

**Emotional Janhvi**  
 Actor Janhvi Kapoor offers a deeply personal glimpse into the emotional aftermath of losing her mother  
 LEISURE | P2

**China-Taiwan tensions**  
 Taiwan opposition leader to visit China as Beijing ramps up 'reunification' push  
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**Services sector hit**  
 India's services sector growth momentum rose at the softest pace in 14 months in March  
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**Rising Pugilist**  
 India's Preeti Pawar downs Paris Olympics bronze medallist Aejji Im of Korea to storm into the final of the Asian Boxing Championships  
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**FIERCE BATTLE:** A tense moment unfolds during the match between Odisha and Rajasthan at the 69th National School Rugby U-17 Boys' and Girls' Championship at Kalinga Stadium, Monday  
 PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

## DEATH FOR 9 COPS

While thousands of custodial deaths have been reported in India over the past few decades, the sentencing of police personnel to death remains exceedingly rare. Official data from 2021 revealed that, out of 1,888 custodial deaths recorded over the preceding 20 years, only 26 police officers were convicted of any crime. The last notable instance occurred when a special court in Kerala sentenced two police officers to death for the 2005 custodial murder of Udaykumar. In most cases, custodial death trials end in acquittals, often due to weak investigations or insufficient evidence. Against this backdrop, the verdict in the Sathankulam custodial deaths case stands out as a significant milestone in judicial accountability and action against police brutality.

**Madurai (Tamil Nadu), April 6:** In a landmark judgment, a court here Monday handed the death penalty to nine police personnel in the sensational 2020 Sathankulam custodial death case. Father-son duo P Jayaraj



Victim father-son duo Jayaraj and Bennix

and J Bennix were allegedly assaulted by the convicted policemen in Sathankulam, Thoothukudi district, for allegedly keeping their mobile shop open in violation of COVID-19 norms. First Additional District and Sessions Judge G Muthukumar classified the case as the rarest of rare, observing that those entrusted with protecting the public had committed a crime that shook the collective conscience of society. The court sentenced all nine convicted police personnel to death for the murders of Ja-

yaraj and Bennix. The convicts include former inspector S Sridhar, former sub-inspectors Balakrishnan and Raghu Ganesh, and head constables Murugan and Saamidurai. In addition to the capital punishment, the court imposed a combined fine of ₹1.40 crore on the convicts to be paid as compensation to the victims' family. While pronouncing the quantum of sentence, the judge said the police are meant to protect the common man, and when

they become the perpetrators of such brutality, the law must act as a deterrent. It also noted that by killing both the father and the son at once, the police had uprooted the very foundation of a family. The judge stressed that the

### CUSTODIAL DEATHS

punishment must be severe enough to ensure such horrors never recur. The tragedy dates back to June 2020, when Jayaraj and Bennix were picked up for allegedly keeping their mobile phone shop open beyond permitted hours. They were subjected to extreme physical assault while in custody, leading to their deaths at a hospital days later. Following a massive public outcry, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court took notice of the case, which was eventually investigated by the CBI. A total of 105 witnesses were examined over a five-year period. Of the initial 10 accused, special sub inspector Pauldurai died during the trial due to health complications.

**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

Empowering us with reservation in 2029 is great, but I'd prefer an LPG cylinder now

**Chairman, vice-chairman for SDCs in 23 dists**  
 PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** The state government Monday appointed chairpersons and vice-chairpersons of Special Development Councils (SDCs) in 23 districts, officials said. According to a list shared by the CMO, Basistha Nayak has been appointed chairman of the SDC in Angul district, while Ballav Dharua and Bipin Marandi will head the councils in Bolangir and Balasore districts, respectively. Prashanta Kumar Behera, Nauri Singh and Nilamadhab

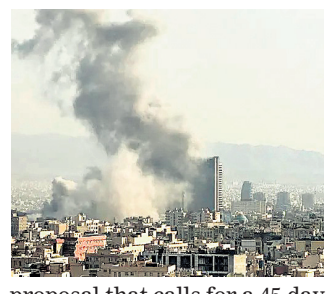
Patra have been appointed chairpersons of the SDCs in Deogarh, Dhenkanal and Ganjam districts, respectively. In Boudh district, Damarudhar Kanhar has been appointed chairman. The government, led by CM Mohan Charan Majhi, has also appointed chairpersons and vice-chairpersons for SDCs in Bargarh, Gajapati, Jajpur, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Keonjhar, Koraput, Malkangiri, Mayurbhanj, Nabarangpur, Nayagarh, Nupada, Rayagada, Sambalpur and Sundargarh districts, officials added.

### No ceiling on 5-kg LPG to students, workers

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** The state government Monday said there was no restriction on the distribution of 5-kg LPG cylinders, and vulnerable consumers such as students and migrant workers can obtain them by producing only identity proof without the need for address documents. Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare principal secretary Sanjay Kumar Singh said the small cylinders are being made easily available through a simplified process. "There is no restriction on 5-kg cylinders marketed by OMCs. Students, workers and migrant labourers can avail these cylinders by producing valid identity proof. No address proof is required for such vulnerable consumers," he said. Singh said individuals can obtain 5-kg Free Trade LPG (FTL) cylinders from authorised distributors through a simple process, and that OMCs are also organising special camps at various locations to provide on-the-spot connections. He said restrictions are only being imposed on illegal vendors to ensure public safety, and strict action is being taken against unauthorised sellers. The clarification came a day after Food Supplies minister KC Patra had said the government had stopped the open market sale of 5-kg LPG cylinders due to illegal trading, triggering criticism from the opposition BJD and CPI(M).

## Iran rejects 45-day ceasefire proposal

**Tehran, April 6:** Iran's state-run IRNA news agency said Tehran has rejected the latest ceasefire proposal and wants a permanent end to the war. The report comes shortly before US President Donald Trump's deadline for Tehran to open the Strait of Hormuz or see its power plants and bridges attacked. The news agency said Iran had conveyed its response to the US through Pakistan. "We won't merely accept a ceasefire," Mojtaba Ferdousi Pour, head of the Iranian diplomatic mission in Cairo, told The Associated Press Monday. "We only accept an end of the war with guarantees that we won't be attacked again." On the Strait of Hormuz, Ferdousi Pour said Iranian and Omani officials were working on a mechanism for administering the shipping chokepoint. Earlier, Iran and the United States have received a draft



proposal that calls for a 45-day ceasefire and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz to try and find a way to end the war, two Mideast officials have told The Associated Press. The proposal comes from Egyptian, Pakistani and Turkish mediators working to halt the fighting, the two officials said. They hope the 45-day window would provide enough time for extensive talks between the countries to reach a permanent ceasefire. The proposal was sent late Sunday night to both Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and US Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff, the officials said.

### IRGC INTEL CHIEF ASSASSINATED

**Tehran:** The head of intelligence for Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was killed Monday in an attack targeting him, Iranian state media said. The Israeli military later confirmed the airstrike that killed Maj. Gen. Majid Khademi took place in Iran's capital, Tehran. Meanwhile, strikes on cities across Iran killed more people Monday, while in Israel's Haifa, victims were found dead in rubble following an attack. US President Donald Trump on Sunday stepped up his threat to hit Iran's critical infrastructure hard if the country's government doesn't reopen the Strait of Hormuz by his Tuesday deadline. The United Nations nuclear watchdog Monday confirmed recent strikes struck close to Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant, with one hitting just 75 metres (82 yards) from the facility's perimeter.

## Curbs on old commercial vehicles

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** The state government has imposed restrictions on the transfer of ownership of commercial public transport vehicles like buses and taxis that are more than 10 years old and registered in any other state, officials said Monday. The State Transport Authority (STA) took this decision keeping the safety, comfort and convenience of the travelling public in view, according to an order. "The stage/contract carriers registered in other states which are more than 10 years old from the month and year of manufacturing shall not be granted any permit in the state of Odisha," read the order issued by the STA. The government has asked all regional transport officers (RTOs) to stop making any change of the address, transfer of ownership and accepting tax from such vehicles, it said. With the order's implementation, no commercial vehicle, including buses, taxis, cabs, older than 10 years and registered outside Odisha, will not be allowed to register in the state, a senior STA officer told



## How a Chinese factory learned to live with Trump, tariffs & turmoil

**Dongguan (China), April 6:** US President Donald Trump's tariffs were meant to dent Chinese manufacturing, but for electronics maker Agilian Technology, a turbulent 2025 reinforced a different conclusion: China remains hard to replace. The firm, which produces for Western brands, saw US orders—over half its revenue—frozen for months as clients pushed it to shift production out of China. The disruption reflected broader strain across Chinese industry, with the country's official purchasing managers' index (PMI) contracting for much of 2025 and hitting its weakest level in April. Yet Beijing's countermeasures, including export controls on critical minerals and metals, eased pressure by forcing negotiations. By March 2026, China's PMI rebounded to its fastest growth in a year. Agilian, a \$30-million business, recovered alongside the sector, reaffirming China as central to its operations even as it pursued diversification. Despite a 20% slump in exports to the US in 2025, China's overall trade surplus surged—reaching \$213.6 billion in early 2026 and a record \$1.2 trillion in 2025—underscoring its resilience. Economists say tariffs reshaped supply chains rather than derailing them. For Agilian, the tariff swings created intense uncertainty. As Trump's elec-



tion momentum grew in 2024, clients rushed shipments to North America, driving warehouse costs sharply higher. After his re-election, late-night calls from anxious customers became routine, with some urging a move to Malaysia. The company explored alternatives. India proved slow, with bureaucratic delays frustrating clients. Malaysia's Pen-

ang emerged as a viable option, though setting up operations there was far more time-consuming than in China. The firm also considered US manufacturing, but found supply chains incomplete and costs high. Tariff escalations in early 2025—eventually exceeding 100% on both sides—froze orders entirely. Agilian's Dongguan factory filled with unsold inventory. But a mid-year US-China deal rolled back most tariffs, reviving demand. By the second half of 2025, the company recorded its busiest production period ever, with output rising 29%. Even so, the experience reshaped strategy. Agilian is continuing to build capacity in India and Malaysia as a hedge against future disruptions. "We

want to be a multi-country manufacturer," said Vice-President Renaud Anjoran. Still, China's advantages—efficient supply chains, falling component costs, and high-quality production—remain unmatched. Clients who once pushed for relocation have largely stayed. Looking ahead, CEO Fabien Gaussorgues aims to grow revenue by 30% over three years, but remains wary of renewed geopolitical shocks. "The best we can hope for," one economist noted, "is a framework to prevent tensions from boiling over again." For Agilian, the lesson of 2025 is clear: diversification is necessary, but China remains indispensable.

this agency. However, such vehicles can pass through Odisha and use state roads. The order will not apply to such old vehicles already registered in Odisha earlier, he said. "This order will not be applicable for private vehicles and other commercial vehicles like trucks," the officer clarified. Some states like Uttar Pradesh have already implemented such a decision, which will help in supporting the state's economy and enhance safety in public transportation, he added. The move aims to improve road safety standards, reduce the number of unfit vehicles on the road, and reduce air pollution from old vehicles, the official said.



**MERYL OPENS UP ON THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA CHARACTER**

Hollywood actress Meryl Streep has cleared the air around her portrayal of her character in *The Devil Wears Prada*. 20 years after its release, the Oscar winner said she drew inspiration from two Hollywood heavyweights, Mike Nichols and Clint Eastwood.

**HADID TALKS ABOUT BEING NAMED IN EPSTEIN FILES**

Supermodel Gigi Hadid has opened up about her mention in the infamous Epstein files. In a 2015 email exchange an anonymous person asked the Epstein how Gigi, "became a model and make so much money." Reacting to the relation Gigi, wrote "Horrible to read someone you've never met speak about you that way."



**FORTUNE FORECAST**

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**ARIES**  
Ganesh advises you to look before you leap. One hasty decision may undo a lot of hard work accomplished over a long period of time. After a tense morning, you may simply want an evening with kids, helping them grow the Dahlias.

**TAURUS**  
Love is on the cards, says Ganesh. Your senses are likely to remain highly active today. Stay alert and avoid drifting into your own world at the cost of work. It is best for you to keep your eyes and ears open to avoid any misunderstanding with your near and dear ones, suggests Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
You have been aching to arrange a family reunion or get-together at your house. Well, today is the perfect day to do it. And why just family? You are also likely to invite some of your close friends and important business associates over to your place. Your spouse will enjoy the company of your loved ones.

**CANCER**  
Today, you will be extremely impulsive and spontaneous, feels Ganesh. You better get rid of your negative thoughts and beliefs and start taking charge of things at hand. Also, stop focussing so much on the pitfalls, and start working. Listen to music that speaks to your heart and you will be at peace with yourself.

**LEO**  
The ever energetic Scorpio's dictionary lacks the word dependence, says Ganesh. And true to this, you shall remain very active today. Your abundant energy will allow you to take work by its horns, and this will go a long way in giving you the moniker 'workaholic'. So, wipe the slate clean by finishing all pending tasks, as today, you shall be immersed in work.

**VIRGO**  
Leadership is your forte and you shall receive kudos for the manner in which you handle your team. Much awaited promotions will materialise and will come extra cash in your wallet. Wisely enough, you didn't get all this by not effectively balancing home and work, says Ganesh. Don't slip on this tight-rope walk.

**LIBRA**  
Expect some annoyance from the 'man in the chair', or people in charge who may be looking towards throwing a wench in your way. But know that it is just a blip on the radar. Your fortune is too powerful for anyone to affect it negatively.

**SCORPIO**  
Your rung in the social ladder just went higher today. But be wary of green-eyed monsters and ill words. Fight tooth and nail - if necessary - to protect our reputation, says Ganesh. But also learn to find your enemies' Achilles' heel and target it ferociously.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Your business is likely to grow with leaps and bounds, foresees Ganesh. Increase in financial returns will keep you happy for the entire day. Work in progress gives out positive signals. Your expert advise will be valued at work. In short, a day full of activities.

**CAPRICORN**  
Your exuberance and self-confidence will become the talk of the day for those around you. But it's not for nothing that you will attract so much attention. You will derive pleasure in accomplishing herculean tasks today, and Ganesh says you will do justice to work too. At home, everything will go smooth and you will enjoy and share the peace in your life with your wife. On the whole, you will have a cheerful day ahead.

**AQUARIUS**  
Team work and cooperation bring out the best in you, so you must make the most of a chance to work in a group. It could be brainstorming, or campaigning for an environmental cause or even playing beach ball! A game of cards in the evening, and consider your day well spent, says Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
The workaholic in your bursts to the fore with a vengeance, and today will see you tackle pending projects with the zeal of a Holy Templar crusader. Your energy levels will be unflagging, and your enthusiasm to wipe your slate clean admirable. Make the most of it, says Ganesh.

**MALAIKA owns her age**



**MUMBAI:** Bollywood diva Malaika Arora Khan has spoken about owning her age and said that she wears it like a badge as it is just a number. The diva spoke candidly about ageing on the show *Famously Fit with Sophie*, hosted by Sophie Choudry on Amazon MX. In the episode, Malaika talked about her pragmatic approach to fitness, consistency and hitting the pause button and listening to her body. Not shying away from owning her age, Malaika said in the

show, "Just wear it as a badge, age gracefully, and don't get caught up in it. It's just a number. No matter what age you are, whether 20 or 60, you are amazing."

She went on to encourage women to embrace themselves at every stage. Giving a peep into celebrity life, she shared takes on fitness fads and cheeky take on what's actually 'clean' and what's just packaged hype.

The episode will also showcase her foodie side and how it led her into the restaurant space.

*Famously Fit with Sophie* is now streaming for free exclusively on Amazon MX Player.

**OTT is a writer's medium: Shriya**

**MUMBAI:** Actress Shriya Pilgaonkar opened up on what makes OTT special. *The Mandala Murders* actress said that the expansion of the digital platform has opened up the field, allowing to share stories that are diverse in nature.

Shriya also pointed out that streaming platforms have also given a chance for complex and layered female characters to come forward. She further stated that OTT is a writer's medium.

The *Broken News* actress shared, "Streaming platforms have been very crucial to kind of open the field, be more expansive, be more inclusive and allow for storytelling that's diverse, that's experimental."

"Having said that, it's wonderful that all of us have also had the opportunity to do work where we've had very exciting women, complex, layered, we've been able to play that on screen, and I think it's just about championing each other, supporting each other, and yeah, it's a writer's medium. So that's the best part where the focus kind of all goes back to the text," she added.

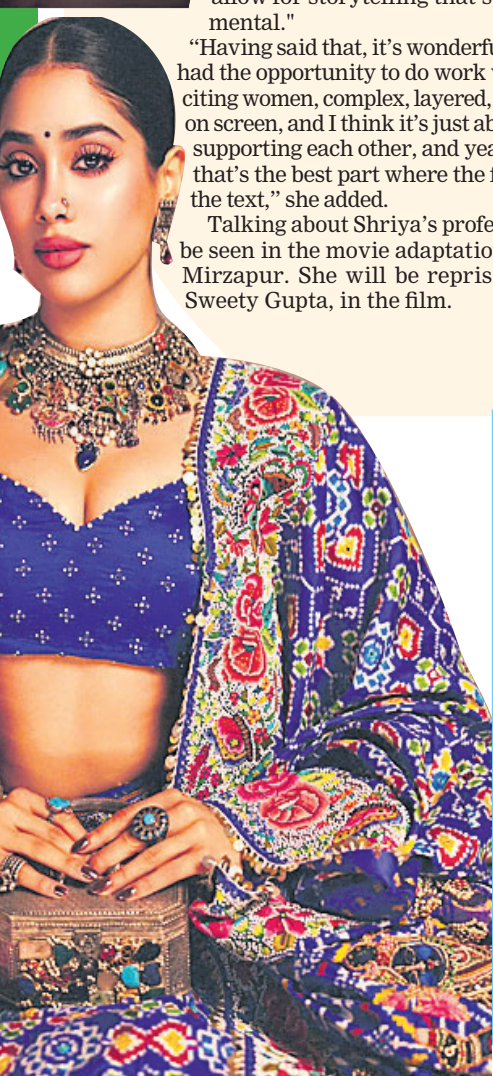
Talking about Shriya's professional lineup, she will soon be seen in the movie adaptation of the popular web series, *Mirzapur*. She will be reprising her beloved character, *Sweetie Gupta*, in the film.

**When Janhvi felt helpless for years**

**MUMBAI:** In an interaction with Raj Shamani, Janhvi Kapoor offered a deeply personal glimpse into the emotional aftermath of losing her mother, speaking about trauma, guilt, and the difficult journey toward healing. Reflecting on that phase of her life, the actor admitted, "I felt helpless for years," describing how the loss left her grappling with confusion and emotional instability. She revealed that her mindset at the time led her to internalise the tragedy in a troubling way. "I almost felt like I deserved it, like it was some kind of cosmic balancing," she said, explaining how she believed that because she had received so much in life, such a loss was inevitable.

However, she was quick to acknowledge how problematic that thinking was. "That's messed up, no one deserves that," she added, noting that she now regrets framing her mother's death in such a self-centred way. "It's not about me. She was her own person, it wasn't just about being my mother."

Janhvi also spoke about how her emotional state and trusting nature made her vulnerable during that time. "I was very naive. I used to believe, why would anyone want to do anything negative?" she admitted, hinting that this outlook sometimes led to people taking advantage of her, both personally and professionally. AGENCIES



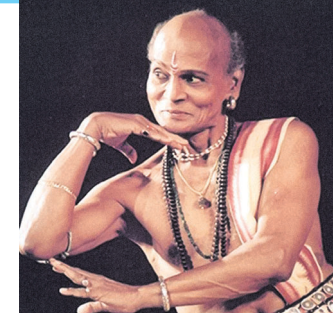
**Art Vision to commemorate GURU KELUCHARAN'S death anniversary today**

**BHUBANESWAR:** On the occasion of the 22nd death anniversary of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, Art Vision—led by his senior disciple Ileana Citaristi—in collaboration with the Department of Odia Language, Literature and Culture, will present Remembering Guruji April 7 here at Rabindra Mandap.

This year's observance holds special significance as it coincides with the Guru's birth centenary celebrations. The evening

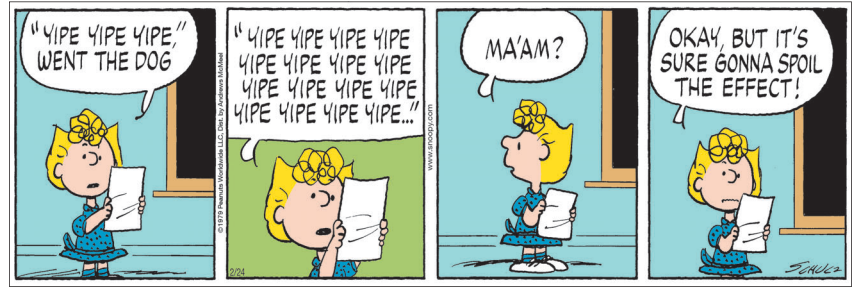
will feature evocative dance offerings by students of his senior disciples, who will bring to life some of his immortal Odissi compositions. Through these performances, the enduring legacy of the legendary guru—widely regarded as a pivotal force in the revival and global recognition of Odissi dance in the mid-20th century—will be passed on to a new generation of dancers.

The programme will open with rare archival video clips



of Guruji's performances, offering audiences a glimpse into his unmatched artistry and vision. The event promises to be a deeply moving tribute, drawing admirers, scholars, and art lovers together in homage to a towering figure whose influence continues to shape the classical dance tradition of Odisha and beyond. PNN

**PEANUTS**



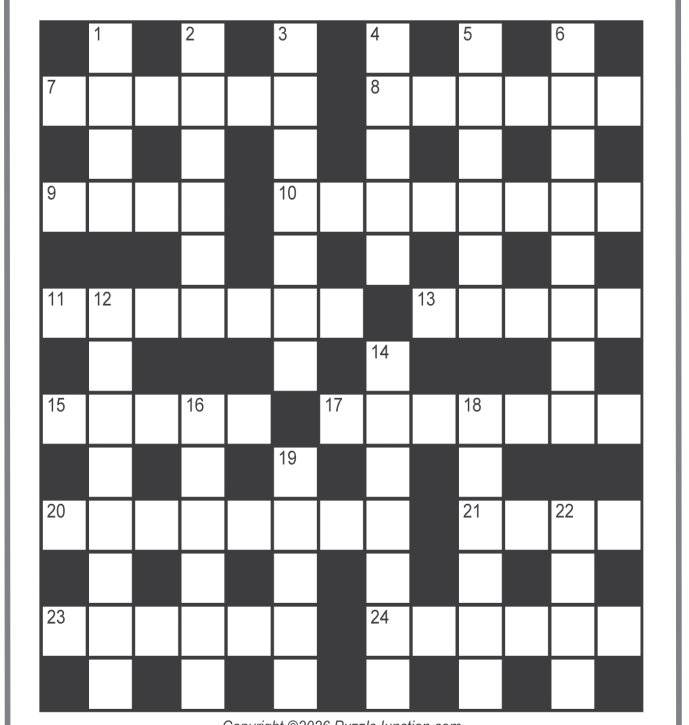
**CALVIN AND HOBBS**



**BREVITY**



**FUN POST CROSSWORD**



- Across**  
7 Cloak  
8 Esoteric  
9 Footwear  
10 Decorate with colors  
11 White ant  
13 Cent  
15 Fool  
17 Venezuelan statesman
- Down**  
20 Photograph  
21 It can be North or South  
23 Food grain  
24 Kind of policy  
5 Glacial period (3,3)  
6 Sleep disorder  
12 Heightened  
14 Roman Catholic Pope  
16 Weak person  
18 Levy, as a tax  
19 Blackboard item  
22 Like some meats

**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.

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

**SOLUTIONS**

**CROSSWORD**

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

**SUDOKU**

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



**HONING SKILLS:** National Security Guard (NSG) personnel take part in a capacity building training and demonstration ahead of the 'Ujjain Simhashta 2026' at Lal Parade Ground in Bhopal, Monday

## SC to CBI: Probe award of contracts to firms of 'Arunachal CM's kin'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 6:** The Supreme Court Monday directed the CBI to register a preliminary enquiry within two weeks into the award of contracts for public works in Arunachal Pradesh to firms allegedly owned by family members of Chief Minister Pema Khandu.

A bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath said the enquiry and consequential investigation, if any, shall cover the award and execution of public works, contracts and work orders in the state for the period from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2025.

The SC directed the CBI to file a status report before it in the matter within 16 weeks. "The CBI shall register a preliminary enquiry within two weeks from the date of the judgement and will proceed in accordance with law," Justice Nath said while pronouncing the order. The SC had February 17 reserved its order in the matter.

The SC was told that government contracts and work orders worth around Rs 1,270 crore were awarded in the last 10 years in Arunachal Pradesh to four firms related to the family members of Khandu.

Advocate Prashant Bhusan, appearing for the petitioner NGOs Save Mon Region Federation and Voluntary Arunachal Sena, had referred to an affidavit filed by the state of Arunachal Pradesh and argued that a number of contracts were awarded to the companies owned by the family members of the CM.

**CARE HOSPITALS**

The family group chat has 847 messages. NOT ONE IS ABOUT HEALTH.

We share everything there.

Memes. Recipes. Flight tickets.

Good morning messages that nobody asked for.

But somehow, health never makes the list.

This World Health Day, let's change that.

**WORLD HEALTH DAY 2026**

0674-6165 656

Prachi Enclave, Chandrasekharpur, Bhubaneswar

## Medicos protest as posting hangs fire

5,967 DOCTOR POSTS VACANT

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar/Cuttack, April 6:** With shortage of doctors crippling the healthcare services at government hospitals, hundreds of medical graduates staged demonstrations near Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC) offices in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar Monday, demanding immediate appointment of the physicians in state.

According to the protesting medical graduates, 5,248 medical officer posts were advertised in February 2025, and 3,955 candidates had applied. The examination was conducted in June last year, with 2,921 candidates appearing. The results were published in August, in which 1,840 candidates qualified, and their certificates were verified.

However, candidates approached the High Court,

### Dissenting voices

**'Govt must take the issue seriously'**  
"For more than two-and-a-half years, not a single government doctor has been appointed. Though the OPSC conducted the medical officer examination, there has been negligence in the recruitment process. The lives of 1,018 qualified candidates are being affected. The government must reconsider and take necessary steps," said Om Swayam Prakash Rautaray.

**'Court directives are being ignored'**  
"Not just 822, but all 1,840 qualified candidates should be included in the appointment list. The court has intervened but its directions are not being followed. The government must prioritise recruitment," said Bibhas Kumar Sahu.

**'Appoint the qualified doctors'**  
"While the government claims to prioritise healthcare, there is a shortage of doctors in government hospitals, and appointments are not being made. Why are qualified candidates being ignored? Immediate steps should be taken," said Priyam Dhal.

alleging that 50 per cent of seats were not allocated to the general category. The court intervened and stated that the state government could proceed with appointments. "However, the recruitment list published March 31 this year included only 822 of those candidates, while 1,018 qualified candidates were left out, for reasons best known to OPSC," one of the agitating candidates said.

These excluded candidates have been protesting since then, demanding their

inclusion in the list. OPSC Secretary Bijay Khandayat Ray said the recruitment process would be carried out in accordance with the High Court's directions and that further action would be taken based on the government's decision. Meanwhile, the Opposition has been targeting the government both inside and outside the Assembly over the issue. A similar situation arose during the recent Budget session.

Responding to the matter, Health Minister Mukesh Ma-

haling said the process to fill 5,967 vacant doctor posts has already been initiated. "Requisitions have long been sent to OPSC to fill 5,248 doctor posts," he had said. However, the OPSC has not yet been able to complete the recruitment process. According to WHO norms, there should be one doctor for every 1,000 people. In Odisha, however, there is one doctor for every 1,265 people.

At present, 35,914 allopathic doctors are registered under Odisha Council of Medical Education and are serving in government and private facilities across the state. The total sanctioned strength of doctors in the state stands at 15,793. Of these, 9,826 doctors are currently in service, while 5,967 posts remain vacant.

Every year, around 3,025 students graduate from various government and private medical colleges in Odisha. These graduates are appointed to different healthcare centres in the state through the OPSC recruitment process, the minister added.

## NGT forms panel over Mahanadi encroachment

**Bhubaneswar:** Expressing displeasure over inaction to stop illegal activities along Mahanadi riverbed and floodplain in Cuttack, the NGT has constituted a joint committee to examine the matter and submit a report within 15 days. The order was issued by the NGT, Principal Bench, while hearing a petition filed by Shailesh Sahoo. "We constitute a Joint Committee comprising representatives of Additional PCCF (C), MoEF & CC Regional Office, Bhubaneswar and the Chief Secretary, and ACS, Forest, Environment and Climate Change dept, Odisha... to look into the grievances and also the aspects highlighted by this Tribunal in the orders already passed," it said.

## 14 varsities get new VCs

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** In a major reshuffle in higher education institutions, Governor and Chancellor of universities Hari Babu Kambhampati Monday appointed Vice-Chancellors to 14 universities in the state.

The appointments were made in exercise of powers conferred under the proviso to sub-section (1) of Section 6 of Odisha Universities Act, 1989, and Section 8 of Odia University Act, 2017.

The newly appointed VCs are: Utkal University - Chandni Prasad Nanda, Ravenshaw University - Arka Kumar Das Mohapatra, Fakir Mohan University -

**Governor and Chancellor of universities Hari Babu Kambhampati extended his best wishes to the newly appointed VCs**

Santosh Kumar Tripathy, Dharanidhar University - Sanjaya Kumar Patro, Gangadhar Meher University - Byomakesh Tripathy, Khallikote Unitary University - Asima Sahu, Maa Manikeshwari University - Pawan Kumar Agrawal, Madhusudan Law University - Sibaram Tripathy, Maharaja Sriram Chandra

Bhanja Deo University - Mahendra Kumar Mohanty, Rajendra University - Bibhuti Bhusan Malik, Rama Devi Women's University - Jyotsna KB Rout, Shree Jagannath Sanskrit University - Prabhat Kumar Mohapatra, Vikram Dev University - Hrushikesh Senapaty and Odia University - Satyanarayan Acharya.

The Chancellor extended his best wishes to the newly appointed VCs as they assume their responsibilities. He exuded confidence that their leadership will help strengthen academic standards, promote research, and shape the future of higher education in Odisha.

## Artemis II breaks Apollo 13's record

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Houston, April 6:** With the moon now filling their windows, the Artemis II astronauts set a record Monday as the farthest humans from Earth during a lunar flyby promising magnificent views of the far side never before witnessed.

The six-hour flyby is the highlight of NASA's first return to the moon since the Apollo era with three Americans and one Canadian — a step toward landing boot prints near the moon's south pole in just two years.

First came a prize — and bragging rights — for Artemis II.

Less than an hour before kicking off the fly-around and intense lunar observations, the four astronauts surpassed the distance record of 248,655 miles (400,171 kilometres) set by Apollo 13 in April 1970.

They kept going, hurtling ever farther from Earth. Before it was all over, Mission Control expected Artemis II to beat the old record by more than 4,100 miles (6,600 kilometres).



Artemis II crew members answer questions from reporters during the first downlink event of their mission April 2, 2026

The astronauts woke up to the voice of Apollo 13 commander Jim Lovell, who recorded the message just two months before his death last August. "Welcome to my old neighbourhood," said Lovell, who also flew on Apollo 8, humanity's first lunar visit. "It's a historic day and I know how busy you'll be, but don't forget to enjoy the view."

They took up with them the Apollo 8 silk patch that accompanied Lovell to the moon, and showed it off as the crucial flyby approached. "It's just a real honour to have that on board

with us," said commander Reid Wiseman. "Let's go have a great day."

Artemis II is using the same manoeuvre that Apollo 13 did after its "Houston, we've had a problem" oxygen tank explosion wiped out any hope of a moon landing.

Known as a free-return lunar trajectory, this no-stopping-to-land route takes advantage of Earth and the moon's gravity, reducing the need for fuel. It's a celestial figure-eight that will put the astronauts on course for home, once they emerge from behind the moon Monday evening.

Wiseman, pilot Victor Glover, Christina Koch and Canada's Jeremy Hansen were on track to pass as close as 4,070 miles (6,550 kilometres) to the moon, as their Orion capsule whips past it, hangs a U-turn and then heads back toward Earth. It will take them four days to get back, with a splash-down in the Pacific concluding their test flight Friday.

Their expected speed at closest approach to the moon: 3,139 mph (5,052 kph).

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# Three RS members from Odisha take oath of office

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: Three members from Odisha — Manmohan Samal, Santrupt Mishra and Dilip Kumar Ray — took oath as members of the Rajya Sabha Monday. Another member from the state, Sujeet Kumar, was reportedly absent from the oath-taking ceremony for unknown reasons.

The results of the Rajya Sabha elections from Odisha were declared March 16, with four candidates emerging victorious in a closely watched contest. Samal and Sujeet Kumar were elected to the Upper House as BJP nominees. Former Union Minister Dilip Ray, who was backed by the BJP, also registered a notable victory as an Independent candidate, defeating Dattesar Hota, who was the common candidate of the BJD, Congress and CPI (M). A few MLAs from the Opposition BJD and Congress had cross-voted in favour of Ray, defying the party whip. Mishra of the BJD has also been declared elected, ensuring the regional party's continued representation in the Upper House.

Apart from Odisha, NCP-SCP leader Sharad Pawar and Union Minister Ramdas Athawale were among 19 new Rajya Sabha members who took oath



here Monday.

The oath was taken in the presence of Rajya Sabha Chairman CP Radhakrishnan. Deputy Chairman Harivansh and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju were present during the ceremony in the Rajya Sabha chamber. Floor leaders of respective parties were also present in the House.

The newly-elected members comprised five from Maharashtra, six from Tamil Nadu, five from West Bengal and three from Odisha.

Maya Chintaman Ivnate of the BJP unit in Maharashtra was the first to take the oath, followed by Pawar, who arrived in a wheelchair. Ramrao Sakharan Wadkute (BJP), Jyoti Nagnath Waghmare (SS)

and Athawale (RPI-A) also took oath as members representing Maharashtra in the Upper House. Similarly, Constandine Ravindran (DMK), Christopher Manickam (Congress), L K Sudhish (DMDK), M Thambidurai (AIADMK), Tiruchi Siva (DMK) and Ambumani Ramadoss (PMK) took oath as members representing Tamil Nadu.

From West Bengal, Babul Supriyo Baral (AITC), Biswajit Sinha (BJP), Menaka Gururamany (AITC), Rajeev Kumar (AITC) and Rukmini Malik (AITC) took oath.

Most members took oath in their respective regional languages.

Chairman Radhakrishnan congratulated all the newly-elected members.

# NIA seeks transfer of City blast probe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 6: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Monday formally requested the police to hand over the investigation into the January blast in Bhubaneswar that left two persons dead, officials said.

The central agency wrote to Police Commissioner S Dev Datta Singh seeking transfer of the case for a detailed probe into a possible terror angle behind the explosion that took place at Azad Nagar in the Airfield police station area January 27, they said.

The NIA intends to examine possible links to larger criminal networks and ascertain whether high-grade explosives such as RDX were used in the blast, they added.

The Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Commissionerate Police, which is currently investigating the case, had earlier said four persons were injured when the prime suspect, Shahnawaz Malik (26), a history-sheeter, was allegedly assembling an explosive device on the rooftop of a rented house. Malik and a woman identified as Lizatun Bibi later succumbed to their burn injuries, while two others survived, police said.

Investigators had seized incriminating materials, including explosive residues, from the site. "Though it is suspected that Malik may have used high-grade explosive material, it is yet to be confirmed whether RDX was used," an officer said.

# Nor'westers, hailstorms pummel parts of Odisha



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 6: Nor'westers and hailstorms wreaked havoc in parts of Odisha Monday including the Capital city, officials said.

Strong winds, accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning, rocked Athargarh town in Cuttack district and Daspalla area in Nayagarh district, they said.

A car was damaged after a cement structure put up by the Athargarh NAC fell on it, they added.

As several trees fell on the roads in the Daspalla block of Nayagarh district, vehicular

movement was disrupted. Later, fire service personnel, along with locals, cleared the roads, officials said.

The pandal put up in Daspalla town for the 'Lankapodi' festival was damaged. The head of the effigy of 'Ravan' flew away due to the strong wind, said an organiser.

Hailstorm and heavy rain damaged several kutcha houses and crops in Dharamgarh block of Kalahandi district, and Patnagarh and Khaprakhol blocks of Bolangir district, officials said.

The rain and thunderstorm, however, brought down the

mercury by several notches, with not a single place recording temperature above 40 degrees Celsius, according to the IMD.

Boudh was the hottest place in the state, recording a temperature of 38.3 degrees Celsius.

The regional Met office said thunderstorms, lightning and gusty surface wind speeds reaching 30 kmph to 40 kmph are expected in Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur and Cuttack districts Tuesday.

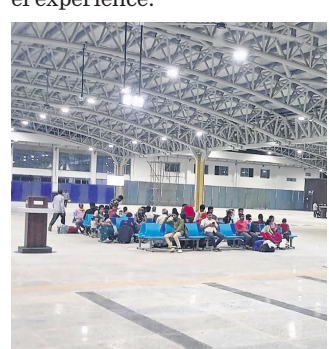
The regional met office has predicted that the Nor'wester and rains will persist till April 10.

# Bhubaneswar station gets major upgrade

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 6: Bhubaneswar Railway Station is undergoing a major modernisation drive aimed at transforming it into a world-class transport hub with airport-like passenger facilities.

The redevelopment project seeks to enhance convenience, comfort and safety for the lakhs of commuters using the station daily. The upgraded facility will feature modern infrastructure, digital passenger information systems and improved connectivity to ensure a seamless travel experience.



The new air concourse is now operational, offering passengers an improved waiting experience along with lifts, escalators, upgraded ticket counters and vending machines.

Passages on both the ground and second floors have been opened, while dedicated entry and exit points, an information centre, food plaza and waiting halls have been developed to streamline passenger movement.

Platforms are being upgraded with extended shelters, better lighting and advanced digital signage for real-time updates. The modernised station is designed to handle up to 1.43 lakh passengers daily, with improved crew lobby facilities ensuring smoother operations.

Improved driveways and access roads on both sides of Bhubaneswar Railway Station are expected to ease traffic congestion and enhance connectivity for passengers. The redevelopment is being carried out in phases to minimise disruption to daily operations. The first phase has seen completion of new buildings at both the East and West entry points, while work on the first five floors (G+4) of the 11-storey main station building is complete, with the remaining floors to be taken up in the next phase.

Railway authorities said the new building is likely to be dedicated by the end of this year, marking a key milestone in the modernisation of the Capital city's railway infrastructure. The project aligns with the broader vision of providing world-class travel facilities, positioning the station as a model of modern, passenger-friendly rail transport.

# BMC signs MoU for waste-to-CNG project

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 6: In a significant step towards sustainable waste management, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Monday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Nexband Renewables to convert vegetable and wet waste into bio-compressed natural gas (CNG). The initiative aims to reduce the city's waste burden while promoting clean energy generation.

The MoU was signed at the BMC headquarters in the presence of Mayor Sulochana Das, Commissioner Chanchal Rana and Additional Commissioner Kailash Chandra Das, along with other corporators and officials.

Under the agreement, BMC



will supply an average of 50 metric tonnes of vegetable waste per day from across the City. The waste will be transported to a compressed biogas plant being set up by Nexband Renewables near Begunia, where it will be processed into CNG and organic manure using advanced scientific methods.

Officials said BMC has already established Micro Composting Centres (MCCs) and Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) for waste segregation and processing. This new initiative will further enhance scientific waste management by converting organic waste into usable energy.

# ODISHA MARKS WORLD HEALTH DAY TODAY

## Call for evidence-based health awareness

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 6: As Odisha joins the rest of the world in observing World Health Day (Tuesday), the occasion serves as a timely reminder that health is far more than the absence of disease—it encompasses complete physical, mental and social well-being. This year's theme by the World Health Organization, "Together for Health, Stand with Science," holds particular relevance amid rising health and mental health challenges in the state as well as across India.

A specialist in urology and kidney transplant Manas Ranjan Pradhan said modern lifestyles and unhealthy habits are driving the rise in lifestyle-related diseases.

"Awareness about health has increased, and more people are coming forward for regular check-ups. Early detection through these screenings is crucial for effective treatment," he said.

He added that kidney-related problems in Odisha are rising rapidly, particularly in districts such as Dhenkanal.

Cardiologist Dibyaranjan Behera warned of a rising trend of early heart problems. "Many young patients, even those aged 25-35, are experiencing heart attacks. Factors such as smoking, stress, sleep deprivation, sedentary life-



styles, lack of outdoor activity and prolonged work-from-home routines are contributing to this worrying trend," he said.

Director of Cardiology at Manipal Hospitals, Bhubaneswar JK Padhi highlighted improvements in healthcare access.

"Compared to earlier times, people are now receiving better and more accessible healthcare, thanks to various government schemes and initiatives," he said.

Renowned health expert Amrit Pattojoshi emphasised the need for an evidence-based understanding of mental health care. "Standing with science means recognising that conditions such as depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia and

substance abuse are not moral failings or personality flaws, but neurobiological and psychosocial conditions with established treatment pathways," he said.

Emphasising the need for a holistic approach, Pattojoshi said, "Care cannot function in isolation. We need integration across primary healthcare, col-

laboration among psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and policymakers, along with active participation of families and communities. Odisha's health system must shift from hospital-centric models to community outreach, early detection, and preventive strategies."

He also warned against misinformation. "Unverified remedies, stigma, and sensationalised portrayals undermine scientific truth. Promoting mental health literacy helps people seek timely help, follow treatment, and reject harmful myths."

He noted that mental well-being in Odisha is increasingly affected by academic stress, urban isolation, social media and financial pressures. "Scientific interventions must adapt to these changing factors, combining biological insights with culturally sensitive psychosocial approaches," he added.

Associate Professor at SCB Dental College and Hospital Subash Behera highlighted the global role of science in improving health outcomes.

"World Health Day reminds us that science has saved millions through advances in drugs, technology, and medical interventions. It is time for everyone to prioritise health, share evidence-based information, and work with governments, communities, and corporates to build a healthier, greener world," he said.

On World Health Day, experts urged normalising mental health conversations, reinforcing evidence-based care, closing treatment gaps, and countering misinformation with scientific accuracy.

# PEO arrested for embezzling ₹11.28L pension funds

POST NEWS NETWORK



Bhubaneswar, April 6: The Odisha Vigilance Monday arrested a Panchayat Executive Officer (PEO) on charges of misappropriating government funds worth over ₹11,28, 600 meant for beneficiaries under the Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY), officials said.

The accused, identified as Dillip Kumar Pradhan, is currently serving as PEO of Ratanpur Gram Panchayat under Tangi block in Khurda district. The alleged misappropriation took place during his previous posting as PEO of Balipatna Panchayat Samiti between January 2023 and July 2024.

According to Vigilance officials, an investigation revealed that the funds, earmarked for disbursement among eligible beneficiaries including elderly and vulnerable persons, were siphoned off instead of being distributed.

The irregularities were detected in Pampalo and Rajas gram panchayats under Balian-ta block, where the pension funds were meant to be released under the welfare scheme.

Following the findings, a case was registered at Bhubaneswar Vigilance police station April 6 under relevant sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 2018 and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Pradhan has been forwarded to the court of the Special Judge, Vigilance, Bhubaneswar.

# FOUNDATION DAY MARKED AT JAGANNATH HOSPITAL



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 6: Jagannath Hospital celebrated its Foundation Day with a grand annual function featuring a Continuing Medical Education (CME) symposium, scientific sessions and the presentation of the prestigious Dr Jagannath Mohapatra Memorial Award. The event brought together leading paediatricians, healthcare professionals and distinguished guests from across the country.

The programme commenced with academic sessions focusing on the institution's functioning and recent advancements in healthcare. Doctors and medical experts presented research papers and shared insights on emerging trends in patient care.

Founded by Jagannath Mohapatra, Jagannath Hospital has earned a reputation for its commitment to compassionate and affordable healthcare. Speakers highlighted its service-oriented approach

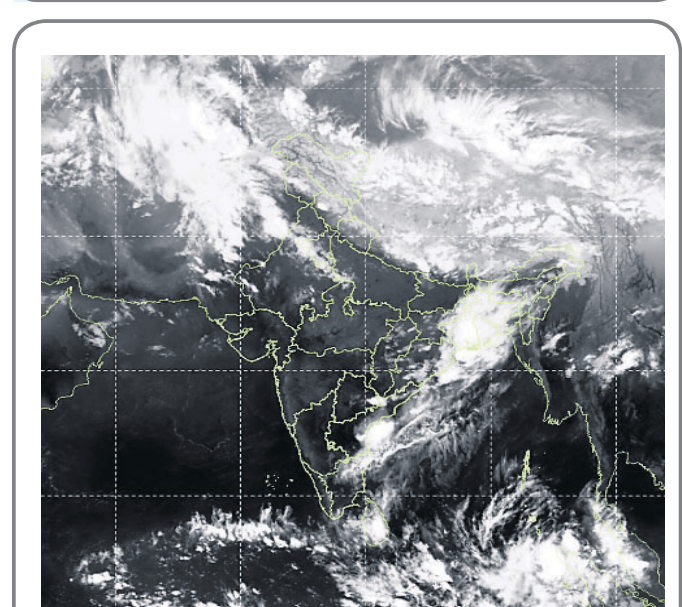
and continued contribution to improving medical care, particularly for underprivileged communities.

The highlight of the event was the presentation of the Second Dr Jagannath Mohapatra Memorial Award to noted paediatrician Prasanna Kumar Sahu. Accepting the honour, he expressed gratitude and described his deep association with the institution, praising its dedication to providing quality treatment to poor patients, especially from the Jajpur region.

Several eminent doctors and dignitaries attended the celebration, including Chairman of Jagannath Hospital Abinash Mohapatra, directors Biswajit Mishra and Arijit Mohapatra, along with paediatric specialists from across the country.

Doctors from Chennai, Kolkata and various parts of Odisha shared their experiences and expertise, discussing advancements in child healthcare and patient care practices.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	93.38 ↓ 0.30	SENSEX	74106.85 ↑ 787.30	GOLD	₹150,090 ↑ ₹410
EURO	108.41 ↓ 0.65	NIFTY	22968.25 ↑ 255.15	SILVER	₹232,500 ↑ ₹5.00



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	34.8°	33.4°	Light to moderate rain or thunderstorm very likely to occur at many places
Min Temp	22.5°	20.4°	
Humidity	84%	83%	
Rainfall	7.2 mm	3.2 mm	

# Irate mob attacks church over visually impaired minor's rape

PNN & AGENCIES

**Keonjhar/Anandapur/Hatadihi, April 6:** An irate mob registering protest against alleged sexual torture and impregnation of a physically challenged minor girl allegedly vandalised a church in a remote village in Keonjhar district Monday, police said.

The attack on the church took place early Monday morning at Murgagatha village under Anandapur police station jurisdiction after around 100 locals rushed towards the place of worship to ransack. They unbolted the main entrance of the church and vandalised the furniture while setting it on fire, said Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO), Kamalakanta Panda.

The alleged rape of a visually impaired minor girl by a local youth and the victim later getting impregnated provoked the violence. The alleged rape was reported about four months back. Since then, the accused has evaded arrest though police launched a manhunt to nab



him. The rape-related pregnancy came to light Sunday. That led the sections of a particular community to launch an attack on the church, said SDPO Panda.

The village is home to around 85 households of which residents of nearly 40 houses are followers of Christianity. The sleepy village had not witnessed incidents of communal flare-up earlier, said sources.

Though tension mounted in the village, it was diffused with timely arrival of police. Situation has been brought under control. Adequate police deployment has been made at the troubled village, informed the police officer.

"A peace committee meeting involving representatives of religious groups has been convened. We are trying to restore peace and harmony in the village," added the police officer.

The incident comes close on the heels of an attack on a church in Dengasargi village of Rayagada district last month.

## Minor critical in crude bomb blast during play

**Kabisuryanagar:** A minor boy was seriously injured and another sustained minor injuries after a crude bomb, which they mistook for a ball, exploded during their play at Khajapalli village under Kabisuryanagar police limits in Ganjam district, police said Monday. The incident occurred while children were playing cricket in an open area near the village. One of the boys reportedly mistook a crude bomb for a ball and picked it up, triggering the blast. He suffered severe injuries to his right palm, with flesh torn, and also sustained injuries to both legs, officials said. Two injured minors were initially rushed to Kodala hospital, where they received treatment. The critically injured boy was later shifted to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur for advanced care. Police said the explosion occurred due to a suspected crude bomb. The source of the explosive remains unclear. Kabisuryanagar police reached the spot soon after the incident and launched an investigation. A forensic team has also examined the site to ascertain the nature of the explosive and the circumstances leading to the blast. "The exact origin of the crude bomb and how it came to be at the spot are under investigation," police said. Further details are awaited as the investigation continues.

## Odisha village shown under Chhattisgarh in house listing

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Lakhanpur, April 6:** A discrepancy in the ongoing house-listing exercise for the 2027 Census has raised concerns in Jharsuguda district, where parts of a village are reportedly being shown under neighbouring Chhattisgarh in geo-tagging records.

The Centre has initiated the first phase of house-listing and self-enumeration from April 1 to April 15. The exercise is underway in Kanaktora gram panchayat under Lakhanpur block. However, during geo-tagging for house-listing, several areas, including half of Ward 1, the entirety of Ward 2 and parts of Ward 3, are being reflected as falling within Chhattisgarh borders.

The anomaly has left local residents surprised and concerned. As per guidelines, people are required to register online for house listing after submitting necessary details at nearby Aadhaar centres.

CENSUS 2027

Villagers expressed resentment after noticing online that their village is being mapped under another state.

Residents pointed out that a 2.5-km road from Kanaktora Kali Temple Square to Ektaal in the neighbouring state was constructed by the Chhattisgarh government. The issue had earlier sparked outrage after a "zero kilometre" signboard installed by Chhattisgarh authorities within Odisha territory went viral on social media and in local media reports.

The incident has triggered debate among the locals, with many questioning whether the issue is merely a technical glitch or a repeat of disputes like the Kotia boundary issue.

Villagers have demanded immediate corrective measures. Additional Tehsildar Kulamani Dalei, who is overseeing the enumeration work in the area, said the discrepancy could be due to a technical error and assured that necessary corrections would be made soon.

Earlier a "zero kilometre" signboard installed by Chhattisgarh authorities within Odisha territory had gone viral on social media

## CoBRA jawan critically hurt in landmine blast



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bonai, April 6:** A jawan of CoBRA battalion sustained critical injuries in a landmine explosion Monday in Saranda forest near Chadridera, close to Baliba village under Chotnagra police limits along the Odisha-Jharkhand border.

The injured jawan was identified as Anuj Kumar of the CoBRA 205 battalion. He was given primary treatment at the spot and later airlifted to Ranchi for advanced medical care, officials said. Following the incident, security forces have intensified search operations across Saranda forest region along the Jharkhand border, Chaibasa SDPO Bahaman Tuti said.

The explosion comes amid ongoing Maoist activity in the region, despite the Union Home Ministry's announcement of a Maoist-free India March 31. The Saranda forest, spanning parts of Odisha and Jharkhand, remains one of the most sensitive Maoist-affected zones due to its dense forest cover and difficult terrain, which provide safe hideouts for insurgents.

Although several Maoist leaders have been neutralised in recent operations, top Maoist leader Misir Besra and over 50 armed cadres are reportedly attempting to reorganise the weakened outfit. The incident has raised questions about whether previously planted landmines continue to pose a threat to security forces and whether there were any lapses during search operations.

## Missing tourist found dead on Mahendragiri

**Paralakhemundi:** A tourist who went missing during a sudden storm on Mahendragiri hill in Gajapati district was found dead Monday morning, officials said. The deceased has been identified as Binod Chandra Jena, a resident of Olatpur village under Niali block in Cuttack district. Jena had travelled to Paralakhemundi Sunday with three friends and visited a relative's house before hiring a car to tour Mahendragiri. The group visited Kunti temple, Yudhishtir temple and Arjuna cave before heading towards Bhima temple on the hill. While climbing, they were caught in a sudden Nor'wester storm, accompanied by strong winds, thunder and rain. As they searched for shelter, three of them managed to reach Bhima temple, while Jena reportedly ran downhill and went missing. After the rain subsided, his friends searched for him and alerted Forest department personnel stationed nearby. Despite an initial search, no trace of Jena was found. Later, Garabandha police and forest officials from Ramagiri range launched a joint search operation. His body was finally recovered Monday morning. The circumstances leading to his death are yet to be ascertained.

## Middle Paleolithic human settlement discovered in Deogarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sundargarh, April 6:** Evidence of a Middle Paleolithic human settlement has been discovered for the first time in Deogarh district, researchers said Monday.

A joint team from the post-graduate (PG) department of History at Government Autonomous College in Sundargarh and the Archaeological Survey of India's Puri Circle made the

rare find. The team was led by ASI Puri Circle Superintendent Dibishad Brajasundar Gadnayak, along with Assistant Professors Sakir Hussain and Jayashankar Naik of Government Autonomous College in Sundargarh.

The artefacts were unearthed near a small hill close to the OS-RTC bus stand in Riamal. The findings include stone tools and cultural materials dating back to the Middle Paleolithic period.



Researchers said the artefacts became visible after laterite soil was removed from the hill during the construction of a

bypass road near Riamal. The materials were found exposed in stratigraphic layers and scattered across the surface.

The collection includes hand axes, Levallois cores, flakes, awls, scrapers, picks, scoids and other tools characteristic of the Middle Paleolithic age.

Preliminary surveys suggest the tools are at least 60,000 to 70,000 years old, Assistant Professor Naik said Monday in Sundargarh.

10001/18/2627

## ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧତ ସତର୍କତା

**ଲକ୍ଷଣ**

- ପ୍ରବଳ ଝାଳ ବୋହିବା
- ମୁଣ୍ଡ ବୁଲାଇ ଅନ୍ଧାର ଦିଶିବା ଓ ବାନ୍ତି ଲାଗିବା
- ପ୍ରବଳ ଶୋଷ ଲାଗିବା
- ମାଂସପେଶୀ ଟାଣି ହେବା
- ଚର୍ମ ଶୁଷ୍କ, ଲାଲ ଓ ଉତ୍ତପ୍ତ ହେବା
- ଅଚେତ ହେବା କିମ୍ବା ବାତ ମାରିବା

**ସତର୍କତା**

- ଦିନ ୧୧ଟା ରୁ ୩ଟା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଖରା ତାତି ଅଧିକ ଥାଏ । ଏହି ସମୟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ବାହାରକୁ ଯାଆନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ । ଜରୁରୀ କାମ ଥିଲେ ବାହାରକୁ ଯିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ପାଣି ପିଅନ୍ତୁ ଓ ସାଥରେ ଛତା, ଚପଲ ଓ ପିଇବା ପାଣି ନିଅନ୍ତୁ
- ଧଳା ରଙ୍ଗର ଢିଲା ପୋଷାକ, ଛତା ଓ ଜୋଡ଼ା ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତୁ
- ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଛାଇରେ ବିଶ୍ରାମ ନିଅନ୍ତୁ
- ଖରାରେ କଠିନ ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ/ ଅଧିକ ଦୂର ଚାଲନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ
- କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ମାଦକ ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ ସେବନ କରନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ

**ପ୍ରତିକାର**

- ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧତ ଆକ୍ରାନ୍ତକୁ ଖୋଲା ଓ ଥଣ୍ଡା ଯାଗାକୁ ନେଇଯାଆନ୍ତୁ, ଓ.ଆର୍.ଏସ୍./ ଚିନି ଲୁଣ ସର୍ବତ୍ର ସାଦାପାଣି ପିଆନ୍ତୁ
- ପୋଷାକ ଯଥାସମ୍ଭବ ଖୋଲି ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ
- ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଧୋଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ, ଓଦା କପଡ଼ାରେ ପୋଛନ୍ତୁ
- ରୋଗୀକୁ ପଞ୍ଜା/ କୁଲର/ ଏସି ପବନରେ ଶୁଖାଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ ଓ ପାଣି ସିଞ୍ଚନ କରନ୍ତୁ
- ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଉନ୍ନତ ନହେଲେ ତୁରନ୍ତ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନା ନେଇ ଚିକିତ୍ସା କରାନ୍ତୁ

ବନ୍ଧୁକ ତଥା ଅସୁସ୍ଥ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଏବଂ ଗର୍ଭବତୀ ମହିଳାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧତର ଆଶଙ୍କା ଅଧିକ

ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

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## ଓଡ଼ିଶାରେ ମତ୍ସ୍ୟବିକାଶ ଓ ଆତ୍ମନିଯୁକ୍ତି ପାଇଁ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ ହେଉଥିବା ପ୍ରମୁଖ ଯୋଜନା

**ମତ୍ସ୍ୟ ଯୋଜନା/ ପାଚୁ ଚାଷ ପାଇଁ ନୂତନ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ଖୋଳା ଯୋଜନା:**

ନୂତନ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ଖନନ ଓ ମାଛଚାଷ ପାଇଁ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ଆନୁଷ୍ଠାନିକ ଖର୍ଚ୍ଚ ବାବଦରେ ହେକ୍ଟର ପ୍ରତି ୧୧,୦୦,୦୦୦ ଟଙ୍କାର ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ବ୍ୟୟ ବରାଦ କରାଯାଇଛି । ଏଥିରେ ସାଧାରଣ ବର୍ଗର ହିତାଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ୪୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ଓ ମହିଳା ତଥା ଅନୁସୂଚିତ ଜାତି ଓ ଜନଜାତି/ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୀ/ଗ୍ରାମଜେଣ୍ଡରଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ୫୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ରିହାତି ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ରହିଛି । ବିଗତ ପାଞ୍ଚ ବର୍ଷରେ ସରକାରୀ ସହାୟତା ପାଇ ନଥିବା ମାଛ ଯୋଗ୍ୟରେ ଭରତ ପ୍ରଶାସନରେ ମାଛଚାଷ ପାଇଁ ହେକ୍ଟର ପ୍ରତି ୪ ଲକ୍ଷ ଟଙ୍କା ଉପରେ ମଧ୍ୟ ରିହାତି ରହିଛି ।

**ବାୟୋଫ୍ଲୋକ୍/କୈବପୁଞ୍ଜ ପଦ୍ଧତିରେ ମାଛଚାଷ:**

କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟରରେ, କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟରରେ ଓ କମ୍ପ୍ୟୁଟରରେ ଅଧିକ ମାଛ ଉତ୍ପାଦନ ପାଇଁ ନୂତନ ଜୀବନଶୈଳୀର ଯୁବ ବାୟୋଫ୍ଲୋକ୍ ପଦ୍ଧତିରେ ମାଛଚାଷ କରିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ପ୍ରୋତ୍ସାହନ ଯୋଗାଇ ଦିଆଯାଇଛି । ଏଥିରେ ସାଧାରଣ ବର୍ଗର ହିତାଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ୫୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ଓ ମହିଳା ତଥା ଅନୁସୂଚିତ ଜାତି ଓ ଜନଜାତି/ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୀ/ଗ୍ରାମଜେଣ୍ଡରଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ୫୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ରିହାତି ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ରହିଛି ।

**ମହିଳା ସ୍ୱୟଂ ସହାୟିକା ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀ ମାନଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ଯୋଜନାରେ ମାଛ ଚାଷ:**

ଗ୍ରାମାଞ୍ଚଳରେ ବାସ କରୁଥିବା ମହିଳାମାନଙ୍କ ଆର୍ଥିକ ବିକାଶ ଓ ସଶକ୍ତିକରଣ ପାଇଁ ଗଠିତ ମହିଳା ସ୍ୱୟଂ ସହାୟିକା ଗୋଷ୍ଠୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ଗ୍ରାମପଞ୍ଚାୟତ ଯୋଜନା ଦ୍ୱାରା ନିଆଦି ସ୍ତରରେ ଲିଫ୍ଟ ଦିଆଯାଇ ମାଛଚାଷ କରାଯାଇଛି । ଏଥିରେ ହେକ୍ଟର ପ୍ରତି ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ମୂଲ୍ୟ ୪,୦୦,୦୦୦ ଟଙ୍କା ରଖାଯାଇଛି । ପ୍ରଥମ ବର୍ଷ ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପମୂଲ୍ୟର ୬୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ, ଦ୍ୱିତୀୟ ବର୍ଷ ୫୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ଓ ତୃତୀୟ ବର୍ଷ ୪୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ରିହାତି ପ୍ରଦାନ ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ରହିଛି ।

**ଖାରିଜଳରେ ମାଛ ଓ ଚିକ୍କୁତିଚାଷ ନିମନ୍ତେ ପ୍ରୋତ୍ସାହନ:**

ରାସ୍ତାର ଉପକୂଳବର୍ତ୍ତୀ ଜିଲ୍ଲାରେ ମାଛ ଓ ଚିକ୍କୁତି ଚାଷକୁ ଅଧିକ ବ୍ୟାପକ କରିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ନୂତନ ଯୋଗ୍ୟ ଖନନ ଓ ଚାଷ ନିମନ୍ତେ ସରକାରୀ ପ୍ରୋତ୍ସାହନ ଯୋଗାଇ ଦେଇଛନ୍ତି । ଏଥିରେ ସାଧାରଣ ବର୍ଗର ହିତାଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ୪୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ଓ ଅନୁସୂଚିତ ଜାତି, ଜନଜାତି, ମହିଳା, ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୀ ଓ ଗ୍ରାମଜେଣ୍ଡରଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ୬୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ରିହାତି ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ରହିଛି ।

**ଜଳକୃଷି ନିମନ୍ତେ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରପାତି ବହୁଳ ବ୍ୟବହାର:**

ଜଳକୃଷି କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଉତ୍ପାଦନ ବୃଦ୍ଧି ଓ ଉଚ୍ଚ ଗୁଣବତ୍ତାରେ ମାଛ ଚାଷ କରିବା ନିମନ୍ତେ ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ବାୟୁ ଚାଳନା ପମ୍ପ, ବାୟୁ ସଞ୍ଚାଳନ ଯନ୍ତ୍ର, କୈବ ସୁରକ୍ଷା ଜାଲ, ମାଛଧରା ଜାଲ, ଜେନ୍ ସେଟ୍, ବରଫ୍ ବାକ୍ସ, ସୌର ଚାଳିତ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରପାତି, ଗ୍ରହ ନେଟ୍, ରିଲ ନେଟ୍, ବାବକ୍ସ ମାଛ/ ଯାଆଁ ପରିବହନ ଯାନ ଯୋଗାଇ ଦିଆଯାଇଛି । ଏଥିରେ ସବୁ ବର୍ଗର ହିତାଧିକାରୀ (ସାଧାରଣ ବର୍ଗ ଅନୁସୂଚିତ ଜାତି, ଜନଜାତି, ମହିଳା, ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୀ ଓ ଗ୍ରାମଜେଣ୍ଡର) କ ପାଇଁ ୪୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ରିହାତି ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ରହିଛି ।

**ନୂତନ ଡଙ୍ଗା, ଲଞ୍ଜିନ୍ ଓ ଜାଲ କ୍ରୟ ନିମନ୍ତେ ସହାୟତା:**

ସାମୁଦ୍ରିକ ମତ୍ସ୍ୟଉତ୍ପାଦନ ବୃଦ୍ଧି ଲକ୍ଷ୍ୟରେ ସାମୁଦ୍ରିକ ମତ୍ସ୍ୟଜୀବୀଙ୍କୁ ନୂତନ ଡଙ୍ଗା, ଜାଲ ଓ ଲଞ୍ଜିନ ଯୋଗାଇ ଦିଆଯାଇଛି । ଏଥିରେ ପ୍ରକଳ୍ପ ମୂଲ୍ୟ ୧୦ ଲକ୍ଷ ଟଙ୍କା ଉପରେ ସାଧାରଣ ବର୍ଗର ହିତାଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ୪୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ଓ ଅନୁସୂଚିତ ଜାତି, ଜନଜାତି, ମହିଳା, ବିଦ୍ୟାଳୀ ଓ ଗ୍ରାମଜେଣ୍ଡରଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ୬୦ ପ୍ରତିଶତ ରିହାତି ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା ରହିଛି ।

ଅଧିକ ବିବରଣୀ ନିମନ୍ତେ କୁଳରେ ଅବସ୍ଥାପିତ ସହକାରୀ ମତ୍ସ୍ୟ ଅଧିକାରୀ କିମ୍ବା ଜିଲ୍ଲା ମତ୍ସ୍ୟ ଅଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ସହ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ମତ୍ସ୍ୟ ନିର୍ଦ୍ଦେଶାଳୟ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା, କଟକ

OIPR-6001/6030/2/26-27/0001

FOCUS INEQUALITY

RICHES STASHED AWAY



There is a practical downside when moral obligations at the heart of issues like fairness or distributive justice are ignored and greed is rewarded

US and its policymaking. What the Oxfam report shows is a failing global order, a tear in the social fabric and the inevitability of violence that will eventually consume not just the poor but also the rich and the super-rich.

This offers a different lens and adds more worries on India's newfound closeness to the US and Israel, which is presented as a strategic geopolitical partnership but also carries the burden of buying into the American ideological Kool-Aid and subserving India's wealth of wisdom to a policy machine that eventually has no friends, only interests.

Yet, the signs of rising inequality are everywhere in the India of today. From private equity that increasingly rules hospitals to galloping fees of schools run in air-conditioned rooms; from unemployed youth in poorly paid food delivery jobs via apps that raise millions to the deteriorating condition of public hospitals, passenger trains and buses - India runs the real risk of deteriorating at the fastest possible pace ever recorded from a socialist set up to a would-be market economy after the 1991 economic reforms to now a de factomarket society.

The writer is a journalist and faculty member at SPJIMR.

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A new report by Oxfam has brought to focus unaccounted wealth stashed away by the world's super-rich in tax havens and called on governments to strengthen taxation systems, increase financial transparency and move towards creating a global asset register to identify, track and tax at higher rates the wealth of the richest individuals.

The numbers paint a grim picture of the power and control exercised by a super-minority of super-rich, leading to an unprecedented concentration of wealth that inflicts structural violence and in-your-face manifest violence that is tearing society apart - a toxic mix of economic violence, the concentration of wealth, which then fuels and funds armed conflict, atrocities and even genocide across borders seen in the military wars of the kind the Israel-US are now engaged in against Iran.

The thinking that delivers violence across the borders brings violence within borders, too, seen in the rising inequity and inequality that erodes opportunity, reduces life expectancy and brings its worst effects on the poor, women and girls, and radicalised groups.

violence within borders, too, seen in the rising inequity and inequality that erodes opportunity, reduces life expectancy and brings its worst effects on the poor, women and girls, and radicalised groups. Consider Oxfam data from an earlier report that said 3.4 Black Americans would be alive if their life expectancy was same as the White people, or that 20 of the richest billionaires are estimated on average to emit 8,000 times more carbon than a billion of the poorest.

Following in the footsteps of the dominant American narratives and mimicking its politics of domination or its business lessons of unbridled shareholder capitalism while mouthing pious but hollow approaches to issues of equity, sustainability or fairness will eat into the Indian ethos, tear apart the oft-cited values of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and lead to a plunder of resources and all the attendant ills that the undue wealth concentration has brought to the



Jagdish Rattanani

THE SIGNS OF RISING INEQUALITY ARE EVERYWHERE IN THE INDIA OF TODAY

Unhinged

Nothing, not even the darkest falsehood can stop the ultimate triumph of Truth.

THE MOTHER



It is disgraceful and a pity that US President Donald Trump has resorted to using expletives directed at Iran that no civilized person, not to speak of the head of state of the world's mightiest country, should ever do.

Iran's deputy foreign minister Kazem Gharibabadi responded by asserting that Trump's threats could amount to war crimes and cited provisions of international law that could be breached.

On the other hand, a significant development is the reported efforts of a group of regional mediators, led by Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey which is trying to thrash out the terms for a potential 45-day ceasefire that could lead to a permanent end to the war.

There is no doubt that Trump is at his wit's end since he talks about destroying Iran and finding a peaceful settlement in the same breath. His 10-day deadline to Iran was to expire in the evening of 6 April, but the previous day he had extended it by 20 hours posting the new deadline on his Truth Social as "Tuesday (7 April) at 8pm ET."

Negotiations taking place through Pakistani, Egyptian and Turkish mediators and also through text messages sent between Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff and Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi do not seem to reach any conclusive wrapping up. According to reports, the Trump administration gave Iran several proposals in recent days, but so far Iranian officials have not accepted them.

It could be that Trump's ego has been so badly damaged by Iran's resilience and fight-back that he could not take it any longer even when negotiations were being held on a war footing.

If Trump is looking for an honourable exit, he needs to swallow his false pride and stop behaving like an international bully. For one thing, his calculation that he could do to Iran what he had done to some other countries as a big bully has gone horribly wrong.

SPECTRUM MEDIA

Independent journalism finds a way

There is now a distinct possibility that Hungary's main opposition party, Tiszsa, will defeat Viktor Orbán's ruling Fidesz party in the country's parliamentary elections on 12 April.

For more than 15 years, Orbán's government has steadily erected barriers to objective reporting and tightened its grip on the media ecosystem. Through a combination of hostile takeovers, pressure campaigns, and interference with regulators like the National Media and Infocommunications Authority, it has fundamentally altered public discourse.

As a result, 80% of the country's news outlets - including formerly independent publications such as Origo and Index - have become pro-government mouthpieces. Media capture on this scale, extensively documented in a major new study, is unprecedented in the EU and demonstrates how quickly pluralism can be destroyed through legal engineering.

My own experience underscores the calculated nature of Orbán's efforts to control the media that Hungarians consume. In 2016, I was the deputy editor-in-chief of Népszabadság, once the highest-circulation daily broadsheet in Hungary, when it was closed overnight.

By now, it is clear that the MTVA's official commitment to impartiality is a fiction. The Budapest-based Republikon Institute recently monitored state media's evening news broadcasts and found that Fidesz and its coalition partner received 15 hours of positive coverage per week.

During this campaign, character assassination and geopolitical fearmongering have featured prominently. Moreover, domestic "scandals" are manufactured to support the regime's central claim: that the opposition is out

of touch with Hungarians and funded by foreign interests. Last August, Index published a document that it claimed was a Tiszsa plan proposing a 33% tax rate. Even though Tiszsa promptly denied the veracity of the report, the story dominated the political agenda for months.

These domestic smears are intended to sow doubt among the electorate and are subsequently linked to broader geopolitical grievances. For example, the regime recently stopped two cash-in-transit vehicles during a routine transfer from Austria's Raiffeisen Bank to the State Savings Bank of Ukraine.

The Hungarian media's financial foundation is also fundamentally lopsided. Since 2015, the government and state-owned companies have reportedly spent in excess of \$1.3 billion on advertising, funneling taxpayer

money almost exclusively into Fidesz-aligned outlets.

There are, however, signs that the regime's information monopoly is beginning to fracture. A small number of independent newsrooms have managed to pierce the government's propaganda shield, despite being under constant political pressure and largely starved of advertising revenue.

Investigative outlets like Direkt36, Telex, and 444.hu, which have survived for years on the doggedness of their staff and the support of their readers, have chipped away at the wall of misinformation with their persistent reporting on corruption and the regime's ties to the Kremlin.

This spelled trouble for Orbán in April's elections. Ultimately, the independent journalism that Orbán has sought to tame - but never fully muzzled - could be his government's undoing.

The writer is the author of After the Conquest: How Autocrats Control the Media.

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Ákos Tóth

ULTIMATELY, THE INDEPENDENT JOURNALISM THAT ORBÁN HAS SOUGHT TO TAME - BUT NEVER FULLY MUZZLED - COULD BE HIS GOVERNMENT'S UNDOING

WISDOM CORNER

I have learned over the years that when one's mind is made up, this diminishes fear; knowing what must be done does away with fear.

ROSA PARKS

I don't want to have lived in vain like most people. I want to be useful or bring enjoyment to all people, even those I've never met. I want to go on living even after my death!

ANNE FRANK

Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.

MAYA ANGELOU

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1724: Johann Sebastian Bach's St. John Passion is premiered. The sacred oratorio is the oldest extant Passion by the German composer. The highly popular work is a dramatization of the final days of Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel of John.
1827: The first friction match is sold. English chemist John Walker produced and sold the first operable matches. They were soon banned in France and Germany because burning fragments would sometimes fall to the floor and start fires.
1939: Albanian King Zog I went into exile after Benito Mussolini made Albania a protectorate of Italy.
1939: Francis Ford Coppola - whose films included the classics The Godfather (1972), The Godfather, Part II (1974), and Apocalypse Now (1979) - was born in Detroit.
1947: Henry Ford, who revolutionized factory production through assembly-line methods he pioneered at his Ford Motor Company, died at age 83.

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, Rasulgarih Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Uncertain times

Sir, The outcome of the Iran war remains uncertain, yet the resulting oil shock has exposed a deeper and more structural fragility in the global economy. Unlike previous crises, this one arrives at a time when governments are already burdened with historically high deficits and debt levels, sharply constraining their ability to cushion the impact of rising energy prices.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

One health

Sir, The World Health Organisation (WHO) that is concerned with international public health, has undertaken path breaking initiatives to prevent, control and eradicate a host of non-communicable and communicable diseases. Countries, from time to time, sought and got the sane counsel of the WHO not to mention the latter's contribution to manpower on leadership and research work.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

# Babri politics ignites Murshidabad battle

Every campaign, conversation and political calculation here circles back to one question: Can the "Babri" appeal consolidate Muslim voters behind Kabir, or will it trigger a counter-consolidation among the Hindus?



invaluable. "Every brick being carried in the name of Babri is helping consolidate Hindu votes in this belt. People see it as another example of appeasement politics," a senior BJP leader from Murshidabad said. Party leaders cite the project as proof of "appeasement politics" and argue that it is fuelling anger among Hindus in nearby pockets, where a considerable number of voters are from the majority community.

The TMC, however, fears that Kabir, especially after joining hands with AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, could prise away a section of Muslim voters in the very belt where the ruling party has built its dominance. "Humayun is trying to create an emotional issue before the polls, but people know who stood by them in difficult times. Development and welfare, not provocation, will decide the election," said a senior district TMC leader.

Murshidabad, where nearly seven in every 10 residents are Muslims, has been one of the strongest pillars of the TMC's minority support base. Of the state's 85 Muslim-dominated seats, the party won 75 in 2021. But the AJUP-AIMIM combine is now seeking to convert the Babri Masjid issue into a rallying point for political assertion among Muslims, particularly younger voters disillusioned with both the TMC and the Congress. Rejinagar is at the centre of that experiment. The constituency, entirely rural with around 65 per cent Muslim, is where Kabir is contesting this time. He first won the seat in 2011 as a Congress

# Memorial for 76 troopers killed in Maoist ambush

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sukma (Chhattisgarh), April 6:** Nearly a week after Chhattisgarh was declared free from armed insurgency, a martyrdom memorial dedicated to 76 security personnel killed in a 2010 Maoist ambush in Tadmela area of Sukma district was inaugurated Monday in a village close to the attack site.

Officials said the memorial was set up by the district administration, police, and the Central Reserve Police Force near the CPRF camp in Gadgadmeta village.

In one of the deadliest attacks on security forces in the country April 6, 2010, 76 security personnel, including 75 CRPF jawans belonging to the 62nd battalion and a police head constable, were killed by Naxals in the forests between Gadgadmeta and Tadmela villages in the then Dantewada district (the area now falls in Sukma district).

CRPF Director General Gyanendra Pratap Singh, the state's Additional Director General (Anti-Naxal Operations) Vivekanand Sinha, Inspector



General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj Pattilingam, and officials from the CRPF, police, and administration paid tribute on the anniversary of the ambush and formally dedicated the memorial to the public Monday.

"For peace, security, and development in the Bastar region, comprising seven districts including Sukma, local police, the CRPF, other central armed forces, and local residents have

made the supreme sacrifices," Pattilingam told reporters.

He said more than 1,500 personnel have laid down their lives over the past 30 to 40 years in the Bastar division alone, while around 2,100 villagers have also lost their lives for the larger good and peace

of the region.

"Today, April 6, 2026, we pay tribute at this very place to those martyred personnel and civilians. Drawing inspiration from their sacrifice, our security forces, district administration, local public, public representatives and all stakeholders have moved forward step by step with determination in line with the government's vision. As a result, the goal of a Naxal-free Bastar, Sukma and Bharat has almost been achieved. Work is still underway in some remaining pockets," he said.

Pattilingam asserted that development works in the region will be accelerated by drawing inspiration from the martyrs' sacrifice. Chhattisgarh, particularly the Bastar region, which has grappled with Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) for over four decades, was declared free of armed Maoists March 31, coinciding with the Centre's deadline to eliminate the menace from the country.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Beldanga (WB), April 6:** Three adjoining Assembly seats in West Bengal's Murshidabad district have turned into the most volatile theatre of the 2026 poll battle, with the proposed Babri Masjid-style mosque at Rejinagar reshaping loyalties, hardening religious identities and threatening to fracture the minority vote, the TMC's bedrock.

Bharatpur, Rejinagar and Beldanga form a contiguous arc around the site where suspended TMC MLA Humayun Kabir, now the founder of the Aam Janata Unnayan Party (AJUP), laid the foundation stone December 6 last year for a mosque modelled on the demolished structure in Ayodhya.

What began as a local act of defiance after Kabir's expulsion from the TMC has, within months, turned into the emotional pivot of the election in this part of Murshidabad. Every campaign, conversation and political calculation here circles back to one question: Can the "Babri" appeal consolidate Muslim voters behind Kabir, or will it trigger a counter-consolidation among the Hindus?

The first Eid prayers there in March drew crowds from Murshidabad, Nadia and North 24 Parganas. Trucks carrying bricks and cement arrive almost daily. Donation boxes overflow. Videos of supporters carrying bricks on their heads have spread across social media, transforming the under-construction mosque into a political symbol larger than the constituency itself. For the BJP, the imagery is politically

## Deleted voters line up across WB as tribunals begin hearings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, April 6:** Thousands of people whose names were deleted from electoral rolls queued up across West Bengal since Monday morning to present their cases before judicial officers, as tribunals for the adjudication of appeals began functioning in the state.

Monday is the last day for adjudication for voters in 152 constituencies going to the polls in the first phase.

For these voters, tribunals are the final recourse after their initial appeals were rejected during the review process. An Election Commission (EC) official said while the voter list will be "frozen" by midnight, those left out can still approach the tribunals till April 22.

The fate of around 23 lakh people, whose names were deleted from the voter list following the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), will be decided by the tribunals.

At Katwa in Purba Bardhaman, Md Mustafa said he had been waiting outside the BDO office since 4 am and was prepared to stay till late evening.

"My elder brother, uncle and I have our names marked 'under adjudication' despite submitting all documents - digital ration card, Aadhaar card, birth certificate, electricity bill and residence proof - in previous SIR hearings," he said.

### S. E. RAILWAY - TENDER

For and on behalf of the President of India, Chief Engineer (Con)/III Garden Reach, Kolkata-700043, S.E. Railway invites e-Tender for the following work. Following tender has been uploaded on website [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in). The tender will be closed at 12:00 Hrs on due date of e-Tender Notice No.: 4630-GR-C-E-C-11-14-2026; Closing Date : 28.04.2026; Brief Description of Works : Yard remodeling works of Badampahar station and other miscellaneous works in connection with Badampahar-Kendughar line under jurisdiction of Dy. CE (Con), Tatanagar of S. E. Railway; Approx. Cost: ₹ 59.31 Crore, Bid Security: ₹ 1,18,61,500.00; Completion period: 24 months; Interested tenders may visit website [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in) for full details/description/specification of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for these items will be accepted. NB: "Prospective Bidders may regularly visit [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in) to participate in all other tenders." (PR-20)

### EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No. eT-M-CD-BBS-CCTV-26-05  
NAME OF WORK: ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT OF CLOSED CIRCUIT SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM PROVIDED IN LH B COACHES OF COACHING DEPOT, BHUBANESWAR FOR A PERIOD OF TWO YEARS.  
Advertised Value (₹) : 1,36,25,790.80, EMD (₹) : 2,18,100.00, Tender Document Cost (₹) : 5,900/-, Period of Completion : 24 Months.  
Bidding Start Date : 07.04.2026  
Closing Date & Time : At 1530 hrs. of 21.04.2026.  
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.  
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website: <http://www.reps.gov.in>  
Coaching Depot Officer, Bhuvanesar  
PR-16/R/26-27

### IDBI BANK

Regional Office: Bhubaneswar

#### CORRIGENDUM

With reference to our "E-Auction Sale Notice" published in the "Orissa Post" on dt. 05.04.2026. Bank is cancelling the E-auction of the property of Borrower: Shri Lalit Narayan Rath which will be held on 21.04.2026. All other facts remain unchanged.

Place: Bhubaneswar Authorised Officer  
Date: 06.04.2026 IDBI Bank Ltd.

### EAST COAST RAILWAY

#### E-AUCTION OF PARKING STAND

**STATION & LOCATION :**  
1) Brahmapur Stand No. 2 - (2 Wheeler) (Platform - 1 side near RMS Office),  
2) Khallikot - (2 Wheeler) (Outside of Railway Station),  
3) Baitarani Road - (2 Wheeler) (Outside side of Railway Station)

**Auction Start Date & Time :** 15.04.2026 at 1500 Hrs. (for SI. No. 01 to 03).  
**Auction End Date & Time :** 15.04.2026 at 1530 Hrs. (for SI. No. 01), 15.04.2026 at 1540 Hrs. (for SI. No. 02) & 15.04.2026 at 1550 Hrs. (for SI. No. 03).

**E-AUCTION OF PAY & USE TOILETS**

**STATION & LOCATION :**  
1) Cuttack (on Platform - 1, Bhadrak end)

**Auction Start Date & Time :** 15.04.2026 at 1200 Hrs. (for SI. No. 01).  
**Auction End Date & Time :** 15.04.2026 at 1230 Hrs. (for SI. No. 01)

Note: Prospective bidders are advised to visit the website : <https://www.reps.gov.in> and check the upcoming e-auctions leasing tab to get all required information regarding this e-auction.

Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager /  
PR-13/R/26-27 Khurda Road

### OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, JATNI, DIST.-KHORDHA

Tel No. : 0674-2490858, e-Mail : [ori-jatni@god.gov.in](mailto:ori-jatni@god.gov.in)  
Letter No.1300 Dt.31.03.2026

#### "e" Procurement Notice

No.19001/10/2627 : Bid Documents consisting of Form, Estimated Cost, Cost of Tender Paper, EMD, time of completion, Class of Contractors and the set of terms and conditions of contract and other necessary documents can be seen in Govt. website i.e. <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>

- Tender Reference No. : 01/PSJ/2026-27
- Name of the Work : Civil Construction works as mentioned in DTCN
- No. of works : 4 Nos.
- Estimated Cost : As per DTCN
- Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) : As per DTCN
- Period of Completion : As per DTCN
- Date & Time of Bidding : 02.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M.
- Last date & time for receipt of bids in the portal : 22.04.2026 at 5.00 P.M.
- Bids received online shall be opened on : 23.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M.
- Name and address of the Officer inviting Bid : O/o Block Development Officer, Jatni

Further amendments, corrigendum or other communication regarding this letter will be available only on <https://tendersodisha.gov.in> and will not be published in print media.  
OIPR-19001/19263/126-27/0001 Sd/- Block Development Officer, Jatni

# Volunteer initiative for wildlife conservation a hit in Balodabazar



lated to forest and wildlife conservation, the official said.

Volunteers are actively involved in activities such as biodiversity conservation, mitigation of human-wildlife conflict, environmental awareness campaigns, community engagement, and various nature-based initiatives at the grassroots level, he added.

The official said the programme emphasises practical learning alongside awareness, enabling youth to gain meaningful insights into conservation practices and inspiring them to emerge as future green leaders.

The forest department provides basic training and exposure in diverse areas, including bird watching, wildlife photography, wetland conservation, eco-tourism, forest-based livelihoods, and strategies to address human-wildlife conflict, the DFO added.

These hands-on activities are designed to equip young participants with valuable skills while fostering a deeper connection with nature, he said.

"The broader objective of the YUVAN program is to develop a motivated and informed group of young individuals who can contribute effectively to conservation efforts within their communities. It also seeks to enhance awareness about the importance of forests and wildlife in everyday life and in achieving sustainable development goals," he added.

**The YUVAN (Youth + Van) volunteer programme encourages youth to actively participate in conservation efforts while building a strong linkage between local communities and the Forest Department**

**Balodabazar, April 6:** A volunteer programme launched by the forest department in Balodabazar-Bhatapara district of Chhattisgarh to strengthen community participation in wildlife conservation has received an encouraging response since its launch last month, an official said Sunday.

**Through YUVAN, participants are being given opportunities to work on real-world challenges related to forest and wildlife conservation**

### Bank of India Gold Auction Notice

Zonal Office: Bhubaneswar Zone, 1/1D, Star House, Jaydev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015, Ph.:0674-2362249

It is hereby brought to the notice of the following gold loan borrowers, their legal heirs, person engaged in the business of gold ornaments and general public that in spite of repeated notices by the Bank, the following borrowers are not repaying their dues to the Bank. Notice is hereby published that if they fail to deposit all their dues in their respective gold loan accounts (including Up-to-date interest and all costs, charges/expenses) by 22.04.2026, their pledged gold ornaments will be auctioned at **Concerned Branch Premises on 23.04.2026 at 11.00 AM**. For this Bank shall not be held responsible for any inconvenience or damage caused to the concerned borrowers and no allegations or representations will be entertained from any borrowers in this regard. Bank reserves the right to cancel the auction without assigning any reason in case, the bidding price so arrived at is observed to be low or inadequate. Further, if needed be Bank reserves the right to change the date and time of the above scheduled auction or cancel the same without assigning any reasons thereon. Purity and net weight and reserve price of gold ornaments/ coins etc. will be available to interested bidders on auction date and auction venue/auction portal.

Sl. No.	A/c. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower(s)	Gross Wt. in Gram	Net Wt. in Gram	Total Dues as on 06.04.2026 (excluding unapplied interest Charges, Cost & Expenses)
<b>BANK OF INDIA, PURI BRANCH, CLERK ROAD, NEAR JHADESWARI CLUB, PURI-752001, MOB.: 9437199488</b>					
1.	55277610003292	Rama Chandra Sahoo, Matiapada, Puri, PIN-752002	46.870	2.700	₹ 15,666.00
<b>BANK OF INDIA, IIT BHUBANESWAR ARGUL BRANCH, PLOT NO.: 289, ARGUL STATION ROAD, ARGUL, JATANI, DIST.: KHORDA, ODISHA, PIN-752050, MOB.: 9776687307</b>					
1.	511977610001596	Suresh Kumar Mohanty, S/o- Dinabandhu Mohanty, At: Jamuna, PO: Argul, PS: Delanga, Dist.: Puri, PIN-752050	13.700	12.000	₹ 57,656.00

Zonal Manager  
Bank of India

### Canara Bank REGIONAL OFFICE, CUTTACK DEMAND NOTICE

Shreeji Complex, Cuttack Town, Unit No. 17, Machhua Bazar, Behind Pantaloons, Cuttack - 753001

Demand Notice u/s 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 issued by the CANARA BANK as Secured Creditor against the Borrower(s)/Mortgagor(s)/Guarantor(s)/ of this following Branch, details of which are mentioned in the table below .

Branch / Name & Address of the Borrower(s) / Mortgagor(s) / Guarantor(s)	(A) Loan/Limit Sanctioned / (B) Date of NPA / (C) Date of Demand Notice	Total Liabilities due on Specified Date	Description of the immovable property mortgaged to the Bank
<b>KHUNTAKATA BRANCH</b> (1) Mr Swarup Khatua (Borrower/Mortgagor), S/o: Prahlad Khatua, At: Badabhunde, PO: Badabhunde, PS.: Athagarh, Dist: Cuttack, Odisha, Pin - 754029 .	(A)Rs. 22,99,000/- / (B) 30.03.2026 / (C) 02.04.2026	Rs.16,25,247.81 as on 26.03.2026 with further interest and incidental expenses and cost	All that part and parcel of the property in the name of Mr Swarup Khatua situated over Khata No.369/821, Mouza: Badabhunde, PS/Tahasil: Athagarh, Thana No.11, Dist: Cuttack. (1) Plot No.749/2993, Area: A0.030 Dec., Kisam: Gharabari, Bounded by: North- Bhamrarabara Choudhury, South- Rangabati Khatua, East- Satrugna Dalua, West- Bhamrarabara Choudhury, (2) Plot No.750, Area: A0.090 Dec., Kisam: Gharabari, Bounded by: North- Bhamrarabara Choudhury, South- Dhruba Panda, East - Rangabati Khatua, West - Road, (3) Plot No.752, Area: A0.080 Dec., Kisam: Gharabari, Bounded by: North- Bhamrarabara Choudhury, South- Gobardhan Panda, East- Satrugna Dalua, West - Sukumari Bewa.

You, the above Borrower(s)/Mortgagor(s) have committed default in repayment of loan as mentioned in above table with further interest at the agreed rate availed from our Branch as mentioned above. The Bank had issued notice under the said Act to you to repay the outstanding amount in the above mentioned table. Due to irregularity in repayment of outstanding dues, the debt has been classified as Non-performing Asset. By this notice you are hereby called upon to discharged the entire liabilities as on date with further interest thereon in the above account to us as Secured Creditor, within 60 days from the date of this notice, failing which we shall be constrained to exercise all or any of our rights conferred under section 13(4) and other provision of the above security interest Act-2002. You are required to note that in terms of Sec. 13(13) of the said Security Interest Act, you shall not, after receipt of this notice, transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, any of the Secured assets above referred to without prior written consent of our Bank. You are also put on notice that any contravention of the injunction/restraint as provided under the said security interest Act-2002 is an offence. This notice is issued including the right to transfer by way of lease, assignment or sale for realizing the secured assets. Provided that the right to transfer by way of lease, assignment or sale shall be exercised only where the substantial part of the business of the borrower is held as security for the debt provided further that where the management of whole of the business of part of the business is severable, that secured creditor shall be take over the management of such business of the borrower which is relateable to the security for the debt and under secured creditor shall take over the management of such business of the borrower which is relateable to the security for the debt and under other applicable provisions of the said Act .

Date: 06.04.2026, Place : Cuttack Sd/- Authorised Officer, Canara Bank



We have governments at both the Centre and the state. We must work among the people with full strength and make our party invincible

BHAIJANLAL SHARMA | RAJASTHAN CM

ISI-BACKED TERROR MODULE BUSTED

The Counter Intelligence Wing of the Punjab Police busted a Pakistan's ISI-backed terror module, arresting three persons and recovering two hand grenades along with a Glock pistol from them, said a senior police officer Monday



of the day quote

People know the condition of the Congress party better than me. It doesn't have a presence in Baramati. If the party contests the bypolls, it will be a nominal fight

ASHOK CHAVAN | BJP LEADER

In Assam today during the election campaign, the Prime Minister urged unanimous support for the women's reservation bill in the special session of Parliament. How much more bogus can he get?

JAIRAM RAMESH | CONGRESS GENERAL SECY IN-CHARGE COMMUNICATIONS

We have given orders for girdawari and after conducting it, who-soever suffered crop damage will be given compensation

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

SHORT TAKES

Ch'garh HC sentences Amit Jogi to life

Raipur: The Chhattisgarh High Court has sentenced Amit Jogi, son of former chief minister Ajit Jogi, to life imprisonment for the 2003 murder of NCP leader Ramavatar Jaggi, observing that he was the "mastermind" and "driving force" behind the conspiracy.

3 die after consuming 'poisonous' liquor

Meerut (UP): Police arrested three people, including a woman, after three men drank alcohol from the same bottle and died, officials have said, adding that they suspected foul play.

UP Police unearths GST fraud rackets

Meerut/Bahraich: Three persons have been arrested in Meerut and Bahraich districts, uncovering two separate multi-crore GST fraud rackets worth over Rs 27 crore, officials said Monday.

Nagaland: BJP supporter dead, in pre-poll violence

Kohima: A BJP supporter was allegedly killed and a dozen vehicles damaged as violence rocked Nagaland's Mokokchung district Monday ahead of the bypoll to the Koridang seat, prompting authorities to impose prohibitory orders, officials said.



Fire Brigade personnel take part in a rehearsal for the Annual Fire Drill competition, in Mumbai, Maharashtra

PTI PHOTO

SECURITY SCARE

SUV crashes through Delhi Assembly gate; 3 detained

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: In a major security breach at the Delhi Assembly, a masked man drove an SUV through one of the boundary gates, placed a flower bouquet outside the Speaker's office, and fled, triggering a high alert Monday afternoon.

Multiple police teams, along with a bomb disposal squad, rushed to the site and conducted a thorough sweep of the area to rule out any threat, a police officer said.

The car, bearing an Uttar Pradesh registration number, entered the Assembly premises after breaking through Gate No. 2 at around 2 pm, officials said.

Since it is not the main gate, security is relatively less around it when the House is not in session, according to sources.

"The driver proceeded towards the office of Assembly Speaker Vijender Gupta and placed a flower bouquet near the porch before rushing out in his vehicle," said a Delhi Secretariat official.



A security official inspects a flower bouquet after the SUV driven by a masked man forced its way through one of the boundary gates of the Delhi Assembly premises.

PTI PHOTO

- A car driven by a masked individual forced entry through a boundary gate of the Delhi Assembly
The car, bearing an Uttar Pradesh registration, broke through Gate No. 2, causing a security scare
The driver left a flower bouquet near the Speaker's office before leaving the premises

and the accused were caught in north Delhi," a police officer said.

Meanwhile, forensic experts examined the flower bouquet that was allegedly kept inside the assembly premises. The bomb disposal squad and dog squad conducted a thorough sweep of the area to rule out any explosive threat.

The incident comes close on the heels of bomb threats received by the Assembly during the recently concluded budget session.

including the driver. "Three people have been detained. The car was recovered,

Ramjas College, Miranda House receive bomb threats

New Delhi: Students from Delhi University's Ramjas College and Miranda House were evacuated Monday morning, after the colleges received bomb threat emails, an official said.

EXCISE POLICY

Kejriwal appears in HC seeking recusal of judge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: Former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal Monday appeared in person in the Delhi High Court seeking recusal of Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma from hearing the CBI petition challenging the discharge of the AAP convenor and all other accused in the liquor policy case.

Justice Sharma took Kejriwal's application for her recusal on record and listed it for hearing April 13, after she was informed that a plea for transfer of the case to another HC bench filed before the apex court has been withdrawn.

The court recorded that besides Kejriwal, the applications for recusal of the judge were also filed by AAP leaders Manish Sisodia and Durgesh Pathak. In its order, the court also granted time till April 10 to Kejriwal and others to file their response on the main CBI plea as a "last and final opportunity".

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CBI, argued that the court was not a forum for theatrics and Kejriwal should discharge his lawyer if he wanted to appear in person in the case.

Rahul calls Modi, Vijayan 'arrogant'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), April 6: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Monday launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, calling them "arrogant" and alleging that they have a "king" mindset of ruling over people rather than working with them.

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha was addressing election rallies at Mala and Kunnankulam in Thiruvananthapuram district, as well as in Palakkad.

In all three venues, Gandhi reiterated the allegation that the UDF is facing a combined force of the LDF and the BJP in the April 9 Assembly polls.

Gandhi alleged that the BJP sees the Congress and the UDF as its main political challenge, both in Kerala and across the country, and the LDF has a deal with the saffron party.

"As proof, PM Modi speaks about God, temples and religion

in his speeches elsewhere, but in Kerala, he does not speak about the Sabarimala gold loss involving CPI(M) leaders. This is because he wants to protect the chief minister and the CPI(M)," he said in Mala.

According to him, anyone who attacks the BJP gets targeted. But the chief minister and his family are not touched. There is no interrogation, ED or CBI action against him.

"It is clear that what we are fighting is a partnership. Remember who the partner is.

The partner is the same people who set fire in Manipur, attacked nurses from Kerala in Chhattisgarh and divide India on religious lines, spreading hatred and violence," he alleged.

In Kunnankulam, Gandhi said he doesn't care about the BJP's attack and will continue his fight. Gandhi also criticised a campaign slogan associated with the LDF, referring to billboards carrying the chief minister's image with the words "Who else?".

EC to deploy 3K more personnel for Bengal polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 6: To ensure peaceful polling in West Bengal, the EC has decided to deploy 3,000 armed police personnel from other states, mostly from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, supplementing the already substantial presence of central forces for the first phase of elections slated for April 23, a senior official said Monday.

"Given the sensitivity of the elections, it has been decided to augment the existing forces with around 3,000 armed police personnel from other states. A large contingent of the additional forces will be drawn from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh," the official told PTI.

The personnel are expected to start arriving in the state from April 13 in a phased manner, he said. The commission has already planned the deployment of 2,400 companies of central forces across the state, he said.

Meanwhile, the EC rejected a plea by former Kolkata Police Commissioner Supratim Sarkar, who sought to be relieved from his newly assigned role as a police observer in Tamil Nadu, citing medical reasons.

Court sends 7 foreigners to 30-day custody in security breach case

New Delhi: A Delhi court Monday sent seven foreign nationals, including six Ukrainians, accused of breaching national security, to 30 days in judicial custody. The foreign nationals were produced before NIA Special Judge Prashant Sharma after the completion of their NIA custody.

SIR: SC to decide on 60L voter deletion claims in Bengal today

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Monday said around 60 lakh claims and objections of those removed from voters' lists in the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in poll-bound West Bengal will be decided during the day, observing that central forces will remain deployed.

Top court directs NIA to probe Malda incident

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Monday ordered the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to take over cases related to the gherao of seven judicial officers in Malda, observing that the bureaucracy's credibility was being lowered and politics was being injected into the West Bengal secretariat and government offices.

SNIPPETS

Army reveals roadmap for drones & loitering munitions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: The army Monday unveiled a key "technology roadmap" outlining technical and operational requirements in the domain of unmanned aerial systems (UAS) and loitering munitions, a move that comes amid the changing nature of warfare as seen in various conflicts.

The nearly 50-page document, intended for industry and academia, details 30 types of UAS and loitering munitions across five categories, translating into nearly 80 variants, a senior officer said.

unmanned aerial systems in air defence role, unmanned aerial systems in special role and logistics unmanned aerial systems.

The initiative comes against the backdrop of rapidly changing conflict dynamics, with the Russia-Ukraine war stretching into over four years and the ongoing West Asia conflict now continuing for over a month, underscoring the growing significance of unmanned systems on the battlefield.

Deputy Chief of Army Staff (Capability Development and Sustenance), Lt Gen Rahul R Singh, in his address at the launch event, cautioned about



the sensitive nature of the document and urged stakeholders not to share it with unauthorised persons, citing the risk of it falling into the hands of an adversary.

Maj Gen C S Mann, ADG, Army Design Bureau, said this is the first time the army has shared such specifications related to the domain of UAS and loitering munitions, reflecting

The nearly 50-page document, intended for industry and academia, details 30 types of UAS and loitering munitions across five categories, translating into nearly 80 variants, a senior officer said

The categories are surveillance, loitering munitions, unmanned aerial systems in air defence role, unmanned aerial systems in special role and logistics unmanned aerial systems

the importance attached to these capabilities.

Work on preparing the document started after Operation Sindoor, a person familiar with the matter said.

Titled "Indian Army's Tech-

nology Roadmap for Unmanned Aerial System & Loitering Munitions", the document was launched at the event held at the Bharat Mandapam here.

The document provides visibility of long-term requirements of the army in the field of UAS and loiter munitions to the industry and academia, officials said.

Senior army officials, along with representatives from the Drone Federation India (DFI), Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the defence industry, academia and R&D organisations attended the event.



When Amit Shah comes here, he only talks about Bangladeshi infiltrators. But the BJP doesn't drive these infiltrators out; they nurture them. It only plays politics in their name

ELECTRIC FAULT SPARKS 'ERUPTION' SCARE

The eruption of a black-coloured substance from the ground in the Samanagaon Road area of Jalna city Monday was caused by the flowing of electric current into the earth due to faulty equipment, leading to the melting of rocks, officials said



of the day quote

The Congress treated the tea tribes as a vote bank to be harvested every five years. You all supported them but, they pushed the future of the community into darkness

Establishing a national-level data pool would be a monumental step in this direction. It would provide better inputs for policy formulation, aid in validating new medical practices, and enable large-scale replication of effective treatments, thereby gradually transforming our healthcare system from a reactive into a proactive model

One of the biggest challenges facing our youth is the menace of substance abuse. Drugs destroy not only individuals but also families and entire communities. I appeal to all of you, say a firm 'no' to drugs

POST OF THE DAY

The only reason we can't have real progress in this country is because we keep tolerating the same broken system: Uneducated politicians. Freebies. Endless "yojanas". Reservations. Corruption. Inefficient government employees.

SHORT TAKES

Japanese tourist molested in Jaipur

Jaipur: A Japanese tourist was allegedly molested by five men near Jaipur's Jaigarh Fort, police said Monday, adding that efforts are underway to trace the accused. The police have registered a case based on the woman's complaint, and are scanning local criminal and tourist guide records to trace and arrest the accused, the officer said.

3 suspected dacoits lynched by public

Nagaon: At least three suspected dacoits were lynched and another critically injured by villagers in Assam's Nagaon district Monday, police said. Nagaon Additional Superintendent of Police (Crime) Abotani Doley told PTI that the incident took place at No 1 Kathpara village within Rupihat Police Station in Kalabar co-district.

Boy found dead at school hostel

Jehanabad: A five-year-old boy was found dead with his throat slit at a school hostel in Bihar's Jehanabad district Monday, police said. The incident happened at a private school hostel in the Karauna police station area, they said.

Sena worker murdered

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar/Nanded: A 35-year-old Shiv Sena worker was stabbed to death in Nanded city in the early hours of Monday, after which one of the suspects was detained following an encounter that left him with a bullet injury, a police official said. It is the fifth murder in a public space in the city in the last three days. Sonu Kalyankar was out on a morning walk around 5.30 am when three men attacked him with sharp weapons in the Shreenagar area, an official said.

Notices to remove CEC rejected

The Opposition had submitted notices to the Lok Sabha Speaker and the Rajya Sabha chairman against the CEC, alleging "partisan and discriminatory conduct in office", "deliberate obstruction of investigation of electoral fraud" and "mass disenfranchisement" among other charges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan Monday rejected separate notices from the Opposition to move a motion for the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar from his post.

The Opposition had submitted notices to the Lok Sabha speaker and the Rajya Sabha chairman against the CEC, alleging "partisan and discriminatory conduct in office", "deliberate obstruction of investigation of electoral fraud" and "mass disenfranchisement" among other charges. In separate orders, the Speaker and the Rajya Sabha Chairman refused to admit the notices moved under Article 324(5) of the Constitution, read with other relevant constitutional and statutory provisions, praying for the removal of Gyanesh Kumar as the Chief Election Commissioner.

"After due consideration of the notice of Motion and a careful and objective assessment of all relevant aspects and issues involved, the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, in exercise of the powers vested to him under Section 3 of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, has refused to admit the said notice of Motion," a notification from the Rajya Sabha Secretary



We know what happened to last RS Chairman: Cong

New Delhi: With notices moved by the opposition to move a motion for the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar rejected, the Congress Monday said "we know what happened to the last Chairman of the Rajya Sabha who accepted a petition moved by Opposition MPs". Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan Monday rejected separate notices moved by the Opposition to move a motion to remove CEC Kumar from his post. The Opposition had moved separate notices to the Lok Sabha Speaker and the Rajya Sabha Chairman.

General said. It said the notice of Motion dated March 12, 2026, signed by 63 members of the Rajya Sabha under Article 324(5) of the Constitution, was submitted to the Rajya Sabha Chairman. A separate notification from

the Lok Sabha Secretary General said a notice of Motion dated March 12, 2026 signed by 130 Members of Lok Sabha under Article 324(5) of the Constitution, read with Article 124(4) thereof, Section 11(2) of the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023 and the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, was submitted to the Speaker, seeking the removal of Gyanesh Kumar, Chief Election Commissioner. "After due consideration of the notice of Motion and a careful and objective assessment of all relevant aspects and issues involved therein, the Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha, in exercise of the powers vested to him under Section 3 of the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968, has refused to admit the said notice of Motion," it said.

The opposition parties have accused the CEC of aiding the ruling BJP on several occasions, especially with the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, which they alleged aims to help the saffron party.

The process for removing the CEC is similar to that for the removal of a Supreme Court or a high court judge, meaning an impeachment can be effected only on the ground of "proven misbehaviour or incapacity".

AJIT PAWAR PLANE CRASH

Ashok Kharat link sparks fresh doubts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, April 6: NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar Monday raised fresh doubts about the January 28 plane crash that killed Ajit Pawar after activist Anjali Damania alleged a link between arrested self-styled godman Ashok Kharat and financial transactions at a cooperative credit society.

Addressing a press conference in Mumbai earlier in the day, Damania claimed SMS alerts linked to transactions in Samata Credit Cooperative Society showed an unusual spike around the time of an alleged accident involving Ajit Pawar, a reference to the then deputy CM's death in a plane crash January 28.

She alleged 17 messages were received January 27, followed by 19 the next day (when the crash took place), and several more in the following days, which she claimed was not the usual pattern. According to Damania, the messages indicated deposits or withdrawals in Kharat's account.

In a post on X, Rohit Pawar said, "Serious questions are being raised after it came to light that substantial financial transactions were carried out by Ashok Kharat during the



NCP-SP MLA Rohit Pawar is questioning the circumstances surrounding the plane crash that killed Ajit Pawar after activist Anjali Damania alleged a link between a godman and financial irregularities

Damania claims unusual financial transactions occurred around the time of the crash, involving self-styled godman Ashok Kharat and the Samata Credit Cooperative Society

same period. Earlier, there were also reports of alleged black magic rituals outside Ajit Dada's residence.

The Karjat-Jamkhed MLA also pointed to reports of Kharat's frequent travel using VSR company's aircraft and his network of followers, asking whether there could be a connection between these developments and the fatal crash. VSR owned and operated the LearJet 45 aircraft that crashed in Baramati January 28.

'No unusual volatility in prices of essential items'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: The government Monday said there is no "unusual volatility" in prices of essential commodities on account of the West Asia crisis, and it is continuously monitoring the rates in wholesale and retail markets across the country.

The Centre said it has sufficient stocks of wheat and rice to meet the requirements of the public distribution system (PDS) and also any exigencies. It has also asked states to crack down on hoarding and black marketing of essential food items. Wheat procurement has already started and "proactive steps" have been taken to ensure availability of packaging material, including diversifying sources and maintaining contingency measures to address any shortfall, it added.

Addressing an inter-ministerial briefing on recent developments in West Asia, Anupam



Mishra, Additional Secretary in the Department of Consumer Affairs, said, the department is "keeping a close watch on the food security situation in the country."

He said the department is monitoring the prices of food commodities, ensuring supply and also making efforts to prevent hoarding and black marketing. Mishra said the department gets prices of 40 commodities on

a daily basis from 528 centres across India. The wholesale and retail prices are updated on a mobile app.

"What we have seen so far, there has been no unusual volatility in prices of the essential commodities," Mishra said. On the supply side, he said, the production of pulses this year is higher than the previous year. The government has 28 lakh tonnes of buffer stock of



Members of the Konyak community during the Aoling festival, at Longwa village, in Mon district, Nagaland

MEA: Over 1,700 Indians exit Iran via land borders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 6: Over 1,700 Indian nationals have left Iran through land border crossings in Armenia and Azerbaijan since the start of the West Asia conflict over a month ago, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Monday.

"Our embassy in Tehran has so far facilitated the movement of 1,777 Indian nationals to exit Iran through Armenia and Azerbaijan," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at a media briefing.

The Indian nationals are flying back home from Armenia and Azerbaijan. Jaiswal said the Indians who returned home included 895 students and 345 fishermen.

"The Indian fishermen were employed by various companies in Iran and they flew home from Armenia April 4," he said.

The US-Israel attacks on Iran, and Tehran's sweeping retaliation have all but halted shipping through the strait - the narrow shipping lane that is the conduit for oil and gas exports from Gulf countries to the world. Iran has, however, stated that "non-hostile vessels" may transit the waterway after coordinating with Iranian authorities.



Iran's state-run IRNA agency said Tehran has rejected the latest ceasefire proposal and wants a permanent end to the war.

The report comes shortly before US President Donald Trump's deadline for Tehran to open the Strait of Hormuz or see its power plants and bridges attacked.

23 lakh deleted voters through tribunals in WB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Thousands in West Bengal are awaiting tribunal decisions after their names were deleted from electoral rolls

Tribunals represent the final recourse for voters whose initial appeals were rejected during the Special Intensive Revision

Concerns are rising among affected residents about potential disenfranchisement and the impact on their citizenship rights in West Bengal

Political parties have set up camps to assist voters in communicating with judicial officers at the tribunals

ship rights? We have been living in West Bengal for more than 80 years," he claimed.

In faraway Barasat, North 24 Parganas district, Bipasha Baidya was standing before the office of the district magistrate with her child.

"I had submitted my documents four times, and during the last two occasions, the poll official told me everything was alright and my name would be included in the list. However, I am yet to see my name in any of the supplementary lists," Baidya claimed.

Similar scenes were reported from Canning in South 24 Parganas, where long queues extended beyond the BDO office premises.

Among those waiting were Anwara Bibi from Gosaba and Sufal Naskar from Basanti, both of whom said their names were missing from the rolls.

"Not sure whether I will be able to exercise my right to vote this time. I have been assured by both TMC and CPI(M) workers that they will fight for inclusion of my name in the rolls," he said.

Advertisement for Government of Odisha Office of the Superintending Engineer Phulbani (R&B) Division, Phulbani. Includes details about procurement notice, bid identification, and contact information.



The Party Central Committee has gained a profound grasp of global energy development trends and made major decisions by advancing the new energy security strategy in depth

INDIA-BORN KATHAK EXPERT RECEIVES ROYAL HONOUR IN UK

Kathak expert Balbir Singh, who received his Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to dance recently, feels the royal honour is a celebration of the guru-shishya tradition of Indian classical art forms.



of the day quote

Against the backdrop of Iran's conflict and the effective paralysis of diplomacy among Washington, Moscow and Kyiv, the risk of further escalation in the region appears to have increased significantly

We note that the level of tension in the region is growing and continues to grow. In fact, the entire region is on fire. These are all very dangerous and negative consequences of the aggression that was unleashed against Iran

This will be a long crisis ... energy prices will be higher for a very long time for some more critical products we expect it to be even worse in the weeks to come

Ukraine targets \$1 million ballistic interceptor by 2027

REUTERS

Kyiv, April 6: Fire Point, maker of Ukraine's Flamingo cruise missile, is in talks with European companies to launch a new air defence system by next year, a senior executive told Reuters, creating a low-cost alternative to the increasingly hard-to-get Patriot system.



FIRE POINT AIMS TO PUT COST OF MISSILE INTERCEPTION BELOW \$1 MILLION
COMPANY DEVELOPING BALLISTIC MISSILE CAPABLE OF REACHING MOSCOW
UKRAINE MUST RULE ON PROPOSED \$760-MILLION INVESTMENT BY MIDDLE EAST CONGLOMERATE
INVESTMENT WOULD HELP OPEN DOOR TO LOW-ORBIT SATELLITE VENTURE

With governments seeking to defend their skies as the wars in Ukraine and Iran sow global instability, Fire Point's co-founder and chief designer Denys Shtilerman said it aimed to slash the cost of intercepting a ballistic missile to below \$1 million.

Shtilerman also said Fire Point was awaiting government approval for an investment by a Middle Eastern conglomerate that valued the company at \$2.5 billion and would open the door to new business opportunities, including low-orbit satellite launches.

DEVELOPING AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE PATRIOT SYSTEM

Ukraine and many other Western-allied nations rely heavily on the US-made Patriot system to stop ballistic missiles.

But Patriot missiles are in increasingly short supply amid extensive deployment in the Gulf against Iranian attacks. And Europe's only anti-ballistic system, the Italo-French SAMP/T, is produced in relatively small numbers.

To bring down a ballistic projectile, the Patriot system

manufactured by Raytheon and Lockheed Martin - often requires two or three air defence missiles, each costing several million dollars, Shtilerman said.

"If we can decrease it to less than \$1 million, it will be ... a game changer in air defence solutions," he said in an interview. "We plan to intercept the first ballistic missile at the end of 2027."

UAE INVESTMENT COULD START SATELLITE VENTURE

Ukraine's anti-monopoly authority has until around October to decide on the proposed \$760-million acquisition of a 30% stake in Fire Point by the Middle Eastern investor, Shtilerman said.

Ukrainian media have identified the suitor as Emirati defence firm Edge Group. Edge Group and Ukraine's anti-monopoly authorities did not respond to a request for comment.

The investment would be the first step in a project to build a space launch terminal in the UAE, with the aim of eventually establishing a constellation of low-orbit European satellites.

Indian envoy reassures Delhi's intent to rebuild ties with Bangladesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, April 6: India is willing to rebuild ties with Bangladesh with a "forward-looking approach", Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma conveyed to Prime Minister Tarique Rahman Monday.

The meeting came as India and Bangladesh are making efforts to rebuild bilateral ties after Rahman became prime minister following his Bangladesh Nationalist Party's victory in the February parliamentary polls.

The ties between the two nations came under severe strain during the past tenure of Bangladesh's interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus.

During the meeting, Verma and Rahman "discussed bilateral engagement with a focus on people-centric cooperation in multiple domains aligned with the national development priorities of the two countries," the Indian High Commission said in an X post.

The High Commissioner also conveyed "India's intent to work together with the Government and people of Bangladesh by adopting a positive, constructive and forward-looking approach and based on mutual interest and mutual benefit."

However, officials familiar with the meeting said the envoy told Rahman that India and Bangladesh should transform their geographical proximity into new opportunities through strengthened economy, connectivity and enhanced cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

Taiwan opposition leader to visit China



REUTERS

Taipei, April 6: Taiwan opposition leader Cheng Li-wun leaves Tuesday for China and a potential meeting with President Xi Jinping on what she says is a peace mission as Beijing makes a renewed push to convince Taiwanese to support "reunification".

Cheng, chairwoman of the Kuomintang (KMT), Taiwan's largest opposition party, is travelling at a time of increased Chinese military pressure on Taiwan, which Beijing views as its own territory, and as the opposition-dominated parliament stalls a government plan for \$40 billion in extra defence spending.

The KMT and the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) have released duelling social media messages ahead of the trip, using the imagery of war and peace.

"Peace is the only foundation for prosperity, and the

hope for Taiwan's future," the KMT said Sunday, putting out a video featuring young people relaxing on the ground, in a pool and smiling while looking up at the stars.

The DPP shot back in a Facebook post that the KMT was trying to "cooperate with the Chinese communists' scheme to weaken Taiwan's defence capabilities", pointing to the delay in passing defence spending, plans the US government has backed. Cheng told foreign reporters last month that "peace cannot possibly be achieved through defence capabilities alone" and political efforts were equally indispensable.

She is going to China a month before US President Donald Trump's summit with Xi in Beijing. While the two sides could strike goodwill agreements in Beijing on trade in agriculture and aircraft parts, they are also expected to discuss areas of deep tension such as Taiwan, where little progress is expected.

KMT CHAIRWOMAN TO VISIT CHINA FROM APRIL 7-12
OPPOSITION-DOMINATED PARLIAMENT STALLS DEFENCE SPENDING
CHINA MAKES NEW PUSH FOR 'REUNIFICATION' WITH TAIWAN
CHINA VIEWS DEMOCRATICALLY GOVERNED TAIWAN AS ITS OWN

SHORT TAKES

Declare TTP terrorist outfit, Pak to Afghan

Lahore: Pakistan has demanded that Afghanistan formally declare TTP as a terrorist organisation and dismantle its infrastructure as a precondition to resolve the ongoing border conflict between the two countries, local media reported Monday. Islamabad put forward three core demands last week during a meeting between representatives of Pakistan and the Afghan Taliban in the Chinese city of Urumqi, The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

Nepal court: Finish Oli-Lekhak probe

Kathmandu: Nepal's Supreme Court Monday ordered authorities to complete the investigation against ousted premier KP Sharma Oli and former home minister Ramesh Lekhak by Thursday or release them from custody. Oli, the chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), and Lekhak, a senior Nepali Congress leader, were arrested last month on charges of alleged involvement in suppressing the Gen Z movement of September 8 and 9 last year, in which 76 people died.

Pak to repay \$4.8bn in external obligations

Islamabad: Pakistan has made arrangements to repay \$4.8 billion in external obligations by June, including \$3.5 billion payable to the UAE through three different facilities, a local media report said. The development comes after the federal government decided to return \$2 billion to Abu Dhabi by the end of the current month. The amount had been placed with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) as a deposit, on which the country has been paying around 6 per cent interest.

Russian attacks kill 4 in Ukraine

Kyiv: A Russian drone attack on Ukraine's southern port city of Odesa killed two women and a toddler, authorities said Monday, while Ukrainian long-range drones targeted Russia's key Black Sea port for oil exports. The nighttime attack on Odesa heavily damaged an apartment block, killing the women and a 2-year-old child, officials said. Rescuers working under floodlights pulled four people from the rubble. Eleven people were hospitalised, including a pregnant woman and two children - the youngest less than a year old, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a post on X.

Myanmar's new president faces genocide complaint



REUTERS

Jakarta, April 6: A criminal case against Myanmar's newly-elected President Min Aung Hlaing was filed in Indonesia Monday by a group of civil society organisations, accusing the leader of acts of genocide against the Rohingya ethnic group.

Myanmar is a member of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), but relations have come under strain since a 2021 coup led by Min Aung Hlaing, leading to civil

war and a humanitarian crisis, with large numbers of Rohingya Muslims displaced and forced into refugee settlements.

Indonesia, which hosts ASEAN's headquarters, is the biggest Muslim majority country in the world, and is among the destinations for Rohingya people fleeing Myanmar or the refugee camps by boat.

Myanmar's armed forces, under then junta chief Min Aung Hlaing, launched an offensive in 2017 that forced at least 730,000 Rohingya from their homes and into neighbouring Bangladesh, where they recounted killings, mass rape and arson.

The complaint to Indonesia's Attorney General's office was filed by Yasmin Ullah, a Rohingya who fled Myanmar, and several Indonesian figures, including a former attorney general and the chairman of Muhammadiyah, one of the country's biggest Muslim groups, they said in a statement Monday.

Hormuz closure divides the fortunes of Middle Eastern oil states

REUTERS

London, April 6: The Strait of Hormuz's closure and the resulting surge in global oil prices have handed financial windfalls to Iran, Oman and Saudi Arabia, while other states that lack alternative shipment routes have lost billions of dollars, a Reuters analysis found.

Iran effectively shut the Strait - a route for about a fifth of global oil and LNG flows - after US and Israeli airstrikes on Iran at the end of February led to a widening conflict.

It later said it would allow transits by vessels that had no US or Israeli links. As a result, some tankers have managed to cross the narrow waterway, but energy markets have still experienced unprecedented disruption. International Brent crude rose by 60% in March, a record monthly increase.

US President Donald Trump has threatened to rain "hell" on Tehran unless it makes a deal by the end of Tuesday that would allow traffic to start moving through the Strait of Hormuz.

GEOGRAPHY DETERMINES OIL FORTUNES

While much of the world faces a surge in inflation and economic damage from the energy price rise, for the Middle Eastern oil producers, the impact has depended on their geography.

Although Iran has control over the Strait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates can bypass it via pipelines and ports.

By contrast, oil from Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar has been trapped as the countries lack alternative routes to international markets.

Following Trump's latest threat, an Iranian official told Reuters Iran would not open the Strait as part of a temporary ceasefire. It has rejected Trump's previous ultimatums, saying it will not be humiliated. Some analysts say the



People gather for the start of the cherry blossom season in the old town of Bonn, Germany, Easter Monday

PTI PHOTO



OIL PRICE SURGE RAISES REVENUES OF IRAN, OMAN AND SAUDI ARABIA
IRAQ AND KUWAIT, LACKING BYPASS ROUTES, SUFFER PLUNGE IN REVENUES
SAUDI AND UAE PIPELINES MITIGATE IMPACT, THOUGH UAE'S REVENUES FALL SLIGHTLY

US-Israeli war on Iran in some ways has strengthened Tehran.

"Now that Hormuz has been closed, it can be closed again and again, and that poses a major threat to the global economy," said Neil Quilliam, associate fellow at think tank Chatham House. "The genie is out of the bottle."

The International Energy Agency described the conflict as the world's biggest energy

supply shock yet, citing more than 12 million barrels per day of regional shut-ins and damage to about 40 energy facilities.

Crude and condensate exports from most Gulf countries have fallen as the US, Israel war with Iran effectively shuts the Strait of Hormuz.

Crude and condensate exports from most Gulf countries have fallen as the US, Israel war with Iran effectively shuts the Strait of Hormuz.

SAUDI PIPELINE WAS BUILT DURING IRAN-IRAQ WAR

The kingdom's biggest pipeline is the 1,200-kilometre

(746-mile) East-West link, built in the 1980s during the Iran-Iraq war to bypass Hormuz.

It connects eastern oilfields to the Red Sea port of Yanbu and is operating at its expanded 7 million barrels per day capacity.

Aramco uses about 2 million bpd domestically, leaving roughly 5 million bpd for export. Yanbu loadings averaged a near-capacity 4.6 million bpd in the week starting March 23, shipping data shows, despite attacks targeting the hub on March 19.

Overall Saudi crude exports fell 26% year-on-year in March to 4.39 million bpd, Kpler and JODI data showed. Still, higher prices increased the value of those exports by roughly \$558 million from a year earlier. Riyadh had pre-emptively boosted exports in February to their highest since April 2023, in case of a US attack on Iran.

Despite the advantage of the East-West link, Quilliam said Saudi Arabia remained vulnerable to further strikes by Iran or its allies in Yemen, the Houthis, against its energy

infrastructure in the west and vessels passing through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait to the Red Sea.

IRAQ HAS SUFFERED THE BIGGEST DROP

The UAE has been shielded to an extent by its 1.5-1.8 million bpd Habshan-Fujairah pipeline, which bypasses the Strait. Its estimated oil export value still fell by more than \$174 million year-on-year in March. Fujairah has come under a series of attacks that led to loading halts.

Among the Gulf producers, Iraq's revenue fell the most - plunging by 76% to \$1.73 billion. Kuwait was next with a 73% fall to \$864 million.

Iraq's state oil marketer SOMO said April 2 that March oil revenues were about \$2 billion, close to Reuters' estimate.

Both countries are likely to suffer steeper declines in April as their March revenues were improved by cargoes that managed to sail in the early days of the conflict. A tanker laden with Iraqi crude sailed through the Strait last week after Iran said Iraq would be exempt from restrictions.



**India has fiscal space - room to maintain our capex programme, room for the RBI to cut rates, room to offer targeted support to affected sectors. This is the dividend of a decade of fiscal discipline. This is the strategic value of fiscal prudence that pays dividends across decades**  
NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

**GeM FACILITATES ORDERS WORTH ₹5.03L-CRORE IN 2025-26**

Public procurement platform Government e-Marketplace (GeM) facilitated transactions worth ₹5.03 lakh crore in 2025-26, down 7.4 per cent from the previous fiscal, a senior official said Monday. GeM facilitated transactions worth ₹5.43 lakh crore in 2024-25



**of the day quote**

**If the Hormuz situation remains status quo without progress in US-Israel negotiations, declining floating inventories and tightening marginal storage could drive a sharp increase in oil prices, leading to sustained higher prices during the month of April**



**DHAVAL POPAT** | ENERGY ANALYST, CHOICE INSTITUTIONAL EQUITIES

**The record GCC leasing activity is a definitive signal of India's position as the global destination of choice for high-complexity capability functions**



**ANSHUMAN MAGAZINE** | CHAIRMAN & CEO, INDIA, SOUTH-EAST ASIA, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA, CBRE

**The outlook for gold and silver for fiscal 2026-27 will remain moderately bullish. Since the global economy is going through a rough patch due to geopolitical tensions, trade wars and fear of global recession, demand for safe-haven assets will rise**



**AMIR MAKDA** | COMMODITY & CURRENCY ANALYST, CHOICE BROKING

**14 MONTHS LOW**

**Services pace slows in March**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 6:** India's services sector growth momentum rose at the softest pace in 14 months in March, mirroring the slowdown in new business intakes, a monthly survey said Monday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index fell from 58.1 in February to 57.5 in March, amid the weakest rises in new business and activity since January 2025.

In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"India's services sector stayed in expansion in March, but growth momentum eased for a second consecutive month. Demand remained resilient, led by new export orders, which rose to the greatest extent since mid-2024. As such, service providers' expectations for future activity remained positive," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

However, the services sector recorded quicker expansions in new export orders. Panellists noted gains from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, the Americas and the Middle East.

On the price front, selling charge inflation quickened to a seven-month high amid the steepest increase in input costs since June 2022. According to panel members, outlays on chicken, cooking oil, eggs, electricity, fish, fruits, fuel, labour, meat and vegetables all rose since February.

"... Input cost inflation accelerated to its fastest pace since 2022, indicating that higher fuel, transport and logistics costs are feeding into services," Bhandari said. Out of the four broad areas of the service economy monitored by the survey, the quickest increases in input costs and output charges were seen in Consumer Services and Finance & Insurance, respectively, the survey noted. Regarding employment, the latest results showed a third consecutive monthly increase. Moreover, the pace of job creation was solid and the strongest since mid-2025 amid a pick-up in business confidence.

"Firms were at their most



**Services sector sees weakest rise in new biz, activity since Jan 2025**  
**However, the sector recorded quicker expansions in new export orders**  
**The pace of job creation was solid and the strongest since mid-2025**

**India's services sector stayed in expansion in March, but growth momentum eased for a second consecutive month. Demand remained resilient, led by new export orders, which rose to the greatest extent since mid-2024. As such, service providers' expectations for future activity remained positive**

**PRANJUL BHANDARI** | CHIEF INDIA ECONOMIST, HSBC

upbeat towards the outlook for output in close to 12 years. Optimism was pinned on hopes of an improvement in demand and market conditions. Advertising and better customer relations were also expected to bear fruit," the survey noted.

Meanwhile, the HSBC India Composite PMI Output Index fell from 58.9 in February to 57.0, indicating the weakest rate of expansion in nearly three-and-a-half years.

Composite PMI indices are weighted averages of comparable manufacturing and services PMI indices. Weights reflect the relative size of the manufacturing and service sectors according to official GDP data.

With new orders rising at softer rates among both goods producers and service providers, overall sales increased at the weakest pace since November 2023. Data implied that the slowdown was centred on the domestic market as international demand for Indian goods and services improved to the greatest extent in seven months.

**'LANDMARK YEAR'**

**Auto retail sales up 13.3% in FY26: FADA**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 6:** Retail sales of vehicles across categories in India in 2025-26 grew by 13.3 per cent at a record 2,96,71,064 units as compared to 2,61,87,255 units in the previous fiscal, with GST 2.0 helping overcome a subdued start to the year, Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said Monday.

Passenger vehicle (PV) retail sales rose to 47,05,056 units in FY26, up 13 per cent from 41,63,927 units in FY25, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) said in a statement, adding that it is cautiously optimistic but watchful of the possible impact of West Asia war on vehicles demand in India going forward.

Similarly, two-wheeler (2W) sales also grew by 13.4 per cent at 2,14,20,386 in 2025-26 as compared to 1,88,89,595 units in 2024-25.

In FY26, three-wheeler retail sales stood at 13,63,412 units, up 11.68 per cent from 12,20,834 units in FY25, according to FADA.

Commercial vehicles (CV) retail also witnessed a growth of 11.74 per cent at 10,60,906 units in FY26 as against 9,49,406 units in FY25, it added.

Commenting on the industry performance, FADA President C S Vigneshwar said, "2025-26 has been a landmark year for Indian auto retail delivering an all-time high of 2,96,71,064 units with a broad-based 13.3 per cent YoY growth that saw five of six vehicle categories set new annual records."

This is not just a number, it represents the industry approaching the 3 crore mark, a milestone that would have seemed distant just two years ago, he added.

From September onwards, the festive convergence of Navratri and Diwali in October delivered an all-time record monthly retail of over 40 lakh units, and the momentum carried through the remainder of the year.

Citing its survey, the dealers' body said 53.2 per cent of dealers have experienced some form of supply or dispatch disruption linked to the ongoing conflict, with 17.1 per cent reporting significant delays of three or more weeks.

**Lead with trust, inspire lasting impact: Diptimayee**

*Dr Diptimayee Mohanty has served as the Principal of Aryavart Ancient Academy for the past 30 years. Driven by unwavering passion and perseverance, she has led the institution in pioneering a distinctive blend of timeless Gurukul principles—fostering discipline, wisdom, and holistic values—with the modern rigor of the CBSE curriculum. This philosophy defines her leadership, empowering thousands of students from modest backgrounds to overcome personal and societal challenges and unlock their fullest potential. Each success stands as a cherished testament to the enduring power of education, a legacy she holds close to her heart. Excerpts...*



**DR DIPTIMAYEE MOHANTY**  
PRINCIPAL, ARYAVART ANCIENT ACADEMY

**Being a major player in the education industry, what do you think are the challenges that the education sector is facing in the country?**

The primary challenge lies in digital education and maintaining a balanced approach for Gen Z between technology and traditional learning methods. Access to devices and reliable internet remains inconsistent, while excessive screen time can negatively impact students' health and concentration. At Aryavart Ancient Academy, we address these challenges through hybrid learning models that support consistent academic progress while prioritizing student well-being—because every child deserves a future free from digital fatigue. We also conduct regular teacher training to help educators adapt effectively without burnout, ensuring that our guardians of knowledge remain motivated and inspired.

**The digital revolution is here. What implications will artificial intelligence have**

**in the education sector?**

AI plays a significant role in managing routine tasks such as grading, lesson customization, and data analysis, enabling teachers to devote more time to direct student interaction and personalized guidance. However, over-reliance on AI risks limiting creativity and weakening the essential teacher-student relationships that are vital for personal and emotional growth. With appropriate guidelines, AI can enhance rather than replace these human elements. At Aryavart Ancient Academy, AI tools are introduced selectively and monitored carefully to ensure that the warmth and connection that truly inspire young minds are preserved.

**The Indian education system has often been criticised for its emphasis on rote memorization and test scores, rather than fostering a culture of critical thinking, creativity, and practical skills. What measures should be taken to prepare the students accordingly?**

The Indian education system remains largely mark-oriented, with limited exposure, as seen in policies like NTA's 75% eligibility rule, unlike more practical approaches in countries such as the Philippines. However, with the right nurturing, students can go beyond marks. Aryavart Ancient Academy promotes this through clubs, blended learning, project-based assessments, and skill workshops. Collaborations with industry experts

for internships further bridge theory and practice, empowering students to think boldly and build resilient futures.

**How has your journey been so far? What makes Aryavart Ancient Academy a preferable place for students?**

My 30-year tenure at Aryavart Ancient Academy has been defined by remarkable student success, driven by a unique blend of Gurukul values and modern education that unlocks hidden potential. Opportunities in arts, science, debates, and sports clubs encourage broad exposure and creative learning, making the institution a preferred choice for holistic development. Our alumni often return as mentors, fostering a strong community and a lasting legacy of excellence.

**Your vision and dedication has taken this institution to new heights, what advice will you give to the newcomers who want to start off their journey in this industry?**

Prioritise creativity and cultivate a welcoming environment that embraces new ideas without fear or undue pressure on staff or students—building trust like a second family. Invest in team trust, continuous professional development, and each student's unique potential, as this foundation drives lasting institutional growth. Lead by example with active listening and ethical commitment—your passion will touch lives deeply, creating ripples of inspiration that echo for generations.

**RESULTS CORNER**

**BoM registers 22% loan growth in Q4**

**New Delhi:** Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) Monday said it has registered a total credit growth of 22 per cent to ₹2.92 lakh crore in the fourth quarter ended March 2026. The outstanding credit was ₹2.40 lakh crore at the end of the January-March quarter of previous fiscal, BoM said in a regulatory filing. The total credit also includes ₹1.12 lakh crore corporate credit while RAM advances of ₹1.79 lakh crore during the quarter, it said. The Pune-headquartered public sector lender reported a 14 per cent increase in total deposits to ₹3.50 lakh crore in the reporting quarter against ₹3.07 lakh crore at the end of the fourth quarter of the previous financial year. As a result, the total business (total credit and deposits) of the bank registered an increase of 18 per cent to ₹6.42 lakh crore compared with ₹5.46 lakh crore at the end of March 31, 2025.

**UCO Bank sees 19% rise in loan growth**

**New Delhi:** State-owned UCO Bank Monday reported a 19 per cent credit growth at ₹2.62 lakh crore in the January-March quarter of FY26. Total advances were at ₹2.20 lakh crore in the year-ago quarter that ended in March 2025, UCO Bank said. The Kolkata-based lender reported an 11 per cent rise in total deposits at ₹3.27 lakh crore during the reporting quarter, as against ₹2.94 lakh crore registered at the end of the fourth quarter of the preceding financial year. During the period under review, low-cost CASA deposits improved to 38.48 per cent as compared to 37.91 per cent of total deposits in the fourth quarter of the preceding financial year, it said.

**Nykaa revenue shines**

**New Delhi:** Beauty and fashion retailer Nykaa (FSN E-Commerce Ventures) Monday said it expects its consolidated net revenue growth to be in the "late twenties" for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2026, marking its highest growth in the last 12 quarters. The company said the Q4 performance will come on the back of a sharp acceleration in its fashion vertical, coupled with sustained robust performance in its core beauty business.

**Jindal Steel leads coal gasification revolution for energy self-reliance, sustainable steel**

**NEW DELHI:** Jindal Steel has pioneered the use of swadeshi coal through advanced coal gasification, significantly strengthening India's energy security while enabling low-carbon steel production. The company achieved a global first by establishing India's first coal gasification-based Direct Reduced Iron (DRI) plant, using syngas for iron-making. In response to shortages of natural gas, LPG, and propane, Jindal Steel has now successfully deployed syngas in galvanising and colour coating line furnaces—marking the first such application in the steel industry. This has helped the company better mitigate fuel shortages in these unprecedented times. Further strengthening its leadership, Jindal Steel has pioneered syngas injection into its blast furnace, reducing dependence on imported coking coal and lowering carbon emissions per tonne of steel. This integrated deployment of syngas across the steelmaking value chain sets a new benchmark for efficiency, sustainability, and energy self-reliance. The forward-looking policies and incentives of the Government of India—including the National Coal Gasification Mission, are expected to accelerate the adoption of coal gasification technologies and support the country's push towards energy self-reliance. PK Biju Nair, Executive Director, Jindal Steel, said: "Synthesis gas from swadeshi coal can replace imported methanol, ammonia, ammonium nitrate, and LNG. India must utilise its vast coal reserves to future-proof low-carbon growth and reduce forex outflow. Coal gasification, coupled with CCUS, will lower emission intensity, support CBAM compliance, and strengthen our export competitiveness". By harnessing swadeshi coal and deploying advanced clean coal gasification technologies, Jindal Steel is advancing the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat while delivering sustainable and cost-competitive steel production.

**BIZ BUZZ**

**Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India achieves 10mn sales in east region**

**BHUBANESWAR:** Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India (HMSI), a leading two-wheeler manufacturer in the country, has achieved a milestone of 10 million cumulative sales in the east region, marking a significant chapter in its growth journey across key markets including West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand and the north-eastern states. The milestone reflects a strong and steady expansion across both metro cities and emerging semi-urban markets, where two-wheelers continue to play a vital role in everyday mobility. Over the years, the East region has evolved into an important growth driver for HMSI, supported by deep market reach and customer preferences. West Bengal and Bihar have been key contributors to this growth, supported by strong demand across major cities such as Kolkata, Patna, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar and Guwahati. These markets continue to shape regional mobility trends, driven by a mix of daily commuting needs and rising aspirations among new buyers. Commenting on the milestone, Mutsuo Usui, Director- Sales & Marketing, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India, said, "The 10 million sales milestone in the East region reflects how deeply our products are integrated into the everyday mobility needs of customers across diverse markets. The accelerated growth in recent years highlights the increasing confidence in our portfolio and the strength of our network across metros as well as emerging towns. As we move ahead, our focus will remain on expanding accessibility, strengthening customer experience and driving the next phase of growth across the region."

**India achieves highest-ever annual wind energy capacity addition in FY26**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 6:** India has achieved the highest-ever annual wind energy capacity addition of 6.05 GW in 2025-26, taking cumulative installed capacity to over 56 GW, the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy said Monday.

According to a ministry statement, India achieved its highest-ever annual wind capacity addition of 6.05 GW during FY26, crossing the landmark of 5.5 GW capacity addition in FY 2016-17.

With this addition, India's cumulative installed wind power capacity has crossed 56 GW, the ministry said.

This milestone reflects renewed momentum in the sector, driven by improved policy clarity, transmission readiness,



competitive tariff discovery, and a strong project pipeline.

This milestone achievement is the result of sustained policy support, improved project execution, and greater pipeline maturity across key wind states.

States like Gujarat, Karnataka, and Maharashtra have been the primary contributors to capacity addition during the year, underpinned by a growing pipeline of wind-solar hybrid

projects and the progressive rollout of green energy open access.

India's wind energy sector has grown steadily, making India one of the leading wind energy markets globally.

The record addition significantly strengthens India's renewable energy portfolio and contributes towards achieving the national target of 500 GW of non-fossil fuel-based energy capacity by 2030.

India's wind energy programme was initiated in the early 1990s as part of the government's broader renewable energy strategy.

Over the past three decades, India has developed a strong wind energy ecosystem and a robust policy framework to promote grid-connected wind power projects.

**CRUDE CORRECTION**

**D-Street bounces back**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 6:** Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty staged a sharp rebound Monday after falling in early trade following a correction in crude oil prices amid reports of ceasefire efforts in the ongoing West Asia war.

Intense buying in banking and IT stocks, and a strengthening rupee, supported investor sentiment, traders said.

In a volatile session, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 787.30 points, or 1.07 per cent, to settle at 74,106.85. During the day, it surged 887.91 points, or 1.21 per cent, to 74,207.46.

A total of 3,207 stocks advanced, while 1,147 declined and 190 remained unchanged on the BSE. The 50-share NSE Nifty edged higher by 255.15 points, or 1.12 per cent, to end

at 22,968.25.

"The recovery was primarily driven by reports of a potential ceasefire framework in the Middle East, which helped stabilise crude prices after the initial uptick and improved global risk sentiment," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Trent jumped the most by 7.89 per cent. Axis Bank, Titan, Larsen & Toubro, UltraTech Cement and Bajaj Finance were also among the major gainers. On the other hand, Reliance Industries and Sun Pharma were the laggards.

The rupee gained 28 paise to close at 92.90 against the US dollar Monday, following the Reserve Bank's measures to curb speculative fervour and dampen volatility in the Indian currency.

**Mallick takes charge as Circle Head of Canara Bank, Bhubaneswar Circle**

**Bhubaneswar:** Subodh Kumar Mallick has taken charge as the Circle Head of Canara Bank, Bhubaneswar Circle Monday. Mallick, who holds MBA and LLB degrees, has been associated with Canara Bank since 1994 and brings with him over three decades of extensive and diverse banking experience. Over the years, he has made significant contributions across multiple domains, playing a vital role in strengthening operations, driving business growth, and enhancing service delivery standards.



Prior to his present assignment, he has served in key locations including Agra and Bhopal, as well as in Regional Offices at Gwalior, Patna, Chandigarh, and Guwahati, where he demonstrated exemplary leadership and operational excellence. Under his leadership, the Bhubaneswar Circle is expected to witness a renewed focus on retail and MSME lending, expansion of digital banking services, and strengthening of customer-centric initiatives. He is also likely to emphasize deeper market penetration, improved branch performance, and stronger engagement with customers and stakeholders. The bank has extended a warm welcome to Mallick and expressed confidence in his leadership for a successful and impactful tenure ahead.

**INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE**

# MI seek reset against RR

*With Mumbai, currently sixth on the points table, seeking to bounce back and second placed Rajasthan riding a wave of confidence, the contest's result could hinge on how effectively MI's bowlers handle the Royals' in-form top order*



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, April 6:** Mumbai Indians will hope that skipper Hardik Pandya regains full fitness when they square off against a confident Rajasthan Royals unit, which will be keen to extend its early-season momentum in their IPL clash here Tuesday.

Pandya, a key figure in the side, missed MI's previous outing due to illness, and his absence proved crucial in their six-wicket defeat to Delhi Capitals Saturday.

While India T20I skipper

Suryakumar Yadav stepped in to lead and ensured continuity, MI missed Pandya's all-round abilities on a tacky surface.

His absence also forced a rejig in the combination. Deepak Chahar, drafted in for the game, delivered a tidy spell, but the decision to bring in pace all-rounder Corbin Bosch in place of seasoned left-arm pacer Trent Boult backfired, with the South African leaking runs.

Pandya has since travelled with the squad and returned to the nets, offering hope of a comeback as MI look to recalibrate their approach after the loss.

Shardul Thakur, who starred with the ball in their opening game, was expensive in the last outing, while the ever-reliable Jasprit Bumrah has been economical but is yet to open his account this season.

In the spin department, Mitchell Santner justified his selection ahead of Afghan mystery spinner Allah Ghazanfar and is likely to retain his place.

The MI bowlers, however, will need to raise their game against a Rajasthan top order that has been in excellent form so far.

Openers Yashasvi Jaiswal and teenage sensation Vaibhav

Sooravanshi have provided explosive starts, with Dhruv Jurel then building on the momentum.

New skipper Riyan Parag is yet to make a significant contribution with the bat but will take confidence from his leadership, particularly his tactical decisions at the death that guided the Royals to a thrilling win over Gujarat Titans.

Among the bowlers, Tushar Deshpande and Ravi Bishnoi have been impressive.

Bishnoi has emerged as the joint leading wicket-taker with five scalps from two matches,

## Rain plays spoilsport, KKR, PBKS share points

**Kolkata:** Kolkata Knight Riders and Punjab Kings shared a point apiece after their Indian Premier League match was called off due to incessant rain and the subsequent wet outfield here Monday. The home side's skipper Ajinkya Rahane won the toss and opted to bat, but his team suffered an early setback in just the second over as Australian pacer Xavier Bartlett dismissed opener Finn Allen (6) and Cameron Green (4), leaving KKR struggling at 16 for two. Rahane (8 not out) and wicketkeeper-batter Angkrish Raghuvanshi (7 not out) were attempting to stabilise the innings when rain halted the play at 25 for two after just 3.4 overs. With the match eventually abandoned, KKR secured their first point after back-to-back losses.



marking a strong turnaround after a challenging 2025 season following which he worked on multiple aspects of his game.

Deshpande, meanwhile, showcased his death-bowling skills by successfully defending 10 runs in the final over against the Titans, conceding just four with a series of pinpoint yorkers.

**ASIAN BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS**

# Preeti stuns Olympics medallist to enter final



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ulaanbaatar (Mongolia), April 6:** Rising Indian boxer Preeti Pawar downed Paris Olympics bronze medallist Aejji Im of Korea to storm into the final while the seasoned Nikhat Zareen and Lovlina Borgohain bowed out of the Asian Boxing Championships here Monday.

Priya and Arundhati Choudhary also notched wins in their respective semifinals while world championship medallist Pooja Rani and Ankushita Boro signed off with bronze medals after losing their semifinals.

The star of the day was Asian Games bronze medallist Preeti, who delivered a composed and clinical performance, dominating all three rounds against Im to secure a 5-0 win.

She will now face Chinese Taipei's Huang Hsiao-wen, a three-time World Champion (2019, 2023, 2025) and Tokyo 2020 Olympic world medallist, in a marquee gold medal clash.

In the women's 60kg category, Priya produced a commanding display to defeat local favourite Namuun Monkhor 5-0, sealing her spot in the final.

She will now take on North Korea's Un Gyong Won in the title bout. Arundhati impressed with a 4-1 victory over Uzbek Oysya Toirova in the 70kg

semifinal.

The World Boxing Cup Final gold medallist showcased control and composure to progress to the final where she is set to face Kazakhstan's Bakyt Seidish.

Two-time world champion Nikhat, however, went down 0-5 to reigning Olympic medallist China's Wu Yu in the 51kg semifinal. This is Nikhat's second loss to the Chinese who had defeated at the Paris Games as well.

Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist Lovlina suffered a 0-5 defeat to 70kg World Championships bronze Uzbekistan's Aziza Zokirova, in the 75kg semifinal.

Having received a bye in the opening round, this was Lovlina's first bout in the competition.

Ankushita went down 0-3 to Chinese Taipei's Nien-Chin Chen, the Paris Olympics bronze medallist, in the 65kg semifinals. The bout was interrupted due to a power supply issue after the first round, following which the result was decided based on points.

In the women's 80kg category, which features only three boxers, Pooja bowed out after a 0-5 semifinal loss to 2023 World Championships bronze medalist Kazakhstan's Nadezhda Ryabets. On Tuesday, world champions Minakshi Hooda (48kg) and Jaismine Lamboria (57kg) will compete in their semifinals.

**INDIA'S CHARGE BEGINS**

## Sat-Chi pull out; Lakshya, Sindhu lead challenge



**Ningbo (China):** Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have withdrawn from the Badminton Asia Championships due to the former's shoulder injury, even as in-form Lakshya Sen and seasoned PV Sindhu gear up to spearhead India's

**BADMINTON ASIA CHAMPIONSHIPS**

challenge with an aim to end a long wait for a singles title in the continental showpiece. Satwik and Chirag, who had won the title in 2023, opted out as the former continues to recover. The duo

had earlier pulled out of the Swiss Open ahead of their quarterfinal match due to a recurring right shoulder injury to Satwik. India will now rely on Lakshya and Sindhu in singles, with both looking to end the country's 61-year wait for a title in the discipline. Former national champion Dinesh Khanna remains the only Indian to win the men's singles gold at the continental meet in 1965, and Lakshya will be keen to follow in his footsteps after a runner-up finish at the All England Championships.



**GRANADA WORLD CUP**

## Mixed rifle, pistol teams to take aim

**Granada (Spain):** Indian shooters will look to assert themselves as a strong force when the Rifle/Pistol World Cup gets underway here Tuesday with the 10m air rifle and air pistol events set to open the competition, though the challenge is expected to be formidable given the depth and quality of the accomplished field. In the pistol event, Asian Games champion Palak Gulia will team up with 2024 junior world champion in 25m pistol, Mukesh Nelavalli, while 2025 World Cup Finals silver medallist Sainyam will partner Ujjawal Malik. They will be up against a formidable field featuring Olympic and world champions, including the Chinese contingent, which skipped the Asian Championships in New Delhi this year but have fielded two world-class pairings. Reigning mixed team world champions Hu Kai and Yao Qianxun and Paris Olympics gold medallist Xie Yu along with 21-year-old former Junior World Championships medallist Shen Yiyao will pose the biggest challenge to the field. In the 10m air rifle event, India will be represented by the pairings of Sonam Maskar and Gajanan Khandagale, as well as Shruti and Arshdeep Singh.

## Rugby Premier League to return from June 16

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 6:** The second edition of the Rugby Premier League (RPL), which is organised by GMR Sports in partnership with Rugby India, will be held at the Gachibowli Stadium, Hyderabad, from June 16 to 28.

Like its inaugural season, the league would be held in the fast-paced Rugby 7s format. It will feature the six franchises from the first edition.

The announcement follows GMR Sports' recent signing of a strategic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Telangana.

"Hyderabad's emergence as a global sporting destination reflects Telangana's long-term policy vision and institutional support for international partnerships. Events like the Rugby Premier League contribute significantly to tourism, urban visibility, and the broader sports economy of the State," said Jayesh Ranjan, Special Chief Secretary (Youth Advancement, Tourism and Culture and Sports Department) in Government of Telangana.

## SGFI National Rugby C'ship kicks off



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 6:** Odisha is hosting the 69th National School Games Federation of India (SGFI) Rugby Championship 2025-26 for both boys and girls in the Under-17 and Under-14 categories. The national-level school rugby championship is being organised at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, bringing together players from different states across the country.

The inaugural ceremony was graced by the Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Sports and Youth Services Department, Bhubendra Singh Poonia, as the chief guest. Among the distinguished guests present were N Thirumala Naik, Commissioner-cum-Secretary, School

and Mass Education Department; Birendra Korkora, Director of Secondary Education; Jyoti Prasad Parida, Assistant Director (PET); SGFI Observer Arvind Yadav; and international rugby player Dumuni Marandi. The championship will be held from April 6 to April 10.

Addressing the participants, chief guest Poonia encouraged the players to compete with true sportsman spirit and strive to represent their state and country at the international level. SGFI Observer Yadav appreciated the School and Mass Education Department and thanked the Odisha government for organizing the event at an international venue like Kalinga Stadium. He also expressed hope that more inter-

national-level sporting events would be hosted in Odisha in the future. International rugby player Dumuni Marandi shared her experiences with the young athletes.

Under-17 boys' and girls' competitions are being held April 6 and 7, while the Under-14 categories will take place April 9 and 10. A total of around 460 players from 15 states and organizations are participating in the Under-17 championship, including Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, New Delhi, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, CBSE Welfare Sports Organisation, and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations.

## Pragg under pressure at halfway stage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Paphos (Cyprus), April 6:** Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa will be desperate for an elusive win in his bid to stay afloat in the Candidates Tournament when he takes on Dutchman Anish Giri in the eighth round here Tuesday.

The 20-year-old from Chennai, who currently occupies the third spot with Giri after logging 3.5 points in seven rounds, just has another seven rounds to turn the tide at the halfway stage.

Starting off with a victory over Giri in the opener, Praggnanandhaa has been looking for a second win that is just not forthcoming.

It has been a tough ride in which he has drawn five games

**CANDIDATES CHESS**



and lost one against tournament leader Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan, who has enjoyed a fairytale journey since last October when he won the World Cup against a highly competitive field.

At the start of the tournament he was, at best, a dark horse according to pundits but he has proved himself way stronger than the rest.

He has, so far, clocked the most impressive performance in the history of the tournament by winning five and drawing the remaining two games.

With Sindarov on six points, the nearest contender and only one within striking distance is Fabiano Caruana of United States and he too is 1.5 points behind the leader.

The eighth round will see Praggnanandhaa take on Giri with white pieces while Sindarov has to fight it out against Esipenko.

Wei Yi of China is on the

joint fifth spot with Matthias Bluebaum of Germany on three points while Hikaru Nakamura closely follows them half a point behind.

Andrey Esipenko of Russia is in the last spot in the USD 700,000 prize money tournament that will decide the challenger to reigning world champion D Gukesh later this year.

The women's event being held simultaneously is comparatively open but the surprise package has been Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine who leads on 4.5 points out of her seven games.

Muzychuk, who replaced Koneru Humpy after the latter withdrew citing security concerns, was probably least prepared for the event but has thus far given a good account of herself.