

**Nora's needs**  
Nora Fatehi, though financially independent, still desires emotional care and effort from partner  
LEISURE | P2

**Britain backs out**  
Britain's government says it had put on hold its deal to cede sovereignty of Chagos Islands which has been criticised by US  
INTERNATIONAL | P10

**Diesel, ATF tax hike**  
The government hikes export duty, or windfall tax, on diesel to ₹55.5 per litre and on aviation fuel ATF to ₹42 a litre  
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**Rewriting history**  
Twenty-year old Ayush Shetty topples World No 1 Vitidsarn to storm into Badminton Asia Championships final  
SPORTS | P12

**Inventory of Ratna Bhandar's outer chamber completed**  
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Puri, April 11: The inventory of Puri Jagannath temple's Ratna Bhandar's outer chamber was completed Saturday, an official said. Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief administrator Arabinda Padhee said the second phase of the inventory, which began April 8, concluded in the evening. The inventory exercise, being conducted for the first time in 48 years, commenced March 25 with the counting of daily-use ornaments of the deities. During the second phase, ornaments and jewellery primarily used during festivals, including the 'Suna Basha' (golden attire) during the Rath Yatra, stored in the outer chamber, were catalogued. Padhee said the third phase will begin April 13, focusing on Ratna Bhandar's inner treasury. The process will be paused April 14 due to Mahabishuba Sankranti and will resume from April 16 to continue until April 18. He said the entire process was documented through videography, photography and 3D mapping to ensure transparency. A digital catalogue of the ornaments has also been prepared and secured in separate 'sindhukas' (treasure chests). As per the standard operating procedure (SOP) laid down by the state government, all authorised personnel, including Padhee, wore traditional attire and underwent security checks before participating in the exercise. "All ornaments stored in the Bahar Ratna Bhandar were counted in this phase. The process has been completed, and the treasury gate was sealed at 6.35 pm in the presence of a magistrate," Padhee said.



**HAPPY HOMECOMING**  
The Artemis II crew capsule splashes down in the Pacific Ocean in this screengrab from a livestream video after the crew's flyby of the Moon (Report P10)  
REUTERS

## One more extension for Mahanadi tribunal

The Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal's tenure has been extended once again, exposing the chronic delays plaguing India's dispute resolution mechanisms. Nearly eight years after the Tribunal's formation, the conflict between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over the Mahanadi remains unresolved, reflecting administrative inertia and institutional gaps, while political considerations are most likely making the issue enduringly inconclusive. Since 2018, the tribunal's tenure has been extended four times. Water disputes demand urgency, given their direct impact on lives and livelihoods.



Chhattisgarh, an official said Saturday. The Centre's decision was notified by the Ministry of Jal Shakti Friday, he said. The tribunal's current tenure was supposed to end April 13. The decision was taken after the governments of Odisha and Chhattisgarh made a joint request to the Centre to ensure that the adjudication process is completed effectively, the official said. Both states had urged the Centre that there is a need to extend the tenure of the tribunal, as no activity was conducted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the absence of a permanent chairperson of the panel for nine months. "This extension of the tribunal period will help the authorities continue hearing and prevent the expiry of the panel without a final resolution," the senior official said. The tribunal was constituted in 2018 after the Odisha government alleged that neighbouring Chhattisgarh prevented the free flow of water in the downstream by setting up several barrages in the upstream of the river. "The central government extends the period of submission of report and decision by Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal for a period of nine months with effect from the 14th April, 2026, that is, on or before the 13th January, 2027, or till the submission of report..." the notification said.

## SIR PHASE II Voter lists in 9 states, 3 UTs pruned by over 10%

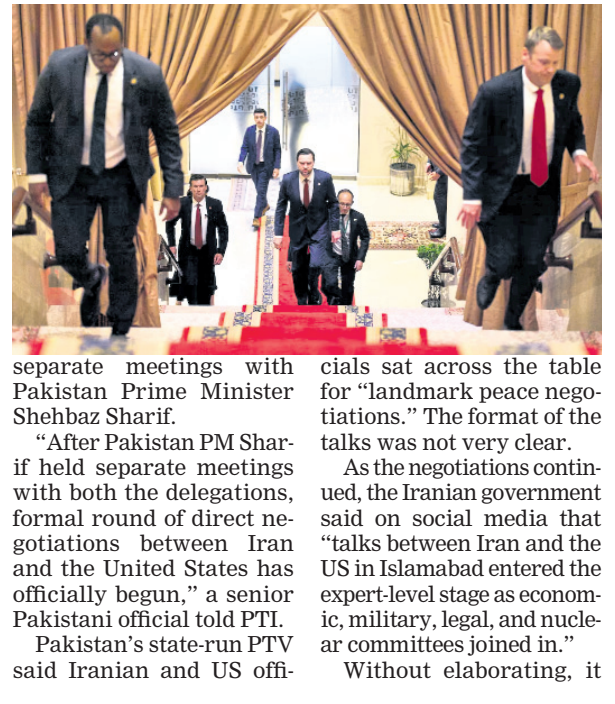
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi, April 11: The combined voters' list of nine states and three Union territories has been pruned by 10.2 per cent following the SIR exercise carried out by the Election Commission, with over 60 lakh dead voters removed, data shared by the poll authority and its state officials shows. When phase II of the SIR of electoral rolls was announced by the EC October 27, the voter base across the 12 states and UTs stood at more than 50.99 crore. Post the exercise, the voters' list stands at 45.81 crore -- a decline of over 5.18 crore. In percentage terms, the electoral rolls have been reduced by 10.2 per cent. As many as 66,88,636 deceased electors have been removed from the rolls, with the maximum of 25.47 lakh from Uttar Pradesh, followed by 24.16 lakh from poll-going West Bengal. Additionally, 63.16 lakh names were deleted following objections and adjudication during the SIR exercise. The second phase of SIR has now been completed with the final electoral rolls of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Puducherry, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Goa published on different dates. Uttar Pradesh was the last state to release its final rolls Friday. While the exercise, which kept the EC in the news, had earlier been completed in Bihar, the second phase covering the above-mentioned 12 states and Union territories, with nearly 51 crore electors, has now concluded. The remaining 40 crore electors will be covered across 17 states and five Union territories when the SIR kicks off, likely after this month's polls to five assemblies.

## 1 DEAD, 24 HURT AS OSRTC BUS FALLS INTO GORGE

POST NEWS NETWORK  
Pottangi, April 11: One person was killed and 24 others injured after an Odisha State Road Transport Corporation (OSRTC) bus plunged about 40 feet into a gorge in Sunki ghat under Pottangi block of Koraput district early Saturday. The Volvo bus (OD 02 DE 5446) was travelling from Bhawanipatna to Visakhapatnam when the accident occurred around 2:10 am near Panasmanagudi, about 3 km from Sunki police station. The vehicle reportedly lost control on a sharp bend along the NH and overturned after falling off the road. Passengers were thrown inside the bus, while one person was trapped underneath. The deceased was identified as Jambab Bihari of Balagon under Kalampur block in Kalahandi district. He died during treatment at Pottangi CHC. Four critically injured passengers were shifted to Koraput Medical College and Hospital, while two others were taken to Visakhapatnam.

## US, Iran hold peace talks in Pak

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Islamabad, April 11: A US delegation led by Vice President JD Vance held historic face-to-face talks with top Iranian negotiators in Pakistan Saturday to reach a peace agreement to end the war in West Asia that has paralysed global energy markets and disrupted trade. The Pakistan-brokered talks -- the first direct, high-level engagement between the two sides since the 1979 Islamic Revolution -- are being watched globally amid increasing expectations of a breakthrough. Ahead of the trilateral negotiations in Islamabad's Serena hotel, the Vance-led US team and the Iranian delegation headed by Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf held



added that certain "technical details" are being finalised. Sources in the Pakistani establishment said that the overall atmosphere in talks was "encouraging". There were reports that talks will continue till Sunday. Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency reported that the negotiations have moved beyond general issues and entered technical-level discussions on 'certain topics.' While Vance is accompanied by Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, President Donald Trump's son-in-law, the Ghalibaf-led Iranian delegation comprised Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, Supreme National Defence Council Secretary Ali Akbar Ahmadian and Central Bank Governor Abdolnaser Hemmati.

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## JLo HAPPY TO RETURN TO 'ROM-COM ERA'

Hollywood actress-singer Jennifer Lopez said that she is happy returning to her 'rom-com era' with *Office Romance* as she shared some never before seen BTS moments from her 2002 romantic comedy film *Maid In Manhattan*.

## EVA LONGORIA DRIFTING AWAY FROM MOVIES

Hollywood star Eva Longoria, who has enjoyed huge success in Hollywood, says that she's currently focused on other interests. "My life's work has been about entrepreneurship, especially with women and Latinas in my foundation," Longoria told *Extra!*



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Ganesha sees a wonderful time ahead for you. Today, you will meet many people who will prove reliable and trustworthy in the future. You aim to think and work perfectly. For that, says Ganesha, you will have to remain your practical and head-on-shoulders self.

**TAURUS**  
Today, you will strike a great balance between your professional and personal life, predicts Ganesha. You will save your money from being swindled by others. You may be lagging in the race to catch up with your goals, but will not be disappointed by what you achieve.

**GEMINI**  
Today, you will have a tendency to remain possessive about your personal belongings, says Ganesha. You are likely to join personality development courses to achieve your ultimate goals. An unpleasant occurrence is likely to throw you off guard. But remember, there is hope when there is life.

**CANCER**  
Today, you will use money to fulfil your needs. If there is anything that according to you needs changing, you will throw some money to get it changed. Your loved ones will celebrate your financial gains and spend some more of it in the process.

**LEO**  
You may not have a halo around your head, but that most certainly does not deter you from playing the spiritual card today, says Ganesha. On this auspicious day, it is through religious scriptures that you satiate your desire to attain the intangible. Spend some time meditating on the finer aspects of life; you will be amazed at the answers such contemplation can throw up.

**VIRGO**  
Something you achieve in a most unexpected manner will make you very happy today. But your happiness may possibly be marred by getting agitated about the problems you are facing. You may expect new funds for new projects, says Ganesha. Your business will flourish today.

**LIBRA**  
A wistful day lies ahead of you, says Ganesha. This day, just like 'on the summer day that we flew kites', may be the standard when it comes to wanting to have a better future. Ganesha expects a sea of change in your outlook, thanks to your sweetheart's noble gesture today.

**SCORPIO**  
Dear friends and soul mates will bring you much relief and calm today, says Ganesha. Spend as much time as possible with them. Romantic escapades with your beloved will be heaven in itself. Blood relations will stand true and strong in matters of importance, says Ganesha.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You take the path of spirituality for the peace of mind and to stay away from the daily humdrum of life. You will not only seek love, but also spread love around you. In a nutshell, a pleasant day in store for you, says Ganesha.

**CAPRICORN**  
Your outstanding intellectual ability will not only yield exciting results for you, but will also help your close associates who will have progressed a great deal in their career because of your valuable advice, says Ganesha. Scores of problems may come your way, but you will have nothing to worry about.

**AQUARIUS**  
You have managed to carve a niche for yourself. Today, you may see the tangible benefits of all your past hard work. But business rivals may poke and pinch; even your health may trouble you. However, you will manage to smile and take things in the right spirit, approves Ganesha.

**PISCES**  
An auspicious time for starting new projects, today will see you make substantial investments in your future. Your family is the foundation of your success, and keeping that in mind will provide you with some vital insights. Your smile wins many a heart today, says Ganesha.

## Pooja calls out film piracy

**Mumbai:** Actress Pooja Hegde has expressed strong disappointment after footage from her upcoming film *Jana Nayagan* surfaced online ahead of its release. Starring alongside Vijay in the H. Vinodh directorial, Pooja addressed the issue from a deeply personal and professional standpoint, urging audiences to reject piracy.

Emphasising the human effort behind cinema, she described the leak as disheartening for the entire team that invested time, creativity, and emotional energy into the project. For Pooja, the issue extends beyond unauthorised circulation. It diminishes the respect owed to artistes and technicians who work tirelessly behind the scenes. She also highlighted the importance of experiencing films in theatres collectively, especially for a project of this scale, which holds significance for fans.

While her appeal remained at the centre, the incident also drew reactions from industry veterans. Legendary actor Rajinikanth termed the leak "shocking and painful," calling for stricter action against piracy. At the same time, actor Kamal Haasan pointed to larger systemic issues, noting that delays and gaps in the system can often enable such incidents. Both emphasised the need to protect cinema and those who create it.

Meanwhile, KVN Productions issued a firm warning, stating that any involvement in sharing or consuming leaked content would invite legal consequences.

IAN5



## Nora gets candid

**Mumbai:** Actor-dancer Nora Fatehi recently opened up about love, dating and gender dynamics in a recent chat, admitting that while she's financially independent, she still desires emotional care and effort from a partner.

When asked if she expects men to pay on dates, Nora said, "I don't need him to. I have my card, I can afford the dinner. But there is a feminine side of me... I would like to see him do that because then I would like him more."

She added, "It's like a masculine thing where he's like, 'I got you.'"

Nora also addressed how her success impacts her dating life. "I've heard so many people say, 'You're intimidating, that's why I didn't approach you,'" she shared.

Questioning modern dating dynamics, she added, "We live in a world where guys will say, 'I love strong, independent women.' But do they really? Maybe they love it from afar." She went on to add, "When it comes to actually being with that kind of woman, they can feel intimidated. I've had guys who wanted me—and I wanted them too—but it didn't work out. They ended up with someone less ambitious, less independent."

Summing it up, she said, "Maybe, in the end, they don't really want someone like me... it's an ego thing. There are some secure men who get it—but it's a handful."

AGENCIES

## Sreeleela in soup over period remark

**Chennai:** Actor Sreeleela has come under criticism after stating that menstruation should not be used as an excuse to avoid responsibilities. The remarks were made during the success party of Ustad Bhagat Singh, starring Pawan Kalyan, and have since sparked debate online.

Speaking at the event, Sreeleela said, "I have shot while I have been on my period, so that is not an excuse anywhere... when we say we want things equally, I feel we have to push beyond physiological barriers." Her remark drew sharp reactions from netizens.

Several users questioned her medical background, with some even calling her a "fake doctor" and doubting her MBBS degree. Others argued that her comments overlooked the physical and emotional challenges many women face during menstruation.

Responding indirectly to such views, medical expert Rajeev Jayadevan noted that the impact of menstruation varies widely. According to him, some women face dysmenorrhea and heavy bleeding. This compels them to take leave from their workplace.

The controversy has reignited conversations around workplace expectations, gender equality, and the need to acknowledge differing physical experiences rather than generalising them.

AGENCIES



## EKTA BUSTS MYTHS ABOUT GLITZY SHOWBIZ PARTIES

**Mumbai:** Bollywood's glitzy birthday bashes often spark curiosity about the kind of lavish gifts stars might receive. However, producer Ektaa Kapoor recently offered a reality check, revealing that such assumptions are far from the truth. One often sees actors like Salman Khan and Shah Rukh Khan throw lavish birthday parties for their close friends from the industry. But one wonders what would people be gifting these big stars.

Ektaa shared during a chat, "People don't usually carry gifts to birthdays, especially for big names like Salman or Shah Rukh Khan. What would you even take to their birthdays?"

She went on to explain that even she

doesn't indulge much in birthday celebrations. "I actually don't attend many birthdays. On my own birthday, I go to Tirupati and don't invite anyone. If you ask normally what one gives at a big person's birthday, I've mostly seen that people only offer blessings," she said.

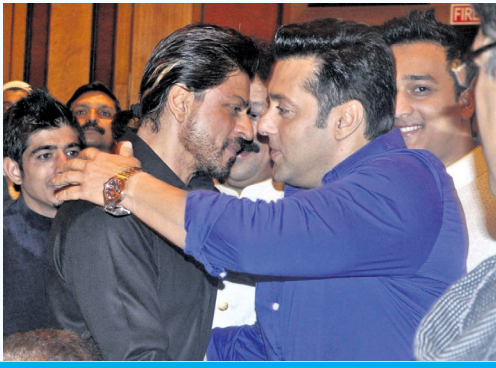
Breaking the stereotype of extravagant Bollywood parties, Ektaa added, "This impression about the film industry, that expensive gifts

are exchanged, people drink heavily, and party all the time, is not true."

In fact, she described the industry as surprisingly subdued. "In fact, you won't find a more boring industry than this. The film industry is the most boring industry," she remarked, noting that many stars maintain disciplined routines, sleeping early, waking up on time, and prioritising their health over late-night indulgence.

On the work front, Ektaa's upcoming film *Bhooth Bangla* is slated to release April 17. The horror-comedy features Akshay Kumar in the lead, alongside Paresh Rawal, Rajpal Yadav, Tabu, and Wamiqa Gabbi in key roles.

AGENCIES



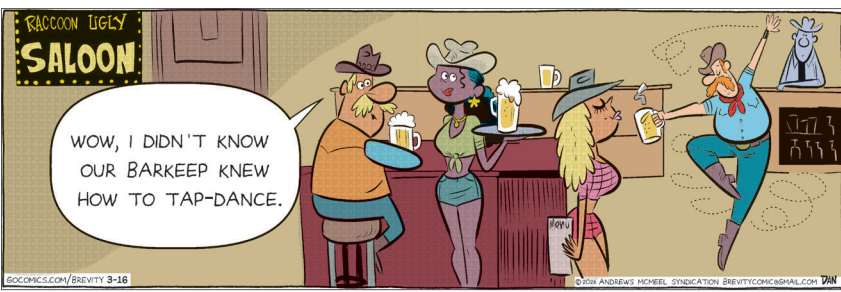
### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

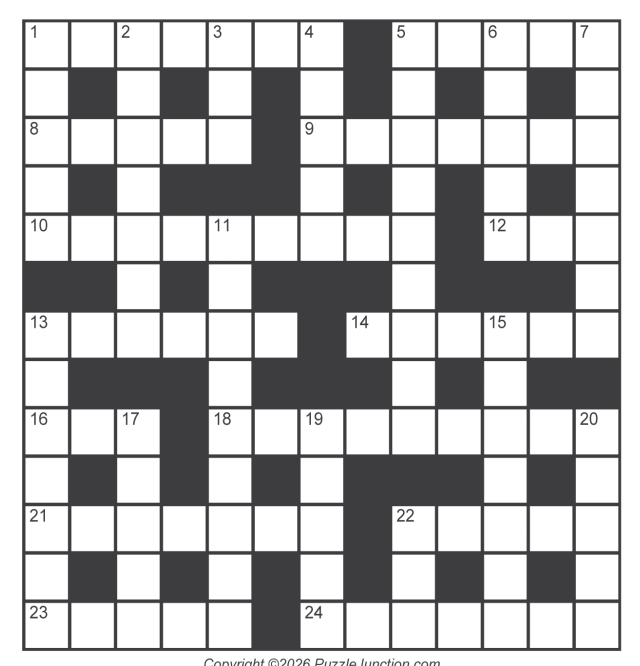


### BREVITY



### FUN POST

### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Keas and macaws
  - 5 Picture puzzle
  - 8 Invoice word
  - 9 Tolerated
  - 10 Go to bed (3,3,3)
  - 12 Furrow
  - 13 Negev, e.g.
  - 14 Large black birds
  - 16 Mountain pass
  - 18 A bit out of whack (3-6)
- Down**
- 21 Kind of penguin
  - 22 Small terrestrial lizard
  - 23 "Rabbit food"
  - 24 Corroded
  - 5 Track event (5,4)
  - 6 Shady spot
  - 7 Calms down, medically
  - 11 Sheltered, as a criminal
  - 13 Deviate
  - 15 Little sound
  - 17 Trainee
  - 19 Sent packing
  - 20 Oxlike antelope
  - 22 Rainbow shape

### 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.

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

### SOLUTIONS

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

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

## Only electric 2-wheelers in Delhi from '28

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 11:** In a far-reaching move, the Delhi government Saturday proposed a hugely reformist electric vehicle (EV) policy, which includes zero registration fee and road tax on EVs priced up to 30 lakh, massive proliferation of charging stations and a ₹1 lakh incentive on purchase of new EVs upon scrapping old vehicles. Moreover, only electric two-wheelers will be registered in the national capital from April 1, 2028.

The draft policy, which also requires at least 10 per cent of school buses to be electrically powered within two years, is largely aimed at reducing vehicular emissions, which have made Delhi one of the most polluted cities in the world.

The government has proposed a 100 per cent exemption on road tax and registration fees for electric cars with an ex-showroom price of up to ₹30 lakh, valid till March 31, 2030. These segments, known for high daily usage, are seen as key contributors to Delhi's pollution. According to the draft policy, only electric two-wheelers will be registered in Delhi from April 1, 2028. **P8**



Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi after inaugurating the bridge over Aradei canal in Bodopalasa area of Keonjhar district, Saturday. The bridge, with a height exceeding 100 metres, will bring a significant change to the daily commute of more than 5,000 people of five panchayats, the CM said **OP PHOTO**

## CM: Process to recruit 45,000 teachers on

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 11:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Saturday said that around 20,000 teachers have been recruited in the last one and a half years, and the process to recruit another 45,000 is currently underway. He made the statement while attending the centenary celebrations of Chandrashekhar Government High School in Keonjhar district's Bodopalasa.

Teachers not only impart education but also shape students' character and guide them on the right path in life, the CM said.

On the occasion, he announced a grant of ₹3 crore for the development of the school's infrastructure. In addition, he said that ₹7 crore will be provided under the Godavarish Adarsh Pratama Vidyalaya Yojana. Majhi also directed the district administration to allot 7 acres of land to the school under the scheme.

Speaking at the event, the CM said that since the formation of

the new government, several schemes and programmes have been launched to bring significant improvements in the education sector.

"In the last one and a half years, about 20,000 teachers have been recruited, and the process to recruit another 45,000 is underway. Additionally, 13,000 schematic teachers have been regularised," he said.

He further stated that a provision of over ₹31,997 crore has been made to the School and Mass Education department in the financial year 2026-27, which accounts for 10.3 per cent of the total Budget. Steps have been taken to establish one model primary school in every panchayat, and work has already begun in 2,200 panchayats in

the first phase, he added. Similarly, he said that 800 schools across the state are being upgraded into centres of excellence under the PM SHRI Yojana, with a focus on improving students' foundational literacy and numeracy skills through the Skilled Odisha Mission.

The CM announced that ₹10 crore will be provided in the coming days for the development of Chandrashekhar Government High School in Keonjhar

## US: IRAN UNABLE TO FIND OWN MINES IN HORMUZ

AGENCIES

**Dubai, April 11:** Iran has been unable to fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz in part because it cannot locate all the naval mines it placed there and lacks the capability to remove them even when it does find them, according to US officials speaking to The New York Times. This issue has emerged as a major technical obstacle in ongoing peace talks in Islamabad.

The revelation sheds light on why Tehran has been slow to meet US President Donald Trump's demands to restore shipping through the strait. It also explains comments by Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi—currently in Pakistan for talks with Vice President JD Vance—who said the waterway would reopen "with due consideration of technical limitations." US officials confirmed that this phrase referred specifically to Iran's difficulty in dealing with the mines.

The Strait of Hormuz, a critical route for about one-fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas, has seen traffic drop sharply since Iran began mining it last month, following the outbreak of war with the US and Israel. The mines, along with the threat of Iranian drone and missile attacks, have given Tehran significant leverage by driving up global energy prices

## Mojtaba suffers severe, disfiguring wounds



Iran's new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei is still recovering from severe facial and leg injuries suffered in the airstrike that killed his father at the beginning of the war, three people close to his inner circle told Reuters.

Khamenei's face was disfigured in the attack on the supreme leader's compound in central Tehran and he suffered a significant injury to one or both legs, all three sources said. The 56-year-old is nonetheless recovering from his

wounds and remains mentally sharp, according to the people, who requested anonymity to discuss sensitive matters. He is taking part in meetings with senior officials via audio conferencing and is engaged in decision-making on major issues including the war and negotiations with Washington, two of them said.

The question of whether Khamenei's health allows him to run state affairs comes during Iran's moment of gravest peril for decades, with high-stakes peace talks with the US opening in the Pakistani capital Islamabad Saturday.

The accounts of the people close to Khamenei's inner circle provide the most detailed description of the leader's condition for weeks. Reuters couldn't independently verify their descriptions.

and strengthening its position in negotiations.

West Asia has been a major source of India's energy procurement.

According to US officials, Iran deployed the mines using small boats in an uncoordinated manner. It is unclear whether all mine locations were properly recorded, and even those that were

may have shifted, as some were designed to drift with ocean currents. While Iran has kept a narrow passage open—allowing ships to pass for a fee—and its Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps has issued charts marking designated safe routes, those corridors remain tightly restricted due to the surrounding, largely uncharted minefield.

## 5-year-old girl raped, stuffed inside sack, dumped in Chh'garh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Durg (Chhattisgarh), April 11:** A five-year-old girl was allegedly kidnapped and raped by a 35-year-old man who later put her in a sack and dumped her near a well in Chhattisgarh's Durg district, a police official said Saturday.

The incident took place under Utai police limits Friday afternoon when the victim, after returning home from school, went to a nearby shop to buy chocolates, the official said.

Dhaneshwar Sahu, who was present at the shop, lured the child to his house on the pretext of giving her chocolates, he said. "When the girl did not return home for a long time, her family members and locals launched a search. After a two-hour-long effort, two youths from the village spotted movement inside a sack near a well. Upon opening the sack, the minor was found inside with her mouth gagged with a pillow cover. She was in a state of shock," he said.

"The girl's medical examination confirmed rape, following which the accused was arrested," Patan area Sub-Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP) Anoop Lakra said. Her condition is now stable, he added.

The incident sparked a massive outcry as angry villagers surrounded the local police station demanding capital punishment for the accused. The situation was later brought under control after police pacified them, the official said.

## Fear of arrest keeps injured Sijimali tribals from hospitals

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, April 11:** A road construction initiative by Vedanta Aluminum Ltd for the Sijimali bauxite mine in Kashi-pur block in the presence of a large contingent of police and administrative officials has flared up tension and kicked up a row in the area.

The move led to a face-off between police and villagers as the latter opposed the road construction work which started Tuesday in the presence of heavy police and administrative personnel.

Official sources said that the district administration intervened and the Collector visited the affected area to defuse the situation as villagers were allegedly disobeying the police. But villagers alleged that officials instead asked them to produce land ownership documents.

Police said they had gone to Kantamal village to arrest Subas Singh Majhi, against whom a warrant was pending. Villagers, however, claimed the police entered the area late at night and attempted to intimidate residents. They alleged that officers banged on doors, threatened people after they opened them and physically assaulted some villagers. Residents also said that they tried to defend themselves, after which the police used tear gas. Several villagers were reportedly injured and later received



treatment at home as they feared getting arrested if they visited a hospital since the police have cordoned off the area.

Women in the village alleged that tear gas shells fired by police led to the death of their livestock. Locals also accused police of assaulting villagers. They alleged that a 60-year-old man, Ravan Majhi, was hit in the face with a tear gas shell, while an elderly woman sustained serious head and hand injuries after being beaten up. The injured woman said police broke open her door and attacked her when she came out. Some women also alleged that they were threatened with sharp-edged weapons.

Villagers have been protesting the proposed road to the Sijimali mine, fearing displacement and loss of their land. The administration had imposed prohibitory orders under Section 163 of the BNS in the area from April 3.

The Rayagada Collector also visited the region earlier to hold discussions with the residents, but fear and tension continue to

grip Kantamal village.

Residents said it was "very unfortunate" that the Collector asked them to produce land titles (land pattas) instead of holding discussions with them. They questioned whether the Collector represents the people of the district or Vedanta.

Determined to protect their land, the villagers have been keeping a round-the-clock vigil at Sijimali hill, armed with traditional weapons such as bows and arrows, axes and sticks, to prevent the road construction. People from more than eight villages, including Sagabari, Kantamal, Sarambai and Banteji, have joined the protest.

"We are ready to take bullets, but we will not give our land to the company," villagers said. Women guarding the foothills said they would resist any such move. Meanwhile, 21 residents of Talampadar in Kalahandi, located near Sijimali, were picked up by police without reason, arrested in false cases and sent to jail. Of them, 10 are women, including two school students.

## City youth held by Delhi Police for radical links

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 11:** A joint operation by the Special Cell of Delhi Police and the twin city Commissionerate Police led to the arrest of a 22-year-old youth in the City for his alleged involvement in a radical online network operating through social media platforms, officials said Saturday.

The accused was identified as Sheikh Imran of Ganga Nagar in Bhubaneswar. According to police, Imran was nabbed by Delhi Police April 10 from Unit-6 area here, with assistance from the Commissionerate Police.

The arrest follows a wider operation by the Delhi Police Special Cell, which had earlier detained a group of individuals in Delhi in connection with "social media posts on platforms like Instagram, Face-

book, WhatsApp and Signal related to radicalisation."

During the questioning of those suspects, investigators reportedly identified a link leading to Odisha. Following his arrest, Imran was produced before the SDJM court here. The court granted transit remand, after which he was taken to Delhi by the Special Cell for further investigation. Police said, "Sheikh Imran was working as a delivery agent for various platforms. It is also alleged that he was acting as an active member of a radical group."

Imran's father Sheikh Amir said, "He was always hooked to his mobile phone. Police had previously contacted us regarding his involvement in this case. He may have come under bad influence through his mobile phone, and he should be punished if found involved."

## UN flags widening gap between rich & poor nations

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**United Nations, April 11:** The gap between rich and poor nations is growing even wider as actions agreed to by many countries last year, including overhauling the major global financial institutions, remain unfulfilled promises, a UN report concluded.

The report assessing the blueprint adopted in Seville, Spain, last June to narrow the gap and achieve UN development goals for 2030 was issued ahead of next week's spring meetings in Washington of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the main global financial institutions promoting economic growth.

The managing director of the IMF, Kristalina Georgieva, said it had been prepared to upgrade global growth, but the Iran war



has now darkened the outlook for the world economy.

Li Junhua, the UN under-secretary-general for economic and social affairs, said the geopolitical tensions were compounding the struggles of developing countries to attract financing.

"This is an extremely perilous time for international cooperation, as geopolitical

considerations are increasingly shaping economic relations and financial policies," he said.

The report pointed to rising trade barriers and repeated climate-related shocks which are also adding to the growing gap.

At last year's conference in Seville, the leaders of many nations, but not the United States, unanimously adopted the Seville Commitment, which

was aimed at closing the USD 4 trillion annual financing gap for development. It called for scaling up investments in developing countries and reforming the international financial architecture, including the World Bank and IMF.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has repeatedly called for major changes to the two institutions, saying the IMF has benefited rich countries instead of poor ones, and the World Bank has failed in its mission, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, which left dozens of countries deeply indebted. His criticisms echo those of outside critics who cite frustration in developing countries with the US and its European allies dominating decision-making at financial institutions.

The UN report on implementing the Seville Commitment

said it represents "the best hope" to close the widening financial gap.

But in 2025, Li said 25 countries decreased their development assistance to poorer countries, leading to a 23 per cent overall drop from 2024, the largest annual contraction on record. The biggest decline 59 per cent was from the United States, he said.

Based on preliminary data, Li said, a further decline of 5.8 per cent is expected in 2026. The report said tariffs including those imposed by the Trump administration have had a major impact on developing countries. Average tariffs on exports from the world's poorest nations surged from 9 per cent to 28 per cent in 2025, the report said, and for developing countries, excluding China, average tariffs increased from 2 per cent to 19 per cent.

54TH OESA BIENNIAL MEET

Build structures to last 200 years: Min



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 11: Engineers should design and build structures capable of lasting over 200 years...

He was addressing the inaugural session of 54th Biennial General Council Meeting of the Odisha Engineers Service Association...

The event brought together engineers from across the state to deliberate on infrastructure development, service-related issues, and professional advancement.

Minister Naik, the chief guest, cited iconic heritage structures such as the Konark Sun Temple and the Jagannath Temple as examples of enduring engineering excellence...

and promotion of the Panchayati Raj engineering cadre, incentives for higher qualifications, special pay for complex assignments, and involvement of OESA in policy decisions related to service conditions.

These demands were presented to Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi through the Minister Naik and guest of honour Minister Harichandan by Working President Abinash Roul, General Secretary Trinath Behera, and Treasurer Prafulla Kumar Behera.

In the second session, discussions were held on organisational issues and elections for new office bearers took place. Ananta Kumar Mohanty (Water Resources department) was elected President, Rajendra Kumar Sethi (Housing and Urban Development department) as General Secretary, and Abhisek Swain (Works department) as Treasurer.

Hundreds of graduate engineers from the Water Resources, Works, Housing and Urban Development, Panchayati Raj, and Drinking Water departments across Odisha participated in the conference.

Form ICC in a week: RDE to colleges

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 11: The Regional Directorate of Education (RDE) has directed all government and non-government aided, unaided and professional colleges under RDE, Bhubaneswar to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) and submit a compliance report within seven days.

In an official communication issued by RDE Saroj Laxmi Singh read, "Formation of an ICC is mandatory as per government guidelines to address



complaints and grievances of students and staff members. The directive applies to all higher educational institutions under the administrative control of RDE, Bhubaneswar."

The letter stated that every institution must constitute the committee in accordance with prescribed norms and submit

a copy of the constituted ICC to the RDE either by hand or through post within the stipulated timeframe. Institutions that have already formed their ICC have also been instructed to submit the details within seven days of issuance of the letter.

RDE emphasised that the ICC plays a crucial role in ensuring a safe and grievance-free academic environment, particularly in addressing issues related to complaints from students and employees. The move is aimed at strengthening

institutional mechanisms for redressal and promoting accountability across campuses.

The communication further warned that failure to comply with the directive may lead to admission restrictions for the 2026-27 academic session. It also stated that any other suitable action deemed appropriate by the authorities may be initiated against defaulting institutions.

Principals of colleges have been urged to treat the matter as urgent and ensure swift compliance with the instruction.



AIRING GRIEVANCES: Around 150 ERSS outsourcing staff stage a protest in Bhubaneswar, Saturday over poor working conditions and salary delays



RETAIL LAUNCH: MP Bhartruhari Mahtab and other dignitaries at the inauguration of Annapurna Gramina Bazar at Cuttack Netaji Bus Terminal, Saturday



FESTIVAL FINALE: Artistes perform on the concluding day of Adishakti Mahotsav organised at Annapurna Rangamanch in Puri, Saturday

CLASSIFIED SALE

Prime location 3BHK fully furnished premium flat 1550sqft. including garage, 3rd Floor in powerful address Bjb Nagar "Surya Apartment" for sell Dr. Sanjay-7077144498.

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit No.636 before the Executive Magistrate, Umerkote, dtd.23.03.2026, I, Rakesh Kumar Agrawal, S/o Mahendra Prasad Agrawal, At-Kusumguda, Umerkote, Nabarangpur-764073, Odisha declare that my father's correct name is Mahendra Prasad Agrawal, but wrongly written as Mohendra Prasad Agrawal in my Passport & HSC Certificate. That Mahendra Prasad Agrawal & Mohendra Prasad Agrawal refer to one and the same person, i.e. my father. Sd./- Rakesh Kumar Agrawal

By virtue of an affidavit No. 2540 before the Executive Magistrate, Umerkote, Dist-Nabarangpur, dated 03.04.2025, I, Rakesh Kumar Agrawal, Kusumguda, P.O./P.S.-Umerkote-764073, Dist-Nabarangpur hereby declare that I have changed my name from Rakesh Kumar Agarwal & Rakesh Kumar Agrawal to Rakesh Kumar Agrawal. Henceforth I shall be known as Rakesh Kumar Agrawal for all purposes.

OMFED celebrates World Chhena Poda Day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 11: Odisha State Cooperative Milk Producers' Federation (OMFED) celebrated World Chhena Poda Day with great enthusiasm at its headquarters in Saheed Nagar Saturday. The occasion was marked by a special event attended by senior officials and staff, including MD in-charge Siddhartha Das, Deputy Manager (PR) Biswaranjan Tripathy, and Assistant Manager (Finance) Tapas Ranjan Mishra.

Celebrated globally April 11, World Chhena Poda Day honours state's iconic dessert, which has gained widespread popularity for its unique taste and texture. This traditional delicacy originated from Nayagarh's Despalla by Sudarshan Sahu, a sweet shop owner who is believed to have first prepared it in 1947.

As the story goes, Chhena Poda was discovered by accident, when Sahu experimented



Celebrated globally April 11, the World Chhena Poda Day honours state's iconic dessert, which has gained widespread popularity for its unique taste and texture

with leftover chhena (cottage cheese) mixed with sugar and left it in a pre-heated oven overnight. By morning, the mixture had caramelised into a rich, golden-brown dessert with a distinctive burnt aroma. The sweet quickly gained

popularity, with Sahu later refining the recipe by adding ingredients such as cardamom, cashew nuts, and raisins to enhance its flavour.

Over the years, Chhena Poda has become an integral part of Odia culinary heritage and

is even offered as a delicacy in temples dedicated to Lord Jagannath and his siblings. It is also said that India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, once praised its unique sweet.

Since 2022, April 11—Sudarshan Sahu's birth anniversary has been observed as World Chhena Poda Day across different parts of the country. The dessert continues to enjoy growing demand both within India and internationally.

On this occasion, OMFED highlighted its efforts to promote and scale up the production of Chhena Poda as part of its diverse dairy product range. The organisation is currently producing large quantities daily to meet increasing consumer demand. Speaking on the occasion, Das said, "World Chhena Poda Day is not only a celebration of a beloved sweet but also a tribute to Odisha's rich cultural identity."

BENGAL ELECTION Puri becomes campaign hotspot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Puri, April 11: Campaign posters written in Bengali and appealing to voters of West Bengal have appeared across this seaside pilgrim town of Odisha, drawing criticism over the alleged politicisation of the sacred place.

The posters, put up by the ruling BJP and bearing the party's 'Lotus' symbol, urge devotees of Lord Jagannath to support the saffron party in West Bengal, which goes to polls in two phases April 23 and 29.

The campaign materials have been strategically placed in high-footfall locations such as the sea beach, bus stand, railway station and Grand Road beside the Jagannath temple frequented by pilgrims and tourists. The Swargadwar cremation ground area, often referred to as 'mini-Bengal' due to the presence of Bengali shopkeepers and visitors, has also seen such posters.

The campaign material targets Bengali tourists, urging



them to vote for the BJP in the upcoming West Bengal elections. Some tourists expressed disapproval of the campaign.

"We have come to Puri to keep away from the election campaign bustle and for relaxation. The prime objective is to pay obeisance to Lord Jagannath," said Protima Basu, a visitor. The development has also not gone down well with the opposition BJD.

"I was born and raised in this town, but have never seen Bengal election posters being pasted on the walls of Puri. The BJP is misusing the pilgrimage town. Puri is one of the sacred

four 'dhams' of the Hindus and should be kept out of politics," BJD Rajya Sabha MP Subhashish Khuntia said.

He also urged the state government to remove the posters and maintain the town's sanctity. A section of the locals echoed similar concerns.

Rathindra Mishra, a resident of the town, said it was for the first time that a political party from another state had used the town for election campaigning.

The BJP, which came to power in Odisha in 2024 defeating the BJD, however, does not see anything wrong in it.

"There is nothing wrong with

fixing posters in Puri or some other places where Bengal voters are frequently visiting. It has nothing to do with religion," state BJP spokesperson Manoj Mohapatra told PTI.

Officials said tourists from West Bengal account for around 15 per cent of domestic visitors to Odisha, with most visiting Puri for the temple and sea beach.

BJP leaders from Odisha, including ministers and MLAs, have been campaigning in West Bengal. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi also visited the neighbouring state twice to address election rallies.

Tripathy takes charge as FLO Bhubaneswar chief

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 11: FICCI FLO Bhubaneswar Chapter has announced Bijoy Projna Tripathy as its Chairperson for 2026-27. The formal Change of Guard ceremony was held at the national platform in Delhi. Subsequently, the Bhubaneswar Chapter celebrated the occasion Saturday at Hotel Ginger, Bhubaneswar, in the presence of members and past chairpersons, reflecting continuity, collaboration, and a renewed vision for the chapter's future initiatives and growth.

The ceremony marked the leadership transition from outgoing Chairperson Prangyan Paramita Mishra (2025-26) to incoming Chairperson Tripathy, and featured the induction of new members, reflecting the chapter's growing strength and vibrancy.

Addressing the gathering, Tripathy outlined her vision for the year ahead, focusing on inclusive growth, women's empowerment, and collabora-



tive leadership. She reaffirmed her commitment to strengthening the Chapter through entrepreneurship, mentorship, and meaningful cross-sector engagement.

The event concluded on a warm note with a High Tea, giving members an opportunity to connect and celebrate new beginnings. The FICCI FLO Bhubaneswar Chapter continues to play a key role in empowering women and promoting leadership, entrepreneurship, and meaningful social impact across the region.

Weather forecast section with a satellite image and a table showing Max Temp, Min Temp, Humidity, and Rainfall for BBSR and CTC.

# DMF funds bring no relief to mining affected areas

Despite over ₹12,000 crore lying in Keonjhar DMF funds, basic facilities elude mining-hit areas



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Joda, April 11:** Mineral-rich Keonjhar district continues to lack development in mining-affected areas despite the availability of substantial funds under the District Mineral Foundation (DMF).

The DMF was created to support the development of communities affected by mining activities, with a focus on improving infrastructure and basic amenities. The state government also earns significant revenue from mining operations. However, despite more than ₹12,000 crore lying in the district's DMF fund, development projects in mining regions have largely remained stalled.

Several villages in mining belts still lack proper roads, schools and access to drinking water, leaving residents deprived of basic facilities.

According to official data, the district has 98 operational mines, and the state govern-

ment has earned around ₹20,000 crore in mining revenue in the current financial year. Over the past decade, more than ₹12,000 crore has been collected by the DMF for expenditure in Keonjhar district.

In addition, the government receives thousands of crores in premiums from companies that acquire mining leases through competitive bidding. As per guidelines, DMF funds are meant to be spent exclusively on the development of mining-affected areas. However, since the fund's inception in 2015, there has been little visible progress on the ground.

Mining-affected regions such as Kiriburu, Barbil, Joda and surrounding areas, including Rugudi, Guali, Roida and others, continue to struggle with inadequate roads, lack of drinking water, poor education facilities and insufficient housing infrastructure.

Residents of these remote areas have demanded that DMF funds be utilised for setting up

a super-specialty hospital, rebuilding dilapidated roads and establishing schools, including a technical institute. In Joda, where there is only one women's college, locals have also called for the establishment of a general degree college.

Sandeep Pattnaik, president of Voice of Keonjhar, said more than ₹12,000 crore has been collected from the Joda mining circle since 2015.

He alleged that the then government misled residents by distributing a limited number of water pumps, assistive devices for persons with disabilities, and solar lights, instead of undertaking substantial development work. He also claimed that some little-known companies that were brought in from outside the state exploited local youth in the name of training programmes.

Pattnaik said the state government has now appointed a CEO to ensure proper utilisation of the DMF funds. He added that residents have high expectations about how these funds will be used.

State BJP spokesperson Satyabrata Panda said Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, while in the opposition, had repeatedly raised questions over transparency and allocation of DMF funds. After assuming office, Panda said, the government has taken initial steps to improve transparency by appointing a senior administrative officer to oversee fund allocation.

He added that guidelines are being prepared to ensure the funds are used for various development projects in the district.



**MATTER OF FAITH:** Danduas (devotees performing severe penance) participate in Ashtadanda Milan at Chhamunda village under Jagannathprasad block in Ganjam district, Saturday

## DFO dies of heart attack

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chandbali, April 11:** Divisional Forest Officer (Wildlife) Soubhagya Ranjan Sahu, 59, posted in Bhadrak Wildlife Division, collapsed and died of a suspected heart attack Saturday.

The sudden death cast a pall of gloom over the Chandbali area.

Sahu was staying alone at his official residence in Chandbali. As it was a holiday, he was at home when he suddenly fell ill. Colleagues rushed him to the local community health centre at around 11am, where doctors pronounced him dead.

Sahu hailed from Barunadiha village under Rajkanika block in Kendrapara district. Forest department officials and local residents expressed deep grief over his untimely death.

## 35 students left hungry as MDM falls short in Kandhamal school

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Daringbadi, April 11:** Inadequate midday meal (MDM) left dozens of students without food Saturday at Daberi Sevashram in Daringbadi block of Kandhamal district, triggering protests by villagers and parents.

Of 157 enrolled girls, 35 did not receive lunch after insufficient quantities were cooked, according to local officials and residents. Members of the village committee, school management committee, parents and self-help groups rushed to the school after learning of the shortage.

Tensions escalated when they found the students standing in the sun with plates, waiting to be served food. Villagers confronted headmaster Gopal Chandra Pradhan, and a heated argument continued for nearly two hours.

School cooks alleged they are regularly given inadequate rations, including rice, to prepare meals. As a temporary measure, the headmaster provided flattened rice and sugar to the hungry students. Cooked food was later served after a delay of about an hour following protests.

Residents said such incidents have occurred repeatedly, with students sometimes forced to subsist on flattened rice and



sugar due to shortages. Several groups warned of demonstrations if the headmaster is not transferred.

The unrest interrupted a village meeting led by Susanta Mallick to address alleged mismanagement at the school. Attendees left midway and went to the Sevashram after hearing of the meal shortage.

Villagers also alleged irregularities in the distribution of MDM and school uniforms, claiming some students have yet to receive uniforms. Additional accusations included misappropriation of funds from the sale of materials from a demolished

building and financial transactions conducted without proper school committee approval.

Block officials, including CRC coordinator Balabhadra Mallick and Assistant Block Education Officer Gokulananda Nayak, reached the site, calmed the situation and began an inquiry. A memorandum addressed to the block development officer (BDO) was submitted.

Headmaster Pradhan denied the allegations, calling them baseless. He said adequate rations were provided and added that infrastructure issues had already been reported to higher authorities.

## Genuine farmers left out of paddy procurement

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, April 11:** Alleged negligence on the part of cooperative and civil supply officials has left more than 3,000 genuine farmers in Ganjam district deprived of selling their paddy during the current procurement season.

According to reports, around 1.56 lakh farmers had registered for paddy procurement in the district this year, out of which approximately 1.52 lakh

were able to sell their produce. However, over 3,000 farmers failed to receive procurement tokens, reportedly due to errors in registration and administrative lapses.

Farmers alleged that while paddy harvesting is usually completed by November, a hurried satellite survey conducted in December by a private agency incorrectly marked several cultivated lands as non-paddy fields. This resulted in the deni-

al of tokens to genuine farmers without any ground verification or consultation.

As per the standard procedure, farmer registration is carried out during June and July through societies and women's self-help groups. Subsequently, agriculture extension workers and revenue officials physically verify the fields and certify paddy cultivation. Despite this multi-level verification, authorities reportedly relied on the

private agency's survey report, leading to the exclusion of many eligible farmers.

Affected farmers repeatedly approached supply and cooperative officials regarding the non-issuance of tokens, but no corrective action was taken.

The Rushikulya Rayat Mahasabha submitted memorandums to the District Collector and the Chief Minister, demanding the procurement of paddy from the affected farmers.

## 30 injured as 2 buses plunge into farmland

**Salipur:** At least 30 people were injured, 10 of them critically, after two private passenger buses veered off the road and plunged into a roadside farmland near Bhatapada Chhak on the Cuttack-Salipur road under Salipur police limits Saturday. The accident occurred when the two buses attempted to overtake each other, leading to loss of control, police said. All injured passengers have been shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, Salipur IIC Maheswar Behera said. The identities of the injured were not immediately known. According to officials, the two private buses Mahalaxmi and Papu were travelling from Kendrapara to Cuttack with around 50 passengers on board. Preliminary reports suggest the mishap took place when the Mahalaxmi bus tried to overtake the Papu bus near Bhatapada Chhak in a competitive manner, resulting in both vehicles skidding off the road.

## Sand mafia attack jr mining officer

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jeypore, April 11:** A junior mining officer was allegedly attacked by sand mafia near Balia under Jeypore Sadar police limits Saturday.

The officer, Pradipta Kumar Munda, lodged a complaint at Jeypore Sadar police station alleging murder bid.

According to the complaint, Munda was returning after inspecting Trishakti Stone Crusher at Sana Ojei village when he spotted a blue tractor (OD-10-AB-3589) being loaded with sand near Balia bridge. Suspecting illegal sand loading and transportation, he questioned the driver.

The driver informed the tractor owner, who reached the spot within 20 minutes. When asked to produce valid documents, the driver failed to do so. Acting on the owner's instructions, the driver attempted to flee with the vehicle towards Khudupi



via the canal road.

Munda tried to stop the tractor, but the accused allegedly attempted to run him over. Subsequently, five persons reportedly assaulted him, snatched the vehicle key and pushed him, allegedly attempting to kill him.

The officer was later rescued after two persons reached the spot. Based on the complaint, Jeypore Sadar police have registered a case (114/26) and launched an investigation.

## Woman's charred body found; suicide through self-immolation suspected

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Paralakhemundi, April 11:** A 24-year-old woman was found dead in her house in Khanjasa-hi Nuabasti area of Paralakhemundi town Saturday, with police suspecting self-immolation.

The deceased has been identified as Subhra Samal, daughter of Bishnucharan Samal.

According to reports, smoke was seen emanating from an upper-floor room of Bishnucharan's house at around 11am while he and his wife were away. A tenant residing on the middle floor noticed the smoke and immediately informed the family, following which the Paralakhemundi Model police were alerted.

Police personnel rushed to the spot, broke open the door of the smoke-filled room and



found Subhra lying dead inside.

A scientific team later reached the scene and began an investigation. Paralakhemundi Model police station Officer-In-Charge Prashant Bhupathi said prima facie evidence suggests no signs of external involvement. A bottle contain-

ing a flammable substance, suspected to be petrol or kerosene, along with match sticks, was recovered near the body.

"Based on the initial investigation, it appears to be a case of suicide. However, the exact cause of death will be confirmed after the forensic analysis and post-mortem report," Bhupathi said. Police have registered a case (2/26) of unnatural death and are probing all angles.

Subhra was a postgraduate pass-out student of Sri Krushna Chandra Gajapati Autonomous College. Her pass-out ceremony was scheduled for Sunday, sources said.

Family members said there had been no known disputes or issues at home, leaving them shocked and unable to comprehend the circumstances or reasons behind her death.

## NIT-R spotlights AI innovations at IInvenTiv '26

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, April 11:** The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Rourkela showcased its research and innovation capabilities at IInvenTiv 2026, a flagship R&D fair organised by the Ministry of Education to promote indigenous technologies and strengthen the research-to-industry ecosystem.

Held at IIT (ISM) Dhanbad April 6-7, the event brought together leading IITs, NITs and premier institutions from across India to present industry-ready solutions developed by students, researchers and faculty.

NIT Rourkela presented three innovations across artificial intelligence and materials science.



In the AI category, Prof Anup Nandy from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering introduced CARAT (Caregiver Autism Robot with AI-based Technology), an assistive robot designed to support children with autism spectrum disorder. The system interprets movements and responds inter-

actively to help develop social and behavioural skills, and is intended for use in therapy centres, classrooms and homes. The innovation is protected by an Indian patent.

In materials science, a team led by Prof Adhidesh S. Kumawat showcased 3D-printable conducting materials for elec-

trochemical applications. The technology enables low-cost production of circuits, sensors and electronic components, and has led to the startup Conductive Creations Pvt Ltd, incubated at FTBI-NIT Rourkela.

Another AI-based project, "So-Connect", presented by Prof Panthadeep Bhattacharjee, proposed a method to recommend social network connections based on shared interests and engagement patterns, offering a more personalised approach than conventional systems.

The institute's participation drew positive responses from visitors and experts, underscoring its role in advancing innovation and technology development in India.

## Woman killed in domestic dispute; husband detained

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bonai, April 11:** A 46-year-old woman died allegedly after being assaulted by her husband following a domestic dispute in Sundargarh district, police said Saturday.

The incident occurred Friday evening in Sasyakala village under Lahunipara police station limits. According to reports, an argument broke out between Sarafina Minj and her husband, Julu Minj, 45, over a minor issue.

In a fit of rage, the Julu allegedly attacked his wife with a wooden plank, leaving her critically injured. Fami-

ly members and neighbours rushed her to the Lahunipara Community Health Centre, where she later succumbed to her injuries late at night.

Police said they were informed about the incident Saturday, following which a team reached the spot and launched an investigation. After verifying the details, officers registered a murder case (103/26).

"The accused has been detained and is being interrogated. He will be produced before a court tomorrow," a police official said, adding that a scientific team is assisting in the investigation.

## 13 teachers issued show-cause notices for late attendance

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Gudari, April 11:** Authorities in Rayagada district have issued show-cause notices to 13 teachers for allegedly being outside during school hours and arriving late to duty.

According to a letter (637/2026, dated April 10, 2026) from the Gudari Block Education Officer's office, the teachers were seen crossing Gudari town and heading towards their schools even after classes had begun April 10 morning.

School hours start at 6:30am, but the teachers were reportedly on their way after the scheduled time.

The teachers have been asked to respond within three days. Failure to provide a satisfactory explanation could lead to disciplinary action, BEO Lokanath Suna said.

The notices were issued after the matter was brought to the officer's attention by ABEO Sanguda Rupamajhi. Suna also said he personally observed some teachers outside near MK Rai School during school hours two days earlier.

He warned that strict action would be taken against any teacher found outside during school hours without prior information.

Teachers who regularly attend school on time have welcomed the move. Block Teachers' Association President Subas Chandra Gouda urged all teachers to adhere to the scheduled time and said a delegation of the association will meet the BEO Monday to discuss the issue.



Care not for time and success.  
Act out thy part, whether it be to  
fail or to prosper.

SRI AUROBINDO



## Global Bystander

I am not sure why but we find the idea of international mediation distasteful. This distaste is both for those being mediated and for the mediator. We know this because of our insistence, under all of our governments it should be said, that things are bilateral and must be resolved bilaterally. This is of course with particular reference to one neighbour. And our contemptuous opinion of international mediators was expressed by the foreign minister who called them 'dalaal.'

What we are doing to solve a problem that involves us and affects us is unclear at the moment. We are involved because we are suffering as the rest of the world is in terms of both prices and shortage but we are content to be onlookers and hoping that the crisis resolves itself, or someone else comes and resolves it, so that things go back to normal for us. That is the way India has decided to approach the ongoing war and we can agree or disagree whether India could have or should have done something more or something different. That is fine.

I wanted to write about the other approach, the one that is not being deployed. We do not need to speculate about what that might be because the previous government left us a document that informs us what it should be.

On 4 November 2013, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh spoke to over 120 heads of Indian missions and outlined the five principles that defined his foreign policy. These were: First, recognition that India's relations with the world — the major powers and Asian neighbours — were shaped by its developmental priorities. Singh said that 'the single most important objective of Indian foreign policy has to be to create a global environment conducive to the well-being of our great country.'

Second, that greater integration with the world economy would benefit India and enable Indians to realise their creative potential. Third, to seek stable, long term and mutually beneficial relations with all major powers. And to work with the international community to create a global economic and security environment beneficial to all nations. Fourth, to recognise that the Indian subcontinent's shared destiny required greater regional cooperation and connectivity.

Fifth, a foreign policy defined not merely by interests, but also by the values dear to Indians: 'India's experiment of pursuing economic development within the framework of a plural, secular and liberal democracy has inspired people around the world and should continue to do so.'

In short: India would use foreign policy to advance its economic development; it would be friendly with global great powers and its neighbours; and it would be helped in doing this by continuing to be a pluralist and secular democracy.

Because this was a clear exposition of what was sought to be achieved, we can apply it today to see what we would do differently. Let us take them each in turn.

If we are to agree that 'the single most important objective of Indian foreign policy has to be to create a global environment conducive to India's well-being', then it is obvious that we should have ensured that the environment is not vitiated. That means engaging with those who have the agency to harm our growth. India is one of the few nations, and perhaps the only nation, that has good relations with America, Israel and Iran. Pakistan is friendly with two of them. Knowing that a war in the Gulf would damage our economy, hurt supply of fertilisers and fuel, and cause general chaos, we should have tried to ensure this war did not begin. We chose not to do that.

The second point on integration is one that we have become cautious if not wary about over the last decade. We chose not to enter the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership that included about 15 Asia Pacific nations and the view of economists, including those who adore the prime minister, is that India has become unnecessarily protectionist.

The third point on seeking long term mutually beneficial relations with "all powers" has its meaning with relation to China. How much agency we have exercised on this since 2020 and where things stand are clear and that need not detain us here.

The fourth and fifth points Singh raised are to my mind the ones where there has been maximum departure since 2014. Borders in South Asia remain either rigid or closed, free movement is impossible and this is so because we as the only power that shares boundaries with the rest want it this way.

Lastly, for the first time since 1947, we are faced with a large and popular political movement that is hostile to the idea of India as plural, secular and liberal. Our newfound deep friendship with Israel is to be understood in this light. Israel is our 49th largest export and 48th largest import partner, one of the lowest. Why are we so besotted with Israel? It is because we ache to do to our minorities what Israel is doing to its minorities.

This is where we stand and this is what we have chosen to do. If we think we require correcting course, then Manmohan Singh's wise, kind and measured counsel from a decade and a half ago is a fine place to start.

### WISDOM CORNER

Experience without theory is blind, but theory without experience is mere intellectual play.

IMMANUEL KANT

Die to everything of yesterday so that your mind is always fresh, always young, innocent, full of vigor and passion.

JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

The cleverest of all, in my opinion, is the man who calls himself a fool at least once a month.

FYODOR DOSTOEVSKY

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1606: The Union Flag, precursor to the Union Jack, was adopted as the national flag of Great Britain.

1955: the results of a two-year trial of a polio vaccine involving nearly two million children were presented at a press conference: it proved 80-90 percent effective in preventing polio, it greatly lessened the severity of disease in those who did contract it, and no inoculated children died.

1961: Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human in outer space.

### FOCUS MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

# ISRAEL'S BUFFER-ZONE FALLACY

Territorial buffers rarely, if ever, deliver the peace and security their advocates promise. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine was seen as a neutral cordon between Russia and NATO. Instead, it became a zone of increasingly fierce geopolitical contention, followed by open war.

French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau made the same mistake when he assumed that the newly independent states of Central and Eastern Europe would serve as a buffer against encroachment by Bolshevik Russia. Instead, they were Hitler's early targets and ended up as part of the Warsaw Pact following his defeat.

In an era when ballistic missiles, drones, and other projectiles can hit distant strategic targets with growing accuracy, the idea of a protective buffer zone is not just faulty; it is nonsense.

Yet Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz insists that the Israel Defense Forces must occupy a large part of south Lebanon to protect "displaced residents" living in northern Israel. He recently boasted that Israeli troops had destroyed five bridges on the Litani River, about 30 kilometers (19 miles) from the Lebanon-Israel border, thus creating a buffer zone that will be maintained "until northern Israel [is] safe." But this occupation, an obvious violation of international law, is unlikely to achieve its stated goals. If anything, it will leave Israelis, especially Israeli soldiers, more vulnerable.

After the horrors of World War II, the international community agreed that no country is permitted to take land from others by force. The "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" features prominently in the preamble of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, which



**Security in Gaza and Lebanon cannot be achieved through buffer zones, but only through a political settlement that addresses humanitarian needs and the root causes of the conflict**

called for the "withdrawal of Israel armed forces from territories occupied in [June 1967]." Yet, in Gaza and southern Lebanon, the entire world is watching Israel deliberately acquire large swaths of land by force.

In Gaza, one of the most densely populated areas in the world, the Israeli army is reportedly occupying more than 50% of the land. In Lebanon, Israel is pursuing an indefinite occupation of roughly 850-1,060 square kilometers—nearly 10% of the country's total territory. And in the West Bank, Israel has long insisted that it must keep the Jordan Valley west of the river as a buffer zone in any peace deal.

But with Iranian missiles and drones reaching Tel Aviv, Beit Shemesh, Haifa, and Dimona—and with Ukrainian drones reaching far into Russia—the justification for such demands has collapsed. Moreover, by pushing to occupy even more land, Israel risks turning local civilians into frontline targets. Some critics even warn of a dynamic in which civilians will effectively serve as human shields, which would then provide a political/media bonanza for Israel's Hasbarists (propagandists). At the same time, by occupying

southern Lebanon, Israeli soldiers themselves will be closer to Hezbollah fighters, and thus in greater danger.

As the political scientist Dominic Tierney has shown, military power alone rarely wins wars, because modern conflicts are political, social, and ideological struggles, not merely tactical battles. "While a dominant military can win battles, secure terrain, and destroy conventional forces," he explains, "it often fails to create lasting peace or achieve political objectives—known as 'winning the war'—because it cannot fix underlying issues such as lack of legitimacy, insurgency, or deep-rooted political instability."

Far from acknowledging these limitations, Israel has already declared that it will prohibit the return of Lebanese citizens who fled before its latest ground invasion began. Such a policy is hardly new. Since 1948, Israel has denied the right of return to roughly 750,000 Palestinians and their descendants, despite numerous UN resolutions urging it to provide this option.

Rather than taking more land where opponents will always exist, the wiser strategy is to pursue a political settlement. Solutions already

exist for both Gaza and Lebanon, but Israeli politicians, especially Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government, appear more interested in preserving the status quo than in making real progress.

As the ancient Chinese strategist Sun Tzu pointed out long ago, harming an enemy or simply taking land does not necessarily constitute a victory. On the contrary, a displaced enemy may return with even greater resolve, or the cost of holding the new ground may prove unsustainable. In a competitive, hostile environment, a retreating enemy can regroup, adapt its tactics, acquire new technologies, and eventually strike back. The fight never truly ends.

But no ancient wisdom is needed to understand that countries should aim to resolve underlying tensions rather than trying to create buffers. Holding territory does not erase the other side. Hezbollah's opponents within Lebanon and Palestinian leaders who oppose Hamas have offered to cooperate with Israel, but Israel has adamantly refused. Its current leaders seem to believe that perpetual conflict and occupation better serve their interests than the unpopular political concessions peace would require.

But peace is the only sustainable option. Security in Gaza and Lebanon cannot be achieved through buffer zones, but only through a political settlement that addresses humanitarian needs and the root causes of the conflict. That requires respect for international law, accountability for actions that affect civilians on all sides, and a genuine readiness to negotiate. The alternative is endless cycles of violence.

*The writer is a former professor of journalism at Princeton University.*

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Daoud Kuttab

**IN A COMPETITIVE, HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT, A RETREATING ENEMY CAN REGROUP, ADAPT ITS TACTICS, ACQUIRE NEW TECHNOLOGIES, AND EVENTUALLY STRIKE BACK**



Aakar Patel

**WHAT WE ARE DOING TO SOLVE A PROBLEM THAT INVOLVES US AND AFFECTS US IS UNCLEAR AT THE MOMENT. WE ARE INVOLVED BECAUSE WE ARE SUFFERING AS THE REST OF THE WORLD BUT WE ARE CONTENT TO BE ONLOOKERS AND HOPING THAT THE CRISIS RESOLVES ITSELF, OR SOMEONE ELSE COMES AND RESOLVES IT**

### SPECTRUM EDUCATION

## India's varsities rise in global rankings

The annual unveiling of global university rankings is often met with a mix of anticipation and introspection within the corridors of higher education. These rankings, such as those published by QS Quacquarelli Symonds, serve as more than just a competitive scoreboard; they are a vital barometer of a nation's intellectual capital and its capacity to contribute to the global knowledge economy. For a developing nation like India, which possesses one of the world's largest higher education systems, these rankings provide an objective lens through which the quality of research, pedagogical innovation and international reputation can be measured against the world's most venerable institutions. While some critics argue that such metrics cannot fully capture the nuances of local socio-economic impacts, they remain a primary currency for attracting international talent, securing research funding and fostering global collaborations.

The latest edition of the QS World University Rankings by Subject highlights a signif-

icant upward trajectory for Indian academia, marking a moment of pride and strategic reflection. The news that four Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Jawaharlal Nehru University, and BITS Pilani have secured spots among the world's top 50 institutions for specific disciplines underscores a deepening of research strength within the country. This year's rankings are particularly notable for their breadth, with India recording twenty-seven top-50 positions across various subjects which is a doubling of the previous year's performance. Leading this charge is the Indian School of Mines University, Dhanbad, which achieved a remarkable 21st position globally in Mineral and Mining Engineering. Similarly, IIM Ahmedabad has maintained its stature by ranking 21st in Business and Management Studies, with India making its debut in the top tier for Marketing. These achievements suggest that the pursuit of excellence is no longer confined to the traditional bastions of engineering but is permeating into social sciences and management.

The rise of these institutions is not an accidental surge but rather the result of deliberate development initiatives aimed at enhancing the global competitiveness of Indian universities. The government's focus on fostering 'Institutes of Eminence' and providing increased autonomy and funding has begun to yield tangible results. There is a visible shift toward prioritizing high-impact research, filing international patents and improving faculty-to-student ratios.

While a handful of premier institutes excel, there remains a staggering disparity between these 'islands of excellence' and the vast majority of state-funded and private universities. Chronic issues such as outdated curricula, a severe shortage of qualified faculty and inadequate laboratory infrastructure continue to plague the larger ecosystem. The lack of internationalization remains a significant hurdle; Indian campuses still struggle to attract a diverse cohort of international students and faculty, which limits the cross-pollination of ideas and negatively impacts the 'international reputation' metric of

these rankings.

To bridge the gap between current achievements and future potential, India must move toward a more holistic reform of its educational landscape. It is not enough for a few elite schools to climb the ranks while the foundation remains fragile. A suggestive path forward involves a two-pronged approach: sustaining the excellence of top-tier institutes through continued investment in cutting-edge technology and research, while simultaneously implementing a 'cluster model' where premier institutes mentor regional universities. The conclusion to be drawn is that while the current rise in rankings is a testament to India's burgeoning intellectual prowess, the ultimate goal should be the democratization of quality education. We must strive for a future where a high rank is not just a badge of honor for a few but a reflection of a robust, inclusive and world-class educational system that empowers every student to compete on the global stage.

*The writer is former college Principal and Founder of Supporting Shoulders*



Bhaskar Nath Biswal

**WHILE THE CURRENT RISE IN RANKINGS IS A TESTAMENT TO INDIA'S BURGEONING INTELLECTUAL PROWESS, THE ULTIMATE GOAL SHOULD BE THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF QUALITY EDUCATION**

## Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

### Iran's message

Sir, Iran's use of the "Minab 168" aircraft to Islamabad was a powerful symbolic and political message. The plane, named after the 168 victims—mostly schoolgirls killed in a strike—carried their photos and belongings on empty seats, turning a diplomatic journey into a moving memorial. This act was meant to highlight the human cost of the conflict and keep global attention focused on civilian casualties, especially children. By doing so during peace talks, Iran seeks to morally pressurise the US and its allies, projecting itself as a victim of aggression, demanding accountability, to evoke international sympathy and strengthen its negotiating position. The gesture conveyed that behind geopolitical conflicts lie innocent lives lost, and that any dialogue must acknowledge this suffering before moving toward resolution. It also subtly reframes diplomacy as remembrance, compelling negotiators to confront grief alongside strategy, and reminding the world that justice, not just compromise, must underpin any lasting and credible peace settlement.

RS Narula, PATIALA

### Sudden exit

Sir, The resignation of a judge of the Allahabad High Court just ahead of an impending impeachment hearing has sparked debate on judicial accountability and institutional integrity. Impeachment is a rare and serious constitutional process meant to uphold the highest standards of conduct in the judiciary. By stepping down before the proceedings could commence, the judge has effectively avoided a formal inquiry and verdict, raising concerns about transparency and closure. While resignation is within an individual's rights, such actions may leave critical questions unanswered and weaken public confidence in the system. It also highlights the limitations of the current mechanism, where accountability can be circumvented at a crucial stage. The episode underscores the urgent need for reforms to ensure that allegations of misconduct are thoroughly examined, regardless of resignation. Strengthening institutional processes will be vital to preserve the credibility, independence, and moral authority of the judiciary in India.

N Sathisiva Reddy, BANGALORE

WEST ASIA CRISIS

Maha to activate helplines to expand PNG coverage



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 11: The Maharashtra government has directed city gas distribution companies to activate 24/7 helplines and increase the number of centres processing applications for piped natural gas connections...

outreach and infrastructure to ensure wider PNG coverage across the state.

The GR said disruptions in global energy supply have affected petroleum product availability, leading to constraints in LPG supply, and emphasised the need to accelerate PNG connections as a short-term mitigation measure.

It directed city gas distribution (CGD) companies to operationalise 24-hour helplines for consumers and ensure citizens do not face inconvenience while applying for connections. The

companies were also asked to increase the number of helplines and helpdesks based on city population and rising demand.

Further, the GR instructed companies to expand ward-level centres to accept new PNG connection applications and to make both online and offline application systems widely available with adequate publicity.

"Housing societies, whether registered or proposed, as well as residents of constructed buildings, have been asked to submit collective or individual applications to facilitate faster rollout of PNG connections," the GR said.

The government also called for establishing information and assistance centres by municipal corporations, district supply officers and CGD firms, and mandated regular district-level reviews of progress.

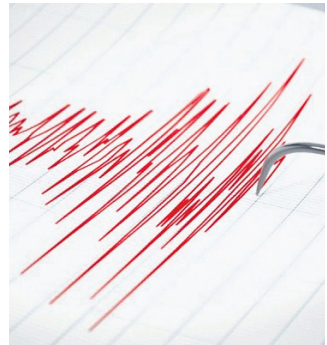
"To monitor implementation, CGD companies must appoint district-level nodal officers and submit weekly progress reports on PNG pipeline expansion and connections, which will be consolidated and reviewed at the state level every Monday," it said.

The GR said the directions will remain in force until the prevailing global geopolitical situation stabilises.

Parts of Hingoli jolted by earthquake, no casualties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, April 11: An earthquake of 4.7 magnitude struck parts of Hingoli district in Maharashtra Saturday morning, while tremors were also felt in parts of neighbouring Nanded and Parbhani districts, officials said.



and record the exact extent of the losses," Hingoli Collector Gupta said.

Local authorities have urged citizens to remain calm and follow safety protocols. Emergency response teams have been placed on standby in Nanded and Parbhani as a precautionary measure.

Authorities have advised people living in houses with tin-sheet roofs to remove heavy stones placed on top for support and instead secure the sheets with bolts as a safety measure.

In case of any further tremors or unusual sounds, residents are advised to immediately move to open spaces and inform the administration by calling the emergency helpline, the Nanded district administration said.

"When I was sitting in my college staffroom doing my work, I suddenly felt a tremor. As I heard a different sound, I was confused. Then I realised it was a mild earthquake," said a college teacher in Nanded.

Khan Market set for facelift

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 11: Delhi's posh Khan Market is set for a makeover, with authorities planning a series of infrastructure upgrades aimed at improving pedestrian movement and reducing frequent disruptions in the high-footfall shopping hub, officials said.

The New Delhi Municipal Council is considering the development of a dedicated walkway along the circumference of the market, around 300 metres long, after completion of a pilot project currently underway on the front side of the market, they said.

They added that on the front side of the market, granite cobblestones are also being laid, with the work expected to be completed within the next few weeks. "The walkway is likely to be constructed using granite cobblestones or granite blocks at least 2.5 inches thick, to ensure durability and ease of movement for visitors," officials said.

NDMC Vice Chairman Kuljeet Singh Chahal said that the series of infrastructure improvements is expected to provide a better experience in the coveted market for shoppers and establish a new development model.

Officials said that alongside this, work is underway to upgrade the middle lane in a manner that would reduce the need for frequent road cutting in the future, particularly for utility services.



A person dangles from the 'Bagad' during the agrarian folk chariot festival 'Bagad Yatra', in Surur, Satara district, Maharashtra

Delhi temp likely to hit 40 deg C

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 11: The National Capital continued to see a rise in the temperature Saturday, with forecasts by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) suggesting a further rise in the coming days.

Safdarjung, representative of the City's weather, recorded a maximum temperature of 34.7 degrees Celsius, 1.4 degrees below the normal and 1.9 degrees more than a day before.

The minimum temperature was logged at 18.6 degrees Celsius, 2.4 degrees below normal, but a 2.3 degree rise from the day before.

Other weather stations also logged a significant rise in both maximum and minimum temperatures. Palam recorded a maximum of 34.4 degrees Celsius, a 2.6 degree rise from Friday and a minimum of 19.5 degrees Celsius, 3.9 degrees more than the day before. Lodhi Road recorded a minimum of 17.8 degrees Celsius, 2.6 degrees rise from the day before.

Meanwhile, IMD has forecast the minimum temperature to be around 18-22 degrees Celsius by Sunday and 20-22 degrees Celsius by Tuesday. The maximum temperature is likely to be around 35-37 degrees by Sunday and 38-40 degrees Celsius by next Wednesday.



Palam recorded a maximum of 34.4 degrees Celsius, a 2.6 degree rise from Friday and a minimum of 19.5 degrees Celsius, 3.9 degrees more than the day before. Lodhi Road recorded a minimum of 17.8 degrees Celsius, 2.6 degrees rise from the day before.

The MeT department has also forecast gusty winds of speed 15-25 kmph, even reaching 35 kmph, to continue through the daytime hours of Sunday.

Meanwhile, the City's air quality index (AQI) saw further improvement on Saturday morning. The 24-hour average AQI was recorded at 123 (moderate) at 4 pm, compared to an AQI of 151 (moderate) recorded at the same time Friday.

According to CPCB standards, an AQI of 0-50 is considered 'good', 51-100 'satisfactory', 101-200 'moderate', 201-300 'poor', 301-400 'very poor', and 401-500 'severe'.

The Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS) for Delhi has forecast the AQI to remain in the moderate category for the next few days and then see a deterioration to the poor category in the subsequent days.

Traffic advisory issued for Qutub Minar, Mehrauli

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 11: Traffic police have issued an advisory announcing restrictions and diversions around Qutub Minar and DDA Mehrauli Archaeological Park Sunday in view of expected high vehicular movement and number of commuters.

According to the advisory, the curbs will be in place from 4pm to 9pm Saturday, or as required, to ensure smooth regulation of traffic in the area. No heavy or commercial vehicles will be allowed to move towards Qutub Minar from Anuvrat Marg via the Phool Mandi approach road, or from Crescent Marg through Masjid Haji Ali Jan, Delhi Traffic Police said.

Similarly, movement of such vehicles will also be restricted from Kalka Dass Marg towards the monument, while halting or parking of heavy and commercial vehicles on connecting roads, including Anuvrat Marg, Crescent Marg and Kalka Dass Marg, has been prohibited. Violators will be towed away and prosecuted as per law, the advisory stated. All major roads, including Aurobindo Marg, Anuvrat Marg, Crescent Road and Kalka Dass Marg, will remain open for regular traffic, but access to Qutub Minar will be allowed only via Kalka Dass Marg.

Delhi Police solves murder case after 35 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 11: The Delhi Police cracked a 35-year-old murder case with the arrest of a proclaimed offender who allegedly killed his landlady and injured her son in a robbery case in 1991, an official said Saturday.

an succumbed to her injuries, while her son survived after treatment. During the investigation, it emerged that Verma, aged around 25 at the time of the incident, was a tenant in the victim's house in east Delhi's Trilok Puri area. He had attacked the duo with a sharp-edged weapon, police said.



The breakthrough came when a team from the Crime Branch reopened the case and began fresh efforts to trace the accused. A dedicated team was tasked with tracking him down.

The accused, identified as Chhavi Lal Verma. Police said that he deliberately avoided returning to his native place for years to evade arrest and also skipped major family events, including his children's marriages.

"The case dates back to August 2, 1991, when a PCR call was received regarding a violent incident at West Vinod Nagar. A police team rushed to the spot and found the woman lying unconscious with multiple stab injuries on her neck, while her son, aged around 18-20 years at the time, had sustained stab wounds on his face," the police officer said.

Both victims were shifted to Lok Nayak Jai Prakash (LN-JP) Hospital, where the wom-

Over the past six months, the team worked meticulously, combining technical surveillance with field intelligence. "Officers revisited old case records, tracked down past associates and conducted extensive inquiries in the accused's native village in Sultanpur in Uttar Pradesh as well as other locations linked to his relatives,"

the officer said.

Despite multiple leads turning cold, the team persisted and developed fresh inputs regarding his possible whereabouts.

He is learnt to have moved across several cities, including Kolkata, Mumbai, Nagpur and Goa, before eventually settling in Punjab. During this period, he frequently changed jobs and identities, working in low-profile roles to avoid attracting attention. "Based on credible intelligence, the team finally traced his presence to Ludhiana. A raiding team was immediately dispatched, and after sustained local verification and surveillance, Verma was apprehended April 10," the officer said.

At the time of his arrest, he was working as a security guard at a commercial establishment in Ludhiana, police said.

During interrogation, Verma confessed to the crime and revealed that financial motive was the primary reason behind the attack. He admitted that he had planned the robbery after assuming that his landlady had

significant cash reserves.

"His plan turned violent when the victims resisted, leading to the death and attempted murder," the officer said.

'Nod mandatory to install statues in public places'

Mumbai: The district administration of Solapur in Maharashtra has mandated prior permission for installation of statues, memorials and flagpoles, citing rising instances of unauthorised constructions that could trigger law and order issues and social tension. An order to this effect has been issued Thursday by the District Collector and District Magistrate, along with coordination from police and administrative officials at the district and sub-divisional levels. The order said that "installation of statues in public places is a highly sensitive matter and must be undertaken strictly through a legal process and only after obtaining prior permission from the competent authority", and outlined a detailed procedure and documentation requirements. According to the administration, several incidents of unauthorised installation of statues of prominent personalities were reported across Solapur district over the past month. Such activities, it noted, have the potential to create law and order problems and may lead to social or caste-based tensions, necessitating stricter and coordinated enforcement.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, MINOR IRRIGATION DIVISION, ANGUL GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA. E-mail ID : semidivisionangul@gmail.com. e-Procurement Notice. 1st Corrigendum to Bid Identification No.- S.E.M.I.D., ANGUL No.17 Letter No. 933 /Date.08.04.2026. No.32001/51/2627 : It is notified that, due to some error BID Identification No. 17 of 2026-27 is hereby cancelled. Sd./- Superintending Engineer M.I.Division, Angul. OIPR-32001/32284/11/26-27/0003

NOTICE INVITING TENDER OFFICE OF THE NOTIFIED AREA COUNCIL, RANPUR NAYAGARH (ODISHA), PIN-752026. No.13001/13196/11/26-27/0002 e-Mail : eoranpur.nayagarh@gmail.com. Tender Call Notice No. 1140 Dt. 06.04.2026 E-Procurement Notice No. : RNP NAC - 01 / 2026-27. Table with 10 rows detailing work items, number of works, value, contractor, completion period, date of publication, and availability of documents.

AUCTION BALL MILL 5 TON CAPACITY GRINDING 300 MESS - Register Office - MalaShil Industries Pvt. Ltd. C/6, Koelnagar, Rourkela-769014, Odisha Mob : 7873257257 Timing - Within 7 days

ଜିଲ୍ଲା ସ୍ତରୀ No. 8001/25/2627: ଏକଜଣା ସର୍ବସାଧାରଣ ଅବଗତ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଜଣାଇ ଦିଆଯାଉଅଛି ଯେ, ବନଖଣ୍ଡ ଅଧିକାରୀ, ଲୁଗା ଜଙ୍ଗଲ ବନଖଣ୍ଡ (ବନ୍ୟପ୍ରାଣୀ) ରାଜନଗର ଅଧିକାରୀଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକ୍ରମ ସଂଗ୍ରହ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ନିମ୍ନଲିଖିତ ତାରିଖ, ସ୍ଥାନ ଓ ସମୟ ଅନୁସାରେ ପ୍ରକାଶ୍ୟକାରୀ ନିଲମ୍ବନା ନିଲମ୍ବନା ଶେଷ ହେବା ପରେ ବ୍ରହ୍ମ ଓ ଏରିଆ କର୍ମାଚାରୀ ଉପରେ ଲିଖିତ ଅଭିଯୋଗ ଗ୍ରହଣ କରାଯିବ ନାହିଁ। ନିଲମ୍ବନା ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ ସର୍ବଶେଷ ବିବରଣୀ ଲୁଗା ଜଙ୍ଗଲ ବନଖଣ୍ଡ (ବନ୍ୟପ୍ରାଣୀ) ରାଜନଗର କାର୍ଯ୍ୟକାରୀଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଦିଆଯିବ। ଏହା ସହିତ ବନଖଣ୍ଡର Website: www.wildlife.odisha.gov.inରେ ଉପଲବ୍ଧ ଅଟେ। Table with 4 columns: ନିଲମ୍ବନା ତାରିଖ, ନିଲମ୍ବନା ସ୍ଥାନ, କର୍ମାଚାରୀଙ୍କ ଦ୍ୱାରା, ସମୟ.



Usually, people see a defence minister as responsible for soldiers and the country's security, not agriculture. Our responsibility is to ensure the country's security, but the kisan in me has not gone away.

RAJNATH SINGH | UNION DEFENCE MINISTER

DIGITAL-ONLY TOLL COLLECTION IMPLEMENTED AT NH FEE PLAZAS

All user fee payments at National Highway toll plazas across the country are being processed exclusively through digital modes with FASTag or Unified Payments Interface (UPI) from Saturday, according to an official statement. The move is a significant step towards strengthening efficiency and transparency in toll collection



of the day quote

I am the son of Lalu Prasad, who stopped LK Advani's 'rath' and got him arrested for trying to facilitate Babri Mosque demolition. Neither my father bowed down to communal forces, nor will I

We will end the 'syndicate raj' of the TMC government after winning the Bengal assembly elections. The time has come to say 'tata bye bye to Hirak Rani'

The brave martyrs Sido-Kanhu blew the historic bugle against injustice, exploitation, and oppression to protect water, forests, and land. This inspires all of us to walk on the path of struggle, courage, and self-respect

Delhi's push for clear air

No tax on EVs up to Rs 30 lakh, only electric 2-wheelers from Apr 2028

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 11: In a far-reaching move, the Delhi government Saturday proposed a hugely reformist electric vehicle policy, which includes zero registration fee and road tax on EVs priced up to 30 lakh, massive proliferation of charging stations and a Rs 1 lakh incentive on purchase of new EVs upon scrapping old vehicles.

The draft policy, which also requires at least 10 per cent of school buses to be electrically powered within two years, is largely aimed at reducing vehicular emissions, which have made Delhi one of the most polluted cities in the world.

The government has proposed a 100 per cent exemption on road tax and registration fees for electric cars with an ex-showroom price of up to Rs 30 lakh, valid till March 31, 2030.

These segments, known for high daily usage, are seen as key contributors to Delhi's pollution.

Cars priced above Rs 30 lakh will not receive such benefits, while strong hybrid vehicles will be eligible for a 50 per cent tax exemption, signalling a



Petrol and diesel vehicles will no longer be added to delivery and ride aggregator fleets in Delhi from this year, while only electric auto-rickshaws will be registered from next year

transitional approach.

Recognising that two-wheelers constitute the bulk of Delhi's vehicle population, the policy offers declining incentives to encourage early adoption

A Delhi resident buying an electric two-wheeler

older vehicles. The benefit is limited to the first 1 lakh eligible applicants.

Petrol and diesel vehicles will no longer be added to delivery and ride aggregator fleets in Delhi from this year, while only electric auto-rickshaws will be registered from next year.

Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said the draft policy, proposed to be in force until March 31, 2030, outlines a comprehensive framework to promote clean and sustainable transport in the city.

"The proposed Delhi EV Draft Policy 2026 is a significant step towards establishing a clean, accessible and sustainable transport system in the capital," she said.

"Extensive financial incentives, tax exemptions, mandatory provisions and infrastructure development have been emphasised to promote electric vehicles in Delhi," the chief minister added.

The Delhi government has earmarked a total outlay of Rs 3,954.25 crore for the policy. This includes Rs 1,236.25 crore for purchase incentives, Rs 1,718 crore for scrapping incentives and Rs 1,000 crore for charging infrastructure development, she added.

13 killed, 30 hurt in multi-vehicle collision



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Katihar (Bihar), April 11: At least 13 people were killed and 30 others injured following a collision involving a bus, a truck, and a pickup van in Bihar's Katihar district Saturday evening, a police officer said.

The accident took place at 6:30 pm on NH-31 in Kodha block of Katihar, Superintendent of Police Shikhar Choudhary told reporters.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh to the next of kin of each of the deceased, and Rs 50,000 to each injured.

While initial reports said seven people died in the accident, six of the injured succumbed during treatment.

A local police official said those travelling in the pickup van were coming from the neighbouring Purnea district.

He said that how the accident occurred is being investigated. It is suspected that the bus driver, who is among the injured people, lost control of the vehicle leading to the crash.

According to a statement issued by the district police, all the injured people have been taken to the nearest government hospital in Purnea.

Officials are trying to ascertain the identity of the deceased, the statement said.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expressed grief over the deaths of people in the accident and announced an ex gratia for the kin of the deceased. "The chief minister... announced an ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh each to the immediate family members of the deceased from the CM's relief fund. He also announced Rs 50,000 each to those injured in the accident," an official release said.

SHORT TAKES

Assam records historic 85.96 % voter turnout

Guwahati: A record 85.96 per cent of Assam's 2.50 crore electorate exercised their franchise in the April 9 Assembly polls, the Election Commission said Saturday. This marks the highest voter turnout in the state's history, surpassing the previous high of 84.72 per cent recorded in 2016, when the BJP first came to power. The turnout had dipped to 82.04 per cent in 2021 when polling was held under COVID-19 protocols. After the close of polling on Thursday, the EC estimated the turnout at 85.64, which was revised to 85.91 Friday. The EC updated the turnout figures as data from all polling stations came in, an official said. Women voters outnumbered men, recording a turnout of 86.54 per cent compared to 85.37 per cent among male voters. Around 35.85 per cent of third-gender voters also exercised their franchise. Turnout among both male and female voters saw an increase from 2021 levels, which stood at 82.05 per cent and 82.04 per cent, respectively.

Crude bomb explodes on school rooftop

Kalyani: A crude bomb exploded on the rooftop of a school building in Nadia district of poll-bound West Bengal Saturday, police said. No casualties were reported in the incident that happened at Ghordagacha Madhyamik Shiksha Kendra in the Saguna panchayat area in the Kalyani assembly constituency, they said. The blast took place shortly after school hours, when students had left the premises following an examination. A few teachers and non-teaching staff were still present when the loud explosion was heard from the rooftop, they added. Teachers rushed upstairs and found that a crude bomb had gone off, while another unexploded device was lying nearby. Police were immediately informed.

Sahil Chauhan held by Haryana Police

New Delhi: Gangster Sahil Chauhan, wanted in multiple cases in different states and facing an Interpol Red Notice, was deported from Thailand, officials said Saturday. Several other gangsters, including Rao Indrajit Yadav, have been detained in Dubai and other countries. Their paperwork is being processed, and extradition is underway, Haryana Police's STF IG B Sathesh Bala said. Chauhan was located in Bangkok by the Central Bureau of Investigation using Interpol channels and was brought back to Indira Gandhi International Airport Saturday morning.

SNIPPETS

Boat tragedy: Mann questions lack of safety

Jagraon: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Saturday said the boat that capsized in Vrindavan was carrying more people than its capacity without any life jackets, stressing the lack of safety measures behind the accident. Mann also confirmed that another body was recovered from the river, taking the toll in the accident that happened Friday to 11, while four people were still missing. Twenty-two pilgrims were safely pulled out from the Yamuna by rescue personnel in Mathura. He said his government will talk to the UP administration so that such incidents do not take place again. "Lakhs of people visit there. Such incidents should not take place again. We will certainly talk to them in this regard," the chief minister said. Mann expressed grief with the families of the victims, most of whom were pilgrims from Jagraon and Dugri areas of Ludhiana district in Punjab.

ED conducts 5-hour raid at ex-Bengal min Partha Chatterjee's home ahead of polls

Kolkata/New Delhi: An Enforcement Directorate team Saturday conducted a five-hour raid at former West Bengal education minister Partha Chatterjee's residence in connection with the school jobs scam, ED officials said. The agency team searched his home ahead of the assembly elections to be held April 23 and 29. ED officials reached Chatterjee's house in Naktala area around 10.45 am after central forces cordoned off the premises. The central agency also questioned him, an ED official said. The team, including a woman official, left the residence at 4:30 pm, but did not talk to the waiting media persons on the nearby road. The former minister did not come out of his residence to meet the media despite requests. Chatterjee was released on bail November 11, 2025, after spending over three years (39 months) in custody following his arrest by the ED July 23, 2022, in connection with the scam.

Punjab nod to amended sacrilege law with stricter punishments

Chandigarh: The Punjab Cabinet Saturday approved stringent amendments to the law on sacrilege to make punishments more severe, including life imprisonment. The Cabinet in a meeting, chaired by Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, cleared the Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Bill, 2026, which proposes enhanced penalties, including life imprisonment, to deter incidents of 'beadri' (sacrilege) and uphold the sanctity of Guru Granth Sahib. According to an official statement, the move comes in view of past incidents of sacrilege that have hurt public sentiments and disturbed communal harmony. It noted that existing provisions under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 do not provide sufficiently stringent punishment. The amended sacrilege law will be introduced in the Assembly Monday.



A protestor places placards along a wall during a protest after 22 community dogs were allegedly caught and taken from DRDO township, at Freedom Park, in Bengaluru, Karnataka, Saturday

UCC is threat to tribal identity: Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, April 11: The Congress Saturday expressed concern over the ruling BJP's plan to implement a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in Madhya Pradesh, saying it could pose a serious threat to the identity, traditions and constitutional rights of the tribal community.

Umang Singhar, the Leader of the Opposition in the state assembly and the Congress's tribal face in MP, also accused the government of trying to impose the UCC in haste, without holding any dialogue and without following the democratic process, which reflects the BJP's "intolerant mindset".

India is a country of diversity where tribal communities have lived for centuries with their distinct cultural heritage, traditions and social systems, he said.

"Imposing a uniform law in such a context would not only disrespect their traditions but also violate their rights," he said in a statement.

During a cabinet meeting held Tuesday, Chief Minister Mohan Yadav asked ministers to study the UCC before its implementation in the state.

The MP home department has since initiated the process, as it is responsible for preparing the UCC bill, sources said. If the government has its

way, it might bring the bill before Diwali, they added.

According to them, a high-level committee will soon be constituted at the state level.

The BJP government in Uttarakhnad has already enforced the UCC in that state January 27. The Gujarat assembly passed it last month. One of the BJP's poll promises in the West Bengal elections is rolling out the UCC within six months after forming the government.

Singhar said Article 44 of the Constitution places the UCC under the Directive Principles of State Policy, as the Constituent Assembly recognised the need for broad consensus on the issue in a diverse country.

FIRST RECORDED BIRTH IN THE WILD AT SANCTUARY

Cheetah gives birth to 4 cubs at MP's Kuno park

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sheopur (MP), April 11: A 24-month-old Indian-born cheetah gave birth to four cubs at the Kuno National Park Saturday, marking the first recorded cheetah birth in the wild at the sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh, officials said.

"A historic moment unfolds at Kuno National Park as an Indian-born female Cheetah of Gamin, aged 25 months, has given birth to four cubs in the wild-marking a major milestone in India's cheetah conservation journey," elated Union Environment and Forest Minister Bhupender Yadav

wrote on X.

This took the number of cheetahs in India to 57, officials said. The female cheetah who gave birth to the litter Saturday is an offspring of the South African-born Gamin.

The minister mentioned that since cheetahs were first brought to the KNP from Africa in 2022, this was the "first recorded birth in the wild" and also the "first such instance involving an Indian-born female."

"This is a significant step toward achieving the core objectives of the project-survival and breeding under natural conditions," Yadav further said in his post on X.



The development reflected the growing adaptation of cheetahs to Indian conditions, the minister said, adding that

it was a testament to the dedicated and tireless efforts of the managers, veterinarians and field staff at Kuno.

A historic moment unfolds at Kuno National Park as an Indian-born female Cheetah of Gamin, aged 25 months, has given birth to four cubs in the wild-marking a major milestone in India's cheetah conservation journey

BHUPENDER YADAV | UNION ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST MINISTER

It was a proud moment for the nation, Yadav added. A total of 49 cubs have been born in 11 litters at Kuno since 2023, of which 37 survive. The overall cheetah population in India, including cubs, has now reached 57, an official said.

All seven adult female chee-

tahs have produced litters at Kuno, he noted.

Cheetahs, known to be the fastest animal species on land, became extinct in India in the 1950s. Under an ambitious re-introduction programme, eight cheetahs were translocated to KNP from Namibia in September 2022, followed by 12 from South Africa in February 2023. A third batch of nine cheetahs arrived from Botswana February 28 this year. Three cheetahs were relocated to Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, while the rest remain at Kuno. The endangered species are not kept in a single habitat to reduce disease risk, officials said.



**“We will reopen the files of every atrocity committed against women under the TMC rule. We will reopen the files of every rape case and ensure accountability in each. This is Modi’s guarantee”**  
 NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

## BIHAR BANS PRIVATE PRACTICE BY GOVT DOCTORS

The Bihar government Saturday announced a complete ban on private practice by doctors employed in government hospitals. According to a notification issued by the state Health Department, the decision was taken under the state’s flagship programme ‘Saat Nischay-3’ (seven resolves) for the 2025-30 period



### of the day quote

From the freedom struggle onwards, the Kisan Sabha has consistently raised the basic issues of farmers - land, remunerative prices and debt relief  
**PRAKASH KARAT** | SENIOR CPI(M) LEADER

If the Trinamool Congress is weak in this soil, the loss for you is much more than the loss for TMC  
**ABHISHEK BANERJEE** | NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY, TMC

I expect the BJP to perform even better than before in the state. I believe the BJP will return with very good results, even better than earlier. Out of 126 seats, we may secure around 90 to 100  
**HIMANTA BISWA SARMA** | CM, ASSAM

## POST OF THE DAY

Why is the Iran War peace summit not happening in Delhi? A summit that’s a defining moment in 21st century’s geopolitics. 1) India is friends with Iran, America, Israel, entire GCC and Russia, and now China too. 2) India has huge interests in the region. Of all kinds. 3) India has a strong history of international leadership, right from the 1950s. 4) India has aligned with the US and done everything Trump demanded in trade terms. 5) India’s stature, size and strength warrant it. So, what went wrong? Why did India lose this opportunity? Why is it absent from the game?  
 @sandeep\_PT

## Over 2.04 crore voters deleted from UP rolls

Over 84 lakh new voters were added, taking the final electorate to 13,39,84,792, according to data released by the Election Commission of India



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, April 11:** More than 2.04 crore voters have been removed from Uttar Pradesh’s electoral rolls following the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise, with deletions largely concentrated in urban centres and a higher proportion involving women voters.

Over 84 lakh new voters were added, taking the final electorate to 13,39,84,792, according to data released by the Election Commission of India (ECI).

The final electoral roll comprises 7,30,71,071 male electors (around 54 per cent), 6,09,09,525 female voters (45.46 per cent), and 4,206 third gender voters.

The gender ratio improved to 834 female voters per 1,000 male voters from 824 in the draft roll, though it declined from 877 before the SIR due to higher deletions among women.

The number of voters aged 18-19 rose sharply to 17,63,360 -- an increase of 14,29,379 compared to the draft roll -- accounting for 1.32 per cent of the electorate.

The state had 15.44 crore voters in the rolls frozen October 27, 2025. This dropped to 12,55,56,025 in the draft elec-

toral roll published January 6, including 6.88 crore male, 5.67 crore female and 4,119 third gender voters.

After the claims and objections process, the final roll saw a net increase of 84,28,767 voters compared to the draft list. This included an increase of 42,27,902 male voters, 42,00,778 female voters and 87 third gender voters. Among districts, Lucknow recorded the highest decline in voters in absolute terms (over 9.14 lakh), followed by Prayagraj (over 8.26 lakh), Kanpur Nagar (over 6.87 lakh), Agra (over 6.37 lakh) and Ghaziabad (over 5.74 lakh).

In percentage terms, Lucknow (22.89 per cent), Ghaziabad (around 20 per cent) and Kanpur Nagar (19.42 per cent) were among the worst affected. Urban constituencies saw the sharpest declines, with Lucknow Cantonment recording the highest drop at 34.18 per cent, followed by Allahabad North (34.01 per cent).

At the Assembly constituency level, other urban segments such as Lucknow East, Lucknow North and Agra Cantonment also saw contractions of around 30 per cent or more.

### US-IRAN CEASEFIRE

## 1st Indian vessel crosses Hormuz Strait since truce

Jag Vikram is the ninth Indian vessel to exit the Persian Gulf since early March, while about 15 India-flagged ships remain in the region, awaiting passage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 11:** An India-flagged liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tanker, Jag Vikram, has crossed the Strait of Hormuz, marking the first such transit by an Indian vessel since a temporary two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran was announced.

Ship tracking data showed the tanker moved through the strategic waterway between Friday night and Saturday morning and was located in the Gulf of Oman, east of the Strait Saturday afternoon, proceeding eastwards.

The vessel movement was also confirmed by a government statement giving an update on developments in West Asia.

“The India-flagged LPG vessel Jag Vikram has safely crossed the Strait of Hormuz today (Saturday),” it said. “The vessel is carrying approximately 20,400 tonnes of LPG cargo with 24 seafarers onboard. It is expected to arrive at Mumbai April 15, 2026.”

Jag Vikram is the ninth Indian vessel to exit the Persian Gulf since early March, while about 15 India-flagged ships remain in the region, awaiting passage.

Owned by Mumbai-based Great Eastern Shipping Com-



pany, Jag Vikram is a mid-sized gas carrier with a deadweight capacity of over 26,000 tonnes.

At least 28 India-flagged vessels were in the Strait of Hormuz region when the West Asia conflict erupted, including 24 on the western side and four on the eastern side of the waterway.

Prior to Jag Vikram’s transit, eight vessels from the western side and two from the eastern side had managed to sail to safety. Several foreign-flagged ships carrying India-bound cargo also remain stranded in the Persian Gulf.

According to MarineTraffic data, hundreds of vessels remain in the region, including 426 tankers, 34 LPG carriers and 19 LNG vessels, many of which had been effectively stranded amid the disruption.

The government statement said that port operations across India remain normal, with no congestion reported.

“The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways continues to coordinate with the Ministry of External Affairs, Indian Missions, and maritime stakehold-

ers to ensure seafarer welfare and uninterrupted maritime operations,” it added.

India, the world’s third-largest energy consumer and fourth-largest gas user, imports about 88 per cent of its crude oil, around half of its natural gas needs and nearly 60 per cent of its liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) requirement, underscoring its dependence on overseas supplies.

More than half of crude imports, about 40 per cent of gas and up to 85-90 per cent of LPG shipments come from Gulf countries and pass through the Strait of Hormuz, a key global energy corridor that was shut during the West Asia conflict.

The United States and Iran earlier this week agreed to a conditional two-week ceasefire that includes reopening the Strait for shipping.

India curtailed LPG supplies to commercial users such as hotels and restaurants after disruptions to Gulf energy flows, before restoring about 70 per cent of pre-crisis volumes as alternative supplies were secured.

## Asha Bhosle admitted to hospital due to chest infection

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 11:** Legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle was admitted to a private hospital here Saturday evening due to chest infection and exhaustion, her granddaughter Zana Bhosle said.

The 92-year-old singer was admitted to Breach Candy hospital in South Mumbai. Sources had earlier said she suffered cardiac arrest and also had pulmonary problems.

Zana took to Instagram to share details about Bhosle’s health.

“My grandmother, Asha Bhosle due to extreme exhaustion and suffering a chest infection has been admitted to hospital and we request you to value our privacy. Treatment is ongoing and hopefully everything will be well and we shall update you positively,” she wrote.



Asha Bhosle, with a career spanning over eight decades, is known for her versatility and has sung many memorable melodies, from romantic songs to ghazals to peppy numbers.

Among her most popular songs are ‘Abhi Na Jao Chhod Kar’, ‘In Ankhon Ki Masti’, ‘Dil Cheez Kya Hai’, ‘Piya Tu Ab to Aaja’, ‘Duniya Mein Logon Ko’, and ‘Zaara Se Jhoom Loom Main’, among others.

Bhosle has recorded over 12,000 songs in different Indian languages and has been the voice for many leading ladies, from Meena Kumari, Madhubala, Zeenat Aman to Kajol.

## EC: Assembly polls in Kerala, Assam, Puducherry drew global attention

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram/New Delhi, April 11:** The EC Saturday said that the Assembly polls in Kerala, Puducherry and Assam drew global attention as 38 delegates from 22 nations witnessed firsthand the electoral process in India.

The Election Commission (EC), in a statement, said that the delegates witnessed the scale, precision, and vibrancy of India’s electoral process as part of the poll panel’s International Election Visitors’ Programme (IEVP) 2026.

It said that the delegates described their experience as “a true festival of democracy” and expressed admiration for the record voter participation, meticulous planning and seamless execution of polls by the ECI.

“Indian voting, this is a true festival of democracy for the whole world...what is overwhelming for me is the enthusiasm of people to vote. We can only learn from this process;



it’s a huge process and done right,” Branimir Farkas from Croatia is quoted as having said in the statement.

The international delegates began their two-day visit, April 8 and 9, to Assam, Kerala, and Puducherry by visiting the dispatch and distribution centres, where they observed the systematic movement of polling materials through well-planned logistics and established standard operating procedures, the statement said.

On poll day morning, the delegates observed mock polls and thereafter, separately visited polling stations in Assam, Kerala and Puducherry to witness the actual polling process, the statement said.



A camel sits as people walk past it amid a dust storm at the banks of the Sangam, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

## Diktats by khap panchayats unconstitutional: Raj HC

Measures like declaring a person’s ‘hukkaa-paani bandh’ effectively sever individuals and families from community life, the court said, adding that such practices erode dignity and violate core constitutional protection including equality, liberty and the right to life

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jodhpur, April 11:** In a strong rebuke to extra-legal community bodies, the Rajasthan High Court has held that diktats issued by self-styled caste and khap panchayats ranging from social boycott to steep monetary penalties are unconstitutional and undermine the rule of law.

Calling the issue a serious social concern, a single bench of Justice Farjand Ali Friday directed the Rajasthan government to frame a clear policy backed by a standard operating procedure (SOP) to tackle complaints of social boycott.

The bench was hearing a batch of 11 petitions highlight-

ing instances of coercion and ostracism across districts such as Sirohi, Barmer, Nagaur, Balotra, Jalore and Jodhpur.

The petitioners contended that despite complaints, authorities often failed to act decisively against such informal bodies.

Taking note of recurring patterns, the court observed that these caste forums function as parallel adjudicatory systems, issuing binding orders without any statutory authority.

Measures like declaring a person’s ‘hukkaa-paani bandh’ effectively sever individuals and families from community life, the court said, adding that such practices erode dignity and violate core constitutional protection including equality,



liberty and the right to life. The judgement draws on findings from a court-appointed panel that documented instan-

ces where families were punished for exercising personal freedoms, including choosing their partners or speaking

against entrenched customs.

In some cases, families were fined heavily and excluded from community networks for actions as routine as conducting wedding processions with traditional celebrations.

The court emphasised that these guidelines must be uniformly implemented across districts and adequately publicised to ensure awareness among citizens and officials alike.

Significantly, the court flagged the absence of a dedicated legal framework in Rajasthan to directly criminalise social boycott.

It urged the state to consider enacting a law on the lines of the Maharashtra Protection

of People from Social Boycott Act, 2016, noting that a specific statute would enable targeted prosecution and stronger victim protection.

In a set of operational directions, the court instructed the police leadership to designate a senior officer, not below the rank of Additional Superintendent of Police, to oversee investigations into all pending cases related to social ostracism, with a mandate to complete probes within 90 days.

It also ordered the appointment of nodal officers in each district, functioning under the joint supervision of district collectors and police chiefs, to handle complaints and ensure timely redressal.



God does not bless any conflict POPE LEO XIV | CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADER

UKRAINE, RUSSIA SWAP POW

Ukraine and Russia exchanged 175 prisoners of war (POW) each Saturday in their latest swap, officials from both countries said, as they prepare to start a ceasefire to mark Orthodox Easter.



9-year-old found locked in utility van since 2024

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, April 11: A 9-year-old boy was rescued this week after living locked in his father's utility van in eastern France since 2024, according to the local prosecutor.

Police were alerted by a neighbour to "sounds of a child" coming from a van on Monday in the village of Hagenbach near the borders of Switzerland and Germany.

After forcing the van open, they found a child "lying in a fetal position, naked, covered by a blanket on top of a mound of trash and near excrement", the statement said.

The child was clearly malnourished and could no longer walk, because he had been in a seated position for so long, it said.

The boy's father told investigators that he put the child in the truck in November 2024 "to protect him", because his partner wanted to send the boy to a psychiatric hospital.

The prosecutor said there was no medical record that the boy had any psychiatric problems before he disappeared, and that the boy had had good grades in school.

Warships cross Hormuz amid talks

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, April 11: Two US warships have reportedly passed through the Strait of Hormuz, the first such transit since the war with Iran began, as President Donald Trump said Saturday that the United States had started "clearing out" the strategic waterway.

The US Navy guided-missile destroyers passed through the strait with no issues reported, The Wall Street Journal reported, citing three US officials.

The operation was not coordinated with authorities in Tehran, US media outlet Axios said.

"We're now starting the process of clearing out the Strait of Hormuz," Trump said on his Truth Social platform, calling it "a favor" to countries such as China, Japan and France that "don't have the Courage or Will to do this work themselves."

He insisted that Iran is "LOSING BIG!" in the conflict, while acknowledging that Iranian mines in the strategic strait - through which a fifth of the world's crude passes - still pose a threat.

"The only thing they have going is the threat that a ship may 'bunk' into one of their sea mines," Trump wrote.

The development comes as top US and Iranian officials gathered in the Pakistani



REPRESENTATIVE PIC

capital Islamabad Saturday to hold talks that seek to end their war in the Middle East that has killed thousands, roiled energy supplies and hurt the global economy.

The key shipping lane off the coast of Iran has been virtually blocked by Tehran since the United States and Israel started bombing Iran February 28, though reopening the strait was ostensibly a condition of the shaky ceasefire put in place earlier this week.

Senior Iranian and American officials began negotiations in Pakistan on Satur-

ISRAELI STRIKES IN LEBANON: DEATH TOLL RISES TO OVER 2K

The death toll in Lebanon from Israeli strikes in the ongoing war between Israel and Hezbollah has risen to 2,020, the Lebanese health ministry said Saturday. The death toll from nearly six weeks of war includes 248 women, 165 children and 85 health workers, the ministry said.

day, Iranian media reported, in a bid to bring to an end a conflict that has plunged the Middle East into violence and sent shockwaves through the world economy.

In an earlier post, Trump said that empty tankers were headed to the United States from around the world to purchase oil, without providing details.

PEACE POINTS

- Iran wants a ceasefire in Lebanon, where Israeli attacks on Iran-backed Hezbollah militants have killed nearly 2,000 people since the start of the fighting in March. Israel and the US have said the Lebanon campaign is not part of the Iran-US ceasefire while Tehran insists it is.
Iran wants the US to unblock Iranian assets and end sanctions that have crippled its economy for years. Washington has indicated that it is open to significant sanctions relief but only in exchange for concessions from Iran on its nuclear and missile programmes.
Iran wants acknowledgment of its authority over the Strait of Hormuz, where it aims to collect transit fees and control access in what would amount to a huge shift in regional power. The US wants it opened for oil tankers and other traffic without any limitations, including tolls.
Iran is expected to demand compensation for all damage during the six-week war. The US has not commented on this.
Iran wants to be allowed to enrich uranium, which Washington has ruled out and President Donald Trump has insisted is non-negotiable.
Israel and the US both want Iran's missile capabilities to be dramatically curtailed. Tehran has said its formidable missile arsenal is non-negotiable.
Iran wants withdrawal of US combat forces from the region, cessation of war on all fronts and a commitment to non-aggression. Trump has vowed to retain military assets in the Middle East until a peace deal is reached and warned of a major escalation in fighting if it failed to comply.

of the day quote

I'm fed up with the fact that families across the country see their bills go up and down on energy, businesses' bills go up and down on energy because of the actions of Putin or Trump across the world



We initially discussed the situation in the Middle East, and called for all parties to respect the ceasefire and to make sure this applies to Lebanon, and for all parties to respect the freedom of navigation in the Straits of Hormuz, and we highlighted the importance of getting a strong and lasting diplomatic solution



Ukraine has some of the best technology in the world that it's developed here in the war. I think that could provide utility in the Middle East, as we're seeing already against Shahed drones, all the way through to the Strait of Hormuz



SHORT TAKES

Taiwan detects 16 Chinese warplanes

Taipei: Taiwan's defence ministry said on Saturday that it spotted 16 Chinese warplanes operating near the island the previous day, around the same time China's president was meeting the Taiwanese opposition leader. Late Friday morning, Chinese President Xi Jinping met Cheng Li-wun, chairwoman of Taiwan's largest opposition party the Kuomintang (KMT) in Beijing, where Xi said he "absolutely would not tolerate" independence for Taiwan, which China views as its own territory.

Defence pact: Pak sends jets to Saudi

Riyadh: Pakistan has sent fighter jets and other military forces to Saudi Arabia to boost security under a defence pact between the two countries, the Saudi defence ministry said on Saturday, as Islamabad hosted talks aimed at ending the Iran war. The deployment follows a wave of Iranian talks on the Gulf Kingdom over the past weeks that struck key energy infrastructure and killed a Saudi national. Riyadh and Islamabad signed a mutual defence pact in September 2025, committing both sides to treat any aggression against either country as an attack on both.

PIO jailed for forging bank documents

Singapore: An Indian-origin man in Singapore was sentenced to seven weeks in jail for forging his clients' bank statements so that the insurance policies he was selling to them could take effect. Vijendren Tanapal, 38, pleaded guilty to two forgery charges involving two Japanese clients while working as a wealth planning manager at a bank here.

Fuel stirs hit Ireland

London: Protests over the soaring cost of fuel spread disruption across Ireland Saturday with many gas stations running dry as truck and tractor drivers staged a fifth day of blockades at the country's sole fuel refinery and several depots.

Mob attacks Hindu households, businesses in Bangladesh



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, April 11: A Muslim spiritual leader was hacked to death for allegedly insulting Islam while shops and households owned by Hindus were vandalised in two separate mob attacks in western Kushtia and northwestern Rangpur in Bangladesh Saturday.

An irate mob attacked several Hindu households and businesses in pre-dawn hours over the death of a Muslim youth in their neighbourhood in Rangpur, about 300-odd kms north-west of Dhaka.

A "third party" carried out the vandalism to divert the case and police's attention from the overnight murder of a person named Rakib Hassan, police claimed. Prothom Alo newspaper said more than a hundred

members of the Hindu community live in the Daspara market area where Hassan was murdered allegedly by drug peddler Mohammad Momin over a previous dispute.

Reporters found Momin's house vacant as he went into hiding while his family members feared retaliatory attacks, the newspaper said.

Police said the attack took place even when the deceased youth's family said the Hindu community had nothing to do with his murder. In the second incident, police and media reports said a group of assailants killed school teacher and spiritual figure Shamim Reza Jahangir and critically wounded at least seven of his followers and set on fire his sanctuary or 'darbar' over allegations of insulting Islam in Kushtia, about 200 kms west of Dhaka.

The media reports said the mob also set fire to Jahangir's darbar. Officials said armed police and elite anti-terror Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) forces were sent to the scene to prevent further violence.

Nizar new Iraq prez



REUTERS

Baghdad, April 11: The Iraqi parliament Saturday elected Kurdish politician Nizar Amedi as the country's new president, a largely ceremonial role, following a parliamentary election last November.

Amedi, 58, is a former environment minister and has headed the political office of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in Baghdad since 2024.

Iraq is now due to choose a prime minister, a closely-watched and sensitive pick.

US President Donald Trump threatened in January to withdraw Washington's support for Iraq, a major oil producer, if former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki was designated to form a cabinet.

UK halts plan to cede Chagos Islands after US opposition

Britain forcibly displaced up to 2,000 indigenous Chagossians in the late 1960s and 1970s to establish the base on the Diego Garcia atoll

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, April 11: Britain's government said Saturday it had put on hold its deal to cede sovereignty of the Chagos Islands - home to the US-British Diego Garcia air base - which has been criticised by US President Donald Trump.

The planned legislation underpinning the deal to cede the islands to Mauritius, which needs the backing of Washington, would not be included in the government's next parliamentary agenda, The Times newspaper said.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office said London would try to persuade Washington to



give its formal approval.

Trump said in February that the deal was a "big mistake", having previously said it was the best that Starmer would get.

Under the deal, Britain would retain control of the strategically important military base on Diego Garcia on a 99-year lease that preserves US operations there.

A British government spokesperson said ensuring the long-term operational security of Diego Garcia would remain a priority.

"We continue to believe the

agreement is the best way to protect the long-term future of the base, but we have always said we would only proceed with the deal if it has US support. We are continuing to engage with the US and Mauritius," the spokesperson said.

The alliance between Washington and London has come under strain in recent weeks over Starmer's reluctance to get involved in the US-Israeli war on Iran and his refusal at the start of the conflict to allow Trump to use British air bases to launch attacks.

Artemis II astronauts return to Earth after historic moon trip

Four astronauts land safely after historic lunar flyby, NASA now eyes landing on moon

REUTERS

Houston, April 11: The Artemis II capsule and its four-member crew streaked through Earth's atmosphere and safely splashed down in the Pacific Ocean Friday after nearly 10 days in space, capping the first voyage by humans to the vicinity of the moon in over half a century.

NASA's gumdrop-shaped Orion capsule, dubbed Integrity, parachuted gently into calm seas off the Southern California coast shortly after 5:07 p.m. Pacific Time (0007 GMT Saturday), concluding a mission that four days prior took the astronauts 252,756 miles away from Earth, deeper into space than anyone had flown before.

The Artemis II flight, traveling a total of 694,392 miles (1,117,515 km) in two Earth orbits and a climactic lunar flyby some 4,000 miles from its surface, was the debut crewed test flight in a series of Artemis



missions that aim to return astronauts to the lunar surface starting in 2028.

'PERFECT BULL'S EYE' SPLASHDOWN

The splashdown under partly cloudy skies was carried by live video feed in a NASA webcast. "A perfect bull's eye splashdown for Integrity and its four astronauts," NASA commentator Rob Navias said moments after the landing.

"We are stable one - four



green crew members," mission commander Reid Wiseman radioed just after splashdown, signaling the capsule was upright and that all four astronauts were in good shape.

It took NASA and US Navy recovery teams less than two hours to secure the floating capsule and retrieve the four crew members - US astronauts Wiseman, 50, Victor Glover, 49, and Christina Koch, 47, along with Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen, 50. The crew's homecoming



was the riskiest test of the mission and its Lockheed Martin-built Orion spacecraft, proving the capsule's heat shield could withstand the extreme forces of re-entry on a lunar-return trajectory.

The capsule plunged into Earth's atmosphere at 32 times the speed of sound, with atmospheric friction pummeling its heat shield at temperatures of some 5,000 degrees Fahrenheit (2,760 degrees Celsius). A sheath of ionized gas enveloped the vehicle, causing a planned radio

- Four astronauts flew farther from Earth than anyone before
10-day mission marked first human voyage to moon in half century
Atmospheric re-entry posed key test of capsule's heat shield

STEPPING STONE TO MARS

The quartet blasted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, April 1 aboard NASA's giant Space Launch System rocket, orbiting twice around Earth before sailing on for a rare journey around the far side of the moon.

In so doing, they became the first astronauts to fly around Earth's only natural satellite since the Apollo program of the 1960s and '70s. Glover, Koch and Hansen also made history as the first Black astronaut,

blackout of over six minutes at the peak of re-entry stress.

The tension broke as contact was re-established some 40 seconds later than expected, and two sets of parachutes billowed from the nose of the free-falling capsule to slow its descent to about 15 mph (25 kph) before Orion gently hit the water.

NASA is seeking to achieve a crewed moon landing ahead of China, which is aiming to put its own crews there around 2030. The agency more broadly aims to establish a long-term lunar presence as a stepping stone to eventual human exploration of Mars.

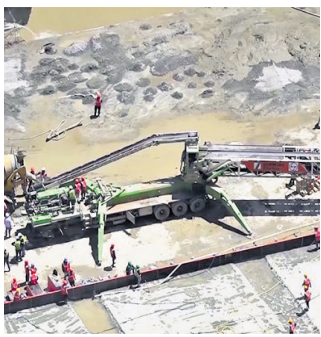
In a historical parallel to the Cold War era of Apollo, the Artemis II mission has played out against a backdrop of political and social turmoil, including a US military conflict that has proven unpopular at home.



**It has been inspiring to spend time in India and witness the dynamism of its talent ecosystem. The depth of aspiration, the speed of growth, and the commitment to professional excellence are remarkable. India is not just participating in the global talent economy; it is helping define it**  
AMY DUFRANE | CEO, HRCI

## WORK RESUMES ON BHUTAN'S HYDRO PROJECT AFTER 7-YEAR HALT

Work on Bhutan's 1,200 MW Punatsangchhu-I hydropower project has resumed after a seven-year suspension, with India's Power Minister Manohar Lal attending a key concrete pouring ceremony marking the restart of dam construction. The revival of the India-funded project, stalled since 2019 due to geological challenges, is seen as a major milestone in bilateral energy cooperation and is expected to pave the way for completion within five years



## of the day quote

**I am confident that we will surely rise to the occasion. A \$10 trillion mark will not be built by capital or policy alone. It will be built in no small part by the quality of the legal system that upholds the rule of law and the promises on which all of that depends**  
SURYA KANT | CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA



**India's retail real estate market is currently operating in a demand-led environment, where occupier interest continues to outpace the availability of high-quality retail space**  
GAUTAM SARAF | EXECUTIVE MANAGING DIRECTOR - MUMBAI & NEW BUSINESS, CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD



**We have announced in our mid-term plan that by 2031, we are going to have four more electric vehicles in our portfolio and obviously, we will have to play across the sectors. So, everything is there in the pipeline**  
PARTHO BANERJEE | SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MARKETING AND SALES, MSIL



## Anil new General Manager Of South Eastern Railway



**Kolkata, April 11:** Anil Kumar Jain has taken over the charge of General Manager, South Eastern Railway recently.

The former General Manager, Anil Kumar Mishra, retired from service on March 31. Thereafter, Soumitra Majumdar, Additional General Manager/S.E. Railway looked after the post of General Manager/S.E. Railway from April 1 to 9 as an interim measure.

Prior to joining S.E. Railway as General Manager, Jain was the Principal Chief Electrical Engineer of North Western Railway, Jaipur. He is an IR-SEE (Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers) Officer of 1990 Batch and joined Indian Railways in 1991. He served as Divisional Railway Manager, Rajkot in Western Railway. He also worked in several key positions of Indian Railways including Chief Electrical Engineer (Planning) in North Western Railway, Principal Chief Safety Officer in South Western Railway, Chief Design Engineer (Electrical) in Banaras Locomotive Works, General Manager of Rail India Technical & Economic Service (RITES) etc.

## India raises export duties on diesel, ATF



*The duties were levied to increase domestic availability of the fuel amid the war in West Asia*

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 11:** The Centre Saturday increased excise duties on petroleum products, including high-speed diesel, with immediate effect, according to a notification issued by the Ministry of Finance.

The Union government has hiked the export duty or windfall tax on diesel by ₹34 per litre to ₹55.5 per litre from ₹21.5 per litre, with immediate effect.

As per the Gazette notification, the Special Additional Excise Duty on high-speed diesel has been raised to ₹24 per litre.

In a separate notification, the Union government also increased the Road and Infrastructure cess on diesel to ₹36 per litre under provisions of the Finance Act, 2018.

The Centre said the revisions were aimed at aligning domestic duties with rising global crude prices and preventing exporters from gaining undue advantage due to price differentials.

Meanwhile, duty on aviation turbine fuel (ATF) has also been raised from ₹29.5 per litre to ₹42 per litre, while ex-

port duty on petrol continues to remain nil.

Global oil markets have remained volatile following the escalation of conflict in West Asia. On February 28, the US and Israel launched military strikes against Iran, triggering retaliatory actions from Tehran.

Subsequently, April 8, Iran, the US and Israel agreed to a two-week ceasefire after the conflict disrupted energy markets and trade flows across the West Asia region.

The notification said the decision to revise duties was taken as circumstances warranted immediate action.

Further amendments have also been made to earlier notifications issued March 26, 2026, revising applicable duty rates on petroleum products.

All the changes have come into force with immediate effect, the notification added.

Earlier, oil marketing companies hiked ATF prices. Rates for domestic carriers were increased by ₹8,289.04 per kilolitre, or 8.56 per cent, to ₹1,04,927.18 per kilolitre from ₹96,638.14 per kilolitre.

Meanwhile, prices for foreign carriers and non-scheduled, charter and ad-hoc operators were raised more sharply by 114.5 per cent to ₹2,07,341.22 per kilolitre.

Analysts said the increase in ATF prices may offer short-term relief to oil marketing companies.

## DIs offset FII selling as markets rebound over 5% this week

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 11:** Domestic institutional investors (DIIs) continued to provide crucial support to Indian equity markets this week, offsetting sustained selling by foreign institutional investors (FIIs), as global sentiment improved after a reported US-Iran ceasefire, exchange data showed.

FIIs offloaded equities worth ₹20,710 crore during the week, while DIIs emerged as net buyers with investments totalling ₹21,602 crore, helping benchmark indices recover over 5 per cent over the period, the data showed. Analysts attributed persistent FII selling to global and macro-economic concerns, including geopolitical tensions, elevated crude oil prices, rupee weakness, rising global bond yields and inflationary pressures.

However, FIIs posted a net inflow of ₹672 crore Friday, marking their first positive session since February 25, but strategists cautioned that sustained follow-through would be needed to signal a durable reversal in foreign sentiment.

Month-to-date data also showed a similar trend, with FIIs withdrawing ₹38,973 crore from Indian equities, while DIIs investing ₹35,983 crore.

While domestic institutions played the larger role, retail investors also remained active. Systematic investment plan (SIP) contributions from retailer into mutual funds hit a record ₹32,087 crore in March.

The easing of tensions after the US President Donald Trump announced a two-week truce with Iran, helped push crude prices lower and lifted investor risk appetite, market participants said.

Foreign institutional flows are likely to be driven by developments in US-Iran negotiations, its impact on crude prices and corporate earnings.

Indian equity benchmarks closed in green for the second consecutive week, amid huge short covering due to the US-Iran ceasefire. Nifty gained 5.89 per cent during the week and added 1.16 per cent on the last trading day to reach 24,050. At close the Sensex was up 918 points or 1.20 per cent at 77,550. It gained 5.77 per cent during the week.

## Prioritise quality, trust, consistency: Sailesh

*Sailesh Sarawgi is the owner of Odissi Jewellery, a prominent jewellery establishment recognised for its exquisite craftsmanship and diverse collections. Under his leadership, the store has become a trusted destination for those seeking high-quality gold, diamond, and silver jewellery. Based in Jharsuguda, he is dedicated to preserving traditional aesthetics while embracing modern design trends. Sailesh's commitment to customer satisfaction and ethical business practices has solidified the brand's reputation as a hallmark of elegance and reliability in the region. Excerpts...*



**SAILESH SARAWGI**  
OWNER, ODISSI JEWELLERY

**What has been the key driving force behind Odissi Jewellery's strong presence in Western Odisha?**

Our strong presence in Western Odisha has been driven by our commitment to traditional craftsmanship, quality products, and customer trust. We focus on preserving the rich cultural heritage of Odissi jewellery while offering designs that appeal to modern customers. Through consistent customer service, transparent pricing, and personalised service helps us stand out from the competition.

**Are you witnessing a shift in consumer preference between gold, diamond, and silver jewellery? How effective have your festive offers and discounts been in driving seasonal sales growth?**

Yes, we are witnessing a gradual shift in customer preferences. While gold jewellery continues to be the preferred choice for investment and traditional occasions, many customers are increasingly showing interest in diamond and silver jewellery for daily wear and gifting.

digital gold, or investing in gold when prices dip. Some delay buying or opt for installment and savings schemes to manage the higher costs. Despite this, demand remains steady during key occasions and festivals.

**How do you differentiate your gold, diamond, and temple jewellery collections from competitors in the region?**

We set our gold, diamond, and temple jewellery collections apart through unique traditional designs, exceptional craftsmanship, and guaranteed purity. Our collections blend Odissi cultural heritage with contemporary styles, offering exclusive designs that are rarely found in the local market. Additionally, our focus on building customer trust, transparent pricing, and personalised service helps us stand out from the competition.

**What role does your mobile app, 'ODISSI JEWELLERS,' play in enhancing customer engagement and boosting sales?**

The ODISSI JEWELLERS mobile app plays a key role in enhancing customer engagement and convenience. It enables customers to check live gold rates, purchase digital gold, browse our jewellery collections, and stay updated on offers and schemes. This not only strengthens customer relationships but also supports online sales and encourages repeat purchases.

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

I was inspired to enter this business by the rich tradition of jewellery craftsmanship and the opportunity to build a trusted brand within the community. The jewellery industry also offers long-term growth through strong customer relationships.

effective in boosting seasonal sales. Special schemes and promotional campaigns during festivals encourage purchases and help drive overall sales during peak seasons.

My advice to aspiring entrepreneurs is to prioritise quality, maintain transparency, foster customer trust, and stay updated with market trends and technology. Hard work and consistent service are essential for success in this field.

### AKSHAYA TRITIYA

#### Khimji Jewellers grand sale goes live

**Bhubaneswar:** Khimji Jewellers unveiled its much-anticipated "The Grand Akshaya Tritiya Sale" to mark the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya. This brings exclusive offers and exquisite collections to customers across Odisha. The festive campaign combines tradition with contemporary elegance, reinforcing the brand's 90 years legacy of trust and craftsmanship in the jewellery market. As part of the celebration, Khimji Jewellers is offering attractive festive benefits, including flat 50% off on gold jewellery making charges and flat 25% off on diamonds, making premium designs more accessible to customers. This offer is available at Khimji Jewellers' showrooms in Bhubaneswar, Berhampur, Cuttack, Puri, Jharsuguda, Rourkela, Angul and Jajpur Road providing an excellent opportunity for the customers to purchase exquisite jewellery on an auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya. Sharing his thoughts on the occasion, Mitesh Khimji, Managing Director, Khimji Jewellers, said, "Akshaya Tritiya is deeply rooted in our cultural and emotional fabric. It is not just about buying gold or diamond, but about investing in prosperity and celebrating new beginnings. At Khimji Jewellers, we take pride in offering Jewellery that stands for purity, trust, and timeless beauty. Through our 'The Grand Akshaya Tritiya Sale' we aim to make premium jewellery more accessible while ensuring our customers experience the finest craftsmanship and transparency." Considered one of the most auspicious days in the Hindu calendar, Akshaya Tritiya symbolizes eternal prosperity and success.

#### Joyalukkas Cashback Fest returns

**Bhubaneswar:** To celebrate the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, Joyalukkas announced Cashback Fest from April 10 to 20. As part of the celebrations, Joyalukkas is offering attractive gift vouchers to complement the festive spirit. On diamond, uncut diamond, and platinum jewellery, customers will receive an ₹2,000 gift voucher on purchases of ₹75,000 and above. Similarly, on gold and precious jewellery, customers will receive an ₹1,000 gift voucher on selected collections worth ₹75,000 and above. Meanwhile, on silver jewellery buyers can enjoy a ₹500 gift voucher on purchases of ₹15,000 and above. These offers reflect the jeweller's commitment to providing exceptional value and extraordinary craftsmanship. Speaking on the announcement, Joy Alukkas, Chairman and Managing Director of the Joyalukkas Group, said, "Akshaya Tritiya is a holy time when prosperity increases and new ventures begin. Through our Cashback Fest, we want to turn every jewellery purchase into a celebration of prosperity, giving customers not just a beautiful piece, but also confidence through unrivalled value and quality. As the world's favourite jeweller, we believe in making this auspicious occasion accessible and rewarding for everyone who wishes to invest in lasting beauty and prosperity."

#### Madhukunj rolls out exciting offers

**Bhubaneswar:** On the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, Madhukunj Gold & Diamonds has unveiled a range of festive offers, combining traditional celebration with attractive value for customers across Bhubaneswar, Jatani, and Cuttack. Known for its craftsmanship and trusted legacy, the jewellery brand is offering flat 50% off on making charges for gold jewellery and flat 100% off on making charges for diamond jewellery, making it an opportune time for buyers to invest in timeless pieces. In addition, customers can prebook their purchases by paying just 10%, allowing them to lock in the gold rate at either the booking day price or the purchase day price - whichever is lower. The initiative aims to make festive shopping more rewarding while reinforcing Madhukunj's presence as a preferred destination for fine jewellery in the region.

## BonV Aero commissions Drone Park in Bhubaneswar



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 11:** BonV Aero has commissioned its state-of-the-art Drone Park in Khurda, marking a major boost to Odisha's aerospace and defence manufacturing ecosystem. The facility was inaugurated in the presence of Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, along with senior government officials and industry leaders.

Spread across 30 acres and planned in two phases, the project entails an investment of ₹300 crore and is expected to generate over 1000 direct employment opportunities across manufacturing, R&D, pilot training, and operations. The commissioning signals BonV Aero's transition from innovation-led development to scalable UAV manufacturing, aligned with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

The Drone Park features advanced assembly lines capable of producing thousands

of UAVs for domestic and global markets. It will also house Centres of Excellence (CoEs), a dedicated skilling centre, and foster ecosystem development through partnerships with MSMEs, component manufacturers, and academic institutions.

Speaking on the occasion, co-founder & CEO Satyabrata Satapathy said the initiative aims to build a robust local ecosystem beyond manufacturing, positioning Odisha as a key player in the global UAV industry.

The event also showcased BonV Aero's indigenous heavy-lift UAV platforms, designed for high payload, long endurance, and all-terrain operations, catering to defence, logistics, and infrastructure sectors. With supportive state policies and upcoming testing infrastructure in Rangeilunda, BonV Aero aims to transform Odisha into a hub for UAV innovation and manufacturing.

## India leads global real time digital payments

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 11:** As India's Unified Payments Interface marks its 10th anniversary Saturday, the government informed that the country now accounts for 49 per cent of global real-time payment transactions.

The instant payments system processed 21.70 billion transactions in January 2026 alone, with ₹28.33 lakh crore in value. UPI accounted for 81 per cent of all retail digital transactions in India.

The International Monetary Fund has called UPI the world's largest real-time payment system by volume, and it was built in under 10 years, an official

### UPI TURNS 10

- India now accounts for 49% of global real-time payment transactions
- Instant payments system processed 21.70bn transactions in Jan 2026 alone, with ₹28.33L-cr in value
- UPI accounted for 81% of all retail digital transactions in India

statement said. UPI has grown 12,000-fold in volume and over 4,000 times in value since launch. The government said UPI's real transformation is beyond the volume of transactions, but its

reach spans domestic informal markets from autorickshaw drivers to village mandis and street vendors.

"A domestic worker can send money across states in seconds using a basic smartphone.

In this system, the divide between urban and rural, formal and informal, steadily disappears—marking a decisive shift towards financial inclusion," the statement said.

India's digital payments ecosystem has also emerged as a reference model globally. Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have acknowledged its scale, efficiency, and inclusiveness.

Its operations expanded to the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius and Qatar, facilitating cross-border transactions and remittances. "A homegrown system, built in under a decade, now leads

the world. What began as an effort to include the unbanked has become the global gold standard for real-time payments. From queues to QR codes, India's journey reflects the power of inclusive innovation," the statement noted.

Meanwhile, UPI is evolving into a broader financial platform, with UPI Lite supporting quick, small-value payments, while UPI AutoPay streamlines recurring expenses such as utility bills and subscriptions.

Credit on UPI expanded by enabling access to pre-approved credit lines, with NBFCs and fintech firms delivering loans, enabling repayments, and offering tailored financial products.

**UNSTOPPABLE AT 11**

**Indian racing wonderkid Atiqa Mir is now top-ranked female in FIA International Kart Ranking**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lonato (Italy), April 11:** Indian racing prodigy Atiqa Mir has emerged as the highest-ranked female in the latest FIA International Kart Ranking (IKR) in her category, marking a milestone moment in her fast

# Atiqa leaves rivals in karting dust

rising career. The 11-year-old is placed in seventh overall position in the International OK-NJ class (age 12-14), making her the highest-ranked female racer in the rankings calculated by the motorsport's world governing body FIA. The rankings are led by Zoltan Coigny of Switzerland. Atiqa, the first Indian to be supported by Formula 1 Academy, was fast tracked into the Junior category (age 12-14) from the mini class (8-12) at the start of 2026 considering her special talent. She repaid the immense faith shown by her backers by bag-

ging a historic podium in the opening round of the Championships of the Future Academy (COTFA) series in Valencia last month. Her father Asif Mir, who was India's first national karting champion, is pleased with



her daughter's rapid rise in the world of motorsport without losing sight of the ultimate goal -- reaching Formula 1 -- with no female having raced there since 1992. "Atiqa has reached a big milestone in her career due to her hard

work and support from everyone involved in her journey. It is a proud moment for India. She needs to keep working hard and improving, it is a moving target. There is a famous saying in racing 'if you sit still you are moving backwards,'" said Asif. Last month, Atiqa capped off a successful campaign in the WSK Super Master Series with a commendable eighth place finish out of 53 drivers in the final round at Franciacorta. After a welcome break of two weeks, she is back testing in Lonato this weekend ahead of WSK Euro Round 2 at the same circuit the following week.

# Bournemouth stun Arsenal; City back in PL title race

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, April 11:** Arsenal's Premier League title bid was hit by a stunning 2-1 loss to Bournemouth at home Saturday. The league leader blew the chance to move 12 points clear of second-place Manchester City after losing for the third time in four games in all competitions. Alex Scott struck a 74th-minute winner at the Emirates to pile pressure on Arsenal ahead of next week's top-of-the-table clash at City. Mikel Arteta's team has

played two more games than City, which could close the gap to six points if it beats Chelsea Sunday at Stamford Bridge. Arsenal's form appears to be slipping at a crucial point of the season. Defeats to City in the English League Cup final and second-division Southampton in the FA Cup ended its pursuit of a quadruple of trophies. It won 1-0 in the Champions League against Sporting Lisbon on Tuesday, but the latest loss will only heighten tension in the race for the title after three straight years of finishing runner-up in England's top flight.

**ICE IN HIS VEINS**

# Shetty on dream run

*The 20-year-old topples World No 1 to storm into Badminton Asia C'ships final and stands one step away from ending India's 61-year wait for a men's singles title*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ningbo (China), April 11:** India's Ayush Shetty stormed into the final with a stunning three-game win over top seed and defending champion Kunlavut Vitidsarn, assuring himself of at least a silver medal at the Badminton Asia Championships here Saturday.



The world No 25 rode on his superior attack and robust defence to script a sensational 10-21, 21-19, 21-17 comeback win over Thailand's Vitidsarn, the Paris Olympics silver medalist and 2023 world champion, in the semifinal that lasted 75 minutes. "Ayush handled the situation well. He seemed to get into Kunlavut's head with his attacking style and exploited that smartly," Vimal Kumar, former India chief coach and Director of Centre for Badminton Excellence (Formerly PPBA), told PTI. "Taking the second game was crucial. At 20-14, Ayush Shetty looked in control but got a bit anxious as Vitidsarn clawed back to 20-19. That is where he produced something special to close it out. "All week, he has shown an ability to respond in tight moments, using the right tactics

and deploying his smashes and clips judiciously. That discipline paid off." With the win, Ayush became the first Indian men's singles player after Dinesh Khanna to reach the finals of the prestigious tournament. Khanna remains the only Indian to win the men's singles gold at the continental meet way back in 1965. Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty won the doubles title in 2023. The 20-year-old from Mangalore, the US Open Super 300 champion, will face second seeded Chinese Shi Yu Qi in

the summit clash. The Indian has secured several high-profile scalps on the BWF World Tour, including Paris bronze winner Lee Zii Jia, former world champion Loh Kean Yew and Brain Yang. This week, Ayush knocked out World No 7 Li Shi Feng and World No 4 Jonatan Christie before outwitting Vitidsarn. The Indian, who has been training under Indonesian coach Irwansyah Adi Pratama for past two weeks, didn't drop a single game coming into the final. But he had suffered a straight game

**INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE**

# Sanju smashes season's first ton

*Samson's hundred, Overton's miserly spell give CSK first win of IPL 2026*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, April 11:** After three silent outings, Sanju Samson rediscovered his batting range with a fabulous hundred and bowlers' fangs regrew as Chennai Super Kings defeated Delhi Capitals by 23 runs to register their first win of IPL 2026 here Saturday. Samson (115 not out, 56 balls) and Ayush Mhatre (59, 36 balls) milked 113 runs for the second wicket to power CSK to a competitive 212 for two and the Delhi Capitals stumbled against Jamie Overton's superb spell (4/18) to get bundled out for 189. Tristan Stubbs (60) delayed the inevitable for DC with a gutsy half-century. While it was the super Kings' first win of the season, the Capitals slumped to their second defeat in a row. Chasing 213, Delhi made a bold start, making 61 in just five overs through a fine stand between openers KL Rahul and Pathum Nissanka (41). But the dismissal of Nissanka took some steam away from DC. Nissanka, whose catch was grassed by Khaleel Ahmed off Anshul Kamboj, could not use the let off as he spooned the next ball off the pace to Dewald Brevis at the edge of the circle. At 61 for two in 5.2 overs, DC were still in a good position but the Chennai bowlers redrafted their strategy at this stage. Their pacers -- Overton, Khaleel and Kamboj -- began to bash the ball into the red-soil surface and extracted good bounce, cramping the DC batters for space to execute their shots effectively. But Samson was the chief



architect of CSK's wonderful Chepauk night. After being asked to bat first, Samson brought up his first substantial knock in a Yellow jersey, and was involved in an excellent stand with Mhatre, who underlined his massive potential in bold letters, for the second wicket -- 113 runs in a little over 11 overs. It was Samson's fourth IPL hundred, the first for CSK and the first one in this IPL season. A big score from Samson was essential for himself and CSK to restore the belief of 'Anbu-den' faithfuls in their team, and he

did that on the night with a brilliant innings in front of home fans. **Brief Scores:** Chennai Super Kings: 212 for 2 in 20 overs (Sanju Samson 115 not out, Ayush Mhatre 59; Axar Patel 1/39) beat Delhi Capitals: 189 all out in 20 overs (Pathum Nissanka 41, Tristan Stubbs 60; Jamie Overton 4/18) by 23 runs

IPL STANDINGS					
TEAMS	P	W	L	NRR	PTS
RR	4	4	0	2.055	8
PBKS	4	3	0	0.720	7
RCB	3	2	1	1.231	4
DC	4	2	2	0.322	4
LSG	3	2	1	-0.359	4
SRH	4	1	3	-0.024	2
GT	3	1	2	-0.270	2
MI	3	1	2	-0.715	2
CSK	4	1	3	-1.532	2
KKR	4	0	3	-1.315	1

**TODAY'S MATCHES**

LSG vs GT  
TIME: 3:30 PM

MI vs RCB  
TIME: 7:30 PM

Star Sports channels & JioHotstar

**INDIAN ATHLETICS SERIES**

# Odisha's Animesh picks up double titles



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 11:** Star sprinter Animesh Kujur of Odisha won the 100m dash in a photo finish after earlier clinching the 200m title, stealing the spotlight at the one-day Indian Athletics Series here Saturday. Opening his outdoor season on the 'fast' Mondo track, Kujur won the 200m race in the morning session with a time of 20.74 seconds, beating 400m national record holder Vishal T who ran 21.01 seconds. Vishal was representing NCOE Trivandrum. Dharamveer Choudhary of Rajasthan clocked the third best time of 21.03 seconds. More than 50 athletes competed in the men's 200m race.

**ASIAN WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS**

# Sujeet, Abhimanyou clinch gold medals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bishkek, April 11:** World U23 champion Sujeet and Abhimanyou registered contrasting victories in their respective men's freestyle final bouts to help India clinch two gold medals on the penultimate day of the Senior Asian Wrestling Championships here Saturday. Sujeet, who has been unbeaten so far this year, totally dominated the men's 65kg freestyle final against Umidjon Jalolov of Uzbekistan to register an 8-1 win and become the first Indian since Bajrang Punia's 2019 triumph to win the Asian Championships gold medal in this weight category. Sujeet started slow in the opening round as Jalolov held

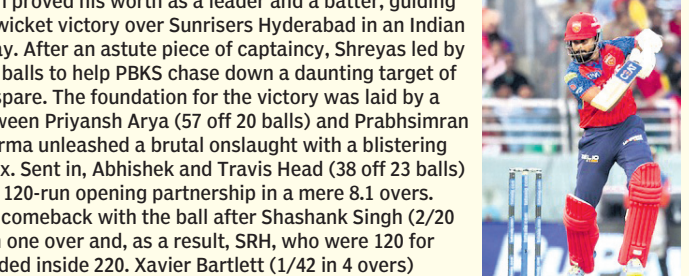


his ground and did not allow the Indian to attack. But the 23-year-old India was quick off the blocks at the start of the second round and went on to register his fifth victory over the Uzbek wrestler. A few minutes later, Abhimanyou made it a double celebration for the Indian camp as he fought back from 0-2 deficit

to beat Tulga Tumor Ochir of Mongolia 5-3 in the men's 70kg freestyle final. Sandeep Mann had the chance to complete a hat-trick of gold medals for India but he went down 1-2 in a closely contested final bout in the men's 79kg category. Earlier, Ankush defeated Fuga Sasaki of Japan 8-2 to clinch the men's 57kg freestyle bronze to take India's overall medals tally to two gold, four silver and eight bronze medals. India will have a shot at two more gold medals on the final day of competition as Paris Olympics bronze medalist Aman (men's 61kg Freestyle) and Mukul Dahiya (men's 86kg Freestyle) sealed their final berths.

# Shreyas leads by example

**Mullanpur:** Shreyas Iyer once again proved his worth as a leader and a batter, guiding Punjab Kings to a commanding six-wicket victory over Sunrisers Hyderabad in an Indian Premier League match here Saturday. After an astute piece of captaincy, Shreyas led by example with an unbeaten 69 off 33 balls to help PBKS chase down a daunting target of 220 with as many as seven balls to spare. The foundation for the victory was laid by a rollicking 99-run opening stand between Priyansh Arya (57 off 20 balls) and Prabhsimran Singh (51 of 25), after Abhishek Sharma unleashed a brutal onslaught with a blistering 28-ball 74 to power SRH to 219 for six. Sent in, Abhishek and Travis Head (38 off 23 balls) blew away the PBKS bowlers with a 120-run opening partnership in a mere 8.1 overs. The home team though made a fine comeback with the ball after Shashank Singh (2/20 in 3 overs) removed both openers in one over and, as a result, SRH, who were 120 for no loss at the start of ninth over, ended inside 220. Xavier Bartlett (1/42 in 4 overs) bowled a brilliant final over to concede just five runs. Abhishek smashed eight sixes and five fours. In reply, PBKS got the start they needed and raced to 93 for no loss in the powerplay, with the opening duo of Priyansh and Prabhsimran going hammer and tongs at the SRH bowlers. Left-arm spinner Harsh Dubej leaked 18 runs in the first over, providing PBKS with the perfect launch pad. Prabhsimran danced down the ground to get a couple of sixes, including one against veteran left-arm seamer Jaydev Unadkat, even as Eshan Malinga gave away 17 runs. Priyansh then hammered Harshal Patel for 6, 6, 4, 4 to race to a 16-ball fifty. Shivang Kumar raised SRH hopes by picking three wickets but Shreyas completed the job for his side. **Brief scores:** Sunrisers Hyderabad: 219/6 in 20 overs (Abhishek Sharma 74, Heinrich Klaasen 39; Shashank Singh 2/20) lost to Punjab Kings: 223 for 4 in 18.5 overs (Priyansh Arya 57, Prabhsimran Singh 51, Shreyas Iyer 69 not out; Shivang Kumar 3/33) by six wickets



**WORLD CUP RIFLE/PISTOL**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 11:** Sainyam, a former junior world and Asian champion, recorded her best finish at an International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup Rifle/Pistol leg, shooting 178.9 in the women's 10m air pistol final on the penultimate day of competitions at the Las Gabias Shooting Range in Granada, Spain, to claim a creditable fifth place Saturday. Reigning Asian Games champion Palak also made the final and finished seventh, bowing out after the 14th shot of the 24-shot final with a score of 137.9. China's Shen Yiyao won

# Sainyam records best-ever WC finish

gold with 244.2. Sainyam shot 582 in qualification to take third spot in the 83-strong field, while Palak made the top eight, claiming seventh spot with a 577. In the men's 25m rapid-fire pistol, Olympian Vijayveer Sidhu recorded the best Indian finish, his effort of 576 giving him 23rd place overall. Among other Indian medal contenders, Ankur Goel was 29th with a 572, and Neeraj Kumar placed 40th with an effort of 565. All three Indians in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P) competition in the ongoing ISSF World Cup Rifle/Pistol, in Granada, Spain, could not progress beyond the qualifica-



tion stage, with Surabhi Bharadwaj Rapole and Olympian Anjum Moudgil logging scores of 587 each to finish in 18th and

19th spots respectively. Ayushi Podder shot 585 to finish 27th. The eighth and final qualification spot went to 589.

Also Friday, Ankur Goel was the best-placed Indian in the men's 25m rapid-fire pistol (RFP) with a score of 289 after the first stage precision round. Olympian Vijayveer Sidhu shot 287 while Neeraj Kumar shot 282. The trio comes back on Saturday for the second rapid-fire qualification stage before the top eight progress to the final. Reigning Asian Games champion Palak will partner Mukesh Nelavalli in the 10m air pistol mixed team, the first event of the tournament, alongside Sainyam and Ujjwal Malik. In the second day's final, the air rifle mixed team, India will be represented by Sonam Uttam Maskar and Gajanan Shahdev

Khandagale, and Shruti and Arshdeep Singh, respectively. As per the laid-down selection policy, India has fielded shooters ranked between 4 and 6 in the domestic national rankings. The team remains a strong contender, however, with established names such as Akhil Sheoran, Anjum Moudgil, and Mehuli Ghosh, world championship medalists all, leading the lines, along with the likes of World Cup final winner Simranpreet Kaur Brar, world record holder Rhythm Sangwan, and last year's Buenos Aires World Cup gold medalist Vijayveer Sidhu, providing further solidity.