

Mrunal's perspective
 Actor Mrunal Thakur says language doesn't matter in a movie, it's the genre which matters
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Stage-I forest clearance for Puri airport

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 4: The Centre has accorded in-principle approval for stage-I forest clearance for the proposed Shree Jagannath International Airport in Puri, officials said Saturday.

The greenfield airport project, mooted by former Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in 2021, received conditional clearance to convert around 27 hectares of forest land for construction.

Puri District Collector Divyajyoti Parida said that the stage-I clearance by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is subject to fulfilment of conditions, including compensatory afforestation, wildlife conservation, and adherence to environmental regulations.

"Once these conditions are met, the project can seek stage-II clearance, which grants full approval for construction," the Collector added.

The official said that the ministry concerned has conveyed its approval in a letter to the state government.

The approval permits diversion of 27.887 hectares of DLC (district level committee) forest land under the Puri Forest Division for the airport project, in accordance with Section 2 (1) (ii) of the Act.

The proposed airport will be developed over 1,164 acres at Girala village, with an estimated project cost of ₹5,631 crore. The first phase is designed to handle approximately 46 lakh passengers annually, significantly improving connectivity and boosting tourism in Puri.

The airport is expected to significantly enhance direct connectivity between Puri and major metropolitan cities across India, strengthening tourism and regional development, officials said.



AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING
 Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi guiding a child to write during the 'Khadi Chhuan' ritual, marking the beginning of studies, for first-time students in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

CM: No child will be denied education

Bhubaneswar, April 4: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday performed the customary 'Khadi Chhuan' ritual, marking the beginning of studies, for first-time students at a function here and asserted that no child in the state would remain deprived of education.

Majhi, a teacher by profession, held the hands of children and guided them to write "Maa-Bapa" (mother-father) in Odia using chalk and slate at the Raj Bhavan Government Upper Primary School, the venue of the state-level 'Khadi Chhuan' programme.

Interacting with children, the Chief Minister asked them their names, their fathers' names and what they had eaten in the morning, keeping in mind their comfort and mindset. He also visited an exhibition of content-based educational materials developed for children and distributed educational support kits among them.

Majhi said the ritual is a sacred tradition in Odia culture, in which kids are introduced to education at a very tender age.

The Chief Minister said the state government has distributed around 5 lakh invitation letters to parents to bring their children to 'Sishu Vatika' centres opened in various schools to boost enrolment. The Chief Minister reiterated the government's commitment to ensuring that no child is deprived of education and that learning becomes a source of interest and respect rather than fear. The ultimate goal, he stressed, is achieving 100 per cent enrolment.

"We organise 'Khadi Chhuan' as a festival from the village level to the state capital. The objective is to ensure that no child in the state is deprived of education. We are taking all steps to create interest among children and their parents towards education. Our goal is 100 per cent enrolment," he said.

According to the new education policy, the CM said anganwadis will be merged with the 'Sishu Vatikas' in a phased manner.

Calling upon media representatives to play an active role, Majhi described them as a vital bridge between government initiatives and the public, urging them to help transform the campaign into a statewide movement. He also advised teachers to nurture children with care and dedication, treat them as their own.

The programme was attended by School and Mass Education Minister Nityanand Gand, local MLAs and officials of the education department.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

You should join INC, dear. You can defy the party line, and they won't do much

2 US jets shot down in 24 hrs

The downing of two American warplanes within 24 hours over Iran has spelled new peril for US President Donald Trump and his administration. Far from a "decimated" adversary, Iran has demonstrated resilience and the capacity to inflict strategic embarrassment on its foe. The incidents expose the fragility of air superiority in a complex theatre and raise troubling questions about operational overreach. As rhetoric outpaces reality, Washington risks deepening a protracted conflict whose consequences are already reverberating far beyond the battlefield

Dubai, April 4: The search is on for one missing US service member while another was rescued after two US warplanes went down in separate incidents in 24 hours including the first shoot-down since the Iran war began nearly five weeks ago.

The incidents occurred just two days after President Donald Trump said in a national address that the US has "beaten and completely decimated Iran."

One fighter jet was shot down in Iran, officials said. A US crew member from that plane was rescued, but a second was missing, and a US military search-and-rescue operation was underway.

Separately, Iranian state media said a US A-10 attack aircraft crashed in the Persian Gulf after being struck by Iranian defence forces.

The incidents show the risks still facing US and Israeli aircraft over Iran, despite assertions by Trump and his Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth that US forces had total control of the skies.

The prospect of a US service person alive and on the run in Iran comes days after Trump threatened to bomb Iran "back to the Stone Ages" in a conflict that has low public support among Americans and threatens lasting damage to the global economy.

Two Black Hawk helicopters engaged in the search for the missing pilot were hit by Iranian fire but made it out of Iranian airspace, two US officials told Reuters.

The scale of injuries to the crew was unclear.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps said it was combing a southwestern area near where the pilot's plane came down, while the regional governor promised a commendation for anyone who captured or killed "forces of the hostile enemy."

Iranians pumelled by American air power since the US and Israel began their attacks February 28 celebrated the plane downings. Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said on X the war had been "downgraded from regime change" to a hunt for pilots.

Trump has been in the White House receiving updates on the rescue effort, a senior administration official told Reuters.

Iran has told mediators it is not prepared to meet with US officials in Islamabad in coming days and that efforts led by Pakistan to reach a ceasefire have hit a dead end, the Wall Street Journal said Friday.

The conflict has killed 13 US military service members, with more than 300 wounded, the US Central Command says.

Artemis II astronauts seek to break Apollo 13's record

Washington, April 4: Now more than halfway to the moon, the Artemis II astronauts were toasted by Canada Saturday as they prepared for their historic lunar fly-around to push deeper into space than even the Apollo astronauts.

The three Americans and one Canadian will reach their destination Monday, photographing the mysterious lunar far side as they zoom around. It's the first moonbound crew in more than 53 years, picking up where NASA's Apollo programme left off.

Artemis II was poised to set a distance record for humans, traveling more than 252,000 miles (400,000 kilometres) from Earth before hanging a U-turn behind the moon and heading home without stopping or entering lunar orbit. The record is currently held by Apollo 13.

The Canadian Space Agency celebrated the country's role in the mission, speaking from Quebec with astronaut Jeremy Hansen as he headed toward his lunar rendezvous. Hansen is the first non-US citizen to fly to the moon.

"Today he is making history for Canada," said Canadian Space Agency President Lisa Campbell. "As we watch him taking this bold step into the unknown, let his journey remind us that Canada's future is written by those who dare to reach for more."

In the live televised link-up, Hansen said he's already witnessed "extraordinary" views from NASA's Orion capsule. Hansen, Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch are the world's first lunar astronauts since Apollo 17's crew of three in 1972. Koch and Glover are the first female and first Black astronauts to the moon, respectively.

Their nearly 10-day mission - ending with a Pacific splashdown on April 10 - is the first step in NASA's bold plans for a sustainable moon base. The space agency is aiming for a moon landing by two astronauts near the lunar south pole in 2028.

OrissaPOST

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GHOST WHISPERER STAR DEE FREEMAN DEAD AT 66

Actress Dee Freeman, known for roles in *The Young and the Restless* and *Sistas*, has died aged 66 following a battle with stage four lung cancer. The star's family announced on social media that she had passed away Friday following a battle with stage four lung cancer.

STONE NAMES BEST KISSER OF HOLLYWOOD

Hollywood actress Sharon Stone has revealed the name of the actor with whom she shared the best on-screen kiss. The actress branded Robert De Niro "the best kisser in the business", reports 'Female First UK'. The 68-year-old actress starred opposite the screen legend in 1995's *Casino*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you may simply take a day off to be with your spouse or kids. You may even want to catch up with relatives living in your vicinity. Your loved ones will be mighty happy and pleasantly surprised, and Ganesha approves.

TAURUS
A day to talk things out, perhaps some intimate issue that has been on your mind for a while, predicts Ganesha. Pending work may also see completion. You will have an urge to visit holy places or undertake a spiritual journey. Take decisions wisely to avoid unwarranted results, advises Ganesha.

GEMINI
Your interest and performance in sports will go from strength to strength, says Ganesha. You are feeling a bit anxious and will not be able to concentrate on a single job. Instead, you will move from one project to another. You will spend more time at work and less time with the family.

CANCER
You will take advantage of your ability to influence people, predicts Ganesha. At work, your power to communicate will receive widespread approval. You will enjoy social activities later in the day. Meditation will help you relieve your tension in the evening, suggests Ganesha.

LEO
It is time to erase all negative vibes in your surroundings, says Ganesha. The stars ensure that you nurture only the positive aspects of your life today. Chances are that you might find yourself perched atop the horns of dilemma at work, but that shouldn't throw you off your game. Also, you need to be honest in your love life. Secrecy is not the way to go, and it's about time you discussed with your partner certain matters concerning your shared future, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Signs indicate that you shall bring changes you wanted at your workplace. Cash flow will be outrageous, even as your loved ones - on whom it is spent - will love it. Members of the opposite sex will be charmed by your appeal, says Ganesha.

LIBRA
Handling people was never so easy, points out Ganesha, as today, you do extremely well in the area of public relations. You have the answers to satisfy all, and keep them that way. So, do not be surprised if you happen to find yourself assigned to some sort of a probing and demanding job at work. When you are the best, you always seem to get the raw deal.

SCORPIO
The income, which you had written off as bad-debts may be recovered unexpectedly in business, foresees Ganesha. Home and office, both demand your attention equally. And you are just happy that you are able to manage both the places gracefully.

SAGITTARIUS
Your role in bringing around important and influential deals will be pivotal indeed, says Ganesha. However, at work, the final result may not actually be up to the standards you expected. But a pleasant evening with your beloved will clear all such shadows and lighten your mood.

CAPRICORN
Your creative bent will come to the fore, and you will also prove to be a very resourceful person, says Ganesha. The valuable advice that you offer to people will help improve their situations at work as well as home, earning you the reputation of a fine counsellor or healer of many ills.

AQUARIUS
Normally, it is you who delegates and call the shots, but today situation will be different. You will be overloaded with work and nobody will be able to share it with you. But, don't get disappointed, as your hard work will be paid off very well, assure Ganesha.

PISCES
Taking a break from work and going off on a small picnic might be a good idea today, says Ganesha. You will be irresistible to the opposite sex, and love affairs in particular are likely to be rewarding and satisfying.

Mrunal busts language myth

Mumbai: Actress Mrunal Thakur is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film *Dacoit*, and at the trailer launch event, she offered a candid perspective on working across languages and genres. Addressing the often-discussed topic of language barriers in Indian cinema, the actress asserted that the genre of a film plays a far more significant role in shaping a performance. "Language doesn't matter. What matters is the genre of the movie. And I have realized that the hold and the pregnant pauses between each dialogue are so important," Mrunal stated.

Elaborating further, she spoke about the specific demands of an action-driven narrative like *Dacoit*, where body language and physicality become key tools for storytelling. "So, there are certain scenes where there is a pause. But, the genre plays a very, very important role in this," she said. Mrunal also pointed out how action films require a distinct performance style compared to more dialogue-heavy or emotional dramas. "When it comes to action, it is more of a stance. There is more need for a pause in a scene. So, it just varies accordingly," she simply mentioned, emphasising that it's the genre that plays an even bigger role.



MADHURI FLAUNTS ODISHA WEAVES

Mumbai: Actress Madhuri Dixit is celebrating the rich textile heritage of Odisha, describing its traditional weaves as more than just fabric, but "stories woven with love and patience." Taking to Instagram, Madhuri shared her admiration for the intricate craftsmanship and timeless appeal of the state's handlooms. She highlighted how each weave reflects generations of skill, culture, and dedication passed down through artisans. "The rich weaving traditions of Odisha—timeless, intricate, full of soul. Not just fabrics, but stories woven with love and patience. Honoured to represent this beautiful legacy," Madhuri said. Odisha is known for its exquisite handlooms, including ikat and Sambalpuri weaves, which are celebrated for their detailed patterns and vibrant col-

ours, making them a significant part of India's cultural fabric. For the unversed, the actress was appointed as the Brand Ambassador for Odisha Handloom August 7, 2025, during the 'Ekta' event on National Handloom Day in Bhubaneswar. IANS

Krithi bats for old-school love

Chennai: Krithi Shetty will be seen in her upcoming film *Love Insurance Kompany*, which is set in the future and discusses love in that time. Recently, she spoke about her real thoughts on love. Recently, the actress mentioned she decided to remain single as she believes in "a very old-school type of love". The actress shared that she likes slow and deep love, not fast relation-

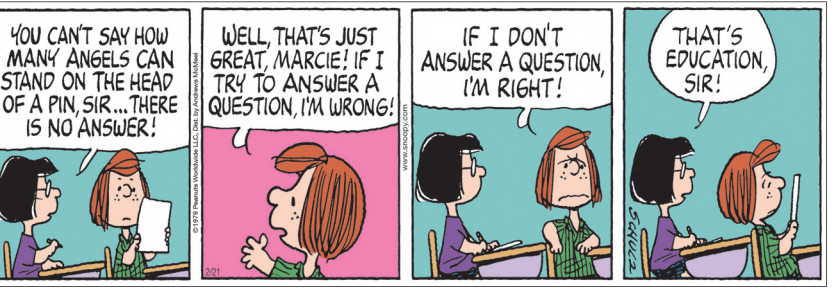
ships. "Personally, being very frank, I decided to stay single because I believe in a very old-school type of love," she said. Krithi shared that she grew up watching old films. She said her father is a big fan of Amitabh Bachchan. She said, "I grew up watching a lot of 80s and 90s movies because my dad is a huge fan of Amitabh Bachchan sir; the kind of love and songs we had back then were so pure and stereotypically old-school, and that's what I still adore." She feels today's love is too fast. She added, "For me to connect to this generation is a little difficult in terms of how fast people are to move on." She hopes to find someone like her in the future. "Maybe in five or ten years, I see myself ending up with someone who has a similar ideology... who still believes in a very sweet, old-fashioned type of love." Krithi is set to feature in a Hindi film very soon. AGENCIES



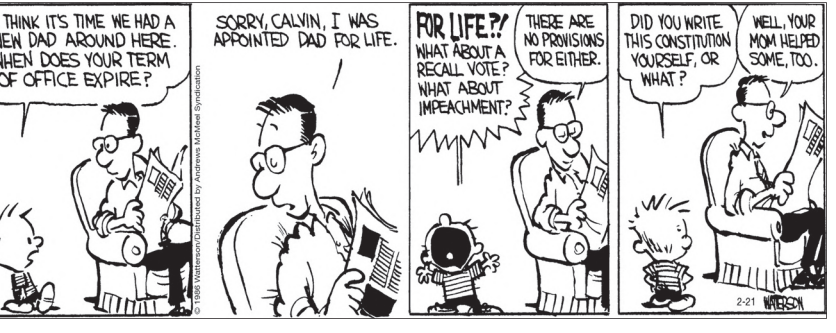
Rajinikanth's big update on Jailer 2

Chennai: Superstar Rajinikanth Saturday dropped a big update on his eagerly awaited action entertainer *Jailer 2*, which is being directed by ace director Nelson Dilipkumar. Answering questions posed by media-persons at the airport, Rajinikanth said, "The film (*Jailer 2*) is in its finishing stage. The production house will announce its date of release." However, Rajinikanth just smiled in reply when media-persons asked him what he would like to say to the people as elections were nearing. When asked when the film in which he was to act with Kamal Haasan was to begin, Rajinikanth replied, "That will happen in August." For the unaware, director Nelson Dilipkumar's *Jailer 2* has triggered huge anticipation among fans and film buffs for several reasons. One of the prime reasons is that *Jailer 2* promises to have loads of action and entertainment just like the first part which went on to emerge a blockbuster, raking in a whopping 650 crores worldwide. IANS

PEANUTS



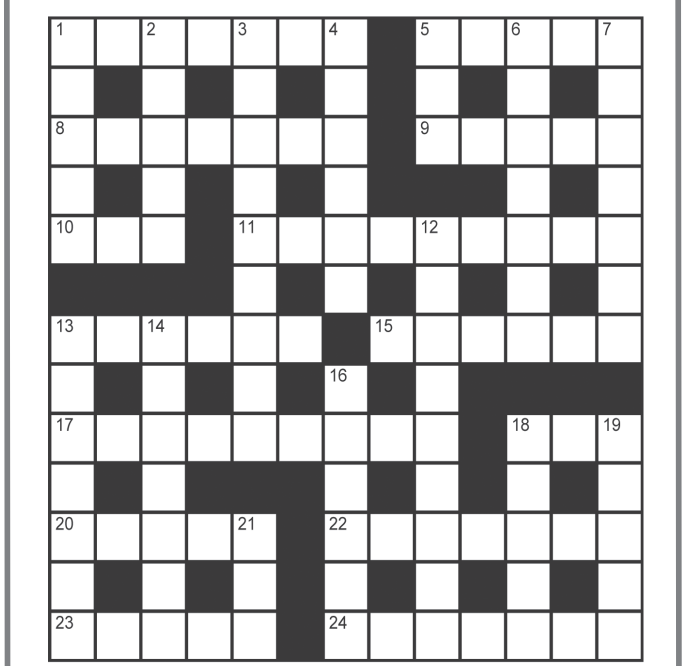
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



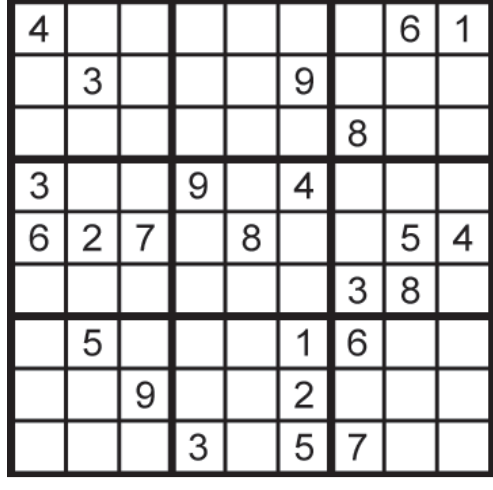
CROSSWORD



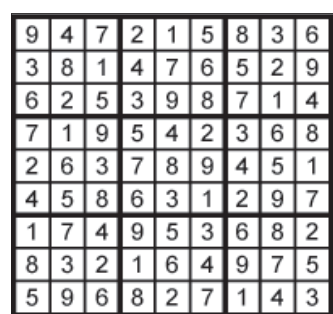
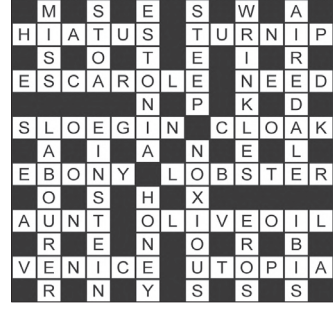
- Across**
1 Wasp's defense
5 Man of morals
8 Novice
9 Look of contempt
10 Dutch city
11 Like a well-known gangster
13 Off course
15 Rushed about
17 Angler's catch
- Down**
18 Circle segment
20 Flightless birds
22 Effusively emotional
23 Curacao neighbor
24 Shake with fear
- 4 Blue moon, e.g.
5 Commercials
6 Look for (4,3)
7 Put into words
12 Hostelry
13 Salzburg site
14 Walden author
16 Fortune
18 Wing it (2-3)
19 Camp craft
21 Health resort

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

Centre okays ₹447cr for NH upgradation in state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 4: The Centre has approved Rs 447.11 crore for upgradation of national highways in Nuapada and Bolangir districts, Union minister Nitin Gadkari said Saturday.

The Kurumpuri-Raj Khariar section, covering a total length of 103.52 km of NH-353 and NH-59, will be upgraded.

Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari, in a post on X, said, "NH-353 and NH-59 together form a vital interstate corridor connecting the Raipur-Mahasamund region of Chhattisgarh with Odisha, extending further towards Berhampur and Gopalpur Port."

Gadkari said this project will significantly strengthen regional and interstate connectivity, ensuring smoother and more efficient movement of both passenger and freight traffic across Nuapada, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, and Ganjam districts of Odisha.

The corridor improvement-through rectification of black spots and provision of paved shoulders-will enhance road safety, particularly for two-wheelers, which constitute a major share of traffic in the region, Gadkari said, adding that it will also improve access to key tourist destinations such as Daringbadi in Kandhamal district, Sunabeda Wildlife Sanctuary in Nuapada district, and nearby hill regions, thereby boosting tourism and local economic development.

Thanking both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Gadkari, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said this investment strengthens a vital interstate corridor, enhancing connectivity across key districts of Odisha.

"This transformative project will significantly improve road safety, enable smoother movement of passengers and freight, and unlock tourism potential at celebrated destinations such as Daringbadi and Sunabeda, accelerating regional development and bringing lasting prosperity to the people of Odisha," Majhi said in a post on X.

Indian-American in race for Washington DC mayor

AGENCIES

Washington, April 4: Rini Sampath, a Tamil Nadu-born candidate, has become the first South Asian person to secure a place on the ballot for Mayor of Washington DC, marking a milestone in the city's political history.

Sampath, who was born in Theni in India and moved to the United States at the age of seven, said the moment carried personal and broader community significance.

"It's so meaningful to me to be the first South Asian person to make the ballot for DC Mayor."

I moved to the United States when I was seven years old in pursuit of the American dream, and I'm in this race to make sure that dream actually works for DC residents," she said.

Her campaign confirmed that more than 4,500 people signed her petition to qualify for the ballot. "I'm thrilled to have had over 4,500 people sign my petition to get me on the ballot for DC Mayor. South Asians contribute so much to our economy but see very little representation in government. I hope my candidacy inspires others to run and do good for their neighbours, and I hope you'll join our campaign," Sampath said.

According to campaign material, Sampath is a 31-year-old government contractor who has lived in the US capital for over a decade. She has positioned her campaign around basic civic services and governance reforms.



ANNUAL FETE: A participant runs alongside his buffalo during Kambala, the traditional buffalo racing event, at Gurupura near Mangaluru, Saturday

State to fill up 1400 teaching posts in varsities

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 4: The state government has initiated steps to fill up teaching and non-teaching posts lying vacant in public universities this year.

Announcing this Saturday, Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj said that the Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC) has been asked to fill up around 1400 teaching posts, including 385 posts of Assistant Professors by July.

He also informed that the process for recruiting Vice-Chancellors in various universities is in the final stage, which will be completed at the earliest. This has been possible after the passing of the Odisha Universities (Amendment) Act, 2024. "There are about 1400 vacancies in universities across the state. We will follow the reservation guidelines given by the Supreme Court and the government. All sections of society will be adequately represented," Suraj told reporters.

He further stated that Staff Selection Board (SSB) has been directed to fill vacancies for non-teaching positions, some of which have already been advertised and start the recruitment process for the rest.

As per official data, 1,430 faculty posts are vacant in 17 state-run universities.

Mukhyamantri Annapurna Yojana gets Cabinet nod

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: The Odisha Cabinet headed by CM Mohan Charan Majhi has taken two major decisions aimed at strengthening social justice in education and enhancing food security across the state.

Addressing the media, Majhi announced revised reservation provisions for higher education institutions and the introduction of a new food distribution scheme, "Mukhyamantri Annapurna Yojana," for the financial year 2026-27.

The Cabinet approved the launch of the "Mukhyamantri Annapurna Yojana" to provide additional rice to beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and State Food Security Scheme (SFSS). Under the scheme, beneficiaries will receive an additional 5 kilograms of rice per person per month free of cost, over and above their regular entitlement.

Currently, 97.97 lakh families covering 3.22 crore individuals benefit under NFSA, while 2.98 lakh families with 5.62 lakh members are covered under SFSS. In total, about one crore families comprising 3.28 crore people will benefit from the new scheme. The state will distribute an average of 1.64 lakh tonne of rice monthly, amounting to 19.71



lakh tonne annually.

The Cabinet approved an estimated monthly expenditure of 734 crore, with an annual outlay of 8,813 crore for the 2026-27 financial year.

Under the Cabinet decision, reservation in admission to medical, engineering and other higher and technical education courses has been revised. Scheduled Tribes (ST) will receive 22.5 per cent reservation, Scheduled Castes (SC) 16.25 per cent, and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) 11.25 per cent. The revised policy will apply to all state universities, affiliated colleges, ITIs, polytechnics and institutions offering courses in engineering, technology, management, medicine, nursing, pharmacy, agriculture, architecture and other professional disciplines at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Majhi stated that the initiative will further strengthen food security, while the reservation reform will empower students from disadvantaged communities and contribute to

building a more inclusive and prosperous Odisha.

The Cabinet also approved the 'Comprehensive Flood Management Scheme' with an outlay of Rs 2781 crore to be spent over a five-year period.

The Cabinet approved the Mukhyamantri Hastatanta Bikasha Yojana for holistic development of handloom sector in the state. A proposal for expenditure in connection with Bhubaneswar Metro Rail Project also got the Cabinet's nod.

Besides, the Cabinet approved the introduction of Odisha Industries Service (Validation of Appointment of Assistant Managers and Assistant Directors) (Amendment) Bill, 2026 for amendment of Odisha Service (Validation of Appointment of Assistant Managers and Assistant Directors) Act, 2025 (Odisha Act 3 of 2017).

The proposal for revival of Badamba Cooperative Sugar Industries Limited also got the Cabinet's nod. The Cabinet gave its approval to a proposal for redevelopment of VSSUT at Burla. The state government will spend Rs 929.96 crore for the initial phase of the project.

Apart from this, a proposal for procurement of 79,033 smartphones under POSHAN Abhiyan was among the 16 proposals approved by the Cabinet.

9 of family killed as car falls into well in Nashik

CM orders safety audit of open wells in public areas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nashik, April 4: Nine members of a family, including six children, were killed after their car fell into an open well in Maharashtra's Nashik district, police said Saturday.

The accident occurred in the Shivaji Nagar area of Dindori town around 10 pm Friday, an official said.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis expressed grief over the deaths of children in the tragic incident, and said that he has ordered an immediate safety audit of open wells in public areas.

According to the police, the victims were returning home after attending a function at a banquet hall in the area when their car fell into a well on the roadside near the venue.

Personnel from the local police and emergency services arrived at the scene and retrieved the car and its occupants with the help of two cranes and swimmers around midnight.

The victims were members of the Dargude family from Indore village in Dindori taluka, the official said.

The deceased were identified as Sunil Dattu Dargude, 32, his wife Reshma, Asha Anil Dar-

gude, 32, and six children from the family - five girls in the age group of seven to 14 years and an 11-year-old boy.

The bodies were brought to the government hospital in Dindori, the official said, adding that a case has been registered.

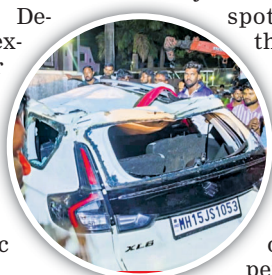
State Disaster Management Minister Girish Mahajan visited the accident spot. He said that the administration has been directed to close the well, and that the government will provide assistance of Rs 5 lakh to the kin of the deceased persons.

The Nashik Collector has been asked to probe the incident and submit an inquiry report, he said.

Speaking to reporters in Nagpur, Fadnis termed the accident "extremely unfortunate".

Preliminary information indicated that the well had a low boundary wall and was in the middle of a frequently accessed area, he said.

The state government has announced financial assistance for the affected family, he said, adding that instructions have been issued to identify and review all wells situated on roads or in areas with public movement.



IF ALIENS EXIST, WHAT WOULD THEY THINK OF US?

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, April 4: For generations, humans have wondered what alien life might be like. Less often, we ask the reverse: what would extraterrestrials think of us? The answer may not be flattering.

Theoretical physicist Avi Loeb suggests that from a distance, Earth might seem disappointing. Much of humanity's resources are spent managing conflicts and preventing violence. Ongoing wars, he argues, are hardly signs of advanced intelligence. Interest in extraterrestrial life remains strong. Public discussions intensified when former U.S. President Barack Obama said aliens are "real," though he had not seen them, and later when Donald Trump announced plans to re-

lease government files related to UFOs. At the same time, missions like NASA's Artemis II, which aims to send astronauts around the moon, are rekindling curiosity about humanity's place in the universe.

Amid war, climate challenges, and political division, it's natural to wonder how outsiders might judge us. Surveys show many people already believe intelligent life exists beyond Earth. A 2021 Pew Research Center study found that about two-thirds of Americans think intelligent extraterrestrial life is likely, and about half believe UFO sightings reported by military personnel could be evidence of it. According to SETI Institute president Bill Diamond, this belief reflects a deeper human desire: not to be alone in the vast universe.



In 2024, the Pentagon released hundreds of reports on unidentified aerial phenomena (UAP), but found no evidence of extraterrestrial origins. Still, unexplained sightings continue to intrigue people. Some individuals report seeing unusual objects in the sky that defy easy

explanation, though they may ultimately turn out to be drones or other human-made devices.

Experts emphasize that UAP simply refers to objects that observers cannot immediately identify. According to them, such sightings are not proof of aliens, but rather a reminder of the limits of human perception and knowledge.

Many people want greater transparency from governments about what is known. Some officials, like retired Rear Adm. Timothy Gallaudet, argue that unidentified objects have been detected in both air and ocean environments, though their origins remain unclear. He supports releasing more data for scientific study.

Scientists note that the vast scale of the universe makes extraterrestrial life statistically

plausible. With billions of galaxies, each containing billions of stars, the odds of life emerging elsewhere are high. University of Michigan astronomer Edwin Bergin suggests that if advanced beings could travel across such distances, they would likely reveal themselves rather than remain hidden.

Loeb believes extraterrestrials may already be observing humanity. If so, they might view us as chaotic or even dangerous, perhaps monitoring us to ensure we do not pose a threat. Government secrecy around UFOs is often linked to national security. Advanced detection technologies used to monitor the skies are sensitive, and releasing related data could reveal defense capabilities. However, some argue that scientific understanding

should take precedence.

Gallaudet believes sharing classified data could help researchers better understand UAP and assess potential risks. Unidentified objects operating near aircraft raise legitimate safety concerns, regardless of their origin. Ultimately, experts like Diamond doubt that a true alien encounter could remain hidden. Any civilization capable of interstellar travel would possess technology far beyond human comprehension and would choose whether or not to make contact.

For now, the question remains unanswered. But whether aliens exist or not, wondering how they might see us offers a revealing mirror, one that reflects humanity's conflicts, curiosity, and enduring search for truth.

Man's body found inside car in City

Bhubaneswar: The body of a 42-year-old man was found inside a car in the Unit VI area of the state Capital Friday night. The deceased, identified as Udanda Chandrasen Patra (42), was a native of Gopalpur in Berhampur and worked with a local travel agency. According to police sources, the agency owner grew concerned after Patra became unreachable on phone from around 3pm Friday. Using the vehicle's GPS tracking system, he traced the white sedan around 10pm and found Patra lying unresponsive inside. On being informed, a team from the Capital police station reached the spot and sent the body for post-mortem examination. While the exact cause of death is yet to be ascertained, officials are exploring multiple possibilities. Preliminary investigation suggests the driver may have died of asphyxiation (suffocation) while sleeping inside the vehicle with the windows rolled up. "A probe has been launched to determine whether there was any foul play or if it was a tragic accident. We are awaiting the autopsy report to ascertain the cause of death," said Capital police station Inspector-in-Charge (IIC) Radhakanta Sahoo.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, ANUPAMA MOHANTY, aged about 56 years, W/o.- Samarjit Pattanayak, resident At- Bidyadharpur, Barik Sahi, P.O.- Nayabazar, P.S.- CRRI, Dist.- Cuttack - 753004, Odisha declare by this Affidavit No. - 729, dtd.-04.04.2026, that now onwards I shall be known as ANUPAMA PATTANAYAK for all future purposes.

I Abdul Samad Khan, S/o-Abdul Gafar Khan, resident of Vill/PO/PS- Brahmabarada, Dist.- Jajpur, Odisha declare by this Affidavit No.921, Dtd.30.03.2026 that now onwards I shall be known as ABDUL BASHID KHAN for all future purposes.

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate Chandahandi, I, Jubrajsing Suna, S/o- Pabansing Suna, resident of Vill- Karadangari, PO-Jamadarpada, PS-Chandahandi, Dist-Nabarangpur declare that I wholly renounce, relinquish and abandon the use of former name of Jubaraj Suna and in place do assume the name of Jubrajsing Suna. Henceforth I shall be called, known and distinguished not by my former name of Jubaraj Suna, but my assumed name of Jubrajsing Suna and date of birth 21.04.2005 instead of 30.04.2004 for all purposes. Sd./-Deponent

LOST

I, Smt. Nilima Ray, W/o.- Dilip Ray, At-Kalyani, Unit- 8, Near Governor House, P.S.- Capital, BBSR, PIN- 751001 declare that according FIR at Dhauli Police Station on dtd.- 04.04.2026, I have obtained the Original Regd. Sale Deed No. 4509 which was purchased from Raj Kishore Rout on dtd.- 19 August 1997 Krushnapur Mouza which Khata No. is 165/15, Plot No. are 262, 275, 263, 355 and 356 missed somewhere on dtd.- 21.03.2026 near Dhauli Chhak while myself coming from my Kharavel Nagar home. If anybody find the above Lost Documents kindly contact Nilima Ray, Mob- 9438701628.

Guv urges graduates to become job creators

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/ Sambalpur, April 4: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati Saturday urged graduating students of IIM-Sambalpur to become job creators rather than job seekers, highlighting the expanding opportunities in entrepreneurship and innovation in India. He was addressing the 10th convocation held at the Konark Auditorium of the premier B-school in Sambalpur.

The Governor highlighted the country's "unprecedented startup revolution," driven by flagship initiatives such as Startup India, Digital India, Make in India and Skill India. He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is steadily emerging as a global hub for startups, technology and innovation, backed by a robust ecosystem of funding, mentorship and policy support.

Expressing appreciation for the institute, he described IIM-Sambalpur as a symbol of innovation, inclusiveness and academic excellence, blending cultural heritage with modern, technology-driven learning. He congratulated graduates of MBA, Executive MBA, MBA for Working Professionals and doctoral programmes, while also acknowledging the contributions of faculty members and parents.

Stating that a convocation marks both achievement and responsibility, he urged students to apply their knowledge to real-world challenges with integrity and purpose. Highlighting the importance of adaptability, he cited the example of Nokia, which lost market dominance due to its inability to keep pace with technological



Governor Kambhampati says true success lies not just in professional achievements but in the values upheld and impact created, urging graduates to remain lifelong learners and responsible leaders committed to societal progress

change. He also referred to Parag Agrawal, highlighting his resilience after being removed from leadership at Twitter (now X) and his efforts to rebuild through new ventures. Such examples, he said, show that setbacks can be turned into opportunities for reinvention and growth.

The Governor underlined Odisha's emergence as a hub for industrial growth and entrepreneurship, with strong prospects in manufacturing, mining, textiles, IT and renewable energy. He encouraged students to contribute to the state's development by leveraging these opportunities.

Pointing to evolving trends such as artificial intelligence, hybrid work models, sustainability and ethical governance, he stressed the importance of

empathy, adaptability and emotional intelligence in leadership. He also urged the institute to further strengthen its startup ecosystem and promote innovation.

"True success lies not only in professional achievements but in the values you uphold and the impact you create," he said, encouraging graduates to remain lifelong learners and responsible leaders committed to societal progress.

On the occasion, the convocation address was delivered by Vice-President and Managing Director of Adobe India Prativa Mohapatra. The Director's Report was presented by IIM-Sambalpur Director Mahadeo Prasad Jaiswal, while Chairperson-in-Charge of the Board of Governors, Chandan Chowdhury, delivered the welcome address.

Min reviews Works dept projects, 3-year infra plan

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: Odisha is in a strong position in infrastructure development, with several major projects underway and more set to begin soon, Works, Law and Excise Minister Prithviraj Harichandan said Saturday, stressing the government's commitment to delivering quality public infrastructure.

Chairing a high-level review meeting at Lok Seva Bhavan, the minister assessed progress of ongoing state highway projects, works undertaken by OBCC, and initiatives aimed at easing traffic congestion in major cities including Bhubaneswar, Sambalpur, Cuttack, Rourkela, Puri, Balasore, Keonjhar and Berhampur.

During the meeting, emphasis was placed on preparing a comprehensive three-year action plan for the effective implementation of development projects. Discussions also focused on road widening ensuring regular maintenance, and improving infrastructure around major temples. The minister highlighted the need to develop "Way Side Amenity Centres" along highways to provide essential facilities for commuters.

Additionally, the minister



directed departmental officials and engineers to fast-track development work on nearly 3,300 km of roads recently transferred from the Rural Development department to the Works department. He emphasized that all projects must be completed within stipulated timelines to deliver benefits to the public more quickly.

Principal Secretary Sanjay Kumar Singh provided a detailed briefing on the various projects undertaken by the department.

The meeting was attended by senior officials including EIC-cum-Special Secretary Er. Laxmi Kanta Padhi, Additional Secretary Deepak Ranjan Das, EIC (Civil) Satyabrata Behera, EIC (Design, Planning & Coordination) Sameer Hota, Advisor JK Das, EIC (Roads) Dhyan-chand Nayak, Chief Engineer (National Highways) Narayan Patel, Chief Construction Engineer Manoj Mahananda and Chief Engineer Shivabrata Taria, among others.

Death anniv of martyrs Raghu, Dibakar observed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: The state-level death anniversary of martyrs Raghunath Mohanty and Dibakar Parida was observed with solemnity here Saturday. Speakers recalled their sacrifice, courage and patriotism during the Ranpur Prajamandal Movement against British rule and oppressive monarchy.

The programme, organised by the I&PR department, Ra-



ghu-Dibakar Memorial Committee and Ranpur Cultural Council at Jayadev Bhavan, began with a ceremonial lamp lighting and floral tributes to the martyrs.

Chandrika Panda passes away at 77

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: Chandrika Panda, a retired Labour Commissioner (Compensation) of the Odisha government, died March 25. She was 77.

Panda served in various positions in the state Labour department across Odisha during her career and retired as labour compensation commissioner. She was known for her work toward the welfare of workers, ensuring compensation for deceased labourers and advocating justice for their widows.

She worked for several years at the Chief Labour Commissioner Office in Bhubaneswar and was regarded as a dedicated and honest officer. She also served for a few years in charge of the Employee Welfare Division at Odisha Text Book Press. After retirement, Panda focused on writing children's literature. Several of her works were published in children's magazines, and she was honoured with the Jhumuka Award by the Jhumuka family for her contributions.

She had been undergoing treatment for a kidney-related illness at a private hospital here for the past few days.

Min Pujari unveils R&DM dept library

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: A new library of the Revenue and Disaster Management (R&DM) department was inaugurated at Lok Seva Bhavan here Saturday by Minister Suresh Pujari.

On the occasion, he read a few pages from a copy of the Constitution available in the library and recorded his remarks in the register as its first reader. The minister expressed satisfaction that the facility would enhance the knowledge and professional skills of departmental officers and prove useful at both personal and administrative levels.

The library has been equipped with computers to enable digital reading facilities. A wide range of Odia literature has also been made available through the Odia Virtual Academy. According to the department's Additional Chief Secretary, Arabinda Kumar Padhee, the facility will

Facility to enhance officers' knowledge and professional skills, proving useful at both personal and administrative levels, says Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Pujari

give officers access to essential information, books and key administrative circulars, supporting their official work.

Officials have also been encouraged to contribute self-authored and other useful books to enrich the collection. To ensure discipline and effective use, mobile phone use has been prohibited inside the library.

Special Relief Commissioner Rajesh Prabhakar Patil and other senior officers of the Revenue and Disaster Management department were present at the inauguration.

Das visits WSC, stresses skill devpt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Shaktikanta Das, visited the World Skill Center (WSC) here Saturday, reaffirming the growing national focus on advanced skill development as a key driver of India's economic transformation.

Das reviewed the institute's state-of-the-art Centres of Excellence in vertical transportation, air conditioning and refrigeration, beauty and wellness, and the School of Hospitality. He appreciated the advanced infrastructure, modern training methods and strong emphasis on industry-aligned, outcome-driven skill development.

Chief Secretary Anu Garg and Skill Development & Technical Education (SD&TE) Commissioner-cum-Secretary Bupendra Singh Poonia accompanied Das during the visit.

He also interacted with the institute's senior leadership,



including CEO Rashmi Ranjan Mohapatra, SD&TE Additional Secretary and WSC COO Pinaki Patnaik, and Principal Subhanga Kishore Das.

The discussions offered insights into Odisha's evolving skill landscape, showcasing WSC as a flagship institution driving excellence in technical education and training.

Key deliberations focused on enhancing workforce readiness of the skilled talent pool, continuously improving the quality and relevance of training

programmes, and aligning skill-building initiatives with emerging global industry demands. The need to deepen collaboration between government, industry and training institutions to ensure employment-oriented, future-ready skill development was strongly emphasised.

Das' visit underscored the state government's strategic vision to empower youth with cutting-edge skills, foster innovation in training delivery and create better livelihood opportunities.

Record ₹6.02cr revenue, 1.4L visitors in '25-26

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur/Bhubaneswar, April 4: Debrigarh Ecotourism posted a record performance in 2025-26, earning ₹6.02 crore and drawing nearly 1.4 lakh visitors. The surge marks a sharp rise from the previous fiscal's ₹5.01 crore revenue and 85,000 tourists, reflecting its growing popularity among nature and wildlife enthusiasts.

The steady rise underscores Debrigarh's emergence as one of India's fastest-growing wildlife tourism hubs. About 50 per cent of visitors were from Odisha, with the rest coming from across India and countries including Italy, France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Finland, Ireland, Spain and Brazil.

This year also witnessed the introduction of Odisha's first Nature Homestay at Dhodrokusum Green Village and a unique 2-km Birding Trail, adding new dimensions to the destination's eco-tourism experience. These additions complemented earli-



er attractions such as stargazing rooms with glass roofing, an island café, wildlife library, and guided stargazing activities introduced last year.

Debrigarh has steadily evolved into a popular wildlife destination, offering near-guaranteed sightings of species such as Indian bison (gaur), leopard, wild dog, sambar, chital, sloth bear, wild pig, peacock, and a wide variety of birds. Visitors can explore jungle safaris with eco-guides, Hirakud reservoir cruises, island visits, hiking and trekking trails, kayaking, cycling, wildlife photography

tours, and guided stargazing. Currently, the destination offers 25 night-stay units, including stargazing rooms and forest homestays managed by local communities.

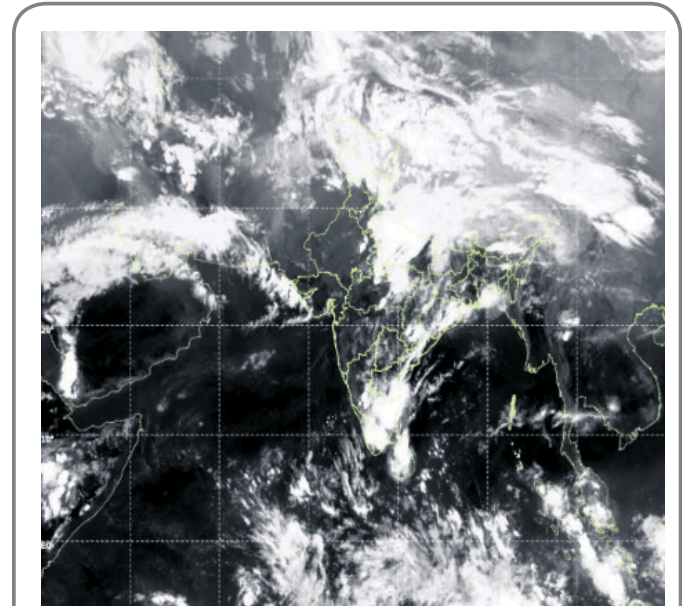
Looking ahead, Debrigarh Ecotourism is set for further expansion in 2026-27, with plans to open 32 new night-stay cottages, including 10 additional homestays at Dhodrokusum, along with a canopy walk and upgraded safari and cruise facilities. Emphasising the importance of community-led conservation, DFO Hirakud Wildlife Division Anshu Praygan Das

said, "Debrigarh Ecotourism is a model where conservation and livelihoods go hand in hand. The growth in visitor numbers and revenue reflects the success of community-driven initiatives like Dhodrokusum Homestays and the Birding Trail."

"Our focus remains on sustainable tourism, regulated visitor management, and empowering local communities, especially women and youth, while ensuring minimal disturbance to wildlife," he added.

Around 120 local families are now directly engaged in ecotourism activities as guides, safari drivers, boat operators, and homestay hosts. Nearly 40 per cent of participants are women, including female safari drivers and eco-guides, while tribal women manage the homestays.

With regulated safari limits, strict monitoring, and eco-friendly practices, Debrigarh is steadily reinforcing its status as a model destination that balances tourism growth with wildlife conservation and community empowerment.



| WEATHER | | | |
|----------|-------|-------|---|
| | BBSR | CTC | FORECAST |
| Max Temp | 38.8° | 37.8° | Light to moderate rain or thunderstorm very likely to occur |
| Min Temp | 25.9° | 23.8° | |
| Humidity | 77% | 86% | |
| Rainfall | Nil | 3.8mm | |

Dialysis unit at DHH gets new AC within 24 hours

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, April 4: Swift administrative action followed a report published in OrissaPOST Saturday highlighting the non-functional air-conditioning system at the dialysis unit of the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) in Subarnapur.



A new air-conditioner was procured Saturday and is expected to be made operational Sunday, bringing huge relief to patients who had been undergoing dialysis in sweltering conditions for nearly two years owing to the defunct AC and administrative apathy.

OP IMPACT

The intervention came after Chief District Medical and Public Health Officer (CD-M&PHO) Dr Usharani Dash inspected the unit along with Additional District Medical Officer and hospital superintendent Dr Durgadatta Dash

and hospital manager BK Sagarika. The officials interacted with patients and assessed the difficulties caused by the prolonged absence of cooling facilities.

The dialysis unit, located within the Maternal and Child Health Centre premises of the DHH, had two air-conditioners that had remained defunct for the past two years. Despite repeated requirements, neither the hospital authorities nor the private agency responsible for managing the unit, Chandigarh-based Rahi Care Private Limited, had taken steps to repair or replace the machines. Following the publication

BLO suspended for negligence in SIR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, April 4: The District Election Officer and District Collector here has suspended a booth-level officer (BLO), an assistant teacher, for alleged dereliction of duty and disobedience of official orders.

The action relates to a polling station under Kashinagar block in the 137-Paralakhemundi Assembly constituency in Gajapati district. According to office order No. 239/Election, Ramanuj Das, BLO of Booth No. 110 at Sidhamadanga, was found negligent in carrying out the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral roll as mandated under the Representation of the People Acts, 1950 and 1951.

During the suspension period, Das has been directed not to leave his headquarters without prior permission from the competent authority. He will be entitled to subsistence allowance as per rules, DEO and Collector Akshay Sunil Agrawal said.

The suspension order stated that Das failed to perform his assigned duties without any valid reason. His actions were deemed a serious lapse, reflecting negligence, dereliction of duty and violation of lawful instructions.

Keonjhar DMF CEO bars employee from rejoining

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar/Hatadihi, April 4: The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of District Mineral Foundation (DMF) here debarring a long time employee from rejoining duty kicked up a huge row Saturday.

According to reports, the employee identified as Ranjit Sahu has been working in the office for the past six years. Earlier, he was allegedly dismissed irregularly and verbally by the CEO after reportedly seeking a salary hike.

After being relieved from service, he had approached

the Orissa High Court seeking justice. In response to the court order, the district administration reportedly informed that the employee had not been formally terminated.

Encouraged by this clarification, the employee went to resume his duties. However, he was allegedly not allowed to rejoin by DMF CEO Dr Reena Pradhan, an IAS officer who has been serving in the post since July 2025. The CEO reportedly asked him to leave the office despite no clear directive regarding his employment status.

The employee has since lodged a complaint at the Dis-

trict Collector's office.

When contacted over phone, Pradhan did not provide a clear response. She said there was no explicit mention in any order stating that the employee had not been terminated, nor was there any mention confirming his termination. When questioned that if any senior officer had instructed her to debar the employee from joining duty she shot back and asked to enquire from the senior officer.

She said that no instruction had been received on whether the employee could rejoin duty and abruptly ended the call after declining further comment.

Gangrape survivor critical after consuming sedatives

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, April 4: A gangrape survivor staying at a child care institution in Sundargarh district is in critical condition after allegedly consuming an excessive number of sedative pills.

She is undergoing treatment in the ICU of a private hospital in Sambalpur, District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) Sri-banta Jena said.

The survivor from Biramitrapur police limits was a minor when she was gangraped in 2020 and has since been residing at the shelter home. At that time, she had accused her then male friend, stepfather and the then IIC of Biramitrapur PS. However, a case was registered only against the IIC. The DGP later suspended and subsequently dis-

missed the officer from service.

Now an adult, the survivor has reportedly expressed her unwillingness to continue staying at the shelter home. Her mother has also refused to take her back home, sources said.

On a doctor's advice, the survivor had been taking one sedative tablet every night. However, she reportedly consumed about 25 tablets at once, leaving her seriously ill around 8pm Thursday. She has been admitted to a private hospital in Sambalpur and remains in ICU care.

The gangrape case is currently being investigated by the Crime Branch. Two days ago, CB sleuths arrested the survivor's stepfather and her male friend and sent them to judicial custody. The development is being seen as a significant turn in the high-profile case.

Man dies after being trapped under branch

POST NEWS NETWORK

Udala, April 4: A young man died after he got trapped under a tree branch and was left hanging nearly 20 feet above the ground for about an hour in Mayurbhanj district Saturday morning.

The incident occurred in Katuria village under Kaptipada police limits. The deceased, identified as Kuanr Hansda of Sanadei village, had climbed a tree around 8am to cut branches in the backyard of a local resident. After cutting a branch, another tree that was leaning against it suddenly collapsed, causing a heavy branch to fall on him. He was trapped and left hanging mid-air for nearly an hour before personnel from the Kaptipada fire brigade reached the spot and rescued him. Hansda was immediately taken to Udala hospital for treatment, where doctors declared him dead.

Skeleton, skull found in forest

Patana: Police Saturday recovered a human skull and skeletal remains from a sal forest in Sunapashi village under Damahuda panchayat in Keonjhar district. A saree found near the remains is suspected to be that of a missing village woman, prompting her daughter to file a complaint at Patana police station. Based on the complaint, police have begun an investigation. According to sources, a group of villagers had gone to the forest Friday to collect firewood when they spotted the skull and clothing. They suspected the remains could be those of Salge Majhi, 62, who has been missing since March 12, and alerted her daughter, Ghumi Majhi, and the police. A team comprising a magistrate, scientific officers and police personnel reached the spot and seized the skull, bones, a bag, a saree and a dress believed to be of the victim's daughter. The remains have been sent to Dharanidhar Medical College and Hospital in Keonjhar and are likely to be forwarded to a forensic laboratory in Bhubaneswar for DNA testing, officials said. Ghumi Majhi has sought an impartial probe.

Ganjam admin opens free coaching centre for civil services aspirants

Berhampur: The district administration of Ganjam opened a free coaching centre here Saturday for aspirants preparing for the UPSC and the OPSC examinations. Two other similar coaching centres will be inaugurated at Bhanjanagar and Chhatrapur in the district next week. Coaching will be provided to 170 aspirants, 85 of them women, in the three centres. The candidates who will be provided free coaching have been selected through an entrance examination. The district administration has also signed an MoU with a New Delhi-based coaching centre in this regard, officials said. The IAS, IPS and senior officers working in the district, and some retired officers, will also impart coaching to the aspirants. The vision of 'Lakshya Niketan' is to create a vibrant and inclusive ecosystem in the district to nurture talent, empower youth and produce competent people who excel in civil services and other competitive exams, Ganjam Collector V Keerthi Vasan said.

Row over tree felling for pond project; work halted



POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, April 4: Fresh concerns have emerged in Mayurbhanj district over alleged large-scale tree felling in Baripada under the guise of development work. The Forest Department has halted the activity and launched an inquiry following complaints.

actions by the civic body in the name of development. Environmentalists, including Bishal Singh and Kanha Mohanty, expressed strong resentment, alleging the felling was carried out without official clearance.

"The large-scale felling has displaced thousands of birds that had nested here for years," they said.

The issue comes even as a separate controversy over tree cutting for an interstate bus terminal in the town remains pending before the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

According to reports, hundreds of trees were allegedly felled without permission during a pond restoration drive in the heart of the town. The area, known for hosting a large number of birds year-round, has reportedly suffered ecological damage, with many birds losing their habitat. Local residents protested after noticing machines being used to cut trees, questioning what they described as arbitrary

Baripada Municipality Chairman Krushnanand Mohanty defended the move, stating it is part of a plan to develop a large park by integrating the existing Jubilee Park area. He assured that trees would be replanted at all affected locations.

The incident has raised questions about how such extensive felling occurred on forest-classified land without due permission. The Forest Department has stopped the work and initiated a probe. Divisional Forest Officer Govind Chandra Biswal said strict action would be taken if irregularities are found.

₹40L seized at Kesinga station; one detained

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kesinga, April 4: Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel seized ₹40 lakh in cash from a man at Kesinga railway station under the Sambalpur division and detained him for questioning, officials said Saturday.

Prabhat Samuel, 34, from West Bengal. During preliminary questioning, he reportedly told police that he had collected the money from a businessman in Kesinga area and was on his way to Raipur.

Acting on a tip-off about a person carrying a large sum of money, Titilagarh RPF conducted checks at multiple points in and around the station Friday evening. During the operation, they intercepted a man with a bag containing the cash. The detained individual has been identified as

RPF officials confirmed the seizure and said further investigation is underway to ascertain the source and purpose of the cash. Senior officials from Sambalpur, along with Income Tax department authorities, are expected to join the probe. Officials said appropriate action will be taken based on the findings of the investigation.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER PHULBANI (R&B) DIVISION, PHULBANI
 Email - eep1brb@gmail.com, Tel : 06842-253212
 No. 2266 // Dated. 26.03.26

CANCELLATION OF BID
 No.34001/8/2627 : In response to the work "Annual Comprehensive Maintenance of Fire Fighting and Alarm System installed in MCH Building at DHH, Phulbani, Kandhamal" as per Lr. No. 33699 dated 11.12.2024 of DHSO Buildings (Tender ID: 2026_EICCL_127100_1), vide Bid Identification No. SE-R&B-PLB-13-2025-26 No. 1674 dated 05.03.2026, only a single bid has been received through the Odisha e-Procurement Portal (<http://tendersodisha.gov.in>) during the first call.

Hence, the tender invited under the aforesaid e-TCN is hereby cancelled by the undersigned in accordance with the provisions laid down in OPWD Code, Volume-II, Clause-29 of Amendment-2015 (Appendix-IX), which has been concurred by the Finance Department vide U.O.R. No. 254-WF-1 dated 13.11.2014, Subdt. by vide File No. 07556900052104-16/W, Dated 01.01.2015.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer,
 Phulbani (R&B) Division

OIPR-34001/34066/1/26-27/0001

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS' EMPOWERMENT OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (AGRI), SOUTHERN ZONE, BRAHMAMUR, RITE CAMPUS, RANGELUNDA, GANJAM No. 408 Date 31.03.2026

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) e-procurement notice

Bid identification number/Tender call notice No.-SE (A) S/7-07 of 2025-26 No. 10015/2627:- The Superintending Engineer (Agril.), Southern Zone, Brahmampur who has been authorized as the procuring officer for the projects of Southern Zone, Brahmampur is directed to invite percentage rate bid on behalf of the Governor of Odisha for the Civil construction works (Including IE and PH works) under Southern Zone. The costs of the project are approximately 66 to 68 Lakhs (Excluding GST & LC). Bid document consisting of detailed tender call notice, the schedule of quantities and the set of terms and conditions of the contract and other necessary documents can be downloaded from <https://tendersodisha.gov.in> from 04.04.2026 at 11:00 hours to 17.04.2026 at 17:00 hours. The bid will be opened on 21.04.2026 at 11:00 hours and onwards in the O/o Superintending Engineer (Agril.), Southern Zone, Brahmampur, RITE Campus, Rangelunda. All other details regarding term and conditions, corrigendum from time to time if any, DTCN etc. can be seen and downloaded from <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer (Agril.)
 Southern Zone, Brahmampur

OIPR-1001/1043/1/26-27/0001

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, RAYAGADA (E-mail ID : eamirayagada@gmail.com)

NOTICE INVITING TENDER e-Procurement Notice

e-Procurement Notice No. SEMIDRGD-01/2026-27
 Letter No.1297 Dated. 01.04.2026

No. 32001/6/2627 : The Superintending Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Rayagada on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites Percentage rate bids in Single cover system through Online Mode. The bid documents consisting of work, Estimated Cost, Cost of Tender Paper, Time of Completion, Class of Contractor, set of terms and conditions of the contract and other necessary documents can be seen in e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>

- Name of the work : Construction of 09 Nos. of New Check Dams in different Blocks of Rayagada District under MATY 3.0 for the year 2026-27
- Total Number of works : 09 (Nine) Nos.
- Estimated cost : Approximately varies from Rs.29.59 Lakh to Rs.46.55 Lakh
- Period of completion : As mentioned against each work in Annexure to Bid Notice
- Class of Contractor : As mentioned against each work in Annexure to Bid Notice
- Date and time of availability of bid documents in the portal : From 10.00 A.M. of 07.04.2026 to 5.00 P.M. of 16.04.2026
- Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal : 5:00 P.M. on 16.04.2026
- Date of opening of bid : At 11:00 A.M. on 17.04.2026 in website (www.tendersorissa.gov.in)
- Submission of Bids : Online mode
- Name of the Officer inviting Bid : Superintending Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Rayagada
- Further details can be seen from the Government of Odisha Website : www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd./- Superintending Engineer
 M.I. Division, Rayagada

OIPR-32001/32524/1/26-27/0001

Government of Odisha, Department of Panchayati Raj & Drinking water, Office of the Panchayat Samiti, Bhadrak

Invitation of Bids (IFB) Bid Identification No. PSB-18/2025-26 e-mail : ori-bhadrak@nic.in FAX/TEL : No.19001/2/2627

Bid documents consisting of work, estimated amount for put to tender, cost of tender paper, time of completion, class of contractor, the set of terms & conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen from the office of Panchayat Samiti, Bhadrak.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Name of the work | : As per DTCN |
| 2. No of works | : 1 no. of package |
| 3. Estimated cost for put to tender | : As Per DTCN |
| 4. Period of completion | : 06 Calendar Months each |
| 5. Date & time of availability of bid documents | : From 02.04.2026 at 10.30 A.M. hours to 20.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M. hours |
| 6. Last date/time for receipt/drop of bid in the office | : 20.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M. |
| 7. Date of opening of Bids | : 20.04.2026 at 03.00 P.M. Hours |
| 8. Class of Contractor | : "C" & "D" Class |
| 9. Name of the Officer inviting Bids | : Block Development Officer, Panchayat Samiti, Bhadrak |

Further details can be seen from the office of Panchayat Samiti, Bhadrak on working hours. Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen at the office of the undersigned. The detailed information is also available on district website "<https://bhadrak.odisha.gov.in>"

Sd./- Block Development Officer
 Panchayat Samiti, Bhadrak

OIPR-19001/19031/1/26-27/0001

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA E-Procurement Notice, Superintending Engineer, M.I. Division, Angul

Bid Identification No.-17 OF 2026-27
 E-mail ID : semidivisionangul@gmail.com
 Letter No.811/Date : 02.04.2026

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Number of Works | : 06 (Six) numbers of Civil works |
| 2. Approximate estimated cost | : From 14.86 Lakh to 40.26 Lakh |
| 3. Cost of Tender paper | : Rs 6000/- (Non-Refundable) |
| 4. Period of completion | : 03 (Three) Calendar Months |
| 5. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal | : Dt. 10.04.2026 at 10.00 A.M. to Dt. 17.04.2026 up to 5.00 P.M. |
| 6. Last date / Time for receipt of bid in the portal | : Dt. 17.04.2026 up to 5.00 P.M. |
| 7. Date of opening of bid documents | : Dt. 18.04.2026 at 5.00 P.M. |
| 8. Date of lottery if required | : Dt. 27.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M. |
| 9. Name and address of the Office Inviting Bid | : Superintending Engineer, Minor Irrigation Division, Angul, At/P.O. : Hakimpada, College Square, District : Angul, PIN-759143, Phone No. 06764-236522, Email ID : semidivisionangul@gmail.com http://tendersorissa.gov.in |
| 10. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal | |

Sd./- Superintending Engineer
 M.I. Division, Angul

OIPR-32001/32284/1/26-27/0001

IDBI BANK Regional Office: 1st Floor, IDBI House, Janpath, Unit-9, Bhubaneswar-751022

E - AUCTION SALE NOTICE

AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY Appendix IV-A (See proviso to Rule 8 (6) & Rule 9(1))
 E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) and Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical/Symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of IDBI BANK LTD., Secured Creditor, will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", AND "WHATSOEVER THERE IS" AND WITHOUT RECOURSE basis on 21.04.2026, for recovery of due to the Secured Creditor from - A Hamd Fish, Prop.: Rojeda Khatun (Mortgagor). The reserve price and earnest deposit will be as under

| Sl. No. | Name & Address of the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) | Brief Description of property / Possession Type | Physical/Symbolic Possession date | Reserve Price / EMD / Bid Increment | Loan Outstanding |
|---------|--|---|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. | Borrower: A Hamd Fish, Prop.: Rojeda Khatun (Mortgagor) / Guarantor: Zulfeqquar Ali Saqueeb, Both are Address-1: Kaji Sahi, Nanga Mahalla, Near Masjid, Bhadrak Town, Bhadrak, Odisha, PIN-756100, Address-2: Khata No.-324, Plot No-1060, Quazisahi, Bajorada, Purnabazar, Nanga Mohalla, Bhadrak, Odisha, PIN-756100 | All that piece and parcel of immovable property admeasuring Area: Ac.0.80 Dec., comprising of Plot No.: 1062, Khata No.: 336/367, Plot No.: 1049, 1063, Khata No.: 537/165, situated at Mouza: Bajorada, P.S.: Bhadrak Puruna Bazar, Bhadrak-756001, State: Odisha, Bounded by East: Road, West: Plot No.: 1061, North: Plot No.: 1049, 1062, South: 1063, 1064 together with all and singular the structures and erections thereon, both present and future. Assets owned & Mortgaged by Rojeda Khatun / Physical | 04.04.2025 | ₹19,25,000/- / ₹1,92,500/- / ₹10,000/- | ₹11,13,461.75 (Including Expenses) as on 04.04.2026 |
| 2. | Borrower: M/s Minati Kisan Seva Kendra, Prop./Guarantor: Shri Diptiman Prusty, Both are At: Athantar, P.O.: Balipatana, Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha, PIN-752102, Guantor/ Mortgagor: Shri Pritiman Prusty, At: Majhihara, Dhanahara, Balipatana, Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda, PIN-752103, Odisha | All that piece and parcel of immovable property situated at Plot No.: 132/1418, Khata No.: 396/96, Mouza: Dhanahara, PS.: Balipatana, Tahasil: Balipatana, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha, PIN-752102, Kissan: Gharabari, Status: Stitiban, Corresponding to previous Khata No.: 396/37, admeasuring Area: Ac.0.500Dec. (21780Sqft), Bounded by East: Canal, West: Gochara, North: Vendor, South: Gochara, together with all and singular the structures and erections thereon both present and future. Assets owned & Mortgaged by Shri Pritiman Prusty / Symbolic | 13.08.2025 | ₹1,06,00,000/- / ₹10,60,000/- / ₹1,00,000/- | ₹1,01,76,535.20 (Including Expenses) as on 31.03.2026 |
| 3. | Borrower: Shri Lalit Narayan Rath, S/o: Laxmi Narayan Rath / Co-Borrower: Smt. Santosini Rath, W/o: Lalit Narayan Rath, Both are Add-1: Plot No: 665/3071, Shree Vihar, Lane No: 7, Patia, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar-751016, Add-2: Panda Residency, Flat No.: PR-D-107, Block-D, First Floor, Mouza: Satyabhamapur, Ranga Bazar, PS: Baliaanta, Bhubaneswar-751031 | Immovable property situated in Apartment named as- Panda Residency, Flat No: PR-D-107, First Floor, under Khata No: 25/11, Plot No: 708 and Khata No: 25/13, Plot No: 708/842, Mouza: Satyabhamapur, PS/TS: Baliaanta, Dist.: Khorda, State: Odisha, Bounded by as per regd. sale deed, East: Revenue Plot No: 709, West: Revenue Plot No: 661, North: Government Road, South: Revenue Plot No: 723 together with all and singular the structures and erections thereon, both present and future / Symbolic | 12.03.2025 | ₹35,41,000/- / ₹3,54,100/- / ₹50,000/- | ₹56,81,098.36 (Including Expenses) as on 31.03.2026 |

Important date

| | |
|--|--|
| 2. Date of Inspection | : 17.04.2026 (11.00 A.M to 1.00 P.M) |
| 3. Last Date of Submission of Bid along with EMD | : 18.04.2026 (Till 4.00 P.M) |
| 4. Date and Time of e-auction | : 21.04.2026 (11.00 A.M to 12 Noon with unlimited extension of 5 min). |

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in www.banknet.com and IDBI Bank's website i.e. www.idbi.com/www.idbibank.com. For any clarification, the interested parties may contact, Shri Lalit Kumar Patra, AGM, Branch Head (M) 8763400140, E-mail: lalit.patra@idbi.co.in, Shri Shukdeb Pal, AGM, Retail recovery (M) 9073303101, E-mail: shukdeb.pal@idbi.co.in or Smt. Suchismita Dutta, Manager, Retail recovery (M) 9830508961, E-mail: suchismita.nandy@idbi.co.in or Shri. Suchit Kumar Behera, Manager, (M) 9830508961, E-mail: behera.suchit@idbi.co.in. For e-auction support, you may contact PSB Alliance Pvt Ltd., Mob No. : 8291 20220/E-mail: support.banknet@psballiance.com. This is 15 days' Notice under Rule 9(1) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 to the Borrower(s)/ Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) of the Loan.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in www.idbibank.in Secured Creditor's website
 Place: Bhubaneswar, Date : 04.04.2026

Sd/- Authorised Officer, IDBI Bank Ltd.,

“ This is faithfulness, to admit and to manifest no other movements but only the movements prompted and guided by the Divine.

THE MOTHER



War Reality

We are in the second month of what is settling in to become a long war and I thought I should put down a few observations. The first is that nations around the world are preparing their populations for what is coming down the pike.

Australia has made public transport free in Tasmania and Victoria to encourage citizens not to use cars. Egypt requires shops and restaurants to shutter at 9 pm. Philippines now has a four day week and so does Pakistan. Myanmar uses an odd day-even day system to keep cars off the road. Slovenia has a 50-litre limit on fuel purchase and Nepal has reduced the gas in LPG cylinders. Thailand's government has asked people not to wear jackets so air-conditioners may run at higher temperatures. Bangladesh closed its universities and introduced planned blackouts (what we used to call load-shedding in the old days). South Sudan is also limiting electricity use. Sri Lanka has made Wednesday a public holiday. The list goes on.

In India there is no similar measure yet. This is for two reasons. First, our government appears to think, though it has not said so explicitly, that there is no real problem. It has told us that the shortages people are feeling are the result of panic and if this irrational panic in Indians were to subside then things would be normal. The other reason is that our government calculates it has an adequate stock of the things we import from the Gulf: fuel, gas, fertiliser inputs and so on. 'Adequate stock' is of course an elastic term because nobody knows how long the war will continue. None of this squares with what we are seeing in terms of autorickshaw queues and the mass migration of workers. We will see how things change as Iran continues to hold out. People in the oil business say that physical shortages will be upon us from this week onward, now that all the ships which were on the water when the war began have been offloaded and new ones are not coming through.

Another observation I have is that America has attacked Iran without Congress, meaning its version of parliament, declaring war. Why is that relevant? When the American constitution was being debated its founders felt that the ability of an individual to declare war separated a king from an elected leader. The president could direct and manage the violence but only after the formal declaration; it was Congress which was required to shoulder the responsibility of declaring war. This vital separation of power has been eroded in the Iran war and there is no difference between the US president and a king if the difference rests on the capacity to invade nations.

The interesting thing here is that it is the conservatives, who usually pride themselves on being constitutionalists, who want this state of affairs. Another reason why this is worth mentioning is that the Donald Trump is a mercurial president. He can say and has said that the war is 'very complete' but will go on. He says talks are progressing well and in the next sentence adds there is nobody to talk to because America has murdered all the Iranian leaders. He demands Iran open the Hormuz Strait in a post and then in a speech says America will leave and it is up to other nations to open it. America's population and its media and its democratic structures seem fine with this, which is why Trump continues as he does.

The third observation I have is about India's role in this. Many of our fine WhatsApp groups are convinced that Jawaharlal Nehru squandered our United Nations Security Council seat. It is unclear what the basis of this belief is, but perhaps it is that Nehru forgot to throw his hanky on the seat to reserve it (or that he threw his hanky and missed) or some such thing. But let us assume we actually had a permanent seat in the UNSC. What would we do with it today to address the war in the Persian Gulf? The seat's holders have one primary power: the veto, meaning the right to reject things that come up for a vote in the security council. The United Kingdom has that power, and it says it is not a participant in this war. What has it done and what can it do with its seat? Nothing that one can think of, which is why the world is not turning to the UNSC at this moment.

What any nation including India can do to end this war or mitigate against its damaging effects must come from the initiatives it can take to rally other nations. Those who want to stand on the sidelines will make no difference whether they are clutching their precious UNSC veto or not. They are bystanders.

These are some of the observations I have and I suspect that this will not be the last time that this column will refer to the Iran war. There are events that reshape the world and change the way that it functions forever. This is one such instance and America's president-king has forced all of us into this new reality, whether we like it or not and whether we want it or not.



Aakar Patel

Donald Trump is a mercurial president. He can say and has said that the war is 'very complete' but will go on. He says talks are progressing well and in the next sentence adds there is nobody to talk to because America has murdered all the Iranian leaders

As the United States and Israel rain bombs down on Iran, with the stated intent of subduing one of the world's most brutal regimes, international law is collateral damage. The US-Israeli strikes clearly defy fundamental rules governing the use of force, as do Iranian missile and drone attacks against civilians in Israel and elsewhere in the region. But these are just the latest in a long train of such violations. And given the rise of "might makes right" foreign policies, they might not be the last.



Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik

THE CHALLENGES THAT WILL SHAPE OUR FUTURE - SUCH AS PANDEMICS, NARCOTICS FLOWS, TERRORISM, OR THE DIFFUSION OF BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS - DO NOT RESPECT BORDERS OR RECOGNIZE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

This would be bad for everyone. That is why many countries, including Norway, still insist on placing international law squarely at the center of their foreign policy. It is also why Norway's government - together with other European leaders, such as French President Emmanuel Macron and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez - has raised concerns about the US-Israeli attacks on Iran.

But our defense of shared rules runs up against considerable criticism. Some deride it as naive, suggesting that international law is little more than a pipe dream of soft-hearted idealists, who fail to grasp the unforgiving logic that real-world statecraft demands. Others argue that international law shouldn't shape state behavior: a framework that reliably shields repressive regimes, like those of Venezuela or Iran, is not worth defending.

Advocates of international law must take these criticisms seriously, beginning with the charge that international law chiefly serves to protect tyrants. Russia, waging a war of aggression against Ukraine since 2022, is an obvious example of a state that systematically flouts its legal obligations.



Today, most state borders can be considered fundamentally arbitrary, or at least open to challenge, with almost all countries including territory over which some other state could claim a historical title

Iran, which has carried out violence against civilians at home and abroad, is another.

But the rights and protections afforded by international law to rogue states and their leaders are not much different from the legal safeguards democratic states provide to criminals, who retain certain rights even after their convictions. However tempting it may be to circumvent the procedural rigor the rule of law demands, genuine liberty depends on the impersonal enforcement of legal due process by independent courts.

The same is true at the international level. Countries seeking to exercise force against others must make their case to the United Nations Security Council and gain authorization for any offensive action. Countries are exempted from this rule only in cases of self-defense, and vague, speculative, or unverified threats - such as those associated with Iran's nuclear capabilities - do not meet this threshold.

While these rules and procedures can make it more difficult to act against "criminal" regimes, they are a bedrock of the liberal world order. That is

why, far from defending this order, rogue states want nothing more than for others to emulate their lawlessness. Criminals thrive when criminality becomes the norm. If the West resorts to subjective standards such as "defending liberty" to justify violating international law, repressive states will lose no time inventing their own excuses for violence.

While critics of international law dismiss it as mere window dressing, its impact can be seen everywhere, in a vast range of activities, from how we fish and trade to how civil aviation operates across borders. To be sure, rules are regularly broken, and human rights are still violated, but the overall trajectory is unmistakably positive. And, despite setbacks in Iran, Venezuela, and Ukraine, international law's keystones - the prohibition on the use of force and the inviolability of national sovereignty - retain broad support. Since violent and territorial conquest was outlawed - notably, by the UN Charter in 1945 - war between states has fallen dramatically.

Given war's prevalence in human history, this is a remarkable achievement. To-

day, most state borders can be considered fundamentally arbitrary, or at least open to challenge, with almost all countries including territory over which some other state could claim a historical title. Yet violent interstate conflict remains an exceptional occurrence, not least because of the international stigma attached to territorial conquest through war.

It is no coincidence that previous generations, in the wake of global crises, embraced collaboration rooted in shared rules and institutions. After World War II, the United States had the foresight and determination to lead the way in realizing a world order that relied on international law and multilateral institutions to constrain the arbitrary exercise of power. Today, this system is strained, but its resilience should not be underestimated. It does not operate perfectly, but it overwhelmingly works.

A world where power trumps principle is invariably hostile to small states such as mine. But a lawless system is also bad for the large and powerful. The challenges that will shape our future - such as pandemics, narcotics flows, terrorism, or the diffusion of biological weapons - do not respect borders or recognize spheres of influence. They can be contained only through binding agreements and institutionalized cooperation.

"If civilization is to survive," US President Dwight D. Eisenhower noted in 1958, "it must choose the rule of law." We in Norway agree, and will continue to defend international law, even when it protects those who least deserve it.

The writer is Deputy Foreign Minister of Norway.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM EMPLOYMENT

Education fails to meet job market needs

India's challenge is not just job availability, but job quality. Unemployment and underemployment and whether the government has concrete plans to address the needs remains largely ignored. Additionally, there is a widely acknowledged disconnect between what the education system produces and what the labour market demands. Degrees often do not translate into employability. What measures either the Centre or states propose to take to usher in reform are unknown. Electoral politics tends to prioritise short-term narratives—blame, identity issues, or welfare announcements—over detailed employment strategies. Job creation plans, when presented, are often headline-driven (targets, incentives) rather than backed by transparent roadmaps, timelines, and accountability metrics.

In such a situation, a report titled 'State of Working India 2026' noted that between 2004 and 2023 50 lakh-odd graduates were added every year, while the number of employed graduates rose by only around 28

lakh annually, out of which 17 lakh were salaried. Obviously, graduate employment has not kept pace with education because of which educated unemployment and underemployment is a serious spectre across the country.

An issue that has not been covered in the report is what percentage has come from the lower segments of society in relation to both the percentage of graduates and those who got employment amongst them. In both these areas, the privileged sections get maximum opportunities, as an established fact. The report has rightly emphasised on skill training, vocational and technical, to increase the chances of employment generation. The world of work must be made class and caste agnostic.

At a recent conference, Secretary of Higher Education Vineet Joshi, pointed out that India's education system is changing under the influence of the National Education Policy 2020 and employability and entrepreneurship are now being seen as essential outcomes. But it is difficult to agree with him as the re-

cent budget has not given priority to education and this is evident from the rather poor financial allocation.

At the same conference, Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) stated recently that outdated curricula had long been a complaint from the industry and institutions had been forced to move towards more frequent revision and closer consultation with employers.

Thus, one cannot but disagree with the poor quality of education imparted in colleges located in rural and backward districts.

The crisis has been aggravated with political parties making false promises before elections but not giving sufficient attention thereafter.

Steps to increase employment generation are not quite pronounced. However, the Union Cabinet recently approved spending ₹33,660 crore (\$3.63 billion) to develop 100 industrial parks in joint ventures with state governments and a state-run company. This, of course, is a long-

term plan which should have been announced much earlier and the government offering financial support of up to ₹1 crore per acre for core and social infrastructure sounds impressive. But the time taken for these parks to come about is not known though it is understood to generate about 15 lakh direct jobs after all the parks are developed. This is not encouraging when job creation needs to be taken up with all urgency.

It must be acknowledged that most political parties are still not according adequate priority to the urgent challenge of job creation. Prolonged unemployment and underemployment—particularly among the youth—carry within them the seeds of deep social unrest. Such unrest may not always be immediately visible, but its gradual accumulation can eventually trigger a situation that becomes difficult to manage or contain. Ignoring this reality risks not only economic stagnation but also a serious strain on social stability and public trust.

INFA



Dhurjati Mukherjee

MOST POLITICAL PARTIES ARE NOT ACCORDING ADEQUATE PRIORITY TO THE URGENT CHALLENGE OF JOB CREATION

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Double standards

Sir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing rallies in Kerala on April 4, 2026, strongly criticised the ruling LDF and accused it of fostering corruption. He declared that once the BJP-led NDA comes to power in the state, corruption would be rooted out and development would be prioritised. I do not know how to react to this news. It is an open secret that the BJP has not only embraced corrupt leaders from other political parties but also rewarded them handsomely with lucrative political positions. For this reason, the BJP has earned for itself the moniker of a "washing machine." Over the past decade, the BJP has been winning one state election after another by offering freebies to the people, thereby prompting other parties to do the same and normalising this cash-for-vote scheme, which goes by various euphemisms such as women's empowerment. That the Prime Minister of a party which has not only emboldened the corrupt but also torn to shreds democratic norms and principles (also a form of corruption) is wooing the people by promising a clean government is a classic example of the pot calling the kettle black.

Avinash Godbole, DEWAS (MP)

Maritime push

Sir, In hindsight, India has yet to fully realise its maritime potential. Every April 5 is observed as National Maritime Day to defend, shield, and preserve India's maritime zones. For a country with a long coastline of over 11,098 km, maritime development can act as an engine of growth and significantly boost economic progress. Waterway trade, or inland waterways, can supplement and ease the burden on road and rail transport. At present, seaports are major carriers of cargo. No effort should be spared in linking seaports with road and rail networks. So, there should also be significant infrastructural improvements at seaports. Ports should be capable of accommodating larger ships and must be equipped to host new terminals to improve vessel occupancy. If seaport capacity is enhanced, other necessary changes will naturally follow.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

WISDOM CORNER

“ The revolution is not an apple that falls when it is ripe. You have to make it fall

CHE GUEVARA

“ Freedom is not given - it is taken

NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE

“ Give me four years to teach the children and the seed I have sown will never be uprooted

VLADIMIR LENIN

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1621: The Mayflower departed for England after having deposited 102 Pilgrims at what became the American colony of Plymouth (Massachusetts).

1879: Chile declared war on Peru and Bolivia, beginning the War of the Pacific; the dispute, which was about control of a mineral-laden area of the Atacama Desert, was won by Chile.

1951: Julius Rosenberg and Ethel Rosenberg were sentenced to death for espionage; two years later they became the first American civilians executed for that crime.

1994: Grunge rocker Kurt Cobain, leader of the band Nirvana, died by suicide at the age of 27.

3 GIB chicks hatched using artificial insemination

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 4: Three new chicks of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustard (GIB) have been successfully hatched at breeding centres in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer district using artificial insemination technology, taking the total number of the birds in captivity to 76, officials said.

Two chicks were hatched at the Sudashri Godawan Breeding Centre, while one chick was hatched at the Ramdevra Godawan Breeding Centre, they said.

With this, the number of Great Indian Bustards, locally known as Godawan and designated as Rajasthan's state bird, has reached 52 at the Ramdevra centre and 24 at the Sudashri facility.

"Artificial insemination is proving to be highly effective in the conservation of the Great Indian Bustard, as it enables breeding even in conditions where natural reproduction is not possible," said Brijmohan Gupta, Divisional Forest Officer at the Desert National Park.

He said the years of sustained efforts being carried out in the Desert National Park landscape are now yielding encouraging results. "This technology has



become a lifeline for the species, which is on the brink of extinction," he added.

GIB, once found in large numbers across Rajasthan, Gujarat and parts of Pakistan, is now among the most critically endangered bird species in the world, with only a small population remaining in the wild.

Experts attribute the sharp decline in its population to factors such as collision with overhead power lines, poaching and habitat degradation.

The forest department has adopted captive breeding in a controlled and safe environment, as a conservation strategy, to counter these threats.

The newly hatched chicks are being closely monitored

by a specialised team to ensure proper nutrition, health care, and behavioural development, officials said.

Efforts are also being made to prepare them for eventual release into their natural habitats, they added.

The conservation programme is being implemented with coordinated efforts of the state and central governments, involving experts, modern equipment, and scientific methods.

Officials said that the steady rise in the number of captive-bred birds offers renewed hope for the revival of the species and marks a significant milestone in wildlife conservation efforts in the country.

Cyclonic circulation brings rain in parts of Rajasthan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 4: Parts of Rajasthan recorded rainfall and gusty winds over the past 24 hours due to a cyclonic circulation with more thunderstorms and hail activity forecasted for the region in the coming days, the India Meteorological Department said Saturday.

According to the Meteorological Centre in Jaipur, western Rajasthan recorded a maximum rainfall of 11.5 mm in Sri Ganganagar's Karanpur, while eastern parts received up to 32 mm rainfall in Udaipur's Kotda.

The IMD said that several districts, including Jaipur, Ajmer, Bharatpur, Kota, and Udaipur, are likely to witness thunderstorms accompanied by gusty winds of 40-50 kmph, light to moderate rainfall, and isolated hailstorm activity Saturday.

In contrast, most parts of Bikaner and Jodhpur divisions are expected to remain largely dry, the weather office said, forecasting fresh activity due to an approaching western disturbance from April 6.

"A new and strong western disturbance is likely to become active over parts of Jodhpur and Bikaner divisions from the afternoon of April 6, leading to a high possibility of thunderstorm and rainfall activity in some areas," the IMD said.

One year on, Mandi Road project remains in pipeline

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: Nearly a year after the Delhi government announced plans to hand over the widening of the crucial Mandi Road in Chattarpur to the NHAI, work on the project has yet to begin, officials said Saturday.

The 8.8-kilometre stretch, which connects Mehrauli in south Delhi to Faridabad in Haryana, remains heavily congested during peak hours, serving as a key link for commuters travelling between Gurugram and the Chattarpur area.

In April 2025, Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh announced that the project would be handed over to the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and that the road would be declared a national highway. However, the proposal to facilitate the handover is still awaiting approval, delaying the commencement of on-ground work.

There was no response from the PWD minister on the matter. "Given its role in facilitating freight movement to industrial zones and connecting to national highways, the project has broader national and regional significance beyond local urban transit," an official said.

According to an initial project



report, the existing road is narrow and flanked by farmhouses, residential properties and individual shops. The scale of land acquisition required prompted the Delhi government to propose transferring the project to NHAI, which is considered better equipped to handle such processes.

"We are trying to expedite the work on widening of Mandi road. There are some trees and other issues that are being worked out," Gajinder Yadav, Chhatarpur MLA, said.

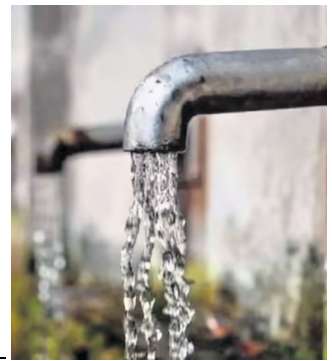
Mandi Road begins near the Chattarpur metro station on MG Road and extends to Faridabad Road, crossing into

Haryana. Owing to its strategic importance and rising traffic demand, authorities have proposed that the stretch be declared a national highway and linked to NH-148A.

"In view of its strategic importance, existing and future traffic demand and its direct connectivity with NH-148A, Mandi Road of total length may be considered for declaration as a national highway," the plan stated.

The road, however, continues to face heavy congestion during morning and evening rush hours, with delays in approvals and land acquisition keeping the long-pending widening project on hold.

Hundreds fall ill after suspected sewage contamination in Jaipur



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 4: Hundreds of residents of the Sushilpura area here have fallen ill over the last week, allegedly due to sewage contamination of the drinking water supply, sparking a health scare.

Several residents have reported similar symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach pain, nausea, and fever, with children and the elderly among the worst affected. Locals claim the crisis has impacted nearly every household, forcing many to rely on water tankers or buy packaged drinking water.

Pooran Mal Kumawat, a resident, said his family has been unwell for several days.

"We have all been suffering from diarrhoea and weakness. My wife even had to take injections," he said.

Another resident, Janki Saini, said the situation has become increasingly difficult. "All three of my children are suffering from stomach pain and fever, and we are arranging water from outside," she said.

Jagdish Sahu, who has spent

thousands of rupees on medical treatment so far, highlighted the financial burden caused by the crisis.

"My mother and I are unwell, and I had to take my son for treatment. We are buying water daily, which is adding to our expenses," he said.

According to the residents, the problem began after road construction work in the area allegedly damaged underground pipelines, leading to sewage mixing with drinking water. Overflowing drains and broken streets have further worsened conditions, they said.

Anil Mehta, in charge of a nearby government dispensary, said over 150 patients with similar symptoms have been treated in the last three days alone. Private practitioners in the area have also reported a surge in such cases.

Civil Lines MLA Gopal Sharma, who visited the area multiple times following protests by residents, said efforts were underway to resolve the issue.

"The government and administration are working hard to find a permanent solution at the earliest, and officials have been directed to restore the clean water supply," he said.

Residents, meanwhile, said tanker supply remains inadequate despite assurances, and contaminated water continues to be used for non-drinking purposes.

Authorities said efforts are on to repair damaged pipelines and ensure safe drinking water, even as the health department continues to monitor the situation closely.

64L in Delhi receiving subsidised food grains

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: More than 64 lakh people in Delhi are receiving subsidised food grains under the public distribution system (PDS), with the government continuing free rations till December 2028, according to official data.

The figures show that 64,93,601 beneficiaries across 14,28,475 households are currently covered. Of these, 62,46,786 beneficiaries fall under the Priority Household (PHH) category, while 2,46,815 are covered under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), meant for the poorest families.

For many families, the PDS remains a critical lifeline. In resettlement colonies and low-income neighbourhoods,



monthly ration supplies often determine whether kitchens can run through the month without additional borrowing.

Officials state that Delhi has 13 districts and 70 circles aligned with Assembly con-

stituencies to manage distribution. Food grains are supplied through a network supported by six Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns located in Mayapuri, Okhla, Pusa, Narela, Ghevra and Shaktinagar.

Anti-narcotics task force carries 258 ops in 175 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur: Rajasthan's Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) has carried out 258 operations within 175 days of its formation, seizing narcotic substances worth approximately ₹563 crore, police said Saturday. The seized value pertains only to drugs and does not include the cost of confiscated vehicles, weapons or factories, officials said, terming it a record in terms of scale and effectiveness since the unit's inception October 7, 2025. Director General of Police Vikas Kumar said the ANTF has taken strong action against all forms of drug trafficking across the state. "Major consignments have been seized, and five significant cases of illegal cultivation of ganja and opium have been busted," he said. He added that 30 illegal MD drug manufacturing units have been busted, including six directly by ANTF teams. The force has also intercepted five major opium smuggling consignments and taken action against 45 notorious and wanted drug traffickers, he said.

DELHI GOVT PLANS SLUM REHAB POLICY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: The Delhi government plans to provide slum dwellers modern facilities such as shopping complexes, parking spaces and e-rickshaw charging points under a new rehabilitation and resettlement policy being prepared, a source said.

Facilities under consideration include schools, Jan Suvidha Kendras, and dedicated sanitation arrangements for women, according to the government's proposed policy plan. The source said the policy is in the final stage and will likely be finalised this month.

The government also plans to extend the eligibility cut-off

date under the existing policy by around 10 years from January 1, 2015, to January 1, 2025, making many slum dwellers eligible for permanent housing, he said.

There are around 750 slum clusters in Delhi. Nearly half are located on land owned by central government agencies such as the Railways, the Land and Development Office (L&DO), and the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), which acts as the nodal agency for their rehabilitation.

The remaining slums are situated on land owned by the Delhi government, where rehabilitation is overseen by the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) under the Urban Development Department.

Currently, slum rehabilita-

tion in the national capital is governed by the Delhi Slum and Jhuggi Jhopri Rehabilitation and Relocation Policy, 2015, which prioritises rehabilitation by providing alternative accommodation at the same site or within a 5 km radius.

A slum dweller must pay between ₹1.12 lakh and ₹1.41 lakh for a 25 square metre housing unit, plus ₹30,000 for five years of maintenance. Since 2008, the Delhi government, through DUSIB and the Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructural Development Corporation, has constructed 52,584 flats in Dwaraka, Sultanpuri, Bhalswa-Jahangirpuri, Savda Ghevra, Pooth Khurd and Tikri Kalan to rehabilitate slum dwellers.

West Asia conflict disrupts snack exports from Bikaner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 4: The ongoing conflict in West Asia has started to impact exporters in the Bikaner region, with shipments of popular food items, such as bhujia, papad and spices to Gulf and European countries facing severe disruptions, traders said.

Bikaner, known for its namkeen industry, exports large quantities of snacks, spices and other products to countries in the Gulf region and Europe.

However, exporters said, the war has led to delays, rising freight costs and container shortages, affecting exports and imports.

Ashish Agarwal, a namkeen trader associated with the Bikharam group, said escalating input and logistics costs are hurting the industry.

"Freight charges have increased sharply due to the war, and raw material prices are also rising. The cost of edible oil has gone up by around 20 per cent in the last one month, which is directly impacting production," he said.

Exporters said container movement has slowed significantly, with shipments that earlier took around 30 days now taking up to 60 days due to longer and safer routes being taken amid the conflict.

Rajesh Jindal, an exporter, said both incoming and outgoing consignments are facing delays, increasing financial pressure on traders.

"Goods coming in and going out are both getting delayed, and costs have increased substantially. Demand for Bikaneri snacks and spices remains strong in Arab countries, but



supply chain disruptions are causing losses," he said.

Apart from exports, import of key raw materials, such as palm oil and soybean, has also been affected, traders said.

Rising petroleum prices have further pushed packaging costs up by 30-40 per cent, adding to

the burden on manufacturers. Exporters said the current period is crucial for the namkeen trade, as preparations for peak export season usually begin around this time.

However, uncertainty over delivery timelines and increased freight charges has

forced traders to rethink their strategies.

According to industry estimates, around 15 to 20 containers of bhujia, papad and namkeen are exported every month from Bikaner, along with nearly 60 containers of other goods. At present, much of this trade has come to a halt, with consignments worth crores reportedly stuck at ports or in transit. Shipments from Bikaner are routed through sea to many countries, such as Iran, Iraq, Oman, the UAE, Qatar and Bahrain, as well as European nations, including the UK, Germany, France, Italy and Spain.

Traders warned that if the situation persists, it could have a significant impact on the city's export-driven economy, with businesses already grappling with rising costs and delayed payments.

Withdraw 'pink elephant' print: PETA urges artiste

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 4: Animal rights body PETA India has urged Russian photographer Julia Buruleva to withdraw a commercial print featuring a captive elephant painted pink in Jaipur, or donate the proceeds to elephant conservation efforts in India, following the animal's death.

In a letter, PETA India's Senior Director of Veterinary Affairs, Mini Aravindan, said the print, reportedly being sold for over ₹3 lakh, should either be taken down or its earnings directed towards recognised conservation initiatives.

"I am writing to urge you to either immediately take down the print or donate all proceeds towards keeping elephants in their forest homes in India," she said.



Referring to the elephant Chanchal, reportedly around 70 years old, Aravindan noted that captive elephants are recommended for retirement at 65 under government guidelines.

"It is not possible to wholly rule out the health impacts of the paint," she added, citing potential risks. The organisation also raised concerns over the treatment of captive elephants used for tourism in Jaipur.



We all know that Gautam Buddha attained enlightenment in Bihar, and Gandhi found his true 'karma boom' in this very land of Champaran
CP RADHAKRISHNAN | VICE PRESIDENTCM

ISRO LAUNCHES MISSION IN LADAKH

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced the launch of a mission in Ladakh to examine the physiological, psychological and operational dynamics of "gaganyatris (astronauts)" and ground teams functioning in a high-altitude environment. The scientific data generated on crew performance and human factors will contribute directly to the Gaganyaan programme and future long-duration missions



of the day quote

Now, the roads are good... Once known for violence and unrest, the state is now known for development and hope
NITIN NABIN | BJP CHIEF

Double engine this, double engine that. You know what the BJP's real double engine is? One engine runs on misusing democratic institutions, weaponising the Election Commission to delete genuine voters, transferring honest officers to destabilise the state machinery, and illegally importing outsiders to rig the electoral rolls
ABHISHEK BANERJEE | TMC LEADER

In some parts of the state, unseasonal rain and hailstorms have brought disaster upon farmers. Wheat and isabgol crops have been damaged in Bikaner division, while in Nagaur, crops like isabgol, cumin, wheat and fennel have suffered heavy losses
ASHOK GEHLOT | FORMER CHIEF MINISTER, RAJASTHAN

SHORT TAKES

Pradhan slams Stalin over 'Hindi imposition'

New Delhi: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Saturday hit out at Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin over his criticism of the three-language formula, saying the narrative of "imposition" is a "tired attempt" to mask political failures. Pradhan said mischaracterising a progressive and inclusive reform as "linguistic imposition" was aimed at creating unnecessary apprehension and confusion. Earlier in the day, Stalin said the three-language formula was a "covert" mechanism to expand Hindi into non-Hindi-speaking regions. He alleged that the CBSE's curriculum framework, aligned with the NEP-2020, was a "calculated" and "deeply concerning" attempt at linguistic imposition. Responding to the criticism, Pradhan said, "The National Education Policy, 2020, is, in fact, a manifesto for linguistic liberation. It prioritises the mother tongue so every Tamil child can excel in their own glorious language."

Chief of defence staff reviews LoC

Srinagar: Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan on Saturday reviewed the security and operational preparedness along the Line of Control (LoC) in north Kashmir. Gen. Chauhan visited the strategically-important areas under the Army's Chinar Corps unit, a defence spokesperson said. During the visit, the CDS reviewed the security landscape and operational posture along the LoC in north Kashmir and commended the formation's exemplary operational preparedness, doctrinal coherence and resolute professionalism, he added. The spokesperson said at Baramulla, the CDS was briefed on future force application and technology infusion.

Three killed in clash between rival gangs

Nanded: Three persons were killed after members of two rival gangs clashed with each other in Maharashtra's Nanded city in the wee hours of Saturday, police said. Police have detained five people in connection with the incident that occurred around 1.30 am near a mall in the city, an official said. Superintendent of Police Abinash Kumar said that members of the Sada gang and Sai Lala gang attacked each other with daggers and sharp weapons, killing two persons on the spot.



People walk down a street amid fresh snowfall in Keylong, in Lahaul and Spiti district, Himachal Pradesh, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

CHANDIGARH GRENADE ATTACK Five held over explosion outside Punjab BJP office



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Preliminary investigations revealed that the module was backed by Pakistan's spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence and operated under the directions of foreign-based handlers located in Portugal and Germany

Chandigarh, April 4: Five individuals, part of a module backed by Pakistan's ISI, have been arrested in connection with the blast incident outside the Punjab BJP headquarters in Chandigarh, said Punjab Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav Saturday.

The Counter-Intelligence wing of Punjab Police, in a joint operation with Chandigarh Police, solved the Chandigarh grenade attack case, DGP Yadav said.

Police recovered one hand grenade and one .30 bore Ziga pistol along with ammunition from their possession, the officer mentioned further.

Those arrested have been identified as Balwinder Lal alias Shami of village Majari

in SBS Nagar, Jasvir Singh alias Jassi of village Bharapur in SBS Nagar, Charanjit Singh alias Channi of village Sujawalpur in SBS Nagar, Rubal Chauhan of village Thana in Shimla and Mandeep alias Abhijot Sharma of Dhuri in Sangrur.

According to DGP Yadav, preliminary investigations revealed that the module was backed by Pakistan's spy agency Inter-Services Intelligence and operated under the directions of foreign-based handlers located in Portugal and Germany. The accused were part of a structured network involving multiple operatives to execute the attack.

Furthermore, the DGP stated that two key perpetrators involved in the attack have also been identified, and ongoing investigations aim to establish both forward and backward linkages in this case.

Sharing further details, Assistant Inspector General, State Special Operations Cell (SSOC), SAS Nagar, Deepak Pareek said the investigation further revealed that the accused had transported a consignment containing hand grenades, arms and live cartridges. This consignment was circulated through multiple operatives before reaching the final perpetrators.

India LPG flows continue as tanker crosses Hormuz

LPG cargo from Iran has arrived at Mangalore and is being discharged

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: An Indian LPG tanker carrying roughly half a day's cooking gas supply has successfully crossed the war-hit Strait of Hormuz, while another vessel from Iran has reached the port of Mangalore, signalling continued fuel inflows despite regional disruptions.

"LPG vessel Green Sanvi has safely transited the Strait of Hormuz, carrying 46,650 tonnes of LPG cargo with 25 seafarers on board," a government statement giving an update on West Asia developments said Saturday.

Green Sanvi is the seventh Indian-flagged LPG tanker to have transited the strategic waterway, which has remained effectively shut since the US and Israel launched attacks on Iran February 28 and Tehran's sweeping retaliation.

Separately, an LPG cargo from Iran has arrived at Mangalore and is being discharged, according to the statement.

This perhaps is the first purchase of Iranian energy in seven years. "LPG vessel Sea Bird carrying around 44,000 tonnes of Iranian LPG berthed at Mangalore, India April 2 and is currently discharging," the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said in a post on X.

The purchase follows United States last month waiving sanctions on Iranian oil and refined products temporarily to ease prices that have skyrocketed since the start of the Middle East conflict.

After the passage of Green Sanvi, 17 Indian flagged vessels



No address proof needed for 5 Kg LPG cylinders: Govt

Amid the evolving situation in West Asia, the government Saturday said that 5 kg LPG cylinders are available at distributors on showing a valid ID without the need for address proof. The Government said it is taking comprehensive steps to ensure smooth availability of fuel and energy supplies, even as tensions in West Asia and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz raise concerns over global energy flows. "The 5 kg FTL cylinders are available at nearby LPG Distributorships and can be purchased by showing any valid ID proofs. No address proof is required," the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said. Officials said this move is aimed at improving access to cooking fuel, especially for migrant workers and those who may not have local address documents. Since March 23, around 5.7 lakh such cylinders have already been sold, with over 71,000 units sold in a single day recently. The Ministry emphasised that there is no shortage of petrol, diesel or LPG in the country and urged citizens not to panic buy. It said all retail fuel outlets are operating normally and adequate stocks are available nationwide, despite reports of heavy rush at some petrol pumps driven by rumours.

remain stranded on the west side of the strait.

Earlier this week, two LPG carriers, BW TYR and BW ELM, carrying combined LPG cargo of about 94,000 tonnes have safely transited the region. While BW TYR reached Mumbai March 31, BW ELM docked at New Mangalore April 1.

The statement said all Indian seafarers in the Gulf region are safe and maritime operations remain unaffected, with no incidents involving Indian-flagged vessels reported in the past 24 hours.

Rajasthan HC removes critical remarks on new transgender law

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jodhpur, April 4: The Rajasthan High Court has revised the epilogue of its recent judgment on transgender reservation, in which it made critical observations on the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026, saying it took away their right to self-identify their gender.

The bench comprising Justice Arun Monga and Justice Yogendra Kumar Purohit refused to delete the epilogue entirely but agreed that some paragraphs in it should not have been there.

"The court has clarified and ordered to remove some of the text, which the court said came by mistake and was neither intended nor necessary," said Vivek Mathur, counsel for a 29-year-old transgender petitioner seeking clarification related to the epilogue.

The revision comes three days after the court's March 30 ruling in a petition challenging a 2023 state notification placing transgender persons within the OBC category without a distinct reservation framework.

In its original judgment, the court had appended an epilogue, expressing concern that the 2026 amendment marked a departure from the constitutional principle of self-perceived gender identity as recognised by the Supreme Court.

The now-deleted portions had cautioned that conditioning legal gender recognition on certification or administrative scrutiny risked reducing an inalienable aspect of personhood to a state-mediated entitlement.

The court had also warned against statutory developments that could dilute constitutional guarantees or render transgender rights illusory by procedural constraints. In its revised order, however, the high court removed these observations, clarifying that they were not essential to the adjudication of the case.

The updated epilogue adopts a more restrained tone, describing the amendment as part of a changing legal landscape, while emphasising that the directions issued in the main judgment remain grounded in the legal position as it stood on the date of the ruling.

DJ Black Coffee's event in Goa cancelled

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Panaji, April 4: The Goa leg of Grammy-winning South African DJ Black Coffee's India tour was cancelled at the last minute Friday evening after authorities revoked the event's No Objection Certificate (NOC), a move intended to honour the solemnity of Good Friday.

Officials Saturday cited the need to respect local sentiments and the religious significance of the day as the primary reason for withdrawing the permission previously granted to host the "Sunset-to-Night" event.

The opposition Congress demanded a probe by the Economic Offences Cell of the state against the organisers.

The revocation of permission by the Communitade of Anjuna, in whose land the event was scheduled to be hosted, followed an objection by locals and the Congress, citing the solemn occasion of Good Friday and the upcoming Easter Sunday.

Local police officials confirmed that the organisers of "Sunset to Night" have cancelled the event, leaving many revellers disappointed.

Sebastian D'Souza, an attorney of Communitade of Anjuna, in a letter addressed to organisers, stated that the NOC granted to them March 4, 2026, to host the musical event April 3 in survey number 206/1 of Anjuna village has been unanimously revoked by the managing committee.



Gujarat HC bars AI use in decision-making, judgment drafting

AI SHALL NOT BE USED TO FIND FACTS, LAW, OR OPERATIVE ORDER IN ANY JUDICIAL PROCEEDING, NOR SHALL IT BE USED FOR SORTING, CLASSIFICATION OF EVIDENCE, ORGANISATION OF EVIDENTIARY MATERIAL, OR ANY TASK INVOLVING EVALUATION OR CATEGORISATION OF PROOF

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, April 4: The Gujarat High Court has prohibited the use of Artificial Intelligence for any form of decision-making, judicial reasoning, order drafting or judgment preparation, bail sentencing considerations, or any substantive adjudicatory process.

According to the high court's AI policy, unveiled Saturday at a conference of district judiciary judges in Gujarat, AI should be used to improve the speed and quality of justice delivery, rather than as a replacement for judicial reasoning.

As per the policy, these technologies "carry substantial risks - including hallucinations, bias, confidentiality breaches, and erosion of judicial independence - that must

be managed with care and institutional discipline".

It says that by confining AI to the narrowest conceivable role, purely anonymised, metadata-driven case allocation and research of legal principles, "human supremacy in justice delivery is reaffirmed and limited technological assistance is harnessed to reduce administrative imbalances that might otherwise delay access to justice".

"Broadly, Artificial Intelligence shall not be used-directly or indirectly-for any aspect of judicial decision, adjudication, reasoning, application of law, interpretation of facts, weighing of arguments, determination of rights/liabilities, sentencing, bail, interim orders, or final judgment," as per the policy document.



Also, AI shall not be used to find facts, law, or operative order in any judicial proceeding, nor shall it be used for sorting, classification of evidence, organisation of evidentiary material, or any task involving evaluation or categorisation of proof, it says.

AI cannot be used to author, generate, or substantially com-

pose any judgment, final order, or binding legal ruling, even if subsequently reviewed by a judge, according to the policy document.

One cannot enter names, addresses, or identifying information of parties, witnesses, or advocates, details of pending proceedings or unreported orders, privileged communications or

confidential legal strategies, and sensitive personal data, it says.

AI shall not be used to generate, fabricate, embellish, or alter evidence in any form, using AI-generated citations, case references, or statutory provisions without independent verification from authoritative primary sources is also prohibited, as is drafting, correcting or summarising any office note or submission, it says

A judge is personally responsible for every order, judgment, and observation issued under their name, and this cannot be delegated, shared with, or diminished by the use of any AI tool, it says.

Every court officer is personally responsible for the accuracy and appropriateness of any AI-generated content used in the performance of their official

duties, stresses the policy

"AI in judiciary should be designed as a decision-support and administrative efficiency tool, not as a replacement for judicial reasoning. With proper safeguards-such as transparency, human supervision, and protection of confidential information-AI can significantly strengthen case management and improve the speed and quality of justice delivery," it states.

The policy requires a qualified human officer to review, verify, and be responsible for any AI-generated output before it is acted upon, filed, published, or communicated. AI-generated content, including case citations and statutory references, must be independently verified against authoritative primary sources before use, it says.



Both Bagalkote and Davanagere are very positive. Congress workers are doing an excellent job, going door to door and convincing people about the guarantee schemes

DOCTORS SEEK IMPLEMENTATION OF NEXT FOR MBBS STUDENTS

Members of the Resident Doctors Association and the Student Association of AIIMS Delhi, along with faculty from AIIMS Delhi, Nagpur, Patna and RML, have sought the implementation of the National Exit Test (NEXT) for MBBS students



of the day quote

Every child must be taken to school...When a child becomes literate, society progresses, and the nation achieves new heights of prosperity. Conversely, illiteracy leads to poverty and backwardness



YOGI ADITYANATH | CHIEF MINISTER, UTTAR PRADESH

The UCC is a directive principle, not a fundamental right. It is mentioned in Article 44 of the Constitution. During the constituent assembly debate, Babasaheb Ambedkar did not say that after the code is framed, the state shall enforce it upon all the citizens. The code shall apply only to those who make a declaration and voluntarily agree to be bound by it



ASADUDDIN OWAISI | AIMIM CHIEF

Deputy Chief Minister Sunetra Pawar called Uddhav Thackeray on Friday. There was a discussion on the Baramati bypoll



SANJAY RAUT | PARTY LEADER, SHIV SENA

POST OF THE DAY

Shameful negligence at #SatpuraTigerReserve! FD Rakhi Nandais blaming "the Gulf War" for signal failure while a radio-collared tiger was poisoned, buried, and its collar burnt by poachers. This level of incompetence is lethal. We demand: 1. Immediate performance audit of ALL radio-collared tigers 2. Accountability for agencies providing faulty/unmonitored collars. 3. Explanation for these bizarre "international war" excuses for local monitoring failures. Wildlife "protection" cannot be a joke

@Ajaydubey9

SHORT TAKES

Families of AI171 crash victims write to PM

Ahmedabad: Ten months after the tragic Air India plane crash that killed 260 persons, bereaved families of the victims have written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging the release of the Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) and black box data. Air India flight AI 171, a Boeing 787-8 aircraft enroute to London, crashed into a medical college hostel complex shortly after the take-off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport here on June 12, 2025. The aircraft burst into flames, killing 241 out of 242 people onboard and 19 individuals on the ground. Around 30 bereaved families from across Gujarat met in Ahmedabad on Saturday and wrote a letter to the prime minister, requesting the release of the CVR and 'black box' (Flight Data Recorder) data to uncover the truth behind the calamity.

Sikkim Municipal polls: SKM wins 58 seats

Gangtok: The ruling Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) Saturday won 58 of 63 wards in nine urban local bodies in the Himalayan state unopposed, while its alliance partner BJP bagged four, according to the State Election Commission. The opposition Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) and the Citizen Action Party Sikkim (CAPS) had already announced that they will boycott the municipal elections April 24, questioning the reservation criteria for the urban body polls. The nine urban local bodies - Gangtok, Singtam, Pakyong, Rangpo, Gyalsing, Namchi, Jorethan, Soreng, and Mangan - together have 63 seats.

Rahul Gandhi alleges attacks on minorities; reiterates BJP-LDF nexus

The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha addressed multiple election rallies in Alappuzha, Kattappana in Idukki district, and Fort Kochi and Kunnathunad in Ernakulam district ahead of the April 9 Assembly election



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Alappuzha/Idukki/Kochi (Kerala), April 4: Top Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Saturday raised the alleged attacks on minorities in Manipur and Chhattisgarh during his election campaign in central Kerala districts, and claimed that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan was aligned with forces behind such incidents. The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha addressed multiple election rallies in Alappuzha, Kattappana in Idukki district, and Fort Kochi and Kunnathunad in Ernakulam district ahead of the April 9 Assembly election.

His remarks on attacks on minorities come amid concerns expressed by sections of the Christian community over proposed amendments to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), which seek stricter monitoring of foreign funds. In Alappuzha, former CPI(M) leader G Sudhakaran, contesting as a UDF-backed candidate, was also present on the stage. Gandhi alleged that minorities were facing widespread at-

tacks in different parts of the country. "Two nuns from here were attacked in Chhattisgarh. In Manipur, churches were burnt. The chief minister has a partnership with the people who are doing this. The very people who are attacking minorities-Muslims, Christians and Sikhs-have a partnership with the CM," he alleged, adding that the BJP and LDF has a nexus in the polls to defeat the UDF. He repeated similar allegations at other campaign venues. In Kochi, Gandhi said the LDF was no longer a Left formation but a partner of a political force that attacks people because of their faith-whether they are Christians, Muslims, Sikhs or Jains. "How can the chief minister stand with them? How can he not be ashamed after his Left training? He is aligned with this force," the Congress leader said, adding that Vijayan must answer to the people of Kerala. He also directly targeted Vijayan, alleging that the CM was "afraid" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in order to protect his children. Rahul made an apparent reference to the Exalgic case allegedly involving the CM's daughter, without naming anyone.

Ghatak hoon: Raghav Chadha hits back at AAP

Chadha says he is in Parliament to create impact, not ruckus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: The spat between the Aam Aadmi Party and its Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha intensified Saturday with the sidelined leader dismissing AAP's allegation against him as "lies" and asserting that he went to Parliament to raise people's issues and not to create ruckus. "All these lies will be unmasked. Kyunki mai ghayal hoon isiliye ghatak hoon" (I am wounded, therefore I am dangerous)," the MP said in a video statement, quoting from the movie 'Dhurandhar', and alleged that there was a coordinated campaign to target him. His reaction came a day after the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) launched an all-out attack, accusing him of shying away from raising his voice against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Centre in Parliament and instead engaging in "soft PR". AAP had removed him as its deputy leader in Rajya Sabha Thursday, after which the MP had said he had been "silenced, not defeated". Chadha Saturday also countered claims by AAP leaders that he did not join opposition walk-outs and had refused to sign the notice for a motion to remove the Chief Election Commissioner. He said that he did not want to respond, but if lies are repeated consistently, they may seem to appear true. "The first allegation they put against me was that I did not walk out with the opposition. This is a white lie, and I challenge you (AAP) to give me one



example, one incident, where opposition walked out and I didn't support them," Chadha said. "There are CCTV cameras everywhere in the parliament. Show me footage and it will become clear," he said. On the notice for a motion against the Chief Election Commissioner, Chadha said no party leader had asked him, either formally or informally, to sign it. He said that several other MPs from his party had also not signed the motion. "So, what is my fault? Why am I being blamed here?" he said, noting that 50 signatures were needed for the notice and there were 105 MPs in the opposition. "They said I am scared and that is why I am raising useless issues. I want to tell you that I did not go to parliament to create ruckus, scream, break the

mic or abuse. I went there to raise problems of people," the MP said. "From Punjab's water issues to air pollution in Delhi, poor conditions of government schools and the problems being faced by passengers traveling in trains... I raised such issues," he said. The MP said his focus in Parliament has been on raising public issues like GST, income tax, public health-care, education, railway passenger issues, menstrual health, unemployment and inflation. Chadha said that he goes to Parliament to "create impact not ruckus" as it runs on taxpayers' money and it is his responsibility to highlight their concerns. "Every lie will be exposed," he said. "I just want to say that all three allegations, all these lies, will be unmasked," Chadha said in the video statement titled "Three Allegations. Zero Truth".

AAP had removed MP Raghav Chadha as its deputy leader in Rajya Sabha Thursday

1 killed, 7-10 feared trapped as 4-storey lodge collapses in MP



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Anuppur (MP), April 4: One person was killed and 7-10 others were trapped in the debris after a four-storey building collapsed in Kotma town in Anuppur district of Madhya Pradesh Saturday evening, police said. An official identified the ill-fated building as 'Aggarwal Lodge' located near a bus stand. The incident occurred at 5.30 pm, eyewitnesses said, adding that a loud explosion-like sound

was heard when the structure collapsed, triggering massive dust clouds. One person was found dead, while 7-10 others are still trapped in the debris, Anuppur Superintendent of Police Moti-ur-Rehman told reporters. Describing the accident as tragic, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said the authorities have been directed to rush to the spot and ensure relief and treatment. At the time of the accident, the area was teem-

ing with passengers of the bus stand as well as those involved in construction work on an adjacent plot, officials added. "The building was approximately 10 years old. The ongoing work nearby may have contributed to the incident," the SP said. The district administration called in expert rescue teams from government-run SECL's facility in Jamuna Kotma and also from JMS, a coal mining firm. "SECL teams and modern machinery have been deployed in rescue and relief operations. The Kotma and Anuppur district hospitals have been placed on high alert," the official added. Expressing grief over the incident, CM Yadav said in a statement, "The collapse of a hotel building in the Kotma Municipality area of Anuppur district is tragic. The death of a civilian is painful. The NDRF (National Disaster Response Force) team has left for the scene."



A green sunbird perches amid blooming yellow trumpet flowers, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

Right to Education does not include right to choose school: Delhi HC

A bench of Chief Justice DK Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia said the Right to Education (RTE) Act was a beneficial legislation, enacted to achieve the objectives of social inclusion and ensuring that schools become a common space which was not differentiated by barriers of caste, ethnic group or caste lines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: A child's right to education does not encompass the right to select a particular school for it, the Delhi High Court has held. A bench of Chief Justice DK Upadhyaya and Justice Tejas Karia said the Right to Education (RTE) Act was a beneficial legislation, enacted to achieve the objectives of social inclusion and ensuring that schools become a common space which was not differentiated by barriers of caste, ethnic group or caste lines. "However, such a right to education cannot be translated into right to select a particular school," the court ruled March 25.

The court's verdict came on a mother's appeal seeking to admit her ward in Class 2 under the EWS category in a private school for the academic session 2024-2025. The appellant had earlier approached a single-judge bench of the high court for admission of her ward under the EWS category in Class 1 of the private school for the 2023-2024 academic session. In the appeal, the appellant assailed the single judge's order, which said that although the school lacked a legitimate basis for refusing admission to the appellant's ward, the conclusion of the relevant academic year precluded the court from issuing an order for her ward's admission in the sub-



sequent academic year, i.e. 2024-25. The single judge, however, had said that the unfilled EWS seats in Class 1 for the academic year would be carried forward next year for the same class and would be available to any

EWS candidate, including the appellant's ward, if they choose to apply. The appellant, however, argued before the division bench that her ward ought to be given admission in Class 2 in the school for the academ-

ic year 2024-2025. Refusing to grant relief in the appeal, the division bench stated that in the absence of any interim order of provisional admission or reserving of a seat during the pendency of the petition, the right of the student to be granted admission in the school would perish once the academic year was over. It further noted that when the school refused to grant admission, the Directorate of Education (DoE) accommodated the appellant's ward in another school, which was amongst the preferred schools selected by the appellant at the time of filing the application form. However, the second school was not accepted by the appel-

lant, noted the court. The appellant stated that during the draw of lots conducted by the DoE in March 2023, her ward's name was selected for admission in the private school. She alleged that when she approached the school for verification of the documents and to complete the admission process, she was denied entry and advised that she would receive further communication. The appellant was subsequently informed that admission for EWS children could not be granted until all seats for the general category were filled, and therefore her ward was placed on a waiting list, the court was informed.



People need to forget about the issue of democracy. We have to tell the truth: democracy isn't for us
IBRAHIM TRAORE | MILITARY LEADER, BURKINA FASO

EUROPEAN MINISTERS TARGET ENERGY FIRMS

The finance ministers of Spain and four other European countries are urging the European Union to impose a bloc-wide windfall tax on energy companies, concerned that surging oil and gas prices driven by the war in Iran will fuel inflation and strain households



of the day quote

We must promote a positive balance between our strategic partners, China and India, preventing the Americans or anyone else from using India against China and, thereby, even indirectly, against us
DMITRY TRENIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIAN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL

The navy is being equipped with state-of-the-art platforms and niche technologies, enabling it to target critical infrastructure and naval assets of the adversary
NAVEED ASHRAF | NAVAL CHIEF ADMIRAL, PAKISTAN

We are working to strengthen our partnership to ensure real protection of people's lives, advance stability and guarantee security in our Europe, as well as in the Middle East
VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

Trump gives Iran 48-hour deadline

The US president re-upped a previous April 6 deadline for Tehran to open up the Strait of Hormuz or face devastating consequences



Araqchi said on X. MIXED SIGNALS Trump has sent mixed messages since the conflict began with a US-Israeli bombardment of Iran February 28, switching between hinting at diplomatic progress to making threats to bomb the Islamic Republic "back to the Stone Ages". On Saturday, he repeated his threats to intensify attacks on Iran if it failed to reach a deal or open the Strait of Hormuz strategic waterway. "Remember when I gave Iran ten days to MAKE A DEAL or OPEN UP THE HORMUZ STRAIT. Time is running out - 48 hours before all Hell will reign (sic) down on them. Glory be to GOD!" he said in a post on Truth Social. In an apparent move to heap further pressure on Tehran

ISRAEL PREPARING FOR ATTACKS ON IRAN ENERGY SITES, OFFICIAL SAYS ONE CREW MEMBER FROM DOWNED F-15E JET RESCUED, ONE STILL MISSING IRAN DENIES REFUSING TO GO TO PAKISTAN FOR TALKS following Trump's ultimatum, a senior Israeli defence official said Israel was preparing to attack Iranian energy facilities, and was awaiting the green light from the US. The timeframe for such attacks would be within the next week, the official said. Trump has previously threatened to hit Iranian power plants if his demands were not met. The war has killed thousands, sparked an energy crisis

and threatened lasting damage to the world economy. Iran has virtually shut the Strait of Hormuz, which normally carries about a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas. Iranian fire brought down a two-seat US F-15E jet, officials in both countries said Friday, and a US official said search-and-rescue efforts had recovered one of the crew. Two Black Hawk helicopters engaged in the search for the missing crew member were hit by Iranian fire but made it out of Iranian airspace, the two US officials told Reuters. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said it was combating a southwestern area near where the pilot's plane came down, while the regional governor promised a commendation for anyone who captured or killed "forces of the hostile enemy." In a separate incident, an A-10 Warthog fighter aircraft was hit and crashed over Kuwait, with the pilot ejecting, the US officials said.

Remember when I gave Iran ten days to MAKE A DEAL or OPEN UP THE HORMUZ STRAIT. Time is running out - 48 hours before all Hell will reign (sic) down on them. Glory be to GOD!
DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, US

fire, state media said, citing the commander of the Revolutionary Guards' navy. IRAN TOUTS NEW AIR DEFENCE SYSTEMS The Downing of two US warplanes shows the risks still facing US and Israeli aircraft, despite assertions by Trump and his Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth that US forces had total control of the skies over Iran. Iranian fire brought down a two-seat US F-15E jet, officials in both countries said Friday, and a US official said search-and-rescue efforts had recovered one of the crew. Two Black Hawk helicopters engaged in the search for the missing crew member were hit by Iranian fire but made it out of Iranian airspace, the two US officials told Reuters. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said it was combating a southwestern area near where the pilot's plane came down, while the regional governor promised a commendation for anyone who captured or killed "forces of the hostile enemy." In a separate incident, an A-10 Warthog fighter aircraft was hit and crashed over Kuwait, with the pilot ejecting, the US officials said.

Russia, Ukraine trade deadly strikes

Kyiv, April 4: Russia and Ukraine traded deadly strikes overnight and Saturday morning, killing 10 people and wounding several dozen more officials on both sides said. The attacks came as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy travelled to Istanbul for talks with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. He will also meet with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the spiritual leader of Eastern Orthodox Christians. "We are working to strengthen our partnership to ensure the real protection of lives, advance stability, and guarantee security in Europe and the Middle East. Joint efforts always yield the best results," Zelenskyy said in a post on the messaging app Telegram after arriving in Istanbul. Russia fired 286 drones at Ukraine overnight, 260 of which were downed, the Ukrainian Air Force said in an online statement. Five people - three women and two men - were killed in the city of Nikopol in the Dnipropetrovsk region, and 19 others were wounded, the head of the regional military administration Oleksandr Hanzha said. The attack damaged market stalls and a shop. In the city of Sumy, not far from the border with Russia, a strike wounded 11 people, the National Police said. Residential areas were hit, and houses, cars and utility networks were damaged in the attack.

SHORT TAKES

Cuba to release over 2k prisoners

Havana: Cuba began releasing prisoners from its jails Friday just hours after its communist-run government announced a sweeping amnesty coinciding with the most intense pressure campaign applied by the US in decades. More than 2,000 prisoners are slated to be released as part of Cuba's state-run media Thursday called a "sovereign and humanitarian" gesture, the largest such amnesty in 10 years. The US said it was closely monitoring whether those it deems to be political prisoners would be among the liberated. "It is unclear how many, if any, political prisoners will be released," the spokesperson said.

12-year-old arrested in death of classmate

Los Angeles: A 12-year-old has been arrested in connection with the death of a classmate who was hit in the head with a metal water bottle during an alleged bullying incident at a Los Angeles school, authorities said Friday. The juvenile, whose age and gender have not been made public, was arrested on suspicion of murder on Thursday, Los Angeles Police Officer Charles Miller said. The arrest stems from the February 25 death of 12-year-old Khimberly Zavaleta Chuquiipa. Miller said he couldn't release any other information because both the victim and the suspect are juveniles. Khimberly's family says she was struck in the head February 17 during a bullying incident at Reseda Charter High School, which also includes a middle school.

Senegal limits foreign trips for officials

Dakar: The Senegalese government has banned all but essential foreign trips for government ministers as part of cost-saving measures triggered by the energy crisis linked to the Iran war. Senegal, like many African countries, imports most of the petroleum products it consumes, leaving its economy vulnerable to supply disruptions such as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which has sent the price of crude soaring. Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko said that his office was taking steps to limit public expenditure, pointing out that the country's initial budget forecasts were based on an oil price of \$62 per barrel, which is now almost double as a result of the Iran war.

NATURE'S FURY

Floods, landslides claim 77 lives in Afghanistan

Kabul, April 4: Widespread flooding, landslides and lightning strikes triggered by heavy rain and storms across Afghanistan have left 77 people dead and 137 injured over the past 10 days, the country's Disaster Management Authority said Saturday. More rain has been forecast for the coming days throughout Afghanistan, and the authority warned the public to stay away from river banks and areas prone to flooding. So far this year, dozens of people have died due to extreme weather in Afghanistan, an impoverished country that is highly vulnerable to extreme weather events. Earlier this year, heavy snowfall and flash floods left dozens of people dead across the country. The recent toll includes 26 people killed over the past 48 hours, the disaster authority said. Overall, 793 homes have been completely destroyed and a further 2,673 have been damaged, while floods and landslides have destroyed 337 kilometres (about 210 miles) of roads, it said. Businesses, agricultural land, water wells and irrigation canals have also been damaged, with more than 5,800 families affected overall, the authority said.

VIOLATIONS OF FMGL REGULATIONS

India asks students to verify credentials of Uzbek varsities

Moscow, April 4: India has advised its students to verify the credentials of Uzbek universities before enrolling in medical programmes in the Central Asian country, highlighting concerns about potential violations of FMGL regulations. The Foreign Medical Graduate Licentiate (FMGL) Regulations are issued by the National Medical Commission (NMC) of India and apply to students who have studied medicine abroad. Urging the students not to fall prey to any person or agent misleading them, the Indian Embassy in Tashkent also asked them to ensure that the institutions in Uzbekistan are not admitting students over and above their capacity. "Embassy would urge you to satisfy yourself fully about the credentials of the university in which you seek admission, and also that universities are not admitting students over and above their capacity," the advisory said. It further asked the students to also ensure that their degree is valid for practice in India, for which their university (in Uzbekistan) must strictly adhere to the FMGL Regulations issued by India's National Medical Commission. "Do not fall prey to any person or agent misguiding you on this issue. Please stay vigilant and contact the Embassy in case of doubt," it said.

Fuel relief in Pak after backlash

Pak govt slashes petrol price by PKR 80 per litre, day after sharp hike met severe backlash

Islamabad, April 4: A day after an unprecedented surge in fuel prices triggered severe backlash, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has announced slashing the petrol price by PKR 80. Sharif in a midnight address Friday announced that the government has decided to reduce petrol levy by PKR 80 per litre, making the commodity available to the end consumer for PKR 378 per litre. The government Thursday announced an unprecedented hike of 43 per cent and 55 per cent in the prices of petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD), respectively. The rise in petrol price from PKR 321.17 to PKR 458.41 per litre came as the government levy increased from PKR 105 to PKR 160 per litre. The government had also increased HSD price by PKR 184.49 per litre - from PKR 335.86 to PKR 520.35 - but had abolished the levy, prompting demands that the government should follow suit with regard to petrol price, providing some relief to citizens. "I am announcing an immedi-



ate reduction of PKR 80 per litre in petrol levy," he said, adding that the new price of PKR 378 per litre would take effect from midnight, with petrol available at the revised rate at petrol stations across the country. The Pakistan prime minister said the petrol price would remain unchanged for at least one month. He emphasised that the situation in the Gulf region was responsible for the hike in petroleum prices, but the government was making every effort to keep prices in check. "Through careful savings and prudent use of resources, we tried to shield you from the storm of inflation," he added. Sharif said previously it was decided that federal cabinet members would not receive their salaries for two months as part of austerity measures taken by the government to deal with the fuel crunch. However, now they would have to go without salaries for six months, he announced. The government initially increased prices by

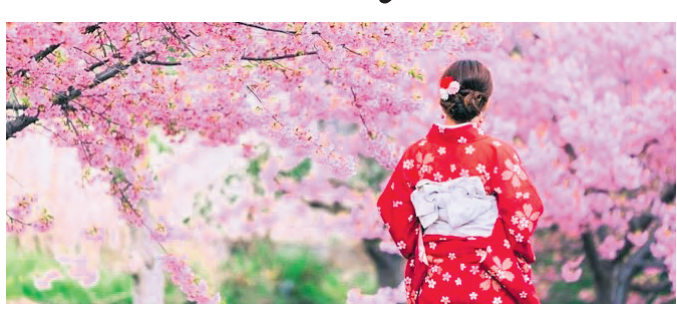
Pak would hit Kolkata in 'future' conflict: Asif

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif Saturday warned India that it would respond with a strike in Kolkata to any "future misadventures." "If India tries to stage any false flag operation this time, then God-willing, we will take it to Kolkata," Asif said while talking to reporters at his hometown of Sialkot, some 130kms from Lahore. He claimed that there are reports that a false-flag operation has been designed through their own men or through the Pakistanis in their detention by laying down some bodies somewhere and saying "they were terrorists and had done so and so." He, however, did not provide any evidence in support of his claim. On Thursday, Asif said that Pakistan's response to any attack would be "swift, calibrated, and decisive." Asif was responding to the remarks by his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh, who earlier said that any "misadventure" from India's neighbour in the prevailing situation would invite an "unprecedented and decisive" action. The Pahalgaon attack that took place April 22 last year resulted in a four-day conflict between the two countries.

PKR 55 per litre for petrol and HSD soon after the war began.

Tokyo's iconic cherry trees ageing fast

People gather under the trees during the season of hanami, or cherry blossom viewing, and the collapse of trees has alarmed officials in Tokyo, the birthplace of the cherry blossom variety



Tokyo, April 4: Many of Tokyo's popular and iconic Somei Yoshino cherry blossom trees were planted during Japan's postwar advancement in the 1960s, and are now getting old and frail. Some have fallen, and many others require support, triggering safety concerns as the

Japanese celebrate the season of their favourite flower. Two cherry blossom trees collapsed Thursday, one at Kinuta Park in downtown Tokyo and the other at the Chidorigafuchi greenway. The one in Kinuta Park damaged a fence while the other tree almost fell into the Imperial Palace moat, though nobody was injured. The tree in Kinuta Park was 18 meters (59 feet) tall and 2.5 meters (8.2 feet) in diameter. It was among the oldest, believed to be more than 60 years old, officials said. In March, another old cherry tree collapsed at the park, injuring a passerby. Last year, 85 trees fell in Tokyo parks, injuring three people, and many were cherry trees, according to Masakazu Noguchi, a Tokyo metropoli-

tan official in charge of public parks. Tokyo assembly member Yutaka Kazama expressed concern on social media last month that "cherry blossom trees with their roots partially exposed or obviously rotten seem dangerous," calling for firm safety measures but without quickly resorting to tree felling. Ageing and erosion by internal fungus growth are among the main causes for the deterioration of the cherry blossom trees. A tree doctor, Hiroyuki Wada, said heavy tilting, flowering on lower trunks and mushrooms growing at the bottom are signs to look for in order to avoid risk-prone trees. Risks increase when tree trunks retain water after rain, he said.

EPSTEIN SCANDAL

Up to 75 women expected to benefit from settlement

New York, April 4: Lawyers say up to 75 women who were sexually abused by Jeffrey Epstein since 2008 may benefit from a \$72.5 million fund set up as part of a settlement Bank of America reached with lawyers representing the women. US District Judge Jed S Rakoff gave the deal preliminary approval Thursday and set a final approval hearing for August 27. He also ordered lawyers to submit to him by Friday a broader list of publications to be used to notify Epstein victims that the settlement fund exists. The judge said he wanted to

ensure "nobody is left out." Lawyers for women abused by Epstein had sued the bank, saying it ignored suspicious financial transactions involving Epstein that occurred while he was abusing girls and women from June 2008 to his arrest in early July 2019 on federal sex trafficking charges. Epstein died in August 2019 in a Manhattan federal jail. The death was ruled a suicide. At the hearing Thursday, attorney David Boies said lawyers for the victims believed between 60 and 75 women will make claims that would make them eligible for payouts from the settlement fund. He said "there may be more we haven't identified."



At a time when global prices and supply chains remain unpredictable, this step should improve stability in input costs
ARUN SHUKLA | PRESIDENT & DIRECTOR, JK LAKSHMI CEMENT

GOVT KEEPS PEA IMPORTS DUTY-FREE

India has extended the period for duty-free imports of yellow peas until March 31, 2027, the commerce ministry said in a notification Saturday. All other terms and conditions governing such imports would remain unchanged, the government said. The government had earlier allowed duty-free imports of yellow peas until March 31, 2026. India, the world's biggest importer of the commodity, sources supplies mainly from Canada and Russia



of the day **QUOTE**

We are looking at closing FY26 with ₹600 crore revenue and going forward, this financial year, we are potentially looking at touching ₹1,000 crore as a goal



PUSPEN MAITY | CEO, TECHNOSPOT

India and global construction markets are at a pivotal inflection point where digital adoption is no longer optional but mission-critical as we build on the foundation for Viksit Bharat 2047



ALOK SHARMA | MD, NEMETSCHKE INDIA

By decriminalising over 1,000 offences across 79 Acts and rationalising penalties, the reform brings greater clarity, predictability, and proportionality in compliance, strengthening ease of doing business, encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation, and reinforcing India's position as a globally competitive investment destination



ANANT GOENKA | PRESIDENT, FICCI

Q4 RESULTS

Loan growth outpaces deposit for 3 banks

New Delhi: LIC-controlled IDBI Bank Saturday reported a 16 per cent increase in loan growth to ₹2.53 lakh crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2026. Its total advances were ₹2.18 lakh crore at the end of March 31, 2025, IDBI Bank said in a regulatory filing. The lender reported a 12 per cent rise in total deposits to ₹3.46 lakh crore from ₹3.1 lakh crore at the end of the fourth quarter of the preceding financial year. Meanwhile, Kotak Mahindra Bank also reported higher credit growth versus deposit expansion. The bank registered a 16.2 per cent rise in advances to ₹4.95 lakh crore from ₹4.26 lakh crore in the fourth quarter of the preceding fiscal. It reported a 14.7 per cent increase in total deposits to ₹5.72 lakh crore from ₹4.99 lakh crore at the end of the fourth quarter of FY25, Kotak Mahindra Bank said in a regulatory filing. AU Small Finance Bank also reported a higher credit growth vis-a-vis deposit expansion. The bank posted a 25.1 per cent rise in advances to ₹1.36 lakh crore against ₹1.08 lakh crore in the fourth quarter of FY25. The lender reported a 22.8 per cent increase in total deposits to ₹1.52 lakh crore compared to ₹1.24 lakh crore at the end of the fourth quarter of FY25, AU Small Finance Bank (SFB) said in a regulatory filing.

HDFC Bank sees 12% rise in loan growth

New Delhi: The country's second-largest lender HDFC Bank Saturday reported a 12 per cent credit growth to ₹29.6 lakh crore for the March quarter. Its total advances were ₹26.43 lakh crore at the end of March 31, 2025, HDFC Bank said in a regulatory filing. The lender reported a 14.4 per cent rise in total deposits to ₹31.05 lakh crore from ₹27.14 lakh crore at the end of the fourth quarter of the preceding financial year. During the period, CASA deposits recorded a growth of 12.3 per cent to ₹10.6 lakh crore compared to ₹9.4 lakh crore in the year-ago period, it said. The bank's period-end time deposits were approximately ₹20.45 lakh crore as of March 31, 2026, a growth of around 15.5 per cent over ₹17.7 lakh crore as of March 31, 2025. During the quarter, Atanu Chakraborty abruptly resigned as chairman of the HDFC Bank, citing ethical concerns effective March 18. This is the first time that the part-time chairman of HDFC Bank left in the middle, raising concerns over the functioning.

WEST ASIA CRISIS

Food prices soar for 2nd month globally

REUTERS

Paris, April 4: World food prices climbed in March to their highest level since September last year and could rise further if the Middle East conflict that pushed up energy prices continues, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization said Friday.

"Price rises since the conflict began have been modest, driven mainly by higher oil prices and cushioned by ample global cereal supplies," FAO Chief Economist Maximo Torero said in a statement.

But if the conflict lasts over 40 days and input costs remain high, farmers may reduce inputs, plant less, or switch crops to lesser fertiliser crops, he said.

"Those choices will hit future yields and shape our food supply and commodity prices for the rest of this year and all of the next," he added.

The FAO Food Price Index, which measures changes in a basket of globally traded food commodities, rose by 2.4% from its revised February level. It is 1% above its value a year ago, although nearly 20% below its March 2022 peak, reached after the start of the war in Ukraine.

FERTILISER COSTS COULD LEAD TO REDUCED PLANTING

The cereal price index increased by 1.5% from the previous month, led by a 4.3% increase in international wheat prices due to worsening crop prospects in the U.S. and ex-



Price rises since the conflict began have been modest, driven mainly by higher oil prices and cushioned by ample global cereal supplies

MAXIMO TEROERO | CHIEF ECONOMIST, FAO

- ▶ **PRICES ARE STILL 20% BELOW MARCH 2022 PEAK**
- ▶ **IF CONFLICT PERSISTS, FARMERS MAY PLANT LESS AS FERTILISER COSTS RISE**
- ▶ **AMPLE CEREAL SUPPLIES HAVE HELPED TO LIMIT PRICE RISES**

pectations of lower plantings in Australia due to higher fertiliser costs.

Global maize prices edged up as ample global supply offset concerns over fertiliser costs, and indirect support from greater ethanol demand prospects linked to higher energy prices. Rice prices dropped 3.0% due to harvest timing and weaker import demand.

Vegetable oil prices increased 5.1%, marking the third consecutive monthly rise. Higher quotations for palm, soy, sunflower, and rapeseed oil reflected the impact of rising

global energy prices and expectations of stronger biofuel demand.

Palm oil prices reached their highest level since mid-2022.

Sugar prices jumped 7.2% in March to their highest since October 2025, as higher crude oil prices drove expectations that Brazil, the world's largest sugar exporter, would channel more sugarcane into producing ethanol.

Meat prices rose 1.0%, led by higher pig meat prices in the European Union and bovine meat prices in Brazil, while poultry prices edged lower.

RE Hunter 350 unveils new variant, colours



POST NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow, April 4: Royal Enfield, a global leader in the mid-size motorcycle segment, has expanded its 2026 Hunter 350 portfolio with the introduction of a new Base Premium variant and fresh colour options. The new lineup was unveiled at HunterHood, the brand's street culture platform, held in Lucknow.

The Hunter 350, which has seen strong success in urban markets since its launch in 2022, now gets a Base Premium variant in Tarmac Black. Positioned as a step-up from the entry-level model, the new variant enhances both visual appeal and rider interface while retaining the motorcycle's core DNA of ease, agility and intuitive control.

Key upgrades in the Base Premium variant include alloy wheels replacing spoke rims for improved everyday usability, an updated round halogen headlamp, and a digi-analog instrument cluster paired with rotary switchgear for a more tactile riding experience. Additional features such as a stitched seat, sporty grab rail, single-channel ABS and a slip-and-assist clutch further enhance comfort and safety.

Alongside the new variant, Royal Enfield has also introduced two new colourways for the top-end Hunter 350. Mumbai Yellow reflects the vibrancy and fast-paced energy of

urban life, drawing inspiration from the cultural dynamism of the city. In contrast, Moonshot White offers a more conceptual design, inspired by the Orion constellation, blending celestial themes with artistic detailing to create a distinctive visual identity.

Commenting on the update, Yadvinder Singh Guleria, Chief Commercial Officer, Royal Enfield, said: "The Hunter 350 continues to resonate strongly with a new generation of riders who value simplicity, usability and a strong sense of identity in what they ride. With the introduction of the Base Premium variant, we are strengthening the Hunter's proposition by offering meaningful upgrades that enhance the everyday riding experience while keeping the platform accessible to a wider set of riders. This allows the Hunter to continue expanding its footprint not just in urban centres, but increasingly across smaller towns and rural markets as well. Additionally, the new colourways — Mumbai Yellow and Moonshot White — further reinforce the Hunter's role as a motorcycle that reflects the culture, individuality and self-expression of the riders who choose it. We are confident that the 2026 Hunter 350 will continue to strengthen its place as a defining motorcycle for a new generation of riders across India."

Samal takes charge as Circle Head of PNB Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar: Ramesh Kumar Samal has assumed charge as the Circle Head of Bhubaneswar Circle of Punjab National Bank (PNB). Prior to this assignment, he was serving as the Circle Head of South 24 Parganas Circle in West Bengal. A native of Salbari Gram Panchayat in Keonjhar district of Odisha, Shri Samal joined the Bank in the year 2000 as a Probationary Officer. Over the past 26 years, he has gained extensive experience by serving in various capacities across West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Odisha. During his distinguished career, he has worked for nearly 15 years in different branches and around five years in the Treasury division, thereby acquiring rich and diverse expertise in banking operations. Recently promoted to the rank of Deputy General Manager (DGM), Samal has now been entrusted with the responsibility of leading the Bhubaneswar Circle. Under his leadership, the Circle will focus on strengthening Retail Banking, Agriculture, and MSME sectors. He also aims to enhance CASA growth and further improve customer service across all branches in the Circle.



Mumbai, April 4: The financial year 2025-26 has emerged as a milestone in the history of India's cooperative movement, with IFFCO achieving record growth and strengthening its global stature, Chairman Dileep Sanghani said. Founded in 1967 with just 57 cooperative societies, Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) has grown into a trusted institution representing over 36,000 societies and millions of farmers. Today, it stands as the world's second-largest cooperative, reflecting the strength of India's cooperative spirit.

Chandi Bhandar expands with 28th store in Bargarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, April 4: On the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, Chandi Bhandar, Odisha's largest and most trusted silver jewellery brand, inaugurated its 28th store in Bargarh Saturday. Located near Bhatli Chowk in the heart of the town, the new outlet marks another milestone in the brand's 12-year journey.

Spanning nearly 2,000 sq. ft., the store has been designed to offer a refined shopping experience, blending modern aesthetics with traditional craftsmanship. With elegant layouts and curated displays, it showcases the brand's signature focus on purity, design and quality.

The store features an extensive range of sterling silver products, including 92.5% pure silver utensils and a wide variety of jewellery for women, men and children. The women's collection

IFFCO marks milestone year with record growth

POST NEWS NETWORK

includes zircon-studded necklaces, bangles, earrings, rings, bracelets and anklets suited for both festive and everyday wear. The Amogh Collection for men offers bracelets, rings, cufflinks and chains, while the kids' range presents playful yet premium designs. In addition to jewellery, the store houses an expanded lifestyle segment featuring silver-accented wine glasses, bottles and tea sets, along with wooden silver-work trays and decor pieces, making them ideal for gifting. To celebrate the launch, Chandi Bhandar is offering up to 30% off on making charges from April 3 to April 19.

"We are proud to launch our 28th store in Bargarh. The love and trust of our customers continue to inspire our growth, and Akshaya Tritiya makes this beginning even more special," said founder Lipsa Hans. As part of its expansion strategy, the brand is strengthening its presence across Odisha while also stepping into the national market with two stores in Raipur at VIP Road and Pandri.

cooperative spirit.

In this landmark year, IFFCO recorded its highest-ever pre-tax profit of over ₹4,106 crore. The organisation also set new benchmarks in production and sales, registering a record fertilizer sale of 118.75 lakh metric tonne and nationwide supply of 119.68 lakh metric tonne—underscoring its priority towards farmers' needs. Rising sales of urea and DAP further reinforced its key role in the agricultural sector.

Expanding its focus on innovation, IFFCO inaugurated its fourth nano-fertilizer plant in Devanahalli, Bangalore.



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"Amid Middle East supply disruptions, Indian refiners have secured their crude oil requirements, including from Iran; and there is no payment hurdle for Iranian crude imports," the oil ministry said on X.

Last month, the United States temporarily removed sanctions on Iranian oil and refined products to ease supply shortages. India has secured its full requirements of crude oil for the coming months, the ministry added.

"India imports crude oil from 40-plus countries, with companies having full flexibility to source oil from different sources and geographies based on commercial considerations." India has also bought 44,000 metric tonne of Iranian liquefied petroleum gas loaded on a sanctioned vessel. The ministry said the vessel, which berthed at the western port of Mangalore Wednesday, is discharging the fuel.

India makes first Iranian oil buy in 7 years with no payment problems

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 4: Indian refiners have purchased Iranian oil amid the Middle East conflict that has disrupted supplies through the Strait of Hormuz, the oil ministry said Saturday. The world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer, India has not received a cargo from Tehran since May 2019 following US pressure not to buy Iranian crude, but supply disruptions from the US-Israel war have hit the South Asian nation hard.

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Last month, the United States temporarily removed sanctions on Iranian oil and refined products to ease supply shortages. India has secured its full requirements of crude oil for the coming months, the ministry added.

"India imports crude oil from 40-plus countries, with companies having full flexibility to source oil from different sources and geographies based on commercial considerations." India has also bought 44,000 metric tonne of Iranian liquefied petroleum gas loaded on a sanctioned vessel. The ministry said the vessel, which berthed at the western port of Mangalore Wednesday, is discharging the fuel.



SANJEEV HANS | FOUNDER, SHUBH LAABH JEWELLERS

What has been the key driving force behind Shubh Laabh Jewellers' strong presence in a competitive market like Bhubaneswar?

When we launched Shubh Laabh Jewellers, we identified a gap in the market. Many low-value customers were often overlooked by larger brands and did not receive adequate attention. We focused on serving this segment by offering personalised service, transparent pricing, and assured quality in gold and silver jewellery. By understanding their needs and building trust, we were able to create a loyal customer base and establish a strong presence in the market.

How have rising precious metal prices, driven

by geopolitical tensions and inflation, influenced customer purchasing behaviour?

The evolving geopolitical situation has driven gold prices to all-time highs. In times of stock market uncertainty, consumers naturally turn to gold as a safe-haven investment. However, these elevated prices have significantly impacted demand and altered buying patterns. While purchases continue, consumers are increasingly opting for lighter and more affordable jewellery. Although overall value sales have been sustained, the volume of sales has declined noticeably, reflecting a more cautious and price-sensitive approach among buyers in the current market environment.

Are you witnessing a shift in consumer preference between gold, diamond, and silver jewellery?

Recently, we have observed a noticeable shift of consumers towards branded jewellery. While our existing business continues to perform well, much of the growth is happening in branded stores, with Gen Z customers increasingly preferring national brands that offer pan-India presence and a strong brand image. To stay aligned with

this trend, we have also expanded our presence by opening an Indriya store, part of the Aditya Birla Group, on Cantonment Road in Cuttack.

How significant is the old gold buyback program in maintaining repeat customers and inventory flow?

The rising prices of gold have led to a surge in the use of gold exchange as a mode of payment. A transparent and reliable old gold exchange policy plays a crucial role in driving business and maintaining customer trust.

What inspired you to venture into this line of business, and what advice would you offer to aspiring entrepreneurs looking to enter this field?

Most businesses today face risks due to technological and channel disruptions, with rapid growth in quick commerce and modern retail impacting small retailers across sectors. However, the jewellery industry remains relatively resilient, as customers still prefer to see and feel products before purchasing. For new entrants, this sector offers comparatively lower risk, as precious metal prices tend to appreciate over time, providing a sense of stability and long-term value.

AGAINST ALL ODDS

Unstoppable Payal's golden glory

Odisha's Payal Nag stuns world No 1 Sheetal for gold as India top standings in Bangkok Para Archery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangkok, April 4: Teenage quadruple amputee archer Payal Nag produced a stunning upset to defeat her world No 1 decorated teammate Sheetal Devi and clinch gold, headlining India's dominant show at the World Archery Para Series here where the country finished on top with an overwhelming seven gold.

The 18-year-old rising star won 139-136 in the compound women's final, capping a memorable campaign as India signed off with 16 medals including five silver and four bronze.

This was Payal's second win over Sheetal in little over a year, having defeated her at the Para Nationals in Jaipur in January 2025.

Payal, competing in only her second international event after making her debut at the Dubai 2025 Asian Youth Para Games, showed remarkable composure under pressure to get the better of her more decorated compatriot.

She began strongly with a perfect 10, taking the opening end 27-25, before Sheetal fought back to level the contest.

Locked at 54-all after the second end, Payal raised her game in the third, shooting two 9s and a 10 to move ahead 82-80, and then sealed the contest with a clinical final end that included two 10s.



Payal's limitless journey

A find of Sheetal's childhood coach Kuldeep Vedwan, Payal's journey has been nothing short of extraordinary.

The daughter of a migrant labourer from Odisha's Bolangir district, she lost all four limbs after coming into contact with a live wire at a brick kiln in 2015.

She trained alongside Sheetal at the Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board Sports Complex in Katra during 2023-24 before the latter shifted base to Sonapat. Armless Sheetal has been

Capping a memorable campaign, India finishes atop with 16 medals including an overwhelming seven gold, five silver and four bronze

Paralympic medallist with her mixed team bronze in Paris 2024.

Since making her national debut in 2025, Payal has rapidly risen through the ranks, including a win over Sheetal in Jaipur, a silver at the Khelo India Para Games, and a bronze at the national championships earlier this year after finishing behind Sheetal in the qualifiers.

Dominant show

India's gold rush also saw Toman Kumar and Bhawna emerge champions in their respective events.

India's most decorated para archer having won two-Asian Para Games gold medals in 2022 and becoming India's youngest

Toman defeated Australia's Jonathon Milne 146-142 in the compound men's final, while Bhawna outclassed Thailand's Phattharaphon Pattawaeo 6-0 in the recurve women's summit clash.

Double Paralympic medallist Harvinder Singh had to settle for silver after going down 3-7 to Indonesia's Kholidin in the recurve final, while Swati Chaudhary also claimed a silver, losing 3-7 to Ok Geum Kim of South Korea in the W1 women's gold medal match.

Earlier, Shyam Sunder Swami secured a bronze after edging past compatriot and Paris Paralympic bronze medallist Rakesh Kumar in a closely-fought play-off in the compound men's individual event.

Swami prevailed 143 (10*) to 143 (9) in the bronze medal match, with the contest decided on a tie-break after both archers were locked at identical scores. Rakesh ended his campaign in fourth place following the narrow defeat.

In the W1 women's individual event, Anjum Tanwar also finished fourth after going down 2-6 in her bronze medal match against an opponent from the Republic of Korea.

The Bangkok meet follows the Asia Cup first leg held recently at the same venue, where India had finished with 10 medals (two gold, four silver and four bronze).

Suraj presents World Athletics flag to CM

The event marks Odisha's readiness to host World Athletics Championship in 2028



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: Sports & Youth Services Minister Suryavanshi Suraj presented the ceremonial World Athletics flag to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi at Kalinga Stadium here Saturday, marking a proud moment for the state reflecting its readiness to host the World Athletics Indoor Championships in the City in 2028.

The ceremonial flag was presented to Ravinder Choudhry of the Athletics Federation of India and Sports Secretary Bhupendra Singh Poonia in Poland, symbolising the official handover of hosting responsibilities to India.

"A proud and historic moment for Odisha as we move closer to hosting the World Athletics Indoor Championships 2028. Today, I received the World Athletics flag at Kalinga Stadium from Hon'ble Sports & Youth Services Minister Shri @suryabanshibip. This flag reflects our commitment, pride,

and readiness to host a global sporting event of the highest standards. As we move towards 2028, Odisha stands prepared to welcome the world and deliver a successful championship. This is a proud moment for our state and for India," Majhi posted on X.

It may be mentioned that in a defining moment for Indian sports, the hosting rights for the World Athletics Indoor Championships 2028 were formally announced in Poland by Sebastian Coe, marking Odisha's arrival on the global athletics stage.

The World Athletics Indoor Championships is among the most prestigious events in global track and field, bringing together elite athletes from across the world to compete at the highest level under indoor conditions. Its arrival in Odisha is not just an opportunity to host, but to showcase India's growing sporting ecosystem, infrastructure, and organisational excellence.

ASIAN BOXING C'SHIPS

Vishvanath stuns world No 1



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), April 4: India's Vishvanath Suresh caused a major sensation at the Asian Boxing Championships 2026, defeating reigning World Champion and World No 1 Sanzhar Tashkenbay of Kazakhstan 5:0 to enter the semifinals of the mega event in Mongolia.

In other bouts, Ankushita Boro (65 kg) won 4-1 against Laura Yessenkeldi (KAZ) in the quarterfinals.

The spotlight was on Vishvanath Suresh, who produced a memorable performance and

ships 2026. In a commanding final, he outclassed Rishi Singh with a unanimous 5-0 decision, firmly securing his position as India's No 1 in the 50 kg division.

His rise has been underpinned by an exceptional youth career. Vishvanath first gained international prominence with a gold medal at the IBA Youth Men's World Boxing Championships 2022, followed by another gold at the ASBC Asian Youth Boxing Championships 2022, asserting his dominance at both global and continental levels.

Following his national triumph, he earned selection for the Asian Boxing Championships 2026, where he is a key figure in India's campaign. Notably, at the ongoing championships in Ulaanbaatar, he registered a major upset April 4, defeating reigning world champion and World No 1 Sanzhar Tashkenbay of Kazakhstan to advance to the semifinals.

Training at the Army Sports Institute and supported by the Boxing Federation of India and Inspire SSCB, Vishvanath continues to evolve into a serious international medal contender.

From a decorated youth champion to India's top-ranked flyweight, Vishvanath Suresh's trajectory reflects consistency, rapid progression, and the promise of sustained success on the world stage.

Splendid double for Advani, Chitra



Ludhiana: Ace cueist Pankaj Advani played the big points well under pressure to edge out a fighting Pushpender Singh for a memorable double in his maiden pool Nationals here Saturday. In the men's final of the 10-ball pool event, PSPB's Advani scored a come-from-behind 11-9 win over his RSPB rival. Later, fellow Bengalurean Chitra Magimairaj rallied splendidly to overcome Neena Praveen of Tamil Nadu 6-4 in the women's final to complete an impressive double. The men's final was a match of small margins. The title clash turned decisively in favour of Advani in the 16th rack. Advani punished another error from In the 20th rack, the RSPB cueist made a couple of brilliant recovery shots before he snookered himself after taking No 7 to the bottom right-hand pocket. Advani then potted the remaining balls to walk away with the title. In the women's final, Chitra took a 5-3 lead in the race-to-6 title clash. Neena reduced the margin by taking the ninth, and the Chennai cueist looked set to draw level. The composed Chitra closed out the rack and match without much ado.

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Red-hot Rizvi steers DC again

Delhi capitals beat Mumbai Indians by six wickets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: Impact substitute Sameer Rizvi continued his red-hot form with another fine half-century as an all-round Delhi Capitals outclassed Mumbai Indians by six wickets in their first home game of the 2026 IPL season here Saturday.

Chasing 163, the 22-year-old Rizvi (90 off 51 balls) took apart the MI attack with a fluent knock studded with seven fours and as many sixes.

After suffering a top-order wobble for the second successive game, Delhi Capitals steadied through a 66-run stand for the third wicket between Rizvi and Pathum Nissanka, who scored 44 off 30 balls.

Rizvi then added 78 runs with David Miller (17 not out) as the hosts completed the chase with 11 balls to spare.

Initially playing second fiddle to Nissanka, Rizvi shifted gears after the Sri Lankan's dismissal, taking on the bowlers with ease. The youngster smashed back-to-back fours followed by two towering sixes, including one over deep backward point, to plunder 20 runs off the 11th over bowled by Corbin Bosch.

He continued the assault in the next over, whipping con-



secutive sixes off Mayank Markande to seize complete control of the chase.

He was unlucky to miss out on his debut IPL ton but received a standing ovation from the crowd when he Bosch got

him out.

This was after Delhi Capitals bowlers dominated to restrict Mumbai Indians to a modest 162 for six despite stand-in skipper Suryakumar Yadav's a patient half-century.

Suryakumar anchored the innings with a 36-ball 51, hitting three fours and two sixes, while Rohit Sharma hit 35 even as other MI batters found it difficult in the middle.

Delhi's bowlers, however, kept things tight. Skipper Axar Patel was exceptional, conceding just 22 runs in his four overs and removing the dangerous Rohit Sharma.

Leg-spinner Vipraj Nigam (1/24 in 3 overs) chipped in with a wicket, while Kuldeep Yadav (0/31 in 3 overs) proved slightly expensive.

The pace trio of Mukesh Kumar (2/26), Lungi Ngidi (1/34) and T Natarajan (1/24) also played their part, sharing four wickets between them.

Brief Scores:
Mumbai Indians: 162 for 6 in 20 overs. (Suryakumar Yadav 51, Rohit Sharma 35, Naman Dhir 28; Mukesh Kumar 2/26) lost to **Delhi Capitals:** 164 for 4 in 18.1 overs. (Sameer Rizvi 90, Pathum Nissanka 44; Deepak Chahar 1/20) by six wickets

CONTINUED CONQUEST

Minerva: Spanish soil, same rule

India's Minerva Academy FC dismantle Liverpool in a historic 6-0 victory at the Mediterranean International Cup in Spain

RISHABH PAREKH, OP

Bascara (Spain), April 4: Continuing their record run for the ages, Minerva Academy FC demolished English giants Liverpool FC 6-0 at the Mediterranean International Cup (MIC), one of the world's most prestigious youth football tournaments, in the Under-15 category, marking a ground-breaking moment for Indian youth football.

In a result that signalled control and dominance at Spanish soil, Punjab's Minerva Academy FC sent shockwaves



through the youth football ecosystem globally. With this win in the Round of 16 of the MIC 2026, the Indian side booked their place in the quarterfinals.

Renowned for their Gegenpressing (high-pressing) system, LFC tasted an even aggressive master class by the debutants hailing from Mohali.

Going head-to-head against one of the most talked-about academies in world football, Minerva dropped a show of

continuous attacking football. Raj Singh emerged as the show-stopper, netting a remarkable hat-trick, capitalising on every defensive lapse from the English side. Mohammad Azam Khan added a clinical brace with Lisham Amarnon Singh sealing off the dominant tie with a solitary strike, resulting in a thumping 6-0 victory for his side. In a closely fought contest in the top eight against UE Figueres of Spain, Miner-

va's historic campaign came to an end with a 2-1 loss.

From becoming the first ever Indian club to feature in the MIC Cup, topping their group with ease, to marking their territory further in Europe, the team highlights India's youth caliber to deliver for the national side.

The moment of truth arrived for Mohali's finest footballing system in 2025 with securing the historic European treble by winning the Gothia Cup, Dana Cup, and Norway Cup in a single season. With this milestone, the U-14/U-15 team became the first Indian academy to collect all three stones in a single season, dominating international youth football.

The eyes of the footballing world are now firmly placed on how much the Indian side can extend its fairytale script.

Deshpande's last-over heroics saves RR

Rajasthan Royals secure thrilling win over Gujarat Titans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, April 4: Tushar Deshpande bowled a magnificent final over by landing six consecutive deliveries on either blockhole or wide yorker length in an exhibition of high-class bowling as Rajasthan Royals edged out Gujarat Titans by six runs in an IPL humdinger here Saturday.

This was Royals' second successive win in the tournament while the Ashish Nehra coached GT team has now lost two matches in a row.

Riding on half-centuries from Dhruv Jurel (75 off 42 balls) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (55 off 36 balls), Royals scored 210 for 6 in their 20 overs.

Despite Sai Sudharsan's 73 which oozed class, GT were staring down the barrel at 161 for 7 before Kagiso Rabada (23 not out) and stand-in skipper Rashid Khan (24) took the team



close to a win with 10 needed off the final over.

But Deshpande had other ideas as he started the final over with a wide but then was on target with three singles and a wide fuller delivery that Rashid conceded a dot. In the end, only four runs were scored and the Titans would feel that they let it slip big time after a solid opening stand.

Earlier, Jurel beautifully merged aggression and discretion in his 42-ball 75 to guide Rajasthan Royals to a challenging 210 for 6 after opting to bat.

Brief Scores:
Rajasthan Royals: 210 for 6 in 20 overs (Dhruv Jurel 75, Yashasvi Jaiswal 55; Kagiso Rabada 2/42) beat **Gujarat Titans:** 204 for 8 in 20 overs (Sai Sudharsan 73; Ravi Bishnoi 4/41) by 6 runs

TODAY'S MATCHES

SRH VS LSG
 TIME: 3:30 PM

RCB VS CSK
 TIME: 7:30 PM

Star Sports channels & JioHotstar