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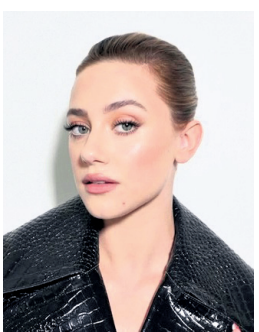
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REINHART RECALLS TOXIC ON-SET EXPERIENCE

Lili Reinhart recalled a toxic on-set moment when a male director told her to "suck in your stomach." Speaking during a promotional video for *Forbidden Fruits*, the *Riverdale* star shared the incident while discussing acting notes that affected her personally

ZENDAYA BREAKS SILENCE ON MARRIAGE RUMOURS

Zendaya addressed rumours about secretly marrying Tom Holland, explaining why she avoids confirming or denying speculation. Speaking on a podcast while promoting *The Drama*, the actor said public interest in her relationship is understandable but prefers maintaining privacy around personal matters



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
Today, you may receive some kind of material support from family. It is probably for a wise cause, so be sure to use it accordingly, says Ganesh. You may spend the evening with those very loved ones who have supported you.

TAURUS
There is a strong prospect that you will work extremely hard to prove yourself at your workplace today, predicts Ganesh. At times, the returns may not be in proportion to your efforts. You will unwind at the end of the day with a happy and content feeling, expects Ganesh.

GEMINI
Today is an important phase in your life. You will be making a few crucial decisions. At work, you will come up with several fresh ideas, which, along with your will-power, form the winning concoction for your company. In the evening, you may spend a few extra bucks on comforts and entertainment, says Ganesh.

CANCER
A very hectic day for you! Today, you may have too much work to do, and taking even a coffee break may not remain an option. You will be forthright in dealing with issues and nothing will escape your sharp observation. You will be able to manage your work well, and finish it on time.

LEO
The Libra in you gives you substantial balancing prowess, says Ganesh. So, it should come as no surprise that you are fabulous when it comes to balancing people and their interests and giving equal attention to everyone. Make it a point to revive your social contacts even if it takes all afternoon.

VIRGO
Work like a thrill to have your contribution noticed, says Ganesh. However, do not expect appreciation in the same degree. Unwind at the end of a long day with the solace of putting in your best.

LIBRA
There are indications that today, you may want to take a break from your humdrum routine in order to recharge your batteries. It is an essential change that we all need from time to time, says Ganesh. Finances may improve sometime later in the day. Children, if any, may be a source of joy in the afternoon. Ganesh says you will get rather emotional towards the end of this fruitful day.

SCORPIO
Life's not too slow nor too fast: you are going steady and strong, feels Ganesh. On the career front, simply grin and bear it all. Workplace efficiency will improve today. At home, you will be happy and content and more importantly - at peace, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
A mixed bag of fortunes in store today, says Ganesh. At work, expect the unexpected and overlook the expected. Don't worry if you stumble there, says Ganesh, for the evening promises to be ecstatic and a fitting finale to a rather muddled day.

CAPRICORN
A couple of fascinating developments on the family front will fill the air with excitement, and will keep you pleasantly occupied throughout the day, says Ganesh. Your outstanding efforts at work will be rewarded adequately, but you will need to be extra careful while executing plans as you may commit mistakes that will do irreparable damage.

AQUARIUS
As the day begins, you will be irritated and troubled by the most trivial of matters. But you won't let it hamper your pace and sincerely pursue your goals. Evening promises some kind of monetary windfall. Make full use of opportunities on the career front, if any, says Ganesh.

PISCES
Today is a day devoted to matters of the heart as well as your heart. So, while you will probably be busy during the day keeping tabs on the refurbishments you have planned for your residence, the evening should probably see you in a romantic setting murmuring sweet nothings to your soul mate, says Ganesh.

Janhvi calls for compassion

Mumbai: Actor Janhvi Kapoor recently spoke about the growing concern of alcohol addiction while supporting an initiative that aims to shift how society talks about the issue. At the launch of the awareness campaign 'Off The Rocks', the actor highlighted the stigma and silence that often surround conversations about addiction and stressed the need for a more compassionate and informed approach.

Janhvi pointed out that while alcohol consumption has become widely normalised in social settings, many people still struggle to recognise when casual drinking turns into a serious problem. Emphasising the mental health aspect attached to addiction, she said people dealing with it need support, care and proper treatment rather than judgement. Speaking at the event, she said, "The

conversation around alcohol is either completely absent or deeply judgmental, and neither helps the people who actually need support. Alcohol addiction is real, it's clinical, and it affects people across every walk of life." She added that the initiative hopes to encourage people to acknowledge the issue and understand that help is available.

On the work front, Janhvi was last seen in the romantic comedy *Sunny Sanskari Ki Tulsii Kumari*. She will next appear opposite Ram Charan in the upcoming Telugu film *Peddi*, slated for release in April 2026.



Fatima on her film choices

Mumbai: Actor Fatima Sana Shaikh has steadily shaped a career defined by bold and unconventional film choices. From beginning her journey as a child artist in *Chachi 420* to gaining nationwide recognition with *Dangal*, the actor has consistently gravitated toward roles that challenge her creatively rather than following predictable paths.

Speaking about her approach to selecting projects, Fatima shared that she is particularly drawn to stories that push her beyond her comfort zone. "I am drawn to stories that make me uncomfortable in the best way," she said, highlighting her preference for layered narratives and complex characters. Over the years, her filmography has reflected this mindset, with the actor choosing roles that explore different emotional and thematic spaces. Fatima believes that staying curious and open to experimentation is essen-

tial for growth as an artist. Instead of limiting herself to a specific image or genre, she has consciously opted for projects that allow her to evolve with each performance. This willingness to take creative risks has helped her build a distinctive identity in the industry. Looking ahead, the actor is set to appear in the upcoming spy thriller *Teen Kawa*, produced by Roy Kapur Films and created by Abbas Tyrewala. Directed by Priyanka Ghose, the series also stars Sidhant Gupta and Bobby Deol, promising yet another intense role in her evolving body of work.

Aafaa to hit theatres today

Bhubaneswar: New Odia family drama film, *Aafaa - Life After Life*, is all set to hit theatres across the state Friday. A special premier will be held here at Cinopolis. The film presents an extraordinary story of an ordinary family, promising an emotional and relatable cinematic experience for audiences.

Centered around a family - father, mother, grandfather, and daughter - the story reflects everyday life in a deeply personal way. The narrative beautifully explores unexpected turns in life and the twists of fate, showing how a single decision can transform an ending into a new beginning. The film marks the acting debut of Anmol Pati, daughter of renowned director Ashok Pati. The movie also features Kuna Tripathy, Pritiraj Satpathy, Naina Das, Hara Rath, Siddharth Tiwari, and child artist Mivaan Siddharth Tiwari in key roles. Produced by Pritiraj Satpathy and Naina Das Tiwari,



the film is also directed by the former, with co-direction by Rajesh Kumar Barik and Krishna. The music of the film is scored by Prem Anand, with lyrics penned by Bapu Goswami and Dibya Kumar Sahu. The songs are sung by popular vocalists including Diptirekha Padhi, Ananya Sritam Nanda, and Shashank Shekhar.

Shilpa digs in nostalgia

Mumbai: Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra is hopping on the, "What were you like in the 90s" bandwagon. Thursday, the actress took to her Instagram, and shared a video of herself from a cruise. She wrote on the video, "Mom what were you doing in the 90s". The video featured clips from 90s Bollywood films like *Baazigar*, *Prithvi*, *Insaaf* and others. One prominent clip was from *Baazigar* where the character of Shah Rukh Khan throws her off the roof. She wrote in the caption, "You didn't see this coming... and won't again. 90s nostalgia "hit" different". *Baazigar* also starred Ka-

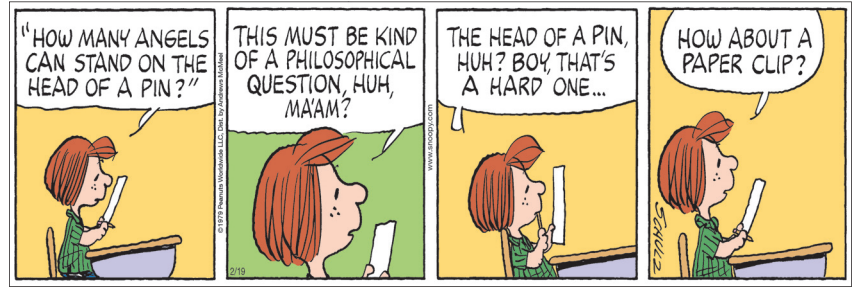
jol in the lead role. It is loosely inspired by the Hollywood film *A Kiss Before Dying*. The story follows a man who seeks revenge against a businessman responsible for his family's downfall, using deception and calculated violence.

A few months ago, Shilpa had visited the holy shrine of Mahalaxmi temple in Kolhapur, Maharashtra. The actress shared a photo from her divine trip on her social media account. She was seen inside the sacred premises of the Mahalaxmi Temple, dressed

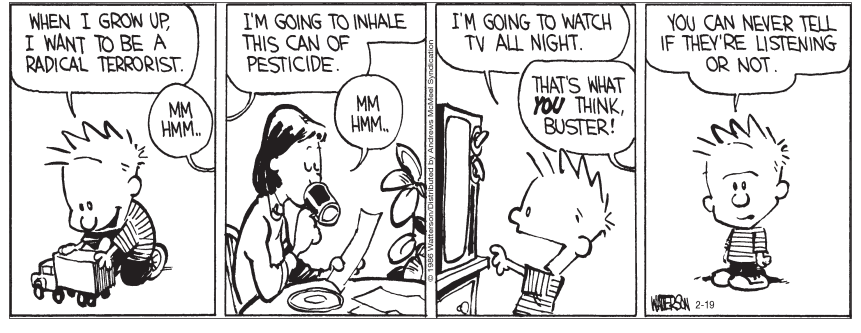
in a vibrant yellow saree, holding a beautifully decorated offering plate filled with flowers, and smiling warmly for the camera. She had captioned the photo as, "#kolhapur-laxmitemple #bless-ed".



PEANUTS



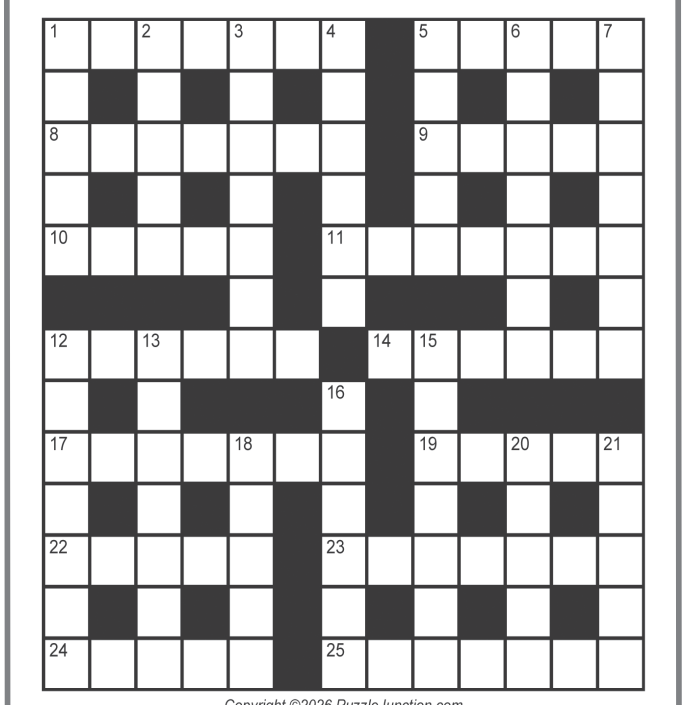
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



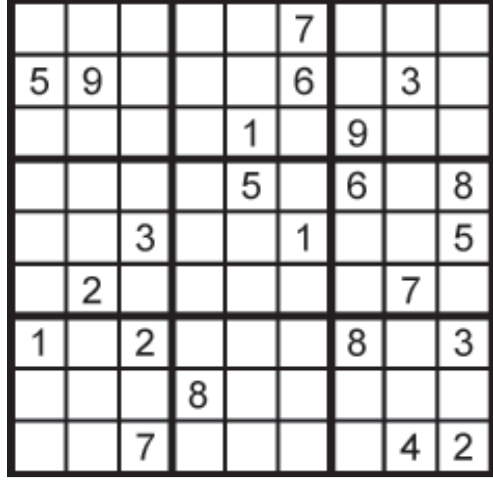
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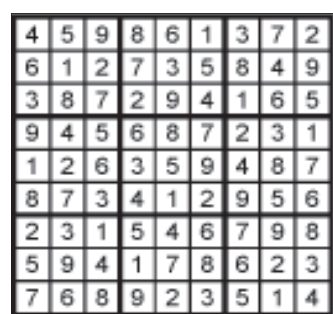
- Across**
1 Sad
5 Rodeo rope
8 August
9 Birthstone
9 Grownup
10 Marsh plant
11 Zero
12 Joan of Arc, e.g.
14 Load
17 Brisk tempo
19 Breezy
- Down**
22 Extreme
23 Spanish explorer
24 Ceased
25 Horse opera
- Across**
5 Smallest
6 Analysed
7 Eight-sided
12 Use a ruler
13 Associated
15 Way to soar
16 Russian capital
18 Before canyon or duke
20 Hangman's rope
21 Long (for)

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Breaking stigma

Actor Janhvi Kapoor speaks on alcohol addiction, supporting an initiative for awareness, and better understanding of the issue

LEISURE

Oli's custody extended

Former Nepal prime minister KP Sharma Oli will remain in judicial custody for two more days

INTERNATIONAL | P8

₹ bounces back

The rupee logs one of its steepest single-day gains in many years and settles 152 paise higher at 93.18 against the US dollar

BUSINESS | P9

Double glory

Odisha concludes its campaign by winning both the men's and women's hockey gold medals at the Khelo India Tribal Games 2026

SPORTS | BACK PAGE

Artemis II rocket lifts off for historic moon mission

REUTERS

Cape Canaveral, April 2: Four astronauts blasted off from Florida Wednesday on NASA's Artemis II mission, a high-stakes voyage around the moon that marks the US' boldest step yet towards returning humans to the lunar surface later this decade in a race with China.

NASA's Space Launch System rocket, topped with its Orion crew capsule, roared to life just before sunset at the agency's Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida, carrying its debut crew into Earth orbit. The space vehicle thundered into clear skies trailing a towering column of thick, white vapour.

NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman said the launch was an opening act for subsequent missions that would include construction of a moon base to support the "enduring presence we're trying to create on the surface."

If the mission proceeds as planned, the crew consisting of NASA astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch, plus Canadian Space Agency astronaut Jeremy Hansen, will fly around the moon and back in their nearly 10-day expedition, putting the spacecraft through its paces while venturing deeper into space than humans have ever gone. The mission is the debut crewed test flight in the Artemis programme and the world's first to send astronauts in the vicinity of the moon, out of Earth's orbit, in 53 years.



WORTH A CAPTURE: NASA's Artemis II moon rocket lifts off from the Kennedy Space Center's Launch Pad 39-B, in Cape Canaveral AP/PTI

Iran's strikes on as Trump says Tehran no longer a threat

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, April 2: Iran fired more missiles at Israel and Gulf Arab states Thursday, demonstrating Tehran's continued ability to strike its neighbours even as US President Donald Trump claimed that Iran is "really no longer a threat".

Iran's attacks on Gulf states along with its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz have disrupted the world's energy supplies with effects far beyond the Middle East. That has proved to be Iran's greatest strategic advantage in the war.

Trump has insisted the strait can be taken by force - but said it is not up to the US to do that. In an address to the American people Wednesday night, he encouraged countries that depend on oil from Hormuz to "build some delayed courage" and go "take it".

Before the US and Israel started the war February 28 with strikes on Iran, the waterway was open to traffic and 20 per cent of all traded oil used passed through it.

Iran responded defiantly to Trump's speech, in which the American president claimed US military action had been so decisive that "one of the most powerful countries" is "really no longer a threat".

A spokesman for Iran's military, Lt. Col. Ebrahim Zolfaghari, insisted Thursday that Tehran maintains hidden stockpiles of arms, munitions and production facilities. He said facilities targeted so far by US strikes are "insignificant".

Just before Trump began his address - in which he said US "core strategic objectives are nearing completion" - explosions were heard in Dubai as air defences worked to intercept an Iranian missile barrage.

Less than a half-hour after the president was done, Israel said its military was also working to intercept incoming missiles. Sirens sounded in Bahrain, home to the US Navy's 5th Fleet, immediately after the speech.

'7mn ready to fight US'

TEHRAN: Iran's parliament speaker claimed Thursday that 7 million Iranians stood ready to fight any US ground invasion of the Islamic Republic. Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, who has been discussed as a possible negotiating partner with the US, has offered a series of online posts challenging America since the war's start. "Right now, in less than a week, a powerful national campaign sweeping the country has brought forward around 7 million Iranians who have already stepped up and declared they're ready to pick up arms and stand in defence of our nation," he wrote on X.

Heat: Morning classes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 2: The state government Thursday directed that schools will operate from 6:30 am to 10:00 am, with immediate effect, until the summer vacation, to protect students from the intensifying heat.

Officials said the decision has been formally communicated by the School and Mass Education Secretary to all district Collectors, who have been asked to ensure immediate implementation and compliance at the local level.

School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond stated that the revised schedule aims to minimise children's exposure to harsh afternoon temperatures amid the threat of an early heatwave.

According to the India Meteorological Department, a brief drop of 2-3 degrees Celsius in temperature is expected over the next few days, but the mercury is likely to rise again gradually across districts.

Youth drowns during reel shoot in Bhadrak

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, April 2: In a tragic incident, a youth drowned in the Salandi River here while being filmed for a social media reel by his friend Thursday. The deceased was identified as Mithun Nayak, 23, of Keonjhar district.

According to sources, Mithun, along with Himanshu Nayak and another friend from Keonjhar, who were working as daily labourers in the area, went to a bridge to shoot a reel as they had no work for the day.

Around 11 am, Mithun and Himanshu jumped from the bridge into the river under the Puruna Bazar police limits in Bhadrak city to create content for the reel. The third friend remained on the bridge to record the footage. While Himanshu managed to swim back to safety, Mithun went missing in the water.



Alarmed by his sudden disappearance, Himanshu and the other friend immediately informed the police. Teams from the Fire Services and the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force arrived at the spot and launched a search and rescue operation. After about three hours of intensive efforts, Mithun's body was recovered from the river.

Police have registered a case of unnatural death and sent the body to the district headquarters hospital for postmortem. The youth who recorded the video has been detained for questioning.

BUDGET SESSION TO RECONVENE APRIL 16

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 2: The Budget Session of Parliament will reconvene April 16 after a brief recess to pass Bills to increase the number of Lok Sabha seats so that the women's reservation law can be implemented at the earliest, in what is expected to be the latest flashpoint between the government and the Opposition amid the poll season.

While the government is keen on passing the Bills, including amending the women's reservation Bill or Nari Vandan Adhiniyam, 2023, the Opposition has accused the Centre of trying to hurriedly move for passing amendments to take political advantage in the state elections.

The two Houses will reconvene April 16, with sources saying that the sitting will likely be for three days to take up the proposed legislations. The government is learnt to have conveyed to the Opposition that the Houses are likely to meet for three days beginning April 16.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

You can remove it, sir. You are no longer in the mother of democracy

15001/1/2627

सत्यमेव जयते

MESSAGE OF HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF ODISHA ON THE AUSPICIOUS OCCASION OF GOOD FRIDAY-2026

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

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

(Hari Babu Kambhampati)

ଗୁଡ଼ ଫ୍ରାଇଡେ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା

ଗୁଡ଼ ଫ୍ରାଇଡେ ଆମ ଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟିଆନ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଏକ ପବିତ୍ର ଦିବସ । ଏହି ଦିବସ ଆମକୁ ତ୍ୟାଗ ଓ ବଳିଦାନର ମୂଲ୍ୟ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ସଚେତନ କରିଥାଏ । ମାନବ ସମାଜର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ପାଇଁ ଯୀଶୁଖ୍ରୀଷ୍ଟଙ୍କ ସର୍ବୋଚ୍ଚ ତ୍ୟାଗକୁ ଆଧାର କରି ଆସନ୍ତୁ, ଏକ ଆଦର୍ଶ ସମାଜ ଗଠନ ଦିଗରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ସଂକଳ୍ପବଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ କାମ କରିବା ।

(ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାଝୀ)
ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

OIPR-15001/15001/2/26-27/0001

Fuel reforms push: PNG drive, leak-proof supply

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 2: In order to streamline the supply of LPG and petroleum products across Odisha, a high-level review meeting was held Thursday under the joint chairmanship of Food Supplies & Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra and Housing & Urban Development (H&UD) Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra.

The meeting, attended by Food Supplies & Consumer Welfare department Principal Secretary Sanjay Kumar Singh and senior representatives of major oil and gas companies, focused on accelerating the transition to Piped Natural Gas (PNG) and strengthening digital safeguards to protect consumers.

During the meeting, Minister Patra issued a stern warning against black-marketing and supply chain irregularities, stressing strict enforcement measures.

To enhance transparency, gas agencies have been directed to implement biometric authentication, including fingerprint and iris verification, for all deliveries.

He further clarified that households receiving Piped Natural Gas (PNG) connections must surrender their existing LPG connections to ensure optimal resource utilisation.

To support the transition, District Collectors have been instructed to extend full administrative cooperation to gas companies for the timely and



BIOMETRIC AUTHENTICATION, INCLUDING FINGERPRINT AND IRIS VERIFICATION, MADE MANDATORY FOR ALL LPG DELIVERIES TO ENSURE TRANSPARENCY

HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVING PNG CONNECTIONS MUST SURRENDER EXISTING LPG CONNECTIONS TO OPTIMISE RESOURCE UTILISATION

DISTRICT COLLECTORS DIRECTED TO EXTEND FULL SUPPORT FOR SMOOTH AND TIMELY PIPELINE LAYING ACROSS THE STATE

100% COMPLIANCE WITH DELIVERY AUTHENTICATION CODE (DAC) MANDATED TO CURB "GHOST DELIVERIES" AND ENSURE TRANSPARENCY

hassle-free laying of pipelines across the state.

Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra emphasised the need to reduce heavy LPG dependence in urban areas and urged government and commercial establishments to switch to Piped Natural Gas (PNG), assuring expedited clearances from the H&UD

department. Citing the importance of major cultural events, he directed officials to prioritise PNG infrastructure in Puri to meet the anticipated surge in demand during the upcoming Rath Yatra.

Addressing the issue of "ghost deliveries," where consumers receive false delivery notifications, Singh directed agencies to ensure 100 per cent compliance with the Delivery Authentication Code (DAC) system to enhance transparency and accountability. He also reassured that there is no cause for concern over gas availability, with the government closely monitoring supplies through a 24-hour control room.

Officials of oil companies informed that a steady five-day buffer stock is being maintained, with real-time inventory data shared daily with the department. Priority sectors such as schools, Anganwadis, Ahaar Kendras and hospitals have been identified to ensure uninterrupted gas supply.

78TH CAPITAL FOUNDATION DAY

Chief Secy Garg reviews preparations

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 2: Chief Secretary Anu Garg chaired a high-level preparatory meeting, Thursday, to review arrangements for the 78th Capital Foundation Day of Bhubaneswar and ensure the two-day celebration (April 13 and 14) is held with grandeur and wide public participation.

Garg directed all departments and associated organisations to coordinate effectively for the smooth conduct of the festivities. While April 13 celebrations will be organised independently, the April 14 programme will be aligned with the state government's 'Odia Pakhya' observances.

Presenting the programme outline, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner Chanchal Rana said the event aims to showcase the City's heritage, culture and development journey while making the occasion memorable for citizens.

Floral tributes will be offered at the Capital Foundation Stone plaque at PMG Square on the



morning of April 13, followed by hoisting of the foundation day flag by the chief guest, he said. "A civil parade will be organised from Rabintra Mandap to Jayadev Bhawan. A photo exhibition depicting the capital city's history and achievements will also be arranged at Jayadev Bhawan by the Information and Public Relations department," he added.

Keeping the summer heat in view, Garg directed that morning programmes conclude early and asked officials to ensure

adequate drinking water, ORS and essential facilities for participating students.

In the evening, the 'Rajdhani Gaurav Samman' ceremony, prize distribution for competition winners and cultural performances will be organised by the Odia Language, Literature and Culture department at Utkal Mandap, continuing in coordination with 'Odia Pakhya' celebrations the following day.

The Khurda district administration, police, Fire services, health authorities, banks, and

various government and private institutions will participate in the programme. The Bhubaneswar Development Authority will undertake cleaning, beautification, floral decoration and restoration of the fountain near the foundation plaza.

Decorative gateways, illumination from AG Square to Rabintra Mandap, and lighting of major government and commercial establishments across the city have also been proposed.

Authorities have also been directed to ensure transport arrangements for students, along with proper traffic management, security, emergency services and extensive media coverage of the events.

Senior officials from departments such as Development, Sports, Education, Tourism, Works and Urban Development, along with members of the Capital Foundation Day Celebration Committee, attended the meeting and shared suggestions for the smooth conduct of the celebrations.

WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY

Zain Foundation Trust promotes inclusivity



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 2: Zain Foundation Trust observed World Autism Awareness Day with enthusiasm and inclusivity at Kala Bhoomi here Thursday, bringing together children, parents, educators and community members.

Children on the autism spectrum from institutions such as Udyam, Shining Spectrum Learning Centre, JP Das Learning Clinic and KIIT International School's Special Education Needs (SEN) Globe participated in cultural programmes, including dance and music, showcasing their creativity and abilities.

The initiative aimed to promote awareness, acceptance and inclusion of individuals with autism, while providing a platform to showcase their talents. Adding a special touch, cookies made from ragi and oats, prepared by the

children, were distributed among the audience.

Eminent Odissi dancer and Padma Shri awardee Aruna Mohanty attended as the chief guest and felicitated mothers of children with autism, recognising their dedication and support.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Trustee of Zain Foundation Trust Gargi Bhattacharya said the organisation has been working towards autism awareness since 2015, actively promoting advocacy through workshops, rallies and inclusive initiatives.

She also highlighted the trust's PECS Café, which uses the globally recognised Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) to empower individuals with autism in workplace settings. In addition, the foundation runs an adult autism respite care centre, providing a safe and supportive space for adults with autism for a few hours.

H&UD dept hits 5-yr high in development spending

Bhubaneswar: In a significant stride towards accelerating Odisha's urban transformation, Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department has recorded its highest-ever development expenditure in last five years, reaching ₹8575.61 crore as of March 31, 2026. This marks a steady and encouraging rise from ₹6,996.92 crore in 2022-23, underscoring a sustained commitment to strengthening urban infrastructure and civic services across the state. The department has demonstrated marked improvement in financial efficiency, achieving an overall utilisation rate of 86.50 per cent, a significant increase from 73.47 per cent in the previous fiscal year. This reflects a clear shift towards ensuring that budgetary allocations are effectively translated into tangible outcomes on the ground. A key driver of this performance has been the remarkable progress under state sector schemes. Expenditure under these schemes has risen sharply from ₹2,676.15 crore in 2022-23 to ₹4,285.45 crore in the current fiscal, with an impressive utilisation rate of 98.18 per cent, compared to 82.92 per cent last year.

Fire safety norms for exhibitions, temporary structures tightened

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 2: As per the Odisha Fire Service Act, strict guidelines have been laid down for exhibitions and temporary structures to ensure fire safety and public security. Organisers are required to inform the local fire station in advance about the venue, size and capacity of the event.

A Fire Safety Certificate (Form-V), issued by the Station Officer or a senior official after inspection, is mandatory to certify compliance with safety norms, while constructors must submit a declaration (Form-I) confirming that all fire safety measures are in place. Authorities are empowered to conduct inspections to ensure adherence.

The guidelines mandate installation of at least one nine-litre water-type fire extinguisher



for every 100 square metres of floor area, along with a minimum of two fire buckets filled with sand or water.

Electrical work must be carried out by licensed contractors



using properly insulated cables, kept away from flammable materials. Construction materials must be fire-resistant, and the use of highly combustible items such as straw or synthetic fabrics is prohibited in specified areas. Kitchens or food stalls must be set up separately from the main exhibition area using non-combustible materials like GI sheets.

All pathways, exits and passages must remain unobstructed and clearly marked with 'Exit' signage, while the width of exit routes and corridors should meet prescribed norms to facilitate safe evacuation during emergencies.

A designated official must be present on-site to manage emergencies, oversee evacuation and coordinate with fire services, and emergency contact numbers (101/112) should be prominently displayed. Any violation of these norms may lead to cancellation of licence, sealing of premises and legal action under the Odisha Fire Service Act, 1993.

Odia cultural heritage conclave ends at BHU



POST NEWS NETWORK

Varanasi / Bhubaneswar, April 2: The two-day national conclave, "Know Odia, Know Odisha: A Window to Odia Cultural Heritage," concluded Thursday at the Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), bringing together scholars, artists and cultural practitioners to showcase Odisha's rich traditions and intellectual legacy.

Organised by the Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja Odia Chair, the conclave began April 1 with ceremonial garlanding of Lord Jagannath and the bust of Madan Mohan Malaviya, followed by renditions of the Kulgeet and Bande Utkal Janani.

Welcoming the gathering, Odia chair Programme committee Member Pradosh Mishra outlined the objective of situating Odisha's cultural traditions within contemporary academic discourse.

Coordinator of the Odia Chair Gopabandhu Mishra emphasised the initiative's broad-

er vision of presenting the holistic dimensions of Odisha's language, arts and heritage.

The guest of honour, Ileana Citaristi, shared her personal journey with the Odia language and performing arts, while the chief guest Ajit Kumar Chaturvedi highlighted Odia's cultural significance and appreciated the Chair's efforts. Dean of the Faculty of Arts Sushma Ghildiyal reaffirmed institutional support and announced upcoming academic initiatives.

Day one featured academic sessions by Satyabrata Rout on Odia theatre, Citaristi on Odissi and the Gita Govinda, and Panakaja Sethi on the Kotpad textile tradition. The evening concluded with a vibrant Gotipua dance performance by Murchhana Dance Academy, Bhubaneswar, adding a strong cultural dimension to the proceedings.

On the second day, Bijayalaxmi Nanda delivered a lecture on gender and society, addressing issues such as gender disparities and women's empowerment in Odisha. The session also reflected on the inspiring journey of President Droupadi Murmu.

The concluding session, led by Debasish Patnaik, explored the cultural, historical and spiritual dimensions of Odia cuisine, highlighting traditional dishes such as Enduri Pitha and Dalma, along with the unique culinary traditions of the Jagannath Temple kitchen.

RCM to host 'Brahmastra 2026'



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 2: Regional College of Management (RCM) is set to host its flagship inter-college B-Fest, Brahmastra 2026, from April 7 to 11, promising five days of competition, innovation and cultural celebration.

The event will feature 42 activities across business, culture, sports, entrepreneurship and technology, turning the campus into a vibrant hub of student engagement.

Highlighting the importance of experiential learning, Group Director of Regional College of Management Pritam Pal said the platform is designed to prepare future leaders through real decision-making scenarios. He noted that events like Brahmastra help students develop leadership, teamwork and problem-solving skills beyond the classroom.

EVENT WILL ALSO FEATURE HACKFORGE 2.0, A HIGH-INTENSITY HACKATHON ORGANISED IN COLLABORATION WITH GOOGLE DEVELOPER GROUP BHUBANESWAR

Participants from institutions across Odisha and beyond are expected to join the fest, which seeks to blend academic learning with real-world exposure. Students, corporate executives, faculty and industry experts will converge for management simulations, cultural events, culinary ventures and sports competitions.

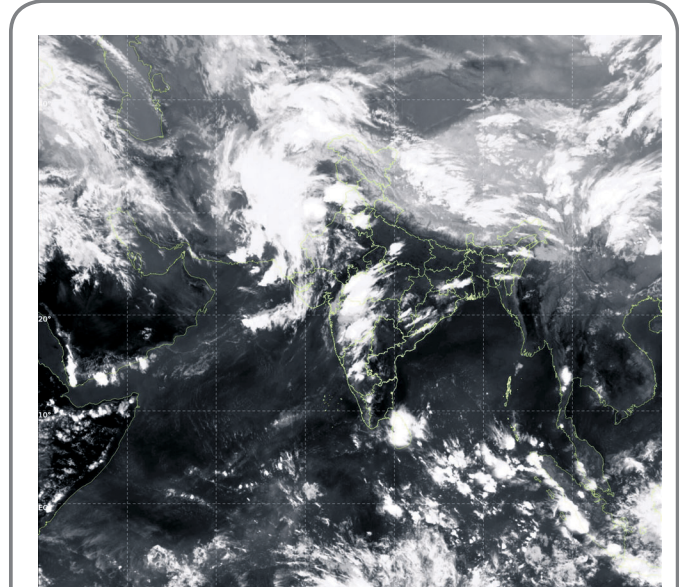
Organisers have structured

the festival around five thematic pillars inspired by India's epic traditions. Kurukshetra will host sports tournaments, while Chakravayuha will focus on management games and business simulations. Brahmotsav will anchor cultural programmes, Pakshala will highlight culinary entrepreneurship, and Drona will serve as a dedicated track for corporate executives and faculty members.

The festival will also feature Hackforge 2.0, a high-intensity hackathon organised in collaboration with Google Developer Group Bhubaneswar.

A key attraction this year is the student-managed food court under Pakshala, envisioned as a live entrepreneurial laboratory, where participants will conceptualise, budget, market and operate food stalls, gaining hands-on experience in business operations.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	93.60 ↓ 1.42	SENSEX	7319.55 ↑ 185.23	GOLD	₹149,845 ↓ ₹3863
EURO	109.10 ↓ 0.42	NIFTY	22713.10 ↑ 33.70	SILVER	₹231,500 ↓ ₹12,001



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	36.8°	36.4°	Light to moderate rain or thunderstorm very likely to occur
Min Temp	24.4°	22.8°	
Humidity	73%	78%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	



RESCUE ACT: A sub-adult elephant, which fell into a 45-ft-deep well, being rescued in Sonahatu area of Ranchi, Thursday

SC: Bengal most polarised

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 2: Termining West Bengal as the "most polarised state", the Supreme Court Thursday slammed the administration for its "complete failure" and inaction over the "deplorable" gherao and attack on seven judicial officers in Malda district during the electoral rolls revision drive Wednesday night and directed a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe besides deployment of central forces in the poll-bound state.

Later in the day, the Election Commission (EC) handed over the probe to the NIA.

In a scathing indictment, the top court said the incident "also exposes complete failure of the state administration" and was a "brazen attempt not only to browbeat the judicial officers" but also amounted to challenge the authority of this Supreme Court.

Dismissal of the submissions that it was "apolitical protest", the Chief Justice Surya Kant-led bench said it was not a "routine incident. Rather, ex-facie a calculated, deliberate move to demoralise the judicial officers".

"If the protest was apolitical, then what were the political leaders doing? Was it not their duty to get to the spot and see what's happening? That somebody's trying to take law and order in their hands? At 5'0 clock these people gheraoed the officers and till 11PM, your Collector was not there," the CJ said.

The top court took suo motu cognisance of a letter from the Chief Justice of the Bengal High Court detailing a harrowing night where judicial officers, including three women and a five-year-old child, were held captive by a mob for over nine hours without food or water.

The incident occurred during the SIR exercise in Kaliachowk

area of Malda district and as per the order, seven judicial officers were gheraoed by "anti-social elements" at a BDO office starting at 3:30pm Wednesday.

The CJ went on and said till 8:30pm, despite repeated pleas, no tangible action was taken by the state officials, he said.

The HC Chief Justice was forced to intervene personally, placing group calls to the Home Secretary and DGP.

The Home Secretary and the DGP arrived at the CJ's residence and the judicial officers, who were held hostage, were relieved post midnight.

Even after the rescue, the judicial officers' vehicles were pelted with stones and attacked with sticks and bricks, the CJ said.

The CJ directed all the top officials to appear before it online April 6 when the bench will take up the pleas, including the one filed by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

AAP removes Raghav Chadha as RS dy leader

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 2: The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Thursday replaced its deputy leader in Rajya Sabha, Raghav Chadha, with Ashok Mittal, amid buzz over his alleged differences with the top leadership, though Chadha did not respond to the development, when contacted.

Party leaders confirmed that a letter was sent to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat seeking the removal of Chadha from the post of deputy leader of the party in the Upper House.

"Rajya Sabha Secretariat was made aware of the party's decision," AAP leader of the House in Rajya Sabha Sanjay Singh told reporters.

AAP leaders refuted the claims that Chadha was prevented from speaking in the Rajya Sabha under the quota of the party MPs.

Talking to reporters, Mittal said AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal has entrusted him with the role of the party's deputy leader in Rajya Sabha, and he will discharge his duties sincerely and present both the party's stance and national interests forcefully in



the House.

The move comes amid Chadha's prolonged silence on matters related to AAP, and his absence from several public events led by Kejriwal.

He becomes the second Rajya Sabha MP of AAP, after Swati Maliwal, to have fallen out with the party leadership.

Once considered a close confidant of Kejriwal and among the youngest MPs in the country, Chadha played a key role in party affairs, particularly in Punjab and during the AAP's tenure in Delhi.

Girl who set self afire after rape plaint dies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, April 2: A 20-year-old girl, who allegedly set herself on fire in Ganjam district a day after filing a rape complaint, has died while undergoing treatment at a hospital here, police said Thursday.

She died Wednesday night after battling for her life for five days at MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur.

The girl had allegedly set herself ablaze behind her house

The girl had allegedly set herself ablaze behind her house March 28, a day after filing a rape complaint with the police against a 21-year-old youth

March 28, a day after filing a rape complaint with the police against a 21-year-old youth. She was initially rushed to a nearby hospital before being shifted to MKCG MCH. The girl

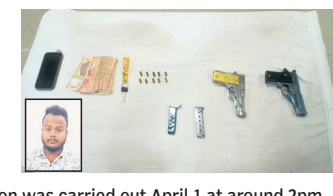
had suffered over 60 per cent burn injuries, doctors at the hospital said.

Police said the victim, a college dropout, had been having an affair with the accused since 2022. Her parents alleged that she took the extreme step due to sexual harassment by the accused. The accused, a priest, was arrested on a rape charge March 29. Following the girl's death, the charge of abetment to suicide has been added to the FIR.

Illegal firearms trade busted in City; 1 held

Bhubaneswar: The Special Crime Unit (SCU) of Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Commissionerate Police has seized two semi-automatic pistols along with 10 rounds of live ammunition and arrested the prime accused in the City, police said Thursday.

The accused was identified as Amaresh Rout alias Kanha, 28, of Sundarapada area under Alifield police limits in Khurda district. According to officials, the operation was carried out April 1 at around 2pm near Hatatola pond in Sundarapada following a specific intelligence input regarding illegal arms movement in the area. Acting swiftly, a team of the SCU conducted surveillance and intercepted the suspect. During the search, police recovered two semi-automatic pistols, 10 rounds of live ammunition, two magazines, one mobile phone, a two-wheeler and ₹800 in cash from his possession. The accused was taken into custody and was being interrogated to ascertain the source of the firearms and his possible links with a larger illegal arms network, said the cops. The SCU has urged citizens to remain vigilant and report suspicious activities, if any, related to illegal weapons trade or crime on landline number 0674-2916383 between 10am and 8pm, assuring confidentiality of informants.



World's oldest tortoise very much alive despite death rumours

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, April 2: Reports of the death of the world's oldest living land animal - a nearly 200-year-old tortoise - were greatly exaggerated.

Jonathan, believed to be 193, is still kicking - albeit slowly - on the island of St Helena.

"It was a hoax," Anne Dillon, head of communications on the island, told The Associated Press Thursday about his alleged passing. "I don't have all those details, I can just assure you that he is very much alive."

News of the tortoise's demise spread rapidly on social media



April Fool's Day. An account on X, falsely claiming to be that of Joe Hollins, a veterinarian who had worked with the reptile on the island west of Africa in the

south Atlantic Ocean, said he was heartbroken to announce the death of the "gentle giant" that "outlived empires, wars, and generations of humans."

The post quickly accumulated nearly 2 million views through Thursday, mostly an outpouring of condolences.

But Hollins later said on Facebook that he didn't even have an X account and something more sinister was afoot.

"There is a hoax - not even an April Fool - going around," Hollins wrote. "The hoaxer is asking for crypto donations. It's a con."

Guinness World Records

lists Jonathan, a Seychelles giant tortoise, as the oldest living land animal and oldest tortoise ever. He was believed to be about 50 years old when he was brought to St Helena in 1882.

Dillon said the tortoise was still roaming the grounds of the governor's residence on the island best known as the place Napoleon Bonaparte was exiled to following his defeat by the British at Waterloo in 1815. Bonaparte died there in 1821, about a decade before Jonathan is believed to have taken the first steps in what would become a very long life.

SIX MONTHS ON THE RUN

Choudwar jail escapee held from Rishikesh



Bhubaneswar, April 2: Nearly six months after an under-trial prisoner (UTP) escaped Choudwar Circle Jail in Cuttack, Odisha Police has apprehended Raja Sahani from Rishikesh in Uttarakhand, said a top police officer.

Director General of Police (DGP) YB Khurania confirmed the arrest of Sahani Thursday, stating that a special team from Cuttack Urban Police District (UPD) successfully tracked the fugitive to the north India pilgrim town. Sahani had been on the run since October 3, 2025, when he, along with another inmate, scaled the walls of Choudwar jail and escaped.

The accused was being brought back to Odisha on a transit remand by the team of Cuttack UPD, when the report arrived.

The first escapee was identified as Madhukant Rana, a resident of Bihar, who was nabbed from an ashram in Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh February 13.

The jailbreak raised serious questions about safety and security at state prisons. The police formed teams and fanned them out across states to trace the fugitives.

The Cuttack UPD is expected to produce him before a local court upon arrival. Investigations are ongoing to determine if the fugitive received local assistance during the period when he stayed in Uttarakhand.

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Do not pretend – Be. Do not promise – act. Do not dream – realize.

THE MOTHER



Finding Real Deterrence

Nuclear weapons made wars of conquest between great powers unthinkable. After 1945, nuclear powers could still confront one another, but only indirectly, through proxy conflicts and peripheral crises. However bloody, these conflicts were not expected to approach the violence of the 20th century's two world wars.

Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine shattered that certainty. By ordering an attack on a country whose independence and security Russia had guaranteed under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, President Vladimir Putin undermined a foundational assumption of the postwar order. The war in Ukraine has demonstrated that under the cover of its nuclear arsenal, a major power can wage a full-scale conventional war of conquest without triggering nuclear escalation or crossing the line that was once thought to separate limited war from catastrophe.

The notion of a clear nuclear threshold, therefore, no longer corresponds to reality. What exists instead is a zone of uncertainty: an intermediate space in which hostile acts can accumulate without automatically triggering nuclear escalation.

Deterrence, however, depends less on weapons themselves than on stable expectations regarding their use. Once that stability erodes, rival powers begin to test the limits of what is possible, and the threshold of the intolerable rises.

This shift, in turn, creates opportunities for revisionist powers to reshape the rules of the international system to their advantage, including by force. The inviolability of borders, a cornerstone of the United Nations order, begins to look less like a rule than a conditional norm, valid only when someone is still willing and able to enforce it.

Notably, the most significant strategic ruptures of the past five years have come from nuclear powers themselves. Russia attempted to subjugate Ukraine, then annexed several of the country's provinces before settling into a war of attrition. Israel, an undeclared nuclear power, responded to Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack with military operations of unprecedented scope, striking targets in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and Iran.

Far from remaining the guarantor of the system it helped build, the United States has fueled its destruction. President Donald Trump's barely veiled threats to take over Greenland were one sign of that shift. Then came the intervention in Venezuela and abduction of its president, followed by the war with Iran, launched without a UN mandate or meaningful congressional consultation.

These episodes do not simply pile up; they reinforce one another. Over the past four years, Russia has demonstrated that economic sanctions can be absorbed, that Western war efforts face industrial and political limits, and that nuclear cover allows for more ambitious land grabs than previously believed.

This shift radically alters the incentive structure, lowering the expected cost of aggression and increasing the anticipated reward. The result is not a sudden global conflagration but a proliferation of local conflicts that refuse to stay local. World War III, in that sense, might unfold entirely below the nuclear threshold, setting off an uncontrollable chain reaction of conventional violence.

Electrical engineering offers a useful metaphor. During the Cold War and the subsequent period of unchallenged US hegemony, conflicts unfolded in parallel within the international order. One could erupt without necessarily implicating the others. A short circuit in one place did not bring down the whole system.

Today, conflicts are increasingly interconnected, with each new hotspot amplifying others and increasing the strain on the system as a whole. Under such conditions, wars no longer remain separate but can converge into a single strategic crisis.

The French sociologist Raymond Aron recognized this problem decades ago. In his prescient 1951 book *The Century of Total War* (*Les Guerres en chaîne*), he argued that American strategists had imagined two futures: armed peace without direct confrontation, or total war culminating in nuclear exchange. In doing so, they overlooked a third possibility: "limited hot wars."

The outbreak of the Korean War exposed that blind spot. Yet even the Cold War's hot wars remained contained. Soviet and Chinese support to North Vietnam, for example, had to remain discreet or defensive. Nuclear deterrence still succeeded in confining violence to limited theaters.

But that capacity for confinement is now fading, partly because no single power can sufficiently regulate local conflicts. The US, though still the world's leading military power, can in practice sustain only one major war at full intensity.

Here lies the paradox of hegemony: the US must remain present everywhere, while its rivals need to dominate only their own regions. A crisis over Taiwan, or elsewhere, could be enough to produce strategic overload. Europe is not yet politically unified enough to fill that gap, and China, despite its growing clout, has shown little appetite for guaranteeing global order rather than defending its immediate interests.

In this environment, a passive security policy based solely on nuclear arsenals and defensive alliances is no longer enough. To re-establish deterrence, liberal democracies must rebuild their collective defense mechanisms by restoring norms governing the use of force and constructing a new security regime that is based on regional balances and capable of functioning without a single guarantor.

As economic power becomes more widely distributed, the age of the US as an "indispensable nation" is coming to an end. The international system is moving toward either what the French sociologist Jean Baechler called an "oligopolar world" – a balanced system dominated by a few powers – or a new bipolar order centered on the US and China.

Whether nuclear deterrence survives the transition will determine what comes next. If it fails, the real danger is not Armageddon, but a sustained buildup of violence that no one can contain.

The writer is a research fellow at CEVIPOF at Sciences Po.

PROJECT SYNDICATE



Anwesh Satpathy

BANGLADESH NOW SEEKS TO INTERACT WITH DELHI ON THE TERMS OF MUTUAL FRIENDSHIP. NEW DELHI WILL HAVE TO BE WARY OF ANY ACCUSATIONS OF DOMINANCE AND HANDLE THE CURRENT MOOD CAUTIOUSLY



Antony Dabila

To re-establish deterrence, liberal democracies must rebuild their collective defense mechanisms by restoring norms governing the use of force and constructing a new security regime that is based on regional balances and capable of functioning without a single guarantor

SPECTRUM TEXTILE

Reviving Habaspuri: Recognition to real support

Odisha's handloom heritage is often celebrated, but rarely sustained. The story of Habaspuri handloom from Kalahandi exposes this gap between recognition and reality. Despite its cultural value and official acknowledgment, this traditional craft is now struggling for survival.



Jasmine Meher

THE LOOM DOES MORE THAN CREATE FABRIC—IT CARRIES IDENTITY, HISTORY, AND COMMUNITY

Originating in the 19th century in Habaspur village, Habaspuri weaving once thrived under royal patronage and within the Kondh tribal community. Its distinctive tie-dye techniques and symbolic motifs—temple patterns, fish, tortoise, and floral designs—reflect a deep cultural narrative. However, with the decline of princely support and the rise of mechanised textiles, this legacy has steadily weakened.

Today, only around 25 to 30 families continue this craft. This sharp decline signals more than economic distress—it points to a fading cultural tradition. The problem lies not in lack of skill, but in lack of sustainability. A single Habaspuri saree

takes weeks or even months to produce, yet the returns remain meagre and inconsistent. Seasonal demand and limited market access further deepen income instability.

Institutional mechanisms have done little to change this reality. Cooperative societies often suffer from inefficiency, while government support—though present in policy—rarely translates effectively on the ground. Gaps in infrastructure, credit access, and procurement continue to push artisans into vulnerability.

The Geographical Indication (GI) tag awarded in 2012 brought recognition to Habaspuri, but recognition alone cannot sustain livelihoods. Without strong branding, market linkages, and consumer awareness, such labels risk remaining symbolic achievements rather than tools of transformation.

Encouragingly, some revival efforts are emerging. Designers and social entrepreneurs are working to reposition Habaspuri in contemporary markets while

preserving its traditional essence. However, these efforts remain limited and fragmented, unable to address the scale of the challenge.

The most pressing concern is the generational shift. Younger members of weaving families are moving away from the craft, driven by financial insecurity and declining social value. When a profession cannot ensure dignity or stability, its future becomes uncertain. The gradual loss of such inherited knowledge systems is difficult to reverse.

At the same time, the digital divide has become a major barrier. As markets move online, many weavers remain excluded due to lack of digital literacy and access. This dependence on intermediaries reduces their earnings and limits exposure. Enabling direct-to-consumer models through digital platforms is no longer optional—it is essential.

What Habaspuri needs is not symbolic celebration, but structural support. Immediate measures such as finan-

cial assistance, affordable credit, and assured procurement must be combined with long-term strategies in branding, export promotion, and infrastructure development. Handloom must be treated as a viable economic sector, not merely a cultural artefact.

Equally important is a shift in public behaviour. Appreciating handloom is not enough; it must translate into conscious consumption. Supporting handmade products ensures that artisans are not just preserved, but empowered.

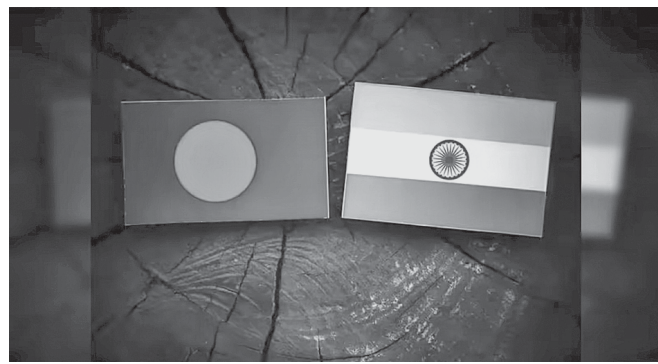
Habaspuri's story reflects a larger reality across India's handloom sector. If Odisha is serious about preserving its heritage, it must move beyond token gestures. The loom does more than create fabric—it carries identity, history, and community.

Saving Habaspuri is not just about protecting a craft; it is about safeguarding a living tradition. The time to act is now.

The writer is a columnist with a background in Global Affairs from Kings College London.

The strain in the relationship that lasted for a year between Bangladesh and India seems to have been finally put behind. As the Tarique Rahman cabinet was sworn in, this direction seemed quite clear. The recent celebration of Bangladesh Independence Day at Bangladesh High Commission in Delhi removed any festering doubts that had remained. The event was attended by top diplomats like Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, the spokesman of the MEA and the MoS for external affairs. The High Commissioner of Bangladesh gave an extremely warm speech, paying tribute to the recently deceased Assamese cult musician Zubeen Garg and highlighting shared heritage by references to Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak and, of course, Nazrul and Tagore. This was reciprocated by the Indian minister. There can be no greater evidence of a complete reset. It is nevertheless worth inquiring as to what precisely went wrong over the course of the year and whether the warmth India enjoyed in the past will be completely restored.

Sheikh Hasina was a brutal authoritarian dictator. Though this statement might be obvious to an international audience, it would appear at least slightly perplexing to an Indian audience. It is not that anyone in India considers Hasina as a benevolent democrat. There is a recognition of her dictatorial tendencies on the domestic front but it is accompanied by the belief that the alternative is and has always been far worse. This is complicated by the fact that Hasina was undoubtedly close to India. It is not simply the case that her government was close to India but in her person, she had unmistakable personal ties to India. This was across party lines. She got along reasonably well with PM Modi and West Bengal's CM Mamata Banerjee. She also has a historical relationship with the Gandhi family. After



For a year, New Delhi failed to recognize the genuine anger that people of Bangladesh felt towards an illegitimate dictator and Dhaka failed to recognize the genuine concern that Delhi felt on the erosion of civil liberties and violence against dissenters and minorities

the assassination of Bangabandhu Mujib, PM Indira Gandhi personally ensured she received asylum and her husband was given a job. Just months before her ouster, she met the Gandhi family during her visit to India and photos of her warm hugs to Priyanka, Rahul and Sonia Gandhi were all over the news. It is no wonder, then, that dissidents of her regime suspected her of being an Indian agent, a claim that fortunately does not pass the smell test.

It is because of her close ties with our political elites perhaps that Indians did not fully grasp the nature of her regime. Hasina had systematized violence against her opponents to the extent of having literal detention centres. Her predecessor had engaged in ruthless political violence as well. Tarique Rahman exiled himself to London not simply on charges of corruption but also on charges of being one of the conspirators in the Dhaka Grenade attack of 2004 at an Awami League rally that left 24 dead and was clearly an assassination attempt on Hasina, who was grievously injured. However, it was Hasina who made violence a part of the state apparatus. These

detention centres served as torture centres. Enforced disappearance and extrajudicial murder was par for the course. The Chattra league was given a free run to commit murder in broad daylight, not including the cases of sexual assaults where its members went unpunished. Biswajit Das, for instance, was not just hacked to death in the day but his brutal murder was also captured live on television. His body was taken to the hospital by a rickshaw puller. A little over a decade later, the 16-year-old Golam Nafiz, after being shot by police, was similarly captured on camera being taken by a rickshaw puller to the hospital, only to be obstructed in the last critical hours by the Leaguers which could have potentially saved his life. This became the most powerful image of resistance against Hasina.

For a year, New Delhi failed to recognize the genuine anger that people of Bangladesh felt towards an illegitimate dictator and Dhaka failed to recognize the genuine concern that Delhi felt on the erosion of civil liberties and violence against dissenters and minorities. Muhammad Yunus undoubtedly proved to

Haryana bank scam

Sir, The recent bank scam in Haryana is essentially about illegally siphoning government money by creating fake banking records. Officials or insiders allegedly generated 'debit memos'—normally used by banks to deduct money for valid reasons—but here they were forged to show false transactions. Using these entries, funds were quietly moved from government accounts in IDFC and AU banks into accounts controlled by the offenders or their network. The offenders benefit not by openly withdrawing large cash amounts, but by layering the money—transferring it through multiple accounts, converting it into assets, or routing it via shell firms—making tracing difficult. They may withdraw smaller amounts over time or invest the funds elsewhere. Reports indicate the total suspected diversion is about Rs 590 crore; the actual personal gain depends on how much they managed to hide or use before detection. They typically do not 'replace' the money. Once exposed, authorities freeze accounts and try to recover funds, but full recovery is rare. If the full amount is not recovered—which is common—the loss is ultimately borne by the government department whose funds were siphoned off. In practical terms, this means taxpayers' money is affected, and the shortfall is adjusted through government budgets. For customers, the impact is indirect: loss of public funds and reduced trust, though deposits generally remain safe.

Inclusion or illusion?

Sir, India's JAM trinity is a masterpiece of economic architecture, yet its foundation the smartphone is crumbling under fiscal pressure. While we celebrate 570 million Jan Dhan accounts and the world's cheapest data, an 18% GST on handsets acts as a regressive gatekeeper. The 7% dip in Q4 2025 shipments isn't just a market correction; it's a red flag for digital equity. When a Vidarbha farmer is priced out of hardware by rupee depreciation and tax tiers, the digital public infrastructure becomes a bridge to nowhere. To truly democratise our ascent, we must stop taxing the primary tool of financial survival as a luxury.

RS Narula, PATIALA

Vijaykumar HK, RAICHUR

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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A MOUNTAIN OF MIRACLES



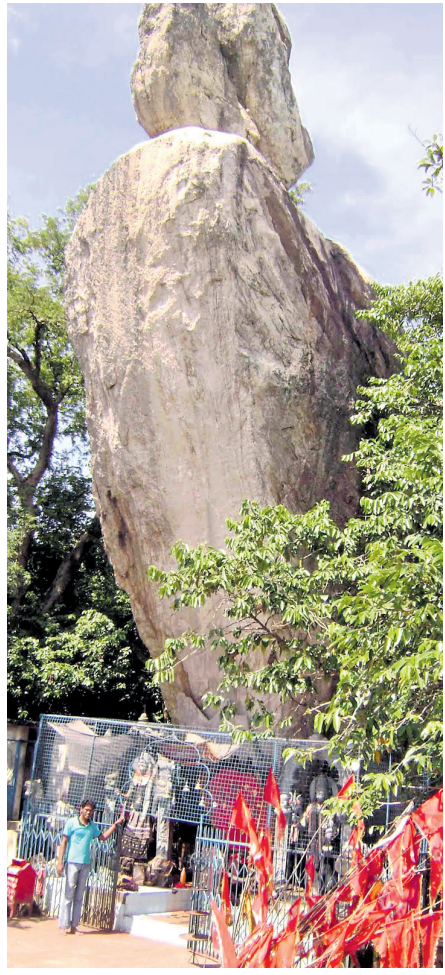
SASHIKANTA MANSINGH, OP

In the quiet, undulating landscape of Khurda district, the hill shrine of Maa Ramachandi at Gadamanitri stands as a place where faith is shaped as much by nature as by narrative. Located around 22 km from Khurda town, the shrine remains relatively secluded, adding to its mystique. There is no ornate temple here, no sculpted idol placed by human hands. Instead, a towering natural stone rising from the earth is worshipped as the Goddess herself, believed by locals to be Swayambhu—self-manifested and eternal. For generations, villagers have looked upon this stone not merely as a symbol, but as a living presence that protects their land, their crops and their lives.

■ The Legend of the Tiger and the Bull

Among the many stories that surround the shrine, the most enduring is that of the tiger and the bull, a legend rooted deeply in the realities of agrarian life. Long ago, the temple priest owned a pair of bulls, essential for ploughing his field. One night, a tiger from the nearby forest attacked and killed one of the bulls, leaving the priest distraught. With only one bull remaining, he had no means to till his land. In his despair, he prayed to Maa Ramachandi, asking how he could survive without the pair that sustained his livelihood.

That night, the Goddess is believed to have appeared in his dream and assured him that the one responsible for his loss would return. She instructed him to go to his field the next morning and yoke that very creature to his plough. At dawn, the priest found the tiger standing quietly at the edge of his field. Gathering courage from his faith, he tied the tiger alongside the remaining bull. What followed defied all natural instinct—the tiger offered no resistance and ploughed the land in perfect rhythm with the bull. From that day onward, it is said, the tiger never harmed humans or cattle again. The legend endures as a



powerful reminder of divine justice, where destruction was transformed into service and fear into balance.

■ The Stone That Once Grew

Another widely recounted belief adds to the mystique of the shrine, and it centres

on the very stone that is worshipped as Maa Ramachandi. Elders say that this main stone once grew gradually in height over time, as though the Goddess herself was rising from the earth. What began as a sign of divine wonder soon became a challenge for the priest, who found it increasingly difficult to perform daily rituals as the height kept increasing.

Unable to continue his worship properly, he is believed to have prayed with humility, requesting the goddess to remain at a height he could serve. From that moment, the growth is said to have stopped, and the stone has since remained unchanged—standing today as both a symbol of immense power and quiet compassion.

■ A Landscape of Quiet Mystery

The hill itself carries an air of mystery,



with natural rock formations adding to the sense of the sacred landscape. Adding to this intrigue is another striking feature—another relatively small stone that has long rested naturally atop the main stone. Despite heavy rains and storms over the years, the smaller stone remains perfectly balanced in its place, a sight that continues to surprise and fascinate visitors and devotees alike. For many, it is yet another quiet testament to the shrine's enduring mystique.

■ When the Hill Comes Alive

While the shrine is steeped in silence for much of the year, it transforms dramatically during festivals, when devotion takes on the colour and rhythm of a vibrant rural fair. On occasions such as Ram Navami, Dussehra, Raja Parba and Panchu Dola Yatra, thousands of devotees from across Khurda district and beyond gather at Gadamanitri.

The paths leading up the hill fill with pilgrims, while the foothills turn into a lively expanse of temporary markets. Rows of stalls are erected, selling offerings, sweets, toys and local delicacies, creating an atmosphere that resembles a bustling fairground. The air is filled with the fragrance of incense, the sound of devotional songs and drums, and the constant hum of people arriving, praying and celebrating. For many, the journey is as much about participation in this shared cultural and spiritual gathering as it is about seeking blessings.

■ Faith Rooted in Land and Life

For the people of Gadamanitri, Maa Ramachandi is not confined to myth or ritual. She lives in the land, in the cycles of farming and in the stories that continue to be told with conviction—stories where a tiger becomes a companion in labour, where a stone once grew and then chose to stop, and where a quiet hill, at certain times of the year, comes alive as a powerful expression of faith and community.

Santosh Kumar Martha of Balibereni village, located near the shrine, says that during Mahasaptami Puja in Dussehra, many devotees visit the hill to offer sacrifices of cocks and goats after the fulfilment of

their wishes. "People come here with deep faith. When their prayers are answered, they return to offer thanks in the way they have promised," he says.

Rajib Lochan Subudhi of Daleiput village, a frequent visitor to the shrine, says his faith in the goddess remains unwavering. "She listens to prayers offered with a clear heart," he says. He adds that the site is not only a place of worship but also a space for community gatherings throughout the year. "Many functions such as marriages, nirbandhas and birthday celebrations are held here. It brings people together, and the natural surroundings make it a very special place," he says.

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ବେଦାନ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସହ, ଭାରତ ପାଇଁ

ଆଲୁମିନିୟମ,
ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ଏକ ଗଣନୈତିକ ଏବଂ ଗୁରୁତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଖଣିକ ପଦାର୍ଥ, ଯାହା ମହାକାଶ ଅନୁସନ୍ଧାନ ରୁ ନେଇ ସୂତ୍ର ଶକ୍ତି, ଭିତ୍ତିଭୂମି ଏବଂ ଜାତୀୟ ପ୍ରତିରକ୍ଷା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଭବିଷ୍ୟତର ମୂଳଦୁଆ ନିର୍ମାଣ କରୁଛି ।
ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ବକ୍ସାଇଟ୍ ଭାରତର ଭବିଷ୍ୟତ ଗଠନ କରିବ ।
ଏହି ସମ୍ଭାବନାକୁ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରୂପେ ଦେବାରେ ବେଦାନ୍ତ, ସରକାରଙ୍କ ସହିତ ପ୍ରତିଶ୍ରୁତିବଦ୍ଧ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ରୁପାନ୍ତରଣ -

- ଝାରସୁଗୁଡ଼ାରେ ବାର୍ଷିକ 18 ଲକ୍ଷ ଟନ୍ ଉତ୍ପାଦନ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ବିଶ୍ୱର ସର୍ବବୃହତ ଆଲୁମିନିୟମ ସ୍ତେଲ୍‌ରୁ
- ବାର୍ଷିକ 30 ଲକ୍ଷ ଟନ୍ ଗ୍ରୀନଫିଲ୍ଡ ଇଣ୍ଡିଗୋରେଟ୍ ଆଲୁମିନିୟମ କମ୍ପ୍ଲେକ୍ସ ପାଇଁ 1 ଲକ୍ଷ କୋଟି ଟଙ୍କାର ନୂତନ ପୁଞ୍ଜିନିବେଶ
- ପ୍ରସ୍ତାବିତ ଆଲୁମିନିୟମ ପାର୍କରେ 500 ରୁ ଅଧିକ ଅନୁଗାମୀ ଶିଳ୍ପକୁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟାଳୟ ଏବଂ ବିଦ୍ୟୁତ୍ ଯୋଗାଣ
- ବାର୍ଷିକ 50 ଲକ୍ଷ ଟନ୍ ଉତ୍ପାଦନ ବିଶିଷ୍ଟ ଏକ ଅତ୍ୟାଧୁନିକ ଆଲୁମିନିୟମ ଉତ୍ପାଦନାରୀ ମାଧ୍ୟମରେ କଳାହାଣ୍ଡିର ବିକାଶକୁ ସୁଦୃଢ଼ କରୁଛି

ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ 1 ଲକ୍ଷ କୋଟି ଟଙ୍କାରୁ ଅଧିକ ପୁଞ୍ଜିନିବେଶ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ପରଠାରୁ ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ 5 ଲକ୍ଷରୁ ଅଧିକ ନିୟୁତ୍ତି ସୁଯୋଗ ସୃଷ୍ଟି 20,000 ରୁ ଅଧିକ ସୃଷ୍ଟି, କ୍ଷୁଦ୍ର ଓ ମଧ୍ୟମ ଉଦ୍ୟୋଗ ପାଇଁ ସୁଯୋଗ ସୃଷ୍ଟି ଦେଶର କୌଣସି କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ କେ ଲିଭେ

Stalled sewer project fuels river pollution in Rourkela

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, April 2: Concerns are mounting over delays in Rourkela's sewerage project, with untreated wastewater reportedly flowing directly into rivers and polluting key water sources including the Koel river.

Launched January 9, 2017, the project aimed to ensure proper drainage and effective treatment of wastewater before its release into the Brahmani and Koel rivers. It was envisioned as a major step towards improving public health and restoring the urban environment. However, nearly a decade later, the project remains incomplete.

Sources said only about 25 per cent of households in different parts of Rourkela have been connected to the sewerage network so far. Land disputes have also stalled the construction of a sewage treatment plant (STP) in Koelnagar, adding to residents' woes.

In areas such as Civil Township and Chhend, household sewer connections have become a persistent problem. During the monsoon and even light Kalabaisakhi showers, sewage chambers often overflow, with contaminated water entering residential premises.

Residents allege that the continued discharge of untreated wastewater into rivers has defeated the very purpose of the project.

The project, originally scheduled for completion in



2024-25, is now expected to be extended further, officials said.

Earlier, an STP with a capacity of 40 million litres per day was inaugurated February 16, 2021 at Balughat-Rupatola at an estimated cost of ₹260 crore. The plan included laying around 185 km of sewer lines and connecting more than 10,000 households.

However, progress on household connections has been slow. As of December 2025, only around 3,000 homes had been linked to the network.

The sewerage system is being developed jointly by the Odisha Water Supply and Sewerage Board and WATCO under the AMRUT mission, with an overall investment of about ₹850 crore. Work remains incomplete in several areas, including parts of Civil Township, Sectors 1 to 6 and Uditnagar.

Koelnagar resident Dillip

Das said the existing sewer infrastructure, laid nearly 50 years ago, has deteriorated significantly, leading to frequent overflow of waste and unsanitary conditions.

"Replacing pipelines alone will not solve the issue. Authorities must resolve hurdles in constructing the STP in Koelnagar and ensure the Koel river remains clean," he said.

Responding to the concerns, WATCO officer in-charge (sewerage board) Tushar Meher said efforts are underway to modernise the sewer network and complete STP construction. Old pipelines have been restored, and awareness campaigns are being conducted to reduce plastic use, he added.

He cited underground water pipelines, electrical cables and monsoon disruptions, which halt work for three to four months, as key reasons for the delays.

Odia teachers in J'khand work sans salaries

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 2: Odia teachers working to preserve the language in remote areas of neighbouring Jharkhand continue without salaries, allegedly due to apathy by the Odisha government.

With the Jharkhand government not recruiting Odia teachers, many are engaged through Utkal Sammilani and receive a monthly honorarium of ₹3,000, or ₹30,000 rupees annually. Educational inspectors are paid ₹5,000 per month.

Teachers say it is difficult to survive on such meager pay, but they continue their efforts to protect the Odia language

and culture.

They said their contributions in preserving Odia language and culture in cut-off areas have been overlooked, particularly when it comes to payment.

In East Singhbhum district, 54 teachers are working in 29 schools; in Seraikela-Kharsawan, 58 teachers in 52 schools; and in West Singhbhum, 42 teachers in 39 schools, teaching Odia as a mother tongue. They have been working under Odisha's School and Mass Education department for the past 22 years. However, they have not received financial assistance since the 2021-22 fiscal year, leading to severe hardship in managing their livelihoods.

Although the government increased the monthly honorarium to ₹4,500 for teachers and ₹6,500 for inspectors for 2023-24, payments remain pending, they said.

Demanding release of arrears and a salary increase, Odia teachers from Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh met School and Mass Education Minister Nityananda Gond March 19 and submitted a memorandum.

Earlier, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, during a visit to Jagannathpur in Jharkhand, announced a monthly grant of ₹6,000 for 12 months for Odia teachers in Odia-majority areas and clear-

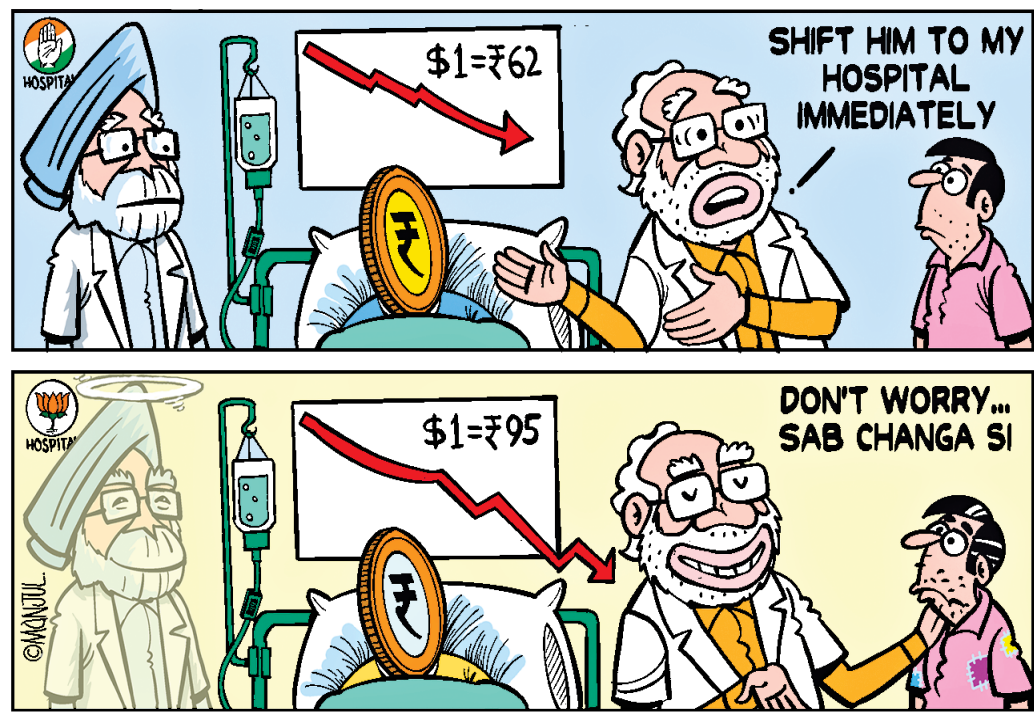
ance of pending dues by September 30, 2024.

In their memorandum, the teachers sought immediate payment of arrears for 2021-22, 2023-24, 2024-25 and 2025-26.

Teachers in West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh also said they have not received financial assistance for the past three years. Despite completion of a survey, dues remain unpaid, they said.

Among those raising the demands are Ritarani Dubey Laxmipriya Mishra, Anita Puraset, Subhadra Mistry, Pranab Kumar Upadhyay, Bharat Mishra, Ramesh Chandra Pradhan, inspector Sushil Sarangi and Jayaramdas Patra, among others.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Student dies after falling ill at hostel

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, April 2: A 13-year-old schoolgirl died during treatment after falling ill at a residential school hostel in Koraput district Thursday, with her family alleging negligence by school authorities.

The deceased was identified as Subarna, daughter of Bhagaban Amanathya of Podapadar village. She was a student of Nuagaon Ashram School under Borigumma block and was staying in the hostel.

According to reports, the girl fell ill Thursday morning. School authorities informed her family, who rushed to the hostel and took her to Borigumma hospital. Doctors there declared her dead.

Family members alleged that the school failed to arrange timely medical care, leading to her death.

Doctors said the body would be handed over to the family after post-mortem. The incident has triggered unrest in the area, with locals demanding a fair probe and strict action against those responsible.

Minor among 7 held for ganja trafficking

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh/Sohela, April 2: Minors are increasingly taking to crimes and joining hands with history-sheeters as police seized 20.7 kg of ganja during smuggling and arrested seven persons including a minor during a raid here Thursday.

The accused were identified as Gobinda alias Sana Negi of Bolangir, Chandrasekhar Gond of Sambalpur and currently residing in Gujarati Colony; Satya alias Satender Mishra from Bhojpur district in Bihar; Gajendra Nag and Rupesh Mukhi of Burla and Rohit Chachan of Bargarh.

The accused were arrested for allegedly transporting ganja on the Bargarh-Barpali-Sohela road near Panimora Chhak.

Around 20.7 kg of ganja, an Innova Crysta (OD02 AW 0059), a Honda Amaze (OD15A 4011), a laptop, a country-made pistol, three rounds of ammunition, a silver bracelet, a silver chain, ₹12,221 in cash, two wallets and 11 mobile phones were seized from their possession during the

152 kg ganja seized; 5 held in twin raids

Sonepur/Birmaharajpur: Police seized 152 kg ganja and arrested five persons, including two women, during coordinated raids at Budharaja Chhak and Baghalpur, officials said Thursday. Following a tip-off, a car coming from Manamunda was intercepted near Budharaja Chhak after a chase. During a search in the presence of a magistrate, police found 31 packets of ganja weighing 31kg hidden inside trolley bags. Three persons, including two women from Nagpur and the driver, were arrested. In a separate operation, Birmaharajpur police intercepted a pickup van at Baghalpur and seized 121 kg of ganja concealed in a secret chamber. Two persons from Boudh district were arrested.

raids. A case (85/26) has been registered at Sohela police station.

Six accused were produced in the Padampur ADJ court Thursday, while the minor was presented before the Bargarh Juvenile Justice Board, police said.

Acting on a tip-off, police intercepted the vehicles at Panimora Chhak and carried out a search, leading to the seizure, officials said. Four of the accused are reportedly habitual offenders.

Sambalpur court again receives bomb threat

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, April 2: A fresh bomb threat has been issued to the District Judge's court in Sambalpur, prompting an extensive security response, officials said Thursday.

The threat was received via an email sent to the court registrar, following which police swung into action. Bomb disposal squads, along with police and fire services personnel, rushed to the spot and conducted a thorough

search of the court premises, including the civil court and the District Collector's residential office. After nearly three hours of checks, no suspicious object was found in or around the premises. This is the third such threat in the past four months. Similar emails were received earlier January 8 and March 1.

Additional Superintendent of Police Ajay Kumar Mishra said the email claimed that explosives had been planted to blow up the District Judge's court.

In response, security has been tightened across the premises. Screening of visitors is being carried out at all entry points using advanced equipment, including door frame metal detectors (DFMD) and hand-held metal detectors (HHMD).

Armed police personnel have been deployed in and around the premises.

Police had earlier registered a case at the cyber police station regarding the threatening emails. Preliminary investiga-

tion suggests the emails originated from abroad. Investigators have traced IP addresses to countries such as the Netherlands and Germany.

Efforts are underway to identify the actual accused persons in accordance with international protocols, officials said.

Former president of the Sambalpur Bar Association and senior advocate Pramod Rath said the mystery behind such emails must be unraveled using technical expertise.

Youth dies, boy critical as bikes collide head-on

Jhariaogon:

A youth was killed and a minor critically injured in a head-on collision between two motorcycles near Cheptiamba village under Jhariaogon police station limits in Nabarangpur district. The deceased was identified as Kanesti Santa, 23, son of Nanda Santa of Cheptiamba village. The injured minor, Sagar Santa, 15, sustained serious injuries. The incident occurred around 8pm Wednesday when Kanesti and Sagar were riding a motorcycle to Palla Chhak to visit Tarini Market. Near Cheptiamba village, their motorcycle collided head-on with another bike coming from the opposite direction. Both were thrown onto the road following the impact. Police began an investigation after a written complaint was filed at Jhariaogon PS.

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Truck catches fire; NH-16 traffic affected

Bhadrak:

Traffic on National Highway 16 was briefly disrupted after a heavy vehicle went up in flames in between Gelpur and Nalanga Square un-



POST NEWS NETWORK

der Bhadrak Rural police limits Wednesday. The incident led to thick smoke in the area, disrupting vehicular movement on the highway for some time.

According to reports, a Hyva truck was returning to Ja-

ipur after unloading goods in Bhadrak. The driver, Bijay Kumar Nath, said he heard an unusual noise while the vehicle was in motion. He stopped the truck and tried to switch off the engine, but it did not turn off.

After stepping out, he noticed smoke billowing from a section on the left side of the vehicle. He attempted to douse it with water using a bucket, but the fire suddenly intensified.

On being informed, fire services personnel rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze.

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India's 1st indigenous coal-to-ammonium nitrate project to come up in Jharsuguda

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/Jharsuguda, April 2: Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) and Bharat Coal Gasification and Chemicals Limited (BCGCL) have signed a significant land leasing agreement for a Coal-to-Ammonium Nitrate project at Lakhanpur in Jharsuguda district.

The ambitious project, designed as a 2000 tonnes-per-day (TPD) Ammonium Nitrate facility, marks a historic milestone as India's first coal gasification initiative to deploy indigenous developed technology by Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL).

This development underscores a major push toward self-reliance, innovation, and reduced dependence on imported technologies in the energy and chemical sectors.

Spread across approximately 350 acres of land under MCL, the project has been made possible through progressive policy reforms introduced by the Ministry of Coal.

These reforms allow the util-



isation of Coal Bearing Area (CBA) land for coal gasification projects, opening new avenues for value-added use of India's abundant coal reserves and supporting sectoral diversification.

To further promote coal gasification, the ministry has extended financial assistance of ₹1,350 crore under its dedicated incentive scheme. The project is already gaining momentum, with major Lump Sum Turnkey (LSTK) contracts awarded—LSTK-1 and LSTK-2 to BHEL, and LSTK-3 and LSTK-4 to Lars-

en & Toubro. Concurrently, site development activities such as boundary wall construction and tree enumeration are progressing to ensure timely execution. The agreement was signed in New Delhi in the presence of Union Minister for Coal and Mines, G. Kishan Reddy. He highlighted that, in line with the Prime Minister's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, the government is actively transforming the coal sector through focused initiatives.

Emphasising India's vast coal

reserves, Reddy stressed the importance of expanding its use beyond traditional applications through large-scale coal gasification.

The Union Minister also noted that the Cabinet has approved an outlay of ₹8,500 crore to promote coal gasification, with seven projects already finalised, including three where foundation work has commenced.

He described the ₹25,000 crore investment in the MCL-BCGCL agreement as a major step forward, marking BCGCL's first indigenous project and reflecting growing momentum in the sector.

The signing of the lease agreement is expected to accelerate project implementation and ensure completion within the planned timeline.

The Coal-to-Ammonium Nitrate project at Lakhanpur stands as a significant industrial initiative, showcasing India's progress in technology, policy reform, and self-reliance, while contributing to long-term industrial growth and economic resilience.

TUSKER CARCASS FOUND NEAR J'KHAND BORDER



POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 2: Forest officials have recovered the carcass of a tusker from Manikpur village in neighbouring Jharkhand, near the Joda border of Keonjhar district.

Local residents spotted the animal's body near a mango grove on the village outskirts Thursday morning and alerted the forest officials. Officials from the Chaibasa forest division in Jharkhand rushed to the spot, examined the situation and seized the carcass before

launching an investigation.

Preliminary reports suggest the elephant might have died due to old age. However, the exact cause of death will be confirmed only after the availability of the post-mortem report, forest officials said.

Sources said that the tusker had frequently strayed from Jharkhand into the Champua forest range in Keonjhar district, causing extensive damage to crops and property in villages such as Godhuli and Jagannathpur under the Champua NAC limits.

Key industrial and energy establishments in the region include the NALCO smelter plant, NTPC Kaniha, Talcher Super Thermal Power Station, and extensive coal mines operated by Mahanadi Coalfields Limited, Pradhan said adding that together, these form the backbone of Odisha's energy security.

The Union Minister emphasised that the Chhendipada tehsil alone accounts for nearly one-sixth of India's coal reserves, underlining its national importance in the energy sector.

However, he pointed out that the existing road infrastructure, particularly SH-63 and the Chhendipada-Jarapada road, is no longer adequate to handle the increasing volume of coal transportation.



Our PM is a coward who has no spine and is compromised. We are paying every day because he does not have the guts to stand up for India

PRİYANKA GANDHI | CONGRESS MP

ADITYA-L1 MISSION: ISRO INVITES RESEARCH PROPOSALS

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced Thursday that it is inviting proposals from the Indian solar physics community to access data from the Aditya-L1 mission, the first space-based Indian mission to study the Sun



of the day quote

Every year, we are spending around ₹ 52,000 crore. Up to March 31, ₹1.31 lakh crore has been spent. So there is no question about these schemes-we will continue them



SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

The BJP is not against any caste, region, religion or language. Unity in diversity is our essence. But the foreign nationals who come, should they be granted voting rights? What will happen to you all then?



NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

Women in Gujarat feel safe even late at night during the Navratri festival. They return home fearlessly after enjoying garba. Gujarat is the safest state for women. We all know the situation in other states



HARSH SANGHAVI | GUJARAT DY CM

Russian Dy PM Denis Manturov meets Modi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 2: Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov Thursday called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and discussed ways to strengthen bilateral ties in areas of investment, energy and fertilisers, among others. Manturov, on a two-day visit to India, also held talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval. The visit assumed significance as it came amid the escalating conflict in West Asia.

"We discussed our mutually beneficial cooperation in trade, fertilizers, connectivity and people-to-people ties," Modi said on social media.

"Welcomed the sustained efforts from both sides to implement the outcomes of the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit held during President Putin's visit to India last December," he said. The Russian first deputy PM briefed Modi on the progress in various areas of mutually beneficial cooperation, including trade and economic partnership, according to an Indian readout.

It said Modi expressed satisfaction at the sustained efforts being made by both sides towards implementation of the outcomes achieved during the India-Russia summit during President Vladimir Putin's visit to New Delhi in December.

JAN VISHWAS BILL GETS PARL NOD

NEW DELHI: Parliament Thursday passed a Bill to amend 784 provisions in 79 central laws for decriminalising and rationalising minor offences to further improve business environment and check harassment of people. The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, was passed in the Rajya Sabha with a voice vote after Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal replied to a discussion on the legislation. The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha Wednesday. The minister said the legislation will help citizens and MSMEs. "I believe that there will be no fear in those who make mistakes. There will be fear in those who break the law on purpose. We have tried to bring simplicity by decriminalising all this. "We have tried to provide protection through adequate civil mechanism. And we have tried to bring swift and proportionate penalties. We have tried to bring swift and proportionate penalties," he said. Replying to queries and apprehensions raised by various MPs, the minister said comprehensive consultations were held with different government departments, state government and organisations before bringing the amendments.

Defence exports rise 62% to hit record ₹38,424cr



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 2: India's annual defence exports touched an all-time high of ₹38,424 crore in the financial year 2025-26, marking more than 62 per cent growth over the previous fiscal year, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said Thursday.

The "big jump" in the defence exports reflected the growing "global trust" in India's indigenous defence capabilities, Singh said in a social media post, adding that the country is "scripting an impressive defence exports success story".

"India defence exports have touched a new all-time high with a record ₹38,424 crore in FY 2025-26. It marks a robust 62.66 per cent growth over the previous fiscal," the defence minister said.

"This big jump of ₹14,802 crore in defence exports reflects the growing global trust in India's indigenous capabilities and advanced manufacturing strength," he said.

With DPSUs (defence public sector undertakings) contributing 54.84 per cent and private

TEJAS SET TO RESUME OPS

NEW DELHI: The Indian Air Force's Tejas light combat jets are set to return to the skies next week, two months after the entire fleet was grounded following an accident involving one of the aircraft at a frontline airbase. DK Sunil, the Chairman and Managing Director of the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), the manufacturer of the jets, said the entire fleet of 34 Tejas will fly most likely from April 8 as the glitch found onboard the aircraft's software has been resolved. "All the Tejas jets are set to fly again from next Wednesday," he said. The fleet was grounded in the first week of February after one Tejas jet sustained damage to its airframe after it overshoot the runway at the airbase following a suspected brake failure. The IAF had also ordered a comprehensive scrutiny of the jets following the accident.

industry 45.16 per cent, this milestone showcases the power of a collaborative and self-reli-

Parl passes Bill to recognise Amaravati as AP's new capital

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 2: Parliament Thursday passed a Bill seeking to recognise Amaravati as the sole and new capital of Andhra Pradesh with the Rajya Sabha giving its nod to it with a voice vote, and all parties except the YSRCP supporting the proposed legislation. Replying to the debate on the

Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, in the Upper House, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said, the state assembly March 28, 2026 passed a proposal requesting the Centre to grant statutory status to Amaravati as the capital of Andhra Pradesh by amending the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014. He said the resolution

passed by the Assembly requested for amendment in the Act, incorporating Amaravati as the capital of Andhra Pradesh with effect from June 2, 2024. The minister congratulated the people of Andhra Pradesh with Amaravati as the new capital, hoping that the state reaches new heights of progress to contribute towards achieving the vision of

Viksit Bharat by 2047. Speaking on the Bill, Sanjay Kumar Jha of JD(U) said Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar are the most important and trusted allies of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) right from the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led government to the present Narendra Modi-led regime.

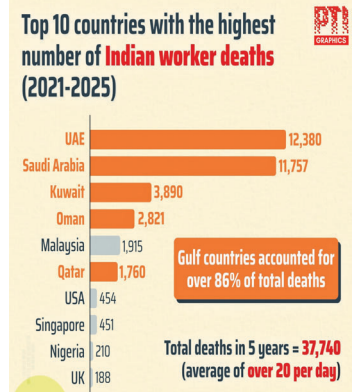
Over 20 Indian workers died abroad daily, most in Gulf

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 2: Disturbing statistics about the conditions of Indian workers abroad reveal that over 20 individuals have died on foreign soil each day over the past five years, with most fatalities occurring in Gulf nations.

According to data provided by Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha January 29, the total number of Indian worker fatalities abroad reached 37,740 between 2021 and 2025. A breakdown of the cause of these deaths was not provided. The data showed that the highest number of deaths occurred in 2021, with 8,234 Indian workers losing their lives abroad. Following a dip to 6,614 deaths in 2022, casualties have risen steadily year-on-year, reaching 7,291 in 2023, 7,747 in 2024, and 7,854 in 2025.

Gulf countries accounted for over 86 per cent of these deaths. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia recorded the highest number of casualties, with 12,380 and 11,757 deaths, respectively, in the five-year period. They were followed by Kuwait (3,890), Oman (2,821), Malaysia (1,915), and Qatar (1,760). During this period, Indian missions overseas received 80,985



complaints of abuse, exploitation, and workplace grievances from Indian nationals. UAE accounted for the highest volume of these grievances, with 16,965 complaints registered between 2021 and 2025. It was followed by Kuwait (15,234), Oman (13,295), and Saudi Arabia (12,988).

A 2018 PTI report, based on analyses of Right to Information (RTI) responses and Parliamentary records highlighted by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), showed that

nearly 10 Indian workers died every day in the Gulf region between 2012 and mid-2018.

The CHRI analysis noted that at least 24,570 Indian workers died across six Gulf nations, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE during that six-and-a-half-year period.

In comparison, the latest government data shows that 32,608 Indian workers died in Gulf nations, excluding Bahrain (figures absent in the reply), between 2021 and 2025. This translates to an average of nearly 18 worker deaths every day in the Gulf region alone over the last five years.

Outside the Gulf region, Malaysia and the Maldives also recorded a significant number of labour issues, registering 8,333 and 2,981 complaints, respectively.

Meanwhile, a significant number of complaints originated from Southeast Asian nations despite them reporting few casualties, with grievances spiking sharply in 2024 and 2025.

Myanmar recorded zero worker deaths over the five years but registered 2,548 complaints, including a sharp increase to 1,863 complaints in 2025 alone. Cambodia reported 31 deaths against 2,531 complaints, while Laos saw 11 deaths and 2,416 complaints.

POST OF THE DAY

The four pillars of democracy—Legislature, Executive, Judiciary, and Media—are the essential components that support a democratic system by ensuring governance, justice, and accountability. Unfortunately, all have failed to uphold 'The Constitution of India' and ensure the tenets of a 'Democracy' is followed!

@Chandrakbosc

SHORT TAKES

Woman techie ends life over 'dowry harassment'

Hyderabad: A 26-year-old woman software professional from Bihar allegedly died by suicide at her residence here due to "harassment" by her husband for additional dowry, police said Thursday. The woman was found hanging from the ceiling fan in the hall of the flat Wednesday by her husband. On receiving information about the incident, the police reached the spot and conducted inquiry.

Karur tragedy: Vijay alleges conspiracy

Tiruchirappalli (Tamil Nadu): TVK chief Vijay Thursday alleged joint machination and conspiracy in the tragic stampede in Karur and also in the release of his final film 'Jananayagan', and said that he too wanted justice in the Karur incident. The tragic stampede left 41 people dead and several injured at a rally addressed by the actor-politician September 27, 2025. Addressing an election rally after filing his nomination papers from Tiruchirappalli East Assembly constituency, Vijay said, as many have been insisting, the Karur incident was "a joint machination."

Suvendu Adhikari files nomination

Kolkata: BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari Thursday filed his nomination for West Bengal's Bhabanipur in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, turning the contest in Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's political backyard into the centrepiece of the assembly election. For the BJP, Bhabanipur is no ordinary seat. Represented by Banerjee since 2011, the constituency has long been seen as her pocket borough and a symbol of the TMC's dominance in Kolkata.

S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER. For and on behalf of the President of India, Sr. Commercial Mahager S.E. Railway, Chakradharpur invites e-tender for the following work: eTender Notice No.: Co m 54-AMN-FM-JRLI-26 Dt. 01.04.2026; Name of the work: One time cleaning of foreign materials lying in Line No. 5, 6, 7 & 8 at Jaroli Yard; Departmental value: ₹ 18,31,536.87; Cost of tender form: ₹ 2,000.00; Earnest Money: ₹ 36,600.00; Date & Time for closing of tender: 22.04.2026 at 15.30 hrs.; Website particulars: www.ireps.gov.in. N.B. Manual tender will not be accepted. Contractor to submit online tender at www.ireps.gov.in (PR-15)

OFFICE OF THE JUDGE FAMILY COURT, RAYAGADA. Dated: 2nd Day of April, 2026. ADVERTISEMENT No. 01 of 2026. Applications are invited for the Post of counsellor in the Family Court, Rayagada from desirous candidates having Master's Degree in Social Science (preferably in Sociology or Psychology) with minimum experience of three years in Family Counselling or persons above the age of 35 years working in the field of Social Service and Welfare Activities and engaged in promoting the welfare of Family and Child Care with a Degree in Social Science (preferably in Sociology or Psychology) [See - Rule-5 and 6 of family Courts (Orissa) Rules, 1990]. Applications along with necessary documents are to be submitted to the Judge, Family Court, Rayagada, At/P.O.: Rayagada, Dist.: Rayagada, PIN - 765001 by Registered Post/Speed Post or through the Drop Box provided in the Office of the Family Court, Rayagada by 23rd April, 2026. For further details, please visit the link: https://rayagada.dcourts.gov.in/notice-category/recruitments/ Last date of receipt of application : 23.04.2026 (5.00 P.M.) Appointing authority : Hon'ble High Court of Orissa, Cuttack Sd./J- Judge, Family Court, Rayagada

PUBLIC NOTICE (ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE). This is to inform all concerned that World Green Energy Pvt. Ltd., Gopalpur, TATA SEZ, Ganjam, Odisha has been granted Environmental Clearance (EC) by SEIAA, Odisha for a Solar PV Cell and Module Manufacturing Industry with a production capacity of 2.0 GW Solar Cells and 1.2 GW Solar PV Modules per year. EC No.: EC25C3806OR5874998N File No.: 549680/140-MINB/09-2025 Date: 30.03.2026 For details, visit: https://parivesh.nic.in/ Sd./- Gobind Chandra Nayak V.P. (Project)

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA. OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, KANUPUR HEAD WORKS DIVISION. At/PO- Basudevpur, Dist-Keonjhar, PIN-758047 e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE Bid Identification No.SE,KHWD-19/2025-26. No.32001/2/2627. Table with columns: Sl. No., Name of Work, Approx. value of work (Rs. in lakh), E.M.D / Bid Security in Rs. (To be remitted online), Cost of Bid document in Rs. (To be remitted online), Period of Completion, Class of Contractor, Name & Address of the division under which the work will be executed. Row 1: Painting of Parapet wall and Deflector wall of Earth Dam and Dyke from RD 00m to RD 1150m, RD 1990m to RD 3460m and RD 00m to 290m of Kanpur Irrigation Project, Basudevpur, Keonjhar. Row 2: Superintending Engineer, Kanpur Head Works Division, Basudevpur, Dist-Keonjhar.



Some people defend the idea of freeing the Strait of Hormuz by force via a military operation, a position sometimes expressed by the United States, although it has varied

JAZEERA AIRWAYS EXPANDS INDIA NETWORK

Kuwait-based Jazeera Airways has added four new destinations to its India network -- Kozhikode, Tiruchirappalli, Mangalore, and Kannur. With this expansion under Project Vande Bharat, the airline -- the only one operating from Kuwait to India -- now serves a total of 12 destinations with 49 weekly flights across the country



of the day quote

Sri Lanka has met all targets set under the IMF's Extended Fund Facility programme

The flames of war in the region have not yet been extinguished; however, as a friend to all parties, Pakistan has been working tirelessly to ease tensions, engaging in talks and diplomatic efforts at various levels

The travel routes will be communicated to the relevant authorities in Israel and the United States, and we will use all channels to request strict adherence to the ceasefire during the convoy's movement

Allies discuss Hormuz flows

Washington/Cairo, April 2: Dozens of countries sought ways to restart vital energy shipments through the Strait of Hormuz after US President Donald Trump vowed more aggressive strikes on Iran, pushing oil prices back up to damaging levels.



US nearing completion of core objectives in Iran, Trump says
Oil benchmark jumps after speech, stocks slide
Iran warns of 'broader and more destructive' attacks
Iranian source says no talks via mediators on temporary truce

'more crushing, broader and more destructive' attacks in store. The war will continue until the 'permanent regret and surrender' of Iran's enemies, said Ebrahim Zolfaqari, spokesperson for the Iranian military's Khatam al-Anbiya central headquarters, in a statement carried by Iranian media.

Middle East war. Iran's parliament was reviewing a bill that would formalise the blocking of vessels from hostile countries passing through the strait and the charging of tolls for others wishing to pass, spokesperson Abbas Goodarzi said.

Thousands of people have been killed across the Middle East since February 28, when the US and Israel began air strikes on Iran, triggering Iranian attacks on Israel, US bases and the Gulf states, while opening a new front in Lebanon.

Iran said several people were likely injured when a bridge linking Tehran and the western city of Karaj was hit by air strikes. Some of its largest steel producers and Tehran's Pasteur Institute of Iran medical research centre had sustained serious damage in the conflict, it said.

Russia said it would ask the U.S. and Israel to cease fire for its staff to leave Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant.

Israel, which shoots down most Iranian missiles, reported new incoming salvos Thursday, Saudi Arabia said it had intercepted four drones and Abu Dhabi said it had intercepted a missile, with minor damage near an economic zone.

The US embassy in Baghdad urged its citizens to leave Iraq, warning of attacks in the capital by Iran-allied militia in the next 24 to 48 hours.

Russia's Primorsk oil terminal lost 40% of storage to drone attacks

REUTERS

Kyiv, April 2: Russia's Baltic Sea port of Primorsk, one of country's largest export gateways, lost at least 40% of its storage facilities in Ukrainian drone attacks last month, US commercial satellite images seen by Reuters showed Thursday.

Ukraine has stepped up attacks on Russian energy facilities in the past month, launching the heaviest drone strikes on the Baltic Sea ports during the more than four-year war.

At some point last month, around 40% of Russia's oil exporting capabilities were shut due to the attacks, closure of the Druzhba pipeline in Ukraine and seizure of Russia-linked tankers.

Satellite images from the end of March, supplied by US spatial intelligence company Vantor, showed at least eight reservoirs with a capacity of 50,000 cubic metres each were damaged. That amounts to at least 40% of the port's total storage and may force the outlet to cut turnover accordingly, traders said. The reservoirs play an important role in the logistics chain at the ports and their availability directly impacts the oil exports.

Another Baltic Sea port of Ust-Luga was also attacked last month several times and it had



At least eight tanks were damaged - around 40% of port storage

Primorsk can handle 1 million bpd, nearly 1% of global oil supply

Two damaged tanks stored diesel, industry sources said

Ust-Luga also hit in late March, forcing export suspensions

to suspend loading.

Russian oil pipeline monopoly Transneft data showed that Primorsk, which is able to handle 1 million barrels of oil per day, or almost 1% of global oil supply, has at its main oil depot 14 crude oil reservoirs and four facilities to store diesel.

According to industry sources, two of eight seriously damaged tanks were used to handle diesel.

Transneft, which also controls the ports, did not reply to a request for comment.

Russian local authorities say Ust-Luga was hit March 22, 25, 27, 29 and 31, forcing suspensions of export operations.

Trump fires Pam Bondi as US attorney general

Washington: US President Donald Trump ousted Attorney General Pam Bondi Thursday after mounting frustration with her performance, especially over the release of files on late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. Trump also felt Bondi was not moving quickly enough to prosecute critics and adversaries whom he wanted to face criminal charges, according to sources. Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche, a former personal lawyer to Trump, will lead the Justice Department temporarily, Trump said in a social media post. In the post, Trump praised Bondi as a "Great American Patriot and a loyal friend" who had overseen a "massive crackdown in Crime." Bondi will soon move to a job in the private sector, Trump said. Blanche thanked Trump and praised Bondi in a social media post. "We will continue backing the blue, enforcing the law, and doing everything in our power to keep America safe," he said. During her tenure as the top US law enforcement official, Bondi was a combative champion of Trump's agenda and dismantled the Justice Department's longstanding tradition of independence from the White House in its investigations.

Nepal court extends Oli's custody by 2 days

Party demands immediate release

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, April 2: Former Nepal prime minister KP Sharma Oli will remain in judicial custody for two more days as a district court here permitted the police to extend his detention Wednesday.

The deposed prime minister and then home minister Ramesh Lekhak were arrested March 28 for their alleged involvement in suppressing last year's Gen Z protest, which left 76 people dead. The Kathmandu District Court permitted Nepal Police to extend their detention by two more days, said Pawan Bhattarai, spokesperson at Kathmandu District Police Circle.

Earlier, the court had given permission to put Oli and Lekhak under judicial remand for five days to investigate the matter. Oli, 75, is currently admitted at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital as he is suffering from various diseases.

The police have been recording his explanations on the case from the hospital bed.



While, 62-year-old Lekhak's statements in the case are being recorded in police detention.

The arrests came after the newly formed Balendra Shah government decided to implement the report of a probe commission into the Gen Z protests in its first cabinet meeting.

Oli's Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML), meanwhile, demanded the party chairman's immediate release. Speaking Thursday at the first session of the House of Representatives (HoR) after the March 5 election, CPN-UML lawmaker Guru Baral accused the government of arresting Oli for political revenge.

Calling the arrests "illegitimate and unconstitutional", he called for Oli and Lekhak's immediate release.

1 killed in Indonesia earthquake



REUTERS

Jakarta, April 2: A magnitude 7.6 earthquake struck in Indonesia's Northern Molucca Sea Thursday, killing one person, damaging buildings and triggering tsunami waves, authorities and witnesses said, though monitoring agencies said the likelihood of further casualties was low.

Indonesia's meteorology agency BMKG said there were tsunami waves reported in five locations, the highest at 0.75 m

(2.46 ft) in North Minahasa in North Sulawesi and about 50 aftershocks were monitored, the largest at a magnitude of 5.8.

BMKG chief Teuku Faisal Fathani initially said modelling indicated there was tsunami potential for waves of 0.5 m to 3 m (1.6 ft to 9.8 ft) high, but the agency lifted its tsunami warning later Thursday morning.

Map showing a 7.4-magnitude earthquake in the sea north-west of Ternate, Indonesia, April 2. Concentric orange-red rings indicate moderate to

severe shaking across North Maluku and parts of Sulawesi.

US tsunami warning authorities also initially said hazardous tsunamis were possible along the coasts of Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia, but later lifted the threat warning.

One person was killed by falling rubble in Manado city when part of a building used by the local sports authority collapsed, deputy chief of North Sulawesi police Awi Setiyono told reporters.

Probe into Garg's death has concluded: Singapore police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Singapore, April 2: The Singapore Police Force (SPF) has confirmed that investigations into the death of singer Zubeen Garg in Singapore September 19, 2025, have concluded and there is no evidence of foul play.

In accordance with the Singapore Coroners Act 2010, the SPF investigated the case thoroughly, and examined available evidence and recorded statements from all relevant witnesses, a statement issued Wednesday read.

The statement was issued in response to media queries, said SPF, reminding members of the public to refrain from comments that impugn the integrity of the court's judgment or the judicial process.

SPF's investigation has established that Garg was on a yacht trip in the waters off Lazarus Island. He had initially worn a life jacket while swimming but later removed it and returned to the yacht without the life jacket on him, the statement said.

When he entered the water the second time, he swam alone and away from the yacht without a life jacket, despite being offered one before entering the water. Subsequently, while swimming back towards the yacht, he was observed to have become unresponsive.

According to the statement, Garg was promptly rescued by the captain of the yacht and members of his group and brought back to the vessel, where cardiopulmonary resuscitation was immediately administered.

A Police Coast Guard boat was dispatched shortly after the emergency call, and officers arrived promptly to render assistance, it said, adding that Garg was attended to by paramedics upon reaching shore and was conveyed promptly by ambulance to Singapore General Hospital, where he subsequently passed away.



CLASSIFIED OBITUARY

୧୯୭୮ମ ଶ୍ରୀଜୀବନୀକା



ସ୍ମୃତି ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ନାୟକ

ବୋ ମା', ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରୀ ଥାପୁ ପୁଣ୍ୟ ଶାନ୍ତିରେ ଥାଆନ୍ତୁ ଏବଂ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରୀ ସ୍ମୃତି, ଶ୍ରୀଜୀ ଓ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦ ଆମକୁ ପଥ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ କରୁଥାନ୍ତୁ। ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ଶ୍ରୀଜୀବନୀଧର ଚଳିବେଳେ ଆମର ଏକି ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା।

ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ନାୟକ ଚଳିବେଳେ ଓ ସାହିବଦ୍ୱିଗାନ୍ଧବ, ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ସାହି, ବାଲିକାଶ୍ରମ।

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Notary Angul affidavit No - 5364 dated 31.03.2026, I Sujata Sahoo, resident of AT-Kanjara, PO-Bimalabada, PS-Jarpada, Dist-Angul (Odisha), India, declare that I have changed my name from Sujata Sethi to Sujata Sahoo. She is same and one person. Henceforth I shall be known as Sujata Sahoo for all purpose.

Danish warship sunk in battle found after 225 yrs

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Copenhagen, April 2: More than 200 years after being sunk by Adm Horatio Nelson and the British fleet, a Danish warship has been discovered on the seabed of Copenhagen Harbour by marine archaeologists.

Working in thick sediment and almost zero visibility 15 metres (49 feet) beneath the waves, divers are working against the clock to unearth the 19th-century wreck of the Dannebrog before it becomes a construction site in a new housing district being built off the Danish coast.

Denmark's Viking Ship Museum, which is leading the monthslong underwater excavations, announced its findings Thursday, 225 years to the day since the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801.

"It's a big part of the Danish national feeling," said Morten Johansen, the museum's head of maritime archaeology.

A great deal has been written about the battle "by very enthusiastic spectators, but we actually don't know how it was



to be on board a ship being shot to pieces by English warships and some of that story we can probably learn from seeing the wreck", Johansen said.

In the Battle of Copenhagen, Nelson and the British fleet attacked and defeated Denmark's navy as it formed a protective blockade outside the harbour.

Thousands were killed and wounded during the brutal hours-long naval clash, considered one of Nelson's "great battles". The intention was to force Denmark out of an alliance of Northern European powers,

including Russia, Prussia and Sweden. At the centre of the fighting was the Danish flagship, the Dannebrog, commanded by Commodore Olfert Fischer.

The 48-metre (157-ft) warship was Nelson's main target. Cannon fire tore through its upper deck before incendiary shells sparked a fire aboard.

"(It was) a nightmare to be on board one of these ships," Johansen said. "When a cannonball hits a ship, it's not the cannonball that does the most damage to the crew, it's wooden splinters flying everywhere,

very much like grenade debris," he added.

The battle also is believed to have inspired the phrase "to turn a blind eye". After deciding to ignore a superior's signal, Nelson, who had lost sight in his right eye, reportedly remarked: "I have only one eye, I have a right to be blind sometimes."

Nelson eventually offered a truce and a ceasefire was later agreed with Denmark's Crown Prince Frederik.

The stricken Dannebrog slowly drifted northward and exploded. Records say the sound created a deafening roar across Copenhagen.

Marine archaeologists have discovered two cannons, uniforms, insignia, shoes, bottles and even part of a sailor's lower jaw, perhaps one of the 19 unaccounted-for crew members who likely lost their lives that day.

The dig site will soon be enveloped by construction work for Lynetteholm, a megaproject to build a new housing district in the middle of Copenhagen Harbour that is expected to be completed by 2070. Marine archaeologists began

surveying the area late last year, targeting a spot thought to match the flagship's final position.

Experts say the sizes of the wooden parts found match old drawings. Dendrochronological dating, the method of using tree rings to establish the age of wood, match the year the ship was built.

They also say the darkened dig site is full of cannonballs, a hazard for divers navigating waters darkened by clouds of silt stirred up from the seabed.

"Sometimes you can't see anything, and then you really have to just feel your way, look with your fingers instead of with your eyes," diver and maritime archaeologist Marie Jonsson said.

Chronicled in books and painted on canvases, the 1801 battle is deeply embedded in Denmark's national story. Archaeologists hope their discoveries may help reexamine the event that shaped the Scandinavian country and perhaps uncover personal stories of those who went into battle on that day 225 years ago.



The definition of success for modern enterprises has fundamentally evolved. It's no longer just about delivery - it's about earning attention, establishing credibility, and driving meaningful conversion

PRIAM BOSE | GLOBAL HEAD, GTM, TRUECALLER

US CRUDE TOPS \$110/BARREL

Oil rose more than 10 per cent and US futures tumbled Thursday after President Donald Trump said in his first national address since the Iran war began that the United States will escalate its campaign in the coming weeks. Futures for the S and P 500 tumbled 1.5 per cent before the opening bell, while futures for the Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 1.4 per cent. Nasdaq futures slid 2 per cent



of the day **note**

While global investors are likely to remain cautious in the near-term on account of volatilities in trade, crude and commodities markets, this phase is expected to be transient in nature



BADAL YAGNIK | CEO & MD, COLLIERS INDIA

Being the world's fastest growing economy, India holds huge promise for investors who will continue to look at the India opportunity in greater numbers and greater value in the future



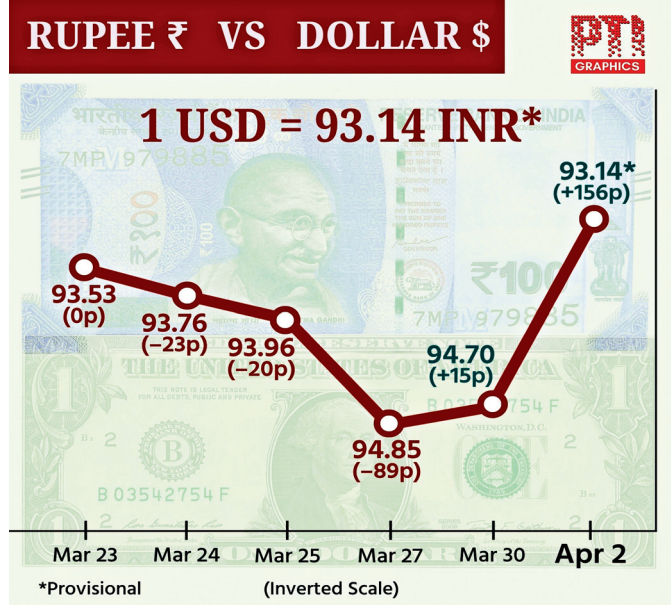
PIYUSH GOVAL | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

SIP flows for the industry are set to decline further in March from February's Rs 29,845 crore because this has been the historical experience where any concern lead to a relook into SIPs



AVINASH SATWALEKAR | PRESIDENT, FRANKLIN TEMPLETON ASSET MANAGEMENT INDIA

₹ strengthens 1.6% after RBI measures



Reserve Bank steps in with a slew of measures to restrict banks from onshore forward markets

its previous closing level. The local currency breached the 95-level Monday before closing at 94.70 versus the greenback. It had settled at a historic low of 94.84 against the dollar on Friday, prompting the RBI to intervene with multiple measures.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 2: The rupee logged one of its steepest single-day gains in many years and settled 152 paise higher at 93.18 against the US dollar Thursday after the Reserve Bank stepped in with a slew of measures to restrict banks from onshore forward markets.

The domestic unit, however, remained under pressure due to the unabated withdrawal of foreign capital, a strengthening dollar, and rising crude oil prices amid a volatile geopolitical situation, forex analysts said.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 94.62 and registered a sharp single-day surge of 188 paise to touch an intra-day high of 92.82 against the greenback. At the end of the session, the rupee was quoted at 93.18 against the dollar, higher by 152 paise, or 1.6 per cent, from

the recovery appears more of a technical pullback after sharp depreciation rather than a trend reversal. Near-term support for rupee is seen near 92.50 and resistance at 93.50," Trivedi said. Through its circular dated March 27, 2026, the RBI

RBI allows exchange of INR at forex counters in international airports

The Reserve Bank Thursday allowed residents as well as non-residents to exchange Indian rupee notes at foreign exchange counters at departure halls in international airports beyond the immigration or customs desk. Earlier, such foreign exchange counters were only allowed to buy Indian rupee from non-residents and sell foreign currency to them. "On a review, it has been decided to allow residents (along with non-residents) to exchange Indian rupee notes at foreign exchange counters at the departure halls in the international airports established in the duty-free area or security hold area beyond the immigration or customs desk," the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in a circular. The Master Direction on Money Changing Activities is being amended accordingly, it added.

capped the net open position on the Indian rupee for banks at USD 100 million, mandating compliance by April 10.

RBI crackdown

On Wednesday, the RBI announced more measures for banks and forex dealers following a "review of evolving market conditions". It said banks authorised to deal in foreign exchange will not be able to offer non-deliverable derivative contracts involving the rupee to resident or non-resident users. Besides, the central bank also restricted the users from rebooking any foreign exchange derivative contract, whether deliverable or non-deliverable, which is cancelled after the date of issuance of these instructions. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.60 per cent higher at 100.05. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading at \$108.08 per barrel, up 6.84 per cent, in futures trade. Equity and forex markets will remain closed Friday due to Good Friday.

Passion for healthcare paramount: Manoj

Manoj Nayak is the founder of Kalinga Biomedical, an enterprise rooted in his deep technical expertise. Born in Sartarpur, Bhubaneswar, he attended Chinmay Vidyalaya, Rourkela, before pursuing a Diploma in Biotech at UCPES, Berhampur. He furthered his specialisation with a B.Tech in Biomedical Engineering from MIET, Bhubaneswar. Today, Manoj leverages his academic background to drive innovation in the healthcare sector, focusing on advancing medical technology and delivering impactful biomedical solutions within Odisha and beyond. Excerpts...



MANOJ NAYAK | FOUNDER, KALINGA BIOMEDICAL

What has been the key driver behind Kalinga Biomedical's growth in Odisha's medical equipment market since 2015-18?

Since our inception in 2015, Kalinga Biomedical has grown from a local partnership firm into one of Odisha's leading medical equipment suppliers. Our rapid growth has been driven by a strong focus on technological innovation and affordable accessibility. By offering the best equipment at competitive prices, we have enabled mid-sized hospitals and rural clinics to upgrade their infrastructure. We provide turnkey solutions for modular ICUs, modern pathology labs, radiology equipment, and modular OT setups, helping healthcare providers deliver better and more efficient services.

vide quality medical equipment at affordable prices. Being led by a team of professional biomedical engineers, we have been able to outperform traditional suppliers who often lack core technical expertise. Our strong understanding of human anatomy combined with medical electronics enables us to deliver effective, customised solutions to our clients, including doctors and hospital owners.

What challenges does the medical equipment trading and distribution industry face today — such as regulatory compliance or pricing pressures?

In terms of regulatory compliance, we face several challenges, particularly in government procurements such as AIIMS, OSMCL, and GeM. These include strict requirements like USFDA approvals, Make in India clauses, and CDSCO licensing. Given the critical nature of healthcare, medical equipment should always be handled by trained professionals to ensure patient safety. On the pricing front, recent GST revisions have made equipment more affordable, with tax rates reduced from 18% to 5%.

and awareness around these essential medical devices. During this period, many non-medical companies also entered the sector, importing and supplying such products, and some successfully evolved into established medical device businesses by adapting quickly to market needs and opportunities.

What is your long-term vision — deeper penetration within Odisha or expansion into other states?

My long-term vision is to promote and provide 'Make in Odisha' medical devices to people across Odisha as well as other states of the country, ensuring accessibility, affordability, and quality healthcare solutions. As an entrepreneur, what motivated you to enter this field, and what advice would you share with those aspiring to build a successful career in this industry? While working with distributor firms and MNCs, I observed a lack of professionalism in the medical equipment sector, where customers often did not receive proper knowledge about the machines they invested in. This motivated me to bridge that gap using my biomedical engineering expertise and deliver meaningful, effective solutions that impact lives. My advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is that if you are passionate about medical devices and human anatomy, this field offers immense potential to build something impactful and successful.

SHORT TAKES

Silver slumps ₹9K, gold drops ₹3,500

New Delhi: Silver prices fell sharply by Rs 9,000 to Rs 2.37 lakh per kilogram in the national capital Thursday, while gold declined Rs 3,500 to Rs 1.51 lakh per 10 grams amid a bearish sentiment in the domestic market. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal depreciated Rs 9,000, or 3.66 per cent, to Rs 2,37,000 (inclusive of all taxes) from Thursday's closing level of Rs 2,46,000 per kg. Gold of 99.9 per cent purity also declined Rs 3,500, or 2.26 per cent, to Rs 1,51,500 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). In the international market, spot silver plummeted by \$5.49, or 7.32 per cent, to \$69.57 per ounce, while gold declined \$166.79, or 3.51 per cent, to \$4,591.52 per ounce.

M&M to raise prices of non-electric SUVs, CVs

Mumbai: Mahindra & Mahindra Friday said it will increase the prices of its non-electric SUVs and commercial vehicles by up to 2.5 per cent from April 6. The company attributed the latest price hike to a combination of cost escalations. "Mahindra & Mahindra announces an increase in prices of up to 2.5 per cent for its ICE (powered) SUV and CV range, with an average hike of 1.6 per cent across the portfolio," the company said in a statement. This price increase is effective from April 6, it said. For the recently introduced XUV700, the price hike is expected to come into effect after the delivery to the first 40,000 price-protected bookings, the company said. Various auto makers including Tata Motors, JSW MG Motor India, BMW, Audi India and Mercedes-Benz have already increased their vehicle prices from April 1 on account of rising input costs.

UPI achieves record 22.64bn transactions

New Delhi: Transaction through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) touched a record high of 22.64 billion in volume terms in March. "UPI achieves 22.64 Bn transaction count in March'26! Thank you, India, for embracing digital payments and driving this revolution forward. Let's continue the journey of transforming the way we transact!," Department of Financial Services said in a post on X.

MIDDLE EAST TURMOIL

Factory activity cools with oil costs rising

Bangalore, April 2: India's manufacturing sector grew at its slowest pace in nearly four years in March as the war in the Middle East stoked uncertainty, disrupted supply chains and dented demand, while higher oil prices drove up input costs, a private survey showed. The HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), compiled by S&P Global, fell to 53.9 in March from 56.9 in February, broadly in line with a preliminary estimate of 53.8. New orders - a key gauge for

demand - and output expanded at their weakest rate in close to four years. Export orders surged to a six-month high in March. Firms faced their steepest cost pressures since August 2022, with prices for aluminium, chemicals, fuel and steel all rising sharply. Despite the surge in input costs, companies raised selling prices at the slowest pace in two years. Employment growth stayed solid in March with the pace hitting a seven-month high as firms added staff to clear backlogs and support expansion plans.

Stock markets stage stunning comeback

Sensex rises 185 pts, Nifty reclaims 22,700 on value buying

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 2: Staging a spirited recovery, stock markets pared early losses to close higher Thursday, with the benchmark Sensex rising by 185 points and the broader Nifty settling above 22,700 on strong value buying in IT and banking shares and a sharp rebound in the rupee. Rebounding more than 2,000

points from the day's low, the 30-share BSE Sensex finally settled higher by 185.23 points, or 0.25 per cent, at 73,319.55. The index opened lower and tanked further by 1,588 points to hit a day's low of 71,545.81 in the first half of the session. Strong value buying in IT bellwethers like HCL Tech and TCS, and banking giants HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank, helped the barometer recover from sharp losses, hitting a high of 73,568.54 in the pre-close session. The 50-share NSE Nifty followed a similar trajectory and closed above 22,700 at 22,713.10,



up by 33.70 points, or 0.15 per cent. The index fell 496.85 points, or 2.19 per cent, in early trade before recovering to hit a high of 22,782.30. Bargain hunting in IT stocks supported the recovery, with

HCL Technologies and Tech Mahindra ending nearly 3 per cent higher. Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, Bajaj Finance, Maruti Suzuki India, Titan, Axis Bank, Bharat Electronics Ltd, Kotak Mahindra Bank and ITC were the major gainers among Sensex shares. On the other hand, Asian Paints, Eternal, Sun Pharmaceuticals, NTPC, Reliance Industries, PowerGrid, Mahindra & Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Adani Ports, Bajaj Finserv and Tata Steel were the only laggards.

AKSHAYA TRITIYA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Festive sparkle at Chandi Bhandar

Bhubaneswar, April 2: Akshaya Tritiya, a festival symbolising prosperity and new beginnings, continues to hold deep cultural significance across India. Celebrated as an auspicious occasion for making meaningful purchases, the day is believed to usher in wealth and good fortune. Marking the occasion, Chandi Bhandar presents an extensive range of silver jewellery and artefacts, positioning itself as a one-stop destination for silver enthusiasts. Known for its purity and heritage craftsmanship, the brand has earned the trust of customers across generations. The collections are thoughtfully curated to cater to diverse tastes and age groups. The women's range includes



zircon-studded necklaces, bangles, earrings, rings, bracelets and payals, suitable for both festive wear and everyday elegance. For men, the Amogh Collection features refined bracelets, rings, cufflinks and chains, while a dedicated kids' collection offers playful yet premium designs. Expanding beyond tradi-

tional offerings, the store also showcases a lifestyle segment that includes silver-accented wine glasses, bottles and tea sets, blending wellness with aesthetics. Wooden silver-work trays and other decor pieces further enhance its gifting portfolio. To celebrate the festive spirit, Chandi Bhandar is offering

up to 30% off on silver jewellery and artefacts from April 3 to April 19. In line with its growth trajectory, the brand is set to open its 28th store in Bargarh, strengthening its footprint in Odisha. It has also taken a significant step towards national expansion with its entry into Raipur, where two outlets have been established at VIP Road and Pandri. "We are deeply grateful for the immense love and support of the people of Odisha, which has given us the confidence to expand beyond horizons. This is just the beginning of many more milestones to come," said Lipsa Hans. Established in 2013, Chandi Bhandar has grown into Odisha's largest silver jewellery chain, with a strong presence across the state.

TPNODL PRIORITISES PUBLIC SAFETY

Balasure: TP Northern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPNODL), a joint venture between Tata Power and the Government of Odisha, continues to reinforce its commitment to operational safety and community well-being. In a major safety drive, the company has successfully relocated electrical transformers from over 1,700 schools and Anganwadi center premises across its operation area. Recognising that children's safety is a paramount concern, TPNODL has proactively shifted these assets to external locations and constructed robust fencing to eliminate potential hazards within educational environments. This initiative ensures that high-voltage equipment is situated away from student activity areas, significantly reducing electrical accident risk in learning environments. The project has seen extensive implementation across five districts to ensure comprehensive coverage. In Balasure alone, TPNODL has shifted transformers from 567 educational sites, while 356 institutions in Jajpur have been cleared of similar hazards. The safety drive has also successfully addressed approximately 350 institutions in Keonjhar, 217 in Bhadrak, and more than 250 in Mayurbhanj. Beyond mere relocation, the company has reinforced these new installations with the construction of dedicated fencing and protective barriers to provide an additional layer of safety for the surrounding community. In tandem with its relocation efforts, TPNODL is aggressively pursuing a region-wide fencing campaign for existing transformers located in public spaces. To date, specialized fences have been installed at 781 transformer sites in Balasure, 586 in Baripada, 476 in Jajpur, nearly 400 in Bhadrak, and over 300 in Keonjhar. These measures are designed to prevent accidental contact and ensure that electrical infrastructure remains isolated and secure.



Klaasen's fifty guides SRH to 65-run victory

KKR slump continues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 2: Heinrich Klaasen's experience-driven half-century guided Sunrisers Hyderabad back to winning ways as they thrashed Kolkata Knight Riders by 65 runs in their IPL clash here Thursday.

Blessing Muzarabani grabbed 4/41 but it was Klaasen's composed 52 off 35 balls that held Sunrisers Hyderabad's innings together as they posted a competitive 226/8 after KKR opted to bowl.

Chasing the daunting target, KKR never found momentum as they were bundled out for 161 and slumped to their second successive defeat, having lost their opening match to Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede.

Boasting a batting-heavy lineup in Finn Allen, IPL's costliest overseas buy Cameron Green (Rs 25.20-crore), Rinku Singh and Sunil Narine, the target at the free-flowing Eden looked par.

It needed a partnership in the middle but there were clear signs of a lack of chemistry in the KKR line-up as they lasted just 16 overs.

That their mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy leaked 25 runs in one over and returned with 0/31 from two overs also hurt them. Narine (0/39) also returned wicketless from his four overs.

For SRH, left-arm pacer Jaydev Unadkat took 3/21 from three overs that included the wicket of Rahane, while Ehsan Malinga (2/14 in two overs) and Nitish Kumar Reddy (2/17 in two overs) were also effective.

KKR's veteran skipper Ajink-



ya Rahane's painful eight off 10 balls once again raised questions over the team's bold leadership call, while partnerships failed to materialise.

Youngster Angkrish Raghuvanshi showed promise with a breezy 52 (29 balls; 6x4, 2x6) but there was no support from the other end.

Fresh from his 100 not out in the T20 World Cup semifinal against South Africa a month ago on the same wicket, Kiwi opener Finn Allen showed early sparks in a seven-ball 28 (4x4, 2x6).

But once he fell to Harsh Dubey giving a return catch, the innings unravelled quickly.

KKR's star recruit Green endured another failure, run out for two, following a chaotic mix-up with Raghuvanshi who played the shot. But Malinga stopped the ball with his foot

and Green was off the crease.

Walking in after a dramatic middle-over slide from being 110/1 in eight overs to 118/4 in 9.2 overs, Klaasen rebuilt the innings with calm assurance, ensuring the run rate never dipped out of control.

Even as boundaries dried up, the seasoned South African smartly rotated strike and ran hard between the wickets, keeping SRH around the 11-run mark alongside Nitish Kumar Reddy (39; 24 balls) in a match-deciding 82 runs alliance off 53 balls.

The duo put on 50 run together in just 36 balls, with Klaasen striking four fours and a six in his composed 52 off 35 deliveries as they maintained the tempo set by their opening duo of Travis Head (46; 21 balls) and Abhishek Sharma (48; 21 balls).

The SRH opening duo raced to an 82-run opening stand in just 34 deliveries, propelling the side to nearly 15 runs per over as KKR's inexperience with the ball started to haunt them.

Brief Scores:

Sunrisers Hyderabad: 226 for 8 in 20 overs (Heinrich Klaasen 52; Blessing Muzarabani 4/41) beat **Kolkata Knight Riders:** 161 all out in 16 overs (Angkrish Raghuvanshi 52; Jaydev Unadkat 3/21, Nitish Kumar Reddy 2/17, Eshan Malinga 2/14) by 65 runs

TODAY'S MATCH

CSK VS PBKS

TIME: 7:30 PM

Star Sports channels & JioHotstar

KHELO INDIA TRIBAL GAMES

Odisha sweeps hockey gold double

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Raipur, April 2: Odisha concluded its impressive campaign by winning both the men's and women's hockey gold medals at the Khelo India Tribal Games 2026 in Raipur, held at the Vallabhbai Patel International Hockey Stadium.

The men's final saw Odisha beat Jharkhand 4-1, while the women's final was a tight contest, with Odisha narrowly defeating Mizoram 1-0. Jharkhand's men's team earned silver; Chhattisgarh took bronze; and, in the women's category, Jharkhand also claimed a well-deserved bronze to round out the podium.

At the Khelo India Tribal Games 2026 in Raipur, Odisha's double gold in men's and women's hockey was more than just a sporting victory; it showcased how the game is transforming lives across the tribal regions of Odisha, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh. The northeastern states, renowned for their sporting talent, also shone, with Mizoram progressing to the knockout rounds at KITG 2026.

Odisha's men's team secured a decisive 4-1 victory over Jharkhand in the final, while the women's team narrowly defeated Mizoram 1-0 in a tense championship match. Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh also earned spots on the podium, highlighting the growing talent from these areas. However, the true story extends beyond medals, reaching into villages, forests, and communities where hockey has become a symbol of identity and a source of opportunity.

Hockey has been a part of tribal culture for decades, with children making sticks from tree branches and play-



ing barefoot on rough ground. While the talent was always present, the path to success was unclear. That is now beginning to change.

With Centres of Excellence managed by the Union sports ministry and states, along with enhanced infrastructure and organised grassroots programmes, a strong ecosystem is gradually forming. Former Olympian Ajit Lakra, a member of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics Indian hockey team and now head coach at the Bilaspur Centre of Excellence, observes this transition firsthand and said, "The entire system, right from grassroots to junior and then senior levels, is gradually becoming stronger. Athletes from tribal regions, in particular, are benefiting greatly. Their natural talent is now being refined with proper guidance and training."

Lakra believes this structured support is creating a

ripple effect. "When children come here, learn and perform well, they inspire others. This is creating a chain, with new players continuously emerging," he said.

Regions previously impacted by socio-economic issues and Naxalism are now experiencing a subtle change through sports. Hockey is becoming a unifying force, integrating communities into the national fabric. The sports ministry's ASMITA programme is increasingly involving women players and helping them become part of the mainstream.

Odisha's double victory at Raipur symbolises a broader movement where villages are emerging as hubs of excellence, and hockey is inspiring a new generation's dreams. From dusty Bastar fields to bustling Raipur stadiums, these athletes' journey is transforming Indian hockey and impacting the social fabric of tribal India.

Road tough for Indians in Candidates chess

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paphos (Cyprus), April 2: After defeating Anish Giri of the Netherlands in the first round, Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa is yet to win a game in the Candidates chess tournament here and the road ahead for him looks difficult as Uzbek Javokhir Sindarov has a head start that everyone will be envious of.

With four rounds out of ten done, Praggnanandhaa is sitting on two points and it is suffice to say that it's a pretty decent start except when one looks at the results of Sindarov.

The Uzbek had stunned the chess audience world over by winning the World Chess Cup in Goa last year and he seems unstoppable having scored 3.5 points out of his four games.

For any strong event like this, either the start or the business end is crucial. And with this kind of start, it is clear that Sindarov is the most feared opponent unless someone brings him down.

That said, the Uzbek brand of chess is also dependent on his ability to go for complexities where he tries to outplay opposition. And this could be one point on which the other elite players will bank on going further as anything can happen in positions which have three possible results.

With Sindarov on 3.5, Caruana stands second on 2.5 while Praggnanandhaa, Matthias



Bluebaum of Germany and Giri share the next three spots on 2 points each. Hikaru Nakamura of the United States and Wei Yi of China come in next on 1.5 points while Andrey Esipenko of Russia is in last spot with just one point in his kitty.

In the women's tournament being held simultaneously, Bibisara Assaubayeva of Kazakhstan and Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine share the lead on 2.5 points. Russians Kateryna Lagno and Aleksandra Goryachkina along with Jiner Zhu of China and Indian R Vaishali share the third spot on 2 points each while Divya Deshmukh and Zhongyi Tan are not far behind on 1.5 points.

In the open section, Sindarov has clearly been the pick of the players with his never-say-die attitude and his skills in the tactical patterns. His game against Praggnanandhaa probably stands out as his best effort in the event thus far wherein he sacrificed a piece early and got great counter play.

For Praggnanandhaa, things need to improve if he has to make a bid to play the next world championship match against D Gukesh.

India's woeful Shotgun WC campaign ends sans medal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tangier (Morocco), April 2: Indian shooters' disappointing run showed no signs of abating, as both mixed team pairs turned in sub-par performances to finish way down in the standings, capping a forgettable outing at the ISSF Shotgun World Cup here Thursday.

Extending India's run of underwhelming results in the men's and women's skeet and trap events, the mixed doubles pair of Olympian Prithviraj Tondaiman and Kirti Gupta could only muster an aggregate of 134, slumping to a disappointing 18th place in a 33-team field.

Only the top four teams enter the finals. Tondaiman scored 69 (24, 22, 23) in his three round of 25 each, totalling 75 while Gupta missed 10 clay targets to finish with 65 (22, 22, 21).

The other Indian pair, Olympians Kynan Chennai and Rajeshwari Kumari, also endured a below-par outing, combining for a modest 130 to finish 25th. Chennai shot 68 (25, 21, 22), while Rajeshwari managed 62 (18, 22, 22), in the season-opening World Cup -- an event whose scores carry significant weight for selection for the Asian Games in Japan later this year.

With the next Shotgun World Cup scheduled in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in May, India have already announced their squad,



and notably, none of the shooters from the current event have been retained.

The national squad's dismal showing at the Tangier World Cup could prove costly, potentially knocking several shooters out of Asian Games contention, while handing the next batch -- set to compete at the Almaty World Cup -- a crucial opportunity to stake their claim for a berth at the continental showpiece in Aichi-Nagoya this September-October.

Amid the team's underwhelming showing here, the

omission of the most experienced trap shooter, World Championships bronze medalist and world No 4 Zoravar Singh -- cited as "workload management" -- remains a questionable decision.

Fresh from winning a World Championships bronze -- becoming only the third Indian trap shooter to achieve the feat -- Zoravar competed in last year's season-ending World Cup Final in Doha and lived up to expectations by reaching the medal round, only to narrowly miss out on a podium finish.

India look for fifth SAFF U20 title in summit clash against tough B'desh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Male, April 2: A familiar rivalry will take centre stage when four-time champions India face Bangladesh in the summit clash of the SAFF Men's U20 Championship at the National Stadium here Friday.

With both sides having shared intense contests in recent times, including a 1-1 draw in the group stage, the final promises another gripping encounter where composure and belief could decide the title.

India head into the summit clash aiming to defend their crown and secure a fifth SAFF trophy at this level. The weight of history, therefore, will add to the intensity.

India coach Mahesh Gawli acknowledged the challenge posed by Bangladesh.

"It won't be easy. Bangladesh are an aggressive and talented side, and it will be tough for us," Gawli said.

"Moreover, there will be a lot of support for them in the stadium. Our boys are used to that. We just have to perform on the ground. But we will focus on our goal and performance."

The final also brings back memories of last year's SAFF U19 Championship summit clash, where India defeated Bangladesh on penalties after a 1-1 draw in regulation time. Bangladesh will be eager to reverse that result, adding another layer of anticipation to the contest.

The two teams also met earlier in the group stage, playing out a hard-fought draw on March 28. That result underlined how closely matched the two sides are.

Their journeys to the final, however, have been contrasting. India produced an emphatic performance in the semifinal, scoring five goals against Bhutan, while Bangladesh battled to a narrow 1-0 win over Nepal to secure their place.



Tendulkar pens heartfelt note on 2011 WC win

India's 2011 World Cup triumph marked a defining chapter in the country's sporting history, as the team fulfilled a long-cherished dream

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 2: India legend Sachin Tendulkar recalled the emotions of the 2011 ICC Cricket World Cup Final on the 15th anniversary of one of India's most iconic triumphs, a night that remains etched in the nation's memory.

Tendulkar played a key role in India's successful 2011 World Cup win on home soil, a historic moment cherished by



all Indian fans. In his last tournament, the Master ended his drought by lifting the trophy at his home ground, becoming India's highest run-scorer among a star-studded team.

Sharing a video on X, Tendulkar reflected on the inten-

sity and significance of that historic moment as he wrote, "The first ball always makes your heart race... and that night, it never stopped. 15 years later, it still stays with us. We all grew up as a bunch of young cricketers, united by

The first ball always makes your heart race... and that night, it never stopped. 15 years later, it still stays with us. We all grew up as a bunch of young cricketers, united by one dream. To win the World Cup for India. To everyone who was a part of the journey, and to all the fans...thank you for sharing it with us and making it so special. Jai Hind!

SACHIN TENDULKAR

one dream. To win the World Cup for India. To everyone who was a part of the journey, and to all the fans...thank you for sharing it with us and mak-