain closed Monday.

"I have never seen such a weather condition in my entire life. I was woken up by the deafening sound of the cloudburst at around 4.30 am and within no time heard cries for help," Mohammad Hafiz, a Seri Bagna



Army personnel conduct a relief work after cloudburst and heavy rain triggered landslides, in Ramban, Jammu and Kashmir

village resident, told PTI. Seri Bagna village was hit by flash floods that claimed lives of three people - Aqib Ahmad (12), his brother Mohd Saqib (10) and their neighbour Muni Ram (65).

"We managed to pull out the two brothers after a portion of their house collapsed due to the flash floods but both of them had died," Hafiz said, adding that the volunteers defied their fear and continued the rescue operation despite heavy rains.

Former Sarpanch Teerath Singh said all the villagers con-

tinued their efforts and were hopeful of pulling out Muni Ram, who was alive and stuck under the debris. However, the elderly man could not be saved.

"It was a frightening scene as dark clouds were hovering overhead with heavy rains continuing. We lost three precious lives and many houses were damaged," he said.

The scene was no different in Dharam Kund village where police promptly acted and rescued over 100 villagers, including women and children.

New players add to churn in Bihar politics ahead of Assembly polls

The new parties can be a useful platform for politicians with a certain vote bank who may not get a ticket from the existing major players

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 20: Emergence of a slew of political parties headed by recognised names with unproven credentials in mass politics threatens to disturb the conventional electoral calculations in Bihar as the state prepares for Assembly polls.

If it appeared a couple of months back that the Jan Suraj Party headed by Prashant Kishor, whose high-decibel foray into popular politics remains a work in progress, will be the only serious new

entrant in the polls, former Congress leader I P Gupta has announced the arrival of his Indian Inquilab Party with an impressive show of strength in Gandhi Maidan around the age-old theme of caste mobilisation.

To add to the churn, amid question marks being raised over the fitness of JD(U) president and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar by his rivals, is the Hind Sena formed by former IPS officer Shivdeep Lande, a Maharashtrian whose flamboyant style at brand has rendered him a certain work recall if not any visible popular support.

If Lande aspires to make a difference in his 'karmahoomi' Bihar, there is also RCP Singh, Kumar's closest aide-turned-bete noire who had joined the BJP but was left out in the cold after the party revived its alliance with the



JD(U). Singh, a former bureaucrat and a Kurmi like Kumar, is flexing his muscles after launching a new party - Aap Sab Ki Awaz. Most leaders across estab-

lished political parties like the BJP, RJD and the JD(U) are of the view that Kishor and Gupta will be the ones to watch out for in the coming months, with the memories of Union minister Chirag Paswan-headed Lok

Janshakti Party singlehandedly engineering the defeat of the JD(U) in nearly 35 Assembly seats in 2020 still afresh.

An RJD leader claimed that he did not see Kishor or Gupta winning many seats but added that they could draw away just enough votes in several constituencies to ensure the defeat of one of the main parties.

While former well-known political strategist Kishor has been mobilising people around the theme of governance and has shunned the conventional caste identity to build support for his party, Gupta has followed the well-trodden track by seeking to rally Tanti and Tantva castes, which fall in the extremely backward classes category.

These castes were removed from the Scheduled Castes category after a Supreme Court order, and Gupta quit the Congress to champion their cause.

Though RJD leaders claimed Gupta would cut into Kumar's support, a couple of JD(U) MPs said social equations forged through several elections cannot be undone in one poll and added that their leader remains the chief minister of choice for the numerically smaller castes besides women.

Kishor's party, political watchers said, has in the past elections drawn a sizeable share of votes from constituencies where it could field strong candidates, at times those with roots in other parties.

These new parties, they added, can be a useful platform for politicians with a certain vote bank who may not get a ticket from the existing major players.

With questions being asked about Kumar's health and the ability of the RJD to draw voters from outside its core support base, the new players may punch above their weight.

## of the day note

The median monthly income of Indian households "increased by a very substantial 40 per cent in the 10 years between 2010 and 2020"

**K SHANMUGAM** | MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND LAW, SINGAPORE

The secretary-general recalls that international law, including international humanitarian law as applicable, must be respected at all times, and he appeals to all to respect and protect civilians as well as civilian infrastructure

**STÉPHANE DUJARRIC** | STÉPHANE DUJARRIC

Journalists are forced to face not only repressions within the country (Belarus), but also the sudden withdrawal of US aid, which puts many editorial offices on the brink of survival

**ANDREI BASTUNETS** | CHAIR, BAI

## SHORT TAKES

### 70 soldiers slain

**Cotonou:** Al Qaeda affiliate JNIM said it killed 70 soldiers in raids on two military posts in north Benin, the biggest death count claimed by jihadists in the country in over a decade of activity in West Africa, the SITE Intelligence Group said Saturday. The West African state and its coastal neighbour Togo have suffered a series of attacks in recent years as groups linked to Islamic State and al Qaeda have expanded their presence beyond the Sahel region to the north. The Sahel insurgency took root after a Tuareg rebellion in north Mali in 2012 and spread into neighbouring Burkina Faso and Niger before reaching the north of coastal West African countries such as Benin more recently. Thousands have been killed and millions displaced by the conflict, which contributed to spurring five military coups in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger between 2020 and 2023.

### Easter attack probe

**Colombo:** Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake Sunday said he has forwarded the presidential panel report of 2021 on the Easter terror attacks to CID for further action, ahead of an anticipated statement about the mastermind of the deadly strikes. Nine suicide bombers belonging to local Islamist extremist group National Thawheed Jamaat (NTJ) linked to ISIS carried out a series of devastating blasts that tore through three churches and as many luxury hotels April 21, 2019, killing 258 people, including 11 Indians. "Today, I have forwarded the commission report to the CID to do their investigation. All previous investigations have aimed to cover up rather than reveal those responsible," Dissanayake told a campaign rally for the May 6 local council election.

## Pak minister attacked by protesters

The attackers were protesting against the proposed canal projects



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Islamabad, April 20:** A Pakistani Hindu Minister of State was attacked in Sindh by protesters opposing the federal government's controversial irrigation canal projects on the pretext that it would reduce the downward flow of rivers that are key for irrigation in the southern province.

Kheal Das Kohistani, state minister for religious affairs in Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led government, was driving through the Thatta district of the province Saturday when his motorcade was pelted with

tomatoes and potatoes. Officials said that Kohistani remained unharmed in the attack. Meanwhile, police have arrested Sindh Taraqi Pasand party's leader Syed Jalal Shah for his involvement in the attack on the convoy of Kohistani. An FIR named several other activists of his party. Prime Minister Shehbaz strongly condemned the attack on Kohistani and assured him of a thorough investigation into the incident. "The attack on the public representatives is unacceptable. The persons involved in the incident would be given exemplary punishment," he said.

Kohistani is a member of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the protesters also chanted slogans against the party's federal government.

Federal Minister for Information Atta Tarar also took notice of the incident and declared it "an attack".



These talks (US-Iran nuclear negotiations) are gaining momentum and now even the unlikely is possible

**BADR AL-BUSAIDI** | FOREIGN MINISTER, OMAN

## PRO-MONARCHY PROTESTS

Hundreds of leaders and cadres of Nepal's pro-monarchist Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) staged a protest rally Sunday near the Prime Minister's official residence and the Parliament building, demanding reinstatement of the monarchy and establishing the Himalayan nation as a Hindu state



An elderly woman prepares her Easter baskets to be blessed during celebration of the Orthodox Easter in Krasne village, Ukraine, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

## EASTER CEASEFIRE BROKEN

# Russia, Ukraine trade blame game

REUTERS

**Moscow, April 20:** Russia and Ukraine blamed each other Sunday for breaking a one-day Easter ceasefire announced by President Vladimir Putin, with both sides accusing the other of carrying out hundreds of attacks.

Putin, who ordered thousands of Russian troops into Ukraine in February 2022, ordered Russian forces to "stop all military activity" along the front line in the three-year-old war until midnight Moscow time (2100 GMT) Sunday.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russia was pretending to observe the Easter ceasefire, but had in fact continued hundreds of artillery attacks Saturday night, with more assaults Sunday.

Despite Putin's declaration of an Easter ceasefire Saturday, Zelenskyy said Ukrainian forces had recorded 59 instances of Russian shelling and five assaults by units across various areas along the front line, as well as "dozens" of drone strikes.

"Either Putin does not have full control over his army, or the situation proves that in Russia, they have no intention of making a genuine move toward ending the war, and are only interested in favourable PR coverage," Zelenskyy said.

Earlier he said the Russian army "is trying to create a general impression of a ceasefire", while continuing to inflict losses on Ukraine's front line.

Russia's Defence Ministry said Ukraine had broken the ceasefire more than 1,000 times, inflicting damage to infrastructure and causing some civilian deaths.



- Zelenskyy says Putin is trying to create an impression of ceasefire as incessant attacks continue
- Putin declares Easter ceasefire until midnight Sunday
- Zelenskyy says Russian activity picks up this morning
- Russia says Ukraine broke ceasefire over 1,000 times
- Russian military bloggers report decrease in activity

The ministry said Ukrainian forces had shot at Russian positions 444 times while it had counted more than 900 Ukrainian drone attacks, including attacks on Crimea and on the Russian border areas of Bryansk, Kursk and Belgorod regions. "As a result, there are deaths and injuries among the civilian population, as well as damage to civilian facilities," the ministry said.

Ukraine's military said earlier Sunday that activity on the front line had decreased. Some Russian military bloggers also said military activity along the front-line has substantially decreased.

The apparent failure to observe even an Easter ceasefire shows just how hard it will be for US President Donald Trump to achieve his aim of clinching a lasting deal to end what he calls the "bloodbath" of the war in Ukraine.

The US will walk away from efforts to broker a peace deal unless there are clear signs of progress soon, Trump and his secretary of state, Marco Rubio, said Friday.

Trump, who says he wants to be remembered as a peacemaker, has repeatedly warned of the escalation risk of the war - which his administration now casts as a proxy conflict between the US and Russia, echoing Moscow's stance.

Last month, after Ukraine accepted Trump's proposal for a 30-day truce, Putin said crucial issues of verification had not been sorted out. Both Moscow and Kyiv have agreed to a moratorium on attacks on energy targets and at sea, which each accuses the other of breaking.

Zelenskyy reiterated that Kyiv was willing to extend the ceasefire for 30 days but said that if Russia kept fighting on Sunday, so would Ukraine.

## Israeli probe into killings of Palestinian medics finds 'professional failures'

The 15 paramedics and emergency responders were shot dead March 23 and buried in a shallow grave where their bodies were found a week later by officials from the UN and the Palestinian Red Crescent

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Jerusalem, April 20:** An Israeli probe into the killings of 15 Palestinian medics last month in Gaza by Israeli forces said Sunday it has found "professional failures" and a deputy commander will be fired.

Israel at first claimed that the medics' vehicles did not have emergency signals on when troops opened fire but later backtracked. Cellphone video recovered from one of the medics contradicted Israel's initial account.

The military investigation found that the deputy battalion commander, "due to poor night visibility", assessed that the ambulances belonged to Hamas militants. Video footage obtained from the incident shows the ambulances had lights flashing.

Eight Red Crescent personnel, six Civil Defence workers and a UN staffer were killed

in the shooting before dawn March 23 by troops conducting operations in Tel al-Sultan, a district of the southern Gaza city of Rafah.

Troops then bulldozed over the bodies along with their mangled vehicles, burying them in a mass grave. UN and rescue workers were only able to reach the site a week later to dig out the bodies.

The head of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society has said the slain men were "targeted at close range".

The Israeli military investigation said the Palestinians were killed due to an "operational misunderstanding" by Israeli forces, and that a separate incident 15 minutes later, when Israeli soldiers shot at a Palestinian UN vehicle, was a breach of orders.

The investigation found the decision to crush the ambulances was wrong but denied that there was an attempt to conceal the event.

"The examination found no evidence to support claims of execution or that any of the deceased were bound before or after the shooting," it added.

Israel has accused Hamas of moving and hiding its fighters inside ambulances and emergency vehicles, as well as in hospitals and other civilian infrastructure, arguing that justifies strikes on them.

## Rahul Gandhi arrives in US, will give talk at Brown University

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New York, April 20:** Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi has arrived in the US and began interactions with business and community members.

The former Congress president arrived in the US Saturday. He will visit Brown University in Rhode Island April 21-22.

"Welcome to the USA, Rahul Gandhi! A voice for the youth for democracy, and for a better future. Let's listen, learn, and build together," Indian Overseas Congress head Sam Pitroda said in a post on X Saturday.

In a post Sunday, Pitroda said, "spent a productive morning with Gandhi engaging with some of India's sharpest business minds".

"We discussed the evolving landscape of entrepreneurship, technology, inclusivity, and the need for ethical leadership. It's clear that the private sector has a major role to play in building a just, innovative, and inclusive India. Grateful for the insights and the spirit of collaboration in the room," he added.

At Brown University, Gandhi will give a talk and interact with faculty members and students. Ahead of his visit to Rhode Island, Gandhi will meet with members of the NRI community, as well as office bearers and members of the Indian Overseas Congress (IOC).

## First wheat shipment since Assad's ouster reaches Syria's Latakia

REUTERS

**Cairo, April 20:** A ship carrying wheat has arrived in Syria's Latakia port, the first delivery of its kind since former President Bashar al-Assad was ousted by rebels in December, the government said Sunday.

Officials of the new Islamist-led government say that while imports of wheat and other basics are not subject to US and U.N. sanctions, challenges in securing financing for trade deals have deterred global suppliers from selling to Syria.

The Syrian General Authority for Land and Sea Borders said in a statement that the ship carried 6,600 tonnes of wheat. It did not identify the nationality or destination of the boat, but one regional commodity trader told Reuters it was from Russia.

"A step that is considered a clear indication of the start of a new phase of economic recovery in the country," the borders authority said of the shipment, adding that it should pave the way for more arrivals of vital supplies. Traders say Syria has this year been largely relying on overland imports from neighbours.

# Descendants of slave owners in Caribbean call for reparations

From about the year 1500, millions of West Africans were sent to work mainly on plantations in the Caribbean and the Americas, including the southern US

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**United Nations, April 20:** The great-great-grandson of 19th-century British Prime Minister William Gladstone said he was horrified to learn seven years ago that his ancestors were slave owners in Jamaica and Guyana.

And former BBC journalist Laura Trevelyan said she learned after records of Britain's Slave Compensation Commission were put online in 2013 that one of her ancestors, Sir John Trevelyan, owned sugar cane plantations in Grenada and about 1,000 enslaved people. They spoke at a meeting at



UN headquarters in New York this past week where, for the first time, descendants of slave

owners and enslaved people in former British colonies in the Caribbean sat at the same ta-

While Britain's role in abolishing slavery in 1833 is widely taught, its involvement in the trade has been completely buried. The history must be told because the evils of this crime against humanity are not historical, they're felt very, very profoundly today

**CHARLES GLADSTONE** | GREAT-GREAT-GRANDSON OF 19TH-CENTURY BRITISH PM WILLIAM GLADSTONE

ble with diplomats and experts from those nations discussing the contentious issue of reparations.

"This was a historic event," said Trevelyan, who moderated the meeting on the sidelines of

the UN Permanent Forum on People of African Descent's week-long session.

UN human rights chief Volker Turk told the forum that an estimated 25 million to 30 million Africans were uprooted for the purpose of slavery.

Few nations have apologised for their role in slavery, and reparations have been the subject of much debate.

The Geneva-based Human Rights Council has called for global action for years, including reparations, apologies and educational reforms to make amends for racism against people of African descent.

The 15-nation Caribbean

Community, known as CARICOM, has a 10-point plan for reparatory justice, starting with demands for European countries where enslaved people were kept and traded to issue formal apologies.

Charles Gladstone, meanwhile, said he felt "a profound sense of guilt" after learning that former Prime Minister Gladstone's father owned estates with enslaved people — and that a great deal of his privileged life "was essentially connected to this criminal past". He said he apologised to Guyana and Jamaica and will try to do something "to make the world a better place".



PLI is a transitional benefit for three to four years till the time industry creates that economies of scale to be able to stand and be competitive on a global scale themselves. So that's why I am a supporter of such incentives  
**MANISH SHARMA | PANASONIC INDIA HEAD**

## MCAP OF 10 MOST VALUED FIRMS JUMPS ₹3.84L-CR

The combined market valuation of the top-ten most valued firms jumped by a whopping ₹3,84,004.73 crore in the holiday-shortened last week, in-tandem with a smart rally in equities, with HDFC Bank and Bharti Airtel emerging as the biggest gainers



### of the day quote

The world of creators and their economy is going through a fundamental change and the 'WAVES 2025' event seeks to evolve itself as a global platform for media and entertainment, just as Davos serves as a global platform for economic policies



**ASHWINI VAISHNAW | UNION MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING**

The global industry environment remained uncertain for most of the year and the recent tariff announcements have only added to that... Even though the underlying demand for tech reinvention remains strong, clients are approaching it more cautiously



**SRINIVAS PALLIA | WIPRO CEO AND MANAGING DIRECTOR**

Today, we do not have any issue in sourcing liability. When the opportune time comes, if we really want to transit ourselves into a bank, we will probably assess, but nothing is on the table as of now



**HP SINGH | SATIN CREDITCARE NETWORK CMD**

## FPIs turn net buyers, inject ₹8,500cr

While the recent uptick in FPI activity signals a potential shift in sentiment, the sustainability of these flows will hinge on the evolving trajectory of global macroeconomic factors



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 20:** Foreign investors have infused nearly ₹8,500 crore in the country's equity markets last week, after a phase of heavy outflows earlier in the month, supported by renewed investor confidence, resilient domestic economy and relative insulation from global trade disruptions.

During the holiday-truncated week ended April 18, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) made a net investment of ₹8,472 crore in equities.

This includes withdrawal of ₹2,352 crore April 15, but investment of ₹10,824 crore in the following two days, data with the depositories showed.

While the recent uptick in

FPI activity signals a potential shift in sentiment, the sustainability of these flows will hinge on the evolving trajectory of global macroeconomic conditions, stability in the US trade policy, and the continued strength of India's domestic growth outlook, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate director - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment, said.

During the week, trading took place on just three days from April 15 to 17 - Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The stock market was closed on Monday and Friday due to

Ambedkar Jayanti and Good Friday, respectively.

Overall, FPIs pulled out ₹23,103 crore from the equities in April so far, taking the total outflow to ₹1.4 lakh crore since the beginning of 2025, data showed.

The initial part of the month was marked by aggressive FPI selling, driven largely by global uncertainties stemming from the US tariff policy developments.

However, renewed investor confidence was supported by India's resilient domestic economy, relative insulation from

global trade disruptions, and comparatively attractive valuations given recent correction in the Indian equity markets, Srivastava said.

This reversal in FPI activity has been caused by two important factors.

Firstly, decline in the dollar index to around 100 level and the expectation of further weakness in the dollar are nudging FPIs away from the US to emerging markets like India, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments, said.

Secondly, both the US and China are likely to report subdued growth this year, while India is expected to clock a growth rate of 6 per cent in FY 26 even in an unfavourable global environment. This relative outperformance of India in growth can lead to outperformance in the market, too, he added.

In March, FPIs withdrew ₹3,973 crore and FPIs took out ₹34,574 crore, while in January, the outflow was higher at ₹78,027 crore.

Geojit's Vijayakumar said that the focus of all investors including FPIs is likely to be domestic consumption themes like financials, telecom, aviation, cement, select autos and healthcare.

## RBI Guv warns of dwindling money market liquidity

REUTERS

**Mumbai, April 20:** India's call money market faces risks of dwindling liquidity, posing challenges for monetary policy transmission, the nation's central bank chief said in a speech published Saturday.

Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra expressed concern about "asymmetries which arise on occasions between different money market rates - the rate at which RBI provides liquidity, the call money rate, the market repo rate and TREPS (tri-party repo dealing system) rate." Banks - the entities with sole access to the RBI's liquidity facilities, the call money market and the repo markets - must be proactive to ensure that the central bank's liquidity measures are "promptly and seamlessly" transmitted to the broader market, Malhotra told a conference in India Friday that was uploaded to the RBI website Saturday.

The call money rate is an overnight interest rate at which banks and other financial institutions lend and borrow from each other. When the RBI cuts interest



rates or injects liquidity, it can push down the call money rate, transmitting the central bank's policy move to the system. Surplus liquidity in India's has averaged 1.7 trillion rupees (\$20 billion) a day this month, reversing a four-month deficit, as the RBI stepped up its liquidity infusions to support growth.

The governor also called for deepening of India's government securities market and improving liquidity and pricing by increasing participation from various stakeholders.

There is also a need for more proactive management of risks by different stakeholders in the derivatives market, enhancing market depth, increasing the diversity of views and fostering greater competition and efficiency, he said.

## Indian Bank's SHG credit outreach



**Bhubaneswar:** In a continued effort to drive financial inclusion and rural empowerment, Indian Bank hosted a Mega SHG Credit Outreach Programme at the Railway Auditorium, Bhubaneswar, extending critical financial support to SHGs across Odisha.

As part of a pan-India initiative by the Department of Financial Services (DFS), Government of India, the programme marks Indian Bank's contribution to the national mission of empowering one crore SHG women with credit access. The event also aligns with the government's focus on 'Viksit Bharat 2047', aiming for inclusive growth and women-led development.

The event was graced by M. Nagaraju, IAS, Secretary, De-

partment of Financial Services, Government of India, Binod Kumar, Managing Director & CEO, and Mahesh Kumar Bajaj, Executive Director, Indian Bank.

A total of 9961 SHGs received sanction letters amounting to ₹509.91 crores, providing timely and transformative financial support to grassroots women entrepreneurs. The event also featured moving success stories from SHG members and a showcase of SHG-led enterprises across diverse sectors such as handicrafts, agri-processing and textiles.

This initiative is a part of Indian Bank's broader strategy to disburse over ₹20000 crores to SHGs nationwide in FY26, positioning itself as a key driver of India's economic engine.

## Automobile exports up 19% to over 53 lakh units in FY25: SIAM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 20:** Automobile exports from India rose by 19 per cent to over 53 lakh units in the last 2024-25 fiscal year driven by robust demand for passenger vehicles, two wheelers and commercial vehicles in the overseas markets.

Overall exports last fiscal stood at 53.63 lakh (53,63,089) units as compared with 45 lakh (45,00,494) units in 2023-24 fiscal ending March 31, 2024.

Passenger vehicle shipments rose by 15 per cent to 7,70,364 units last fiscal as against 6,72,105 units in FY24. The segment reported its best ever yearly performance last fiscal driven by demand for global models being manufactured in India, industry body SIAM stated.

With manufacturing quality improving, some companies have also commenced exporting to developed markets, it added.

Utility vehicle dispatches led the space with dispatch of 3,62,160 units, a growth of 54 per cent, as compared with 2,34,720 units in FY24.

Two-wheeler exports increased by 21 per cent to 41,98,403 units last fiscal as against 34,58,416 units in 2023-



24 fiscal.

New models and new markets have helped in expanding the footprint of two-wheeler exports, SIAM said.

Further, economic stability in the African region and demand in Latin America has supported this growth, it added.

Three-wheeler exports grew by 2 per cent in FY 2024-25 as compared to FY 2023-24 with shipment of 3.1 lakh units.

Exports of commercial vehicles 23 per cent last year fiscal at 80,986 units as compared

with 65,818 units in the year-ago period.

SIAM said that export demand in key markets of interest, such as Africa and neighbouring countries, is likely to continue as 'Made in India' vehicles are gaining traction.

"On the exports front, good recovery is seen across all segments, particularly passenger vehicles and two-wheelers reflecting improved global demand and India's growing competitiveness," SIAM President Shailesh Chandra said.

## SEBI finds no manufacturing at Gensol's EV plant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 20:** Markets regulator SEBI has said it found "no manufacturing activity" at Gensol Engineering's electric vehicle (EV) plant in Pune with only 2-3 labourers present when a National Stock Exchange (NSE) official visited the site.

These revelations were part of markets regulator SEBI's interim order issued April 15 following a complaint received in June 2024 alleging manipulation of Gensol's share price and misappropriation of funds.

In its order, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) found discrepancies as well as misleading disclosures to investors by Gensol Engineering, a company promoted by brothers Anmol Singh Jaggi and Puneet Singh Jaggi.

One of the disclosures came from an investigation conducted by the NSE, which revealed a lack of manufacturing activity at Gensol's EV plant - Gensol Electric Vehicle Private Ltd - at Chakan in Pune.

During a site visit to the facility on April 9, an NSE official found only 2-3 labourers present. "It was found that there was no manufacturing activity at the plant with only 2-3 labourers present there. The NSE official called for details of electricity bills of the unit and it was observed that the maximum amount billed by Mahavitaran during the last 12 months was ₹1,57,037.01 for December 2024. Hence, it can be inferred that there has been no manufacturing activity at the plant site which is on a leased property," SEBI revealed in its interim order passed April 15.

The visit followed an announcement by Gensol to the stock exchanges on January 28, 2025, claiming it had received pre-orders for 30,000 units of its newly launched EVs showcased at the Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025.

However, upon reviewing the documents provided by the company, SEBI found that the orders were Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) entered with nine entities for 29,000 cars. The MoUs were in the nature of an expression of willingness with no reference to the price of the vehicle or delivery schedules.

Therefore, it prima facie appeared that the company was making misleading disclosures to investors, SEBI stated.

## Indian toy makers keen to leverage 'golden opportunity'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 20:** India's toy exporters are aiming to utilise a "golden opportunity" emerging out of the steep tariffs imposed by the US on Chinese imports, and growing enquiries from American buyers eyeing alternative markets to reduce their reliance on Chinese goods.

Toy Association of India has identified about 40 firms with the potential to export to the US market while meeting the compliance requirements.

Currently, about 20 companies export toys in bulk to the American market, President Ajay Aggarwal told PTI.

"We are getting more enquiries from US-based toy buyers in the last one month. Some Indian export houses have also got in touch with us seeking a list of the manufacturers who can make toy products as per US rules and regulations.

They are looking for white labelling and original equipment manufacturers capable of meeting the compliance re-



quirements of the American toy market," Aggarwal said.

According to GMI Research,

the United States' toy market size touched USD 42.8 billion in 2024 and is estimated to

reach USD 56.9 billion in 2032, growing at a CAGR of 3.6 per cent from 2025-2032, fuelled by

a shift in consumer preferences towards educational and interactive toys.

"The US is a big market for toys and we will be benefited if China is subjected to high tariffs and India is on a low tariff. Already about 20 companies from India in the toy sector are exporting to the US in bulk.

If we get the benefit of tariff in terms of the rates being lower than other countries, we can increase the presence of Indian toys in the US market," the Toy Association of India President said.

The association is organising a seminar "very soon" with the manufacturers who are ready to export to the US market, he said, adding that this is "a golden opportunity for Indian toy manufacturers as the US is the biggest toy market in the world."

Aggarwal said with the support of the government, the domestic toy industry will be able to increase its exports which currently stand at less than 1 per cent globally.

# MI win IPL Clasico

Rohit, Suryakumar guide Mumbai Indians to comfortable nine-wicket win over Chennai Super Kings



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 20:** Skipper Rohit Sharma (76 not out) and Suryakumar Yadav (68 not out) tore apart Chennai Super Kings to hand Mumbai Indians a commanding nine-wicket win in an one-sided Indian Premier League match here Sunday.

Chasing a below-par target, the hosts faced absolutely no difficulties on a batting-friendly surface in swatting away the challenge as they went over the line making 177 for one to win by more than four overs to

spare, and take a leap to sixth spot in the points table.

Rohit capitalised on anything short from the pacers in the powerplay and swept with command against the CSK spinners to notch up his maiden fifty of the season, which came off 33 balls.

On a six-hitting spree, Rohit finished at 76 not out off 45 balls with four fours and six hits over the fence.

MI's impact substitute Rohit laid the foundation with a robust 63-run stand for the first wicket in the powerplay -- their

best start undoubtedly in this IPL -- and ensured the hosts remained on track for a big win keeping them at a scoring rate of 10 per over.

For CSK, it was a challenge stopping the former MI skipper in his tracks especially with their seamers failing to make any impact and seasoned spinners in Ravichandran Ashwin (0/25) and Ravindra Jadeja (1/28) not able to extract anything off the surface either.

CSK also introduced their most successful bowler Noor Ahmad (0/36) as late as in the

10th over, by which MI were nearing the 100-run mark with consummate ease.

The writing was on the wall when Noor was hammered for 15 runs with Suryakumar hitting three fours in a row off the left-arm spinner in the 14th over. A few narrow escapes notwithstanding, Rohit's blitz innings gave MI their most convincing win and finally a big score to the right-handed batter after a string of ordinary scores.

Suryakumar (68 off 30 balls, 5x4s, 6x6s) produced the most fluent knock in this season with the No. 3 batter being immaculate in clearing the leg-side boundaries as well as with his compelling sweep shots against the spinners.

His second fifty of the season came off 26 balls as Suryakumar forged a match-winning stand with Rohit for the second wicket to add 114 unbeaten runs off only 54 balls, finishing the game with two consecutive sixes.

Earlier, Shivam Dube and Ravindra Jadeja struck vital half-centuries while 17-year-old debutant Ayush Mhatre dazzled to guide Chennai Super Kings to 176 for five.

Sent in at No 4 as early as in the seventh over, Jadeja (53 not out off 35 balls, 4x4s, 2x6s) hit his maiden fifty of the season alike Dube (50 off 32 balls, 2x4s, 4x6) to lift CSK after the five-time champions appeared to have lost their way.

TEAM	M	W	L	NR	PTS
GT	7	5	2	0.984	10
DC	7	5	2	0.589	10
RCB	8	5	3	0.472	10
PBKS	8	5	3	0.177	10
LSG	8	5	3	0.088	10
MI	8	4	4	0.483	8
KKR	7	3	4	0.547	6
RR	8	2	6	-0.633	4
SRH	7	2	5	-1.217	4
CSK	8	2	6	-1.392	4

Southpaw Padikkal (61 off 35 balls), who is an effortless elegance when on song, scored his first IPL half-century in 22 innings while chases like these have been a cakewalk for someone of Kohli's caliber as he played second fiddle for the better part of his innings.

He finished with a flourish, remaining unbeaten on 73 off 54 balls. The duo added 103 in 11.3 overs by playing textbook

IPL STANDINGS					
TEAM	M	W	L	NR	PTS
GT	7	5	2	0.984	10
DC	7	5	2	0.589	10
RCB	8	5	3	0.472	10
PBKS	8	5	3	0.177	10
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SRH	7	2	5	-1.217	4
CSK	8	2	6	-1.392	4

## BRIEF SCORES

**Chennai Super Kings:** 176 for 5 in 20 overs (Ayush Mhatre 32, Shivam Dube 50, Ravindra Jadeja 53 not out) lost to **Mumbai Indians:** 177 for 1 in 15.4 overs (Rohit Sharma 76 not out, Suryakumar Yadav 68 not out; Ravindra Jadeja 1/28)

# RCB exact sweet revenge

Padikkal shines in Virat's company as Royal Challengers Bengaluru make short work of Punjab Kings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mullanpur, April 20:** The stylish Devdutt Padikkal blossomed under the able guidance of peerless Virat Kohli as Royal Challengers Bengaluru exacted a sweet revenge on Punjab Kings keeping their all-away-win record intact with an easy seven-wicket victory in an IPL match here Sunday.

Having lost the rain-curtailed home match to Punjab Kings Friday, RCB turned the tables within less than 48 hours, chasing down a target of 158 without much ado in just 18.5 overs to enter the top four in the points table.



cricketing strokes with minimal risk.

It was Kohli, who started off with a signature pull off Arshdeep Singh where the rolling of wrists kept the ball down and a bowler's back-drive off Xavier Bartlett to signal his intentions.

He got an able partner in Padikkal, who hit fours and sixes in equal measure.

The best of the lot from Padikkal certainly was the lofted one off Marco Jansen where the bat swing was picture perfect.

Against spinners, he would use the depth of the crease to rock back and running between the wickets was fantastic as on one occasion, Kohli pushed him to sprint for four runs.

Kohli farmed the strike with ease and when needed, got a boundary like once when he rode the bounce to back-cut Jansen towards backward point.

Padikkal was finally gone trying to get for a fifth six off left-arm spinner Harpreet

Brar's bowling but by then RCB had all but pocketed the game.

Once he completed his 50 off 42 balls, Kohli slashed Arshdeep deliberately behind point for a boundary. But undoubtedly the best shot was an inside out straight six off Yuzvendra Chahal.

Earlier, RCB spinners Krunal Pandya and Suyash Sharma bowled stifling spells to restrict Punjab Kings to an under-par 157 for six in 20 overs.

Left-arm spinner Krunal (2/25) and leg-spinner Suyash (2/27) were at their crafty best after Royal Challengers opted to field first on a pitch that had a hint of slowness.

BRIEF SCORES				
<b>Punjab Kings:</b>	157 for 6	in 20 overs	(Prabhsimran Singh 33, Shashank Singh 31 not out; Krunal Pandya (2/25), Suyash Sharma (2/26) lost to <b>Royal Challengers Bengaluru:</b> 159 for 3 in 18.5 overs (Virat Kohli 73, Devdutt Padikkal 61)	

## SHORT TAKES

### Boxers off to flying start

**Amman:** India started their campaign at the Asian U-15 & U-17 Boxing Championships in style with Hardik Dahiya and Rudraksh Singh securing dominant victories here.

In the U-15 boys' category, Hardik (43kg) outclassed Kyrgyzstan's Kubanychbek Bolushov with a 5-0 unanimous decision Saturday.

Rudraksh (46kg) followed it up with another clean sweep, defeating Mongolia's Ibrakhim Maral 5-0. This is the first event organised by Asian Boxing, endorsed by both the Olympic Council of Asia and the newly-formed World Boxing. India has fielded a 56-member squad in the tournament.

### Kane's Bundesliga feat

**Heidenheim:** Harry Kane scored his 60th Bundesliga goal in his 60th game to help Bayern Munich defeat Heidenheim 4-0 and close in on regaining the title. Kane scored the opening goal with a low shot from just outside the penalty area in the 13th minute and nearly what would be the first major team trophy of a career filled with individual scoring accolades. Kane is the fastest player to 60 goals in Bundesliga history, beating Erling Haaland's mark of 65 games with Borussia Dortmund. Bayern moves nine points clear of second-placed Bayer Leverkusen, which plays St Pauli Sunday.

## ISSF WORLD CUP

### Rudranksh-Arya pair, Babuta win silver medals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 20:** The pair of Rudranksh Patil and Arya Borse won the 10m air rifle mixed team silver, while Paris Olympian Arjun Babuta also clinched the second spot in the men's 10m air rifle event at the ISSF World Cup in Lima, Peru.



The duo of Rudranksh and Arya went down 11-17 to the Norwegian pair of Jon-Hermann Hegg and Jeanette Hegg Duestad in the gold-medal match.

These were India's second and third silver medals in the Lima World Cup to go with two gold and a bronze.

Earlier, Rudranksh and Arya had shot a combined 632.5 to make it to the gold-medal match, finishing behind the ta-

ble-topping Norwegian pair by 0.1 point.

They could not overturn that supremacy in the final.

The other Indian pair of Babuta and Narmada Nithin shot 630.0 to finish seventh in the 24-team competition.

Indian trap shooters failed to impress on the day.

Pragati Dubey finished best in the women's trap with a 113, giving her the seventh place. The top-six make the final. Bhavya Tripathi was further down in 12th with 110 while Neeru's 105 gave her the 18th spot.

In men's trap, Prithviraj Tondaiman and Zoravar Sandhu finished with poor qualifying scores of 117 and 116 respectively.

In women's 25m pistol, Manu Bhaker shot 291 (96,99,96) to lie second, while Esha Singh was sixth with a score of 289 after the first duelling round. Simranpreet Kaur Brar shot 286 to be in ninth spot.

The three will come back Monday, the last day of competition, for the second rapid-fire round and then hopefully the final.

# Kalinga Super Cup 2025 kicks off



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 20:** The much-awaited Kalinga Super Cup 2025 got off to a thrilling start at the Kalinga Stadium here Sunday. The tournament will continue until May 3 drawing football enthusiasts from across the country.

The opening match was graced by Odisha Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, Sports Minister Suryabanshi Suraj and Ekamra MLA Babu Singh who extended their best wishes to the players and boosted their morale with their

presence and encouragement.

In the season opener, defending champions East Bengal FC crashed out of the Kalinga



## OFC eye redemption

After a turbulent end to their ISL 2024-25 campaign, the Kalinga Warriors are back in action and ready to shift gears as they kick off their Kalinga Super Cup 2025. Odisha FC will face Punjab FC in their opening Group Stage clash April 21, with kickoff scheduled for 8:00 PM IST. This match brings back the growing rivalry between the two teams. In their last four meetings since 2023, Odisha FC have edged ahead with two wins, while Punjab FC have claimed one victory, and one match ended in a draw. Despite the recent dip in form, Odisha FC head coach Sergio Lobera believes the Kalinga Super Cup offers a much-needed reset and a chance to chase silverware on home turf. "We are very excited about this opportunity to play the Kalinga Super Cup again at home," said Lobera in the pre-match press conference. "Last season was very painful for us, losing the final in the last moment. Football and life sometimes give you second opportunities, and we want to take advantage of this. Tomorrow will start of this competition, and we are ready for the challenge." The Kalinga Super Cup has historically been a successful tournament for Odisha FC, who were champions in 2023 and finalists last year. The stakes are even higher this time—with a place in Asian competition on the line.

Super Cup 2025 after Kerala Blasters FC defeated them 2-0.

The winners, who led 1-0 at half time in the Round of 16 clash on day one of the tournament, scored through their Spanish striker Jesus Jimenez Nunez (40' penalty) and American Noah Wali Sadaoui (64').

Football fans turned up in large numbers at the Kalinga Stadium, creating a vibrant and energetic atmosphere. The spectators thoroughly enjoyed the match and cheered enthusiastically for their favourite teams, making the opening day a grand success.

# I sometimes regret having played cricket: Azharuddin

THE LEGEND'S STRONG STATEMENT COMES AFTER REMOVAL OF HIS NAME FROM HYDERABAD STADIUM STAND

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 20:** Former India captain Mohammad Azharuddin expressed his anguish over the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) Ombudsman's directive to remove his name from the North Stand at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium.

Speaking to IANS, the veteran batter said it is 'heartbreaking' and 'complete disgrace to the sport'.

"It pains me deeply to say this, but I sometimes regret having played cricket. It's heartbreaking to see individuals with little to no understanding of the game now in positions to teach and lead. It's a complete disgrace to the sport," he told IANS.

Azharuddin said he will



take legal action and urged the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to intervene in the matter.

"I am determined to pursue legal action against this injus-

tice, and I urge the BCCI to intervene and take appropriate action. This issue isn't isolated - Sunrisers Hyderabad also had a dispute with the association overpasses, highlighting

It pains me deeply to say this, but I sometimes regret having played cricket. It's heartbreaking to see individuals with little to no understanding of the game now in positions to teach and lead. It's a complete disgrace to the sport

MOHAMMAD AZHARUDDIN | FORMER INDIA CAPTAIN

a pattern of mismanagement and conflict," the former captain said.

"What's unfolding is beyond comprehension, and it hurts me on a personal level. I was not allowed to contest the HCA elections, simply because I exposed the corruption within the system. That truth made me a target," he added.

Justice (Retd) V Eswaraiyah, who serves as the ethics officer for the HCA, made the decision based on a petition submitted by Lords Cricket Club, a member unit of the state association.

The petition accused former HCA president Azharuddin of misusing his position by making arbitrary decisions. Specifically, it alleged that Azharuddin violated HCA rules by participating in an Apex Council meeting as the then-president in December 2019, during which a resolution was passed to name the North Stand after him - just a month after he assumed office. As per the HCA constitution, such a resolution requires ratification by the General Body.

Azharuddin served as the president of the HCA from September 2019 to September 2023.

# NADA's anti-doping blitz rocks Indian athletics

Seven athletes suspended for 'evading' test, three coaches for 'complicity' in doping

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 20:** A slew of dope cases rocked Indian athletics with junior national team chief coach Ramesh Nagpuri suspended by the NADA for "complicity" in doping while seven athletes were also in dock for "evading" tests.

Two more coaches - Karamveer Singh and Rakesh - were also suspended for "complicity" and "administration of prohibited substances" respectively.

The seven athletes suspended for "evasion" in the latest list of dope offenders published by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) were Paras Singhal, Pooja Rani, Nalubo-



thu Shanmuga Sreenivas, Chelimi Pratusha, Shubham Mahara, Kiran and Jyoti.

The 19-year-old Singhal had won the boys 2,000m steeplechase for Haryana at the Khelo India Youth Games in 2024. Sreenivas won a silver each in 200m in the Federation Cup, National Inter-State Championships and National Open in 2024.

Nagpuri, based at the Sports Authority of India Centre in Hyderabad and appointed junior chief coach by Athletics Federation of India (AFI) in 2023, is a renowned Dronacharya Awardee coach.