

Easter truce violation

Russia and Ukraine accuse each other Sunday of breaching the 32-hour ceasefire in their four-year war

INTERNATIONAL | P8

A star is born

India's Ayush Shetty signs off with a silver medal, ending a 61-year long Singles medal drought in the Badminton Asia Championships

SPORTS | BACK PAGE

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STF to probe City man's terror links

Bhubaneswar: The special task force (STF) of Odisha Crime Branch has been appointed the nodal investigating agency to coordinate with Delhi Police in connection with a Bhubaneswar-based man's suspected links with a terror outfit, a senior official said. The 22-year-old man was arrested by a joint team of the Odisha and Delhi Police Friday over alleged anti-national activities, he said. "We are investigating all possible angles in the case, which includes his social links, associates, financial status and transactions, family background and employment," SP (STF) Rabindra Nath Satpathy said.

DAREDEVILRY: Participants rehearse for the Capital Foundation Day parade at Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar Sunday, ahead of the event scheduled for Monday

PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK

Woman kills 2 children over 'hubby's infidelity'

Jharsuguda: A woman allegedly killed her son and daughter before attempting suicide at Tangarpali's Oram Pada under Airport police station in Jharsuguda district late Saturday night, police said. Briefing reporters Sunday, SP GR Raghavendra said accused Ranjita Oram had long suspected her husband Sitaram Oram of having an extramarital affair. The suspicion had led to frequent quarrels between the couple over the past 15 days. She had also threatened to kill herself and her two children on several occasions. Police said an altercation broke out between the couple Friday. Ranjita allegedly woke her husband up at around 11:30pm Saturday, and asked him to get out of the house. After Sitaram stepped out, she locked the door from inside. She then allegedly attacked her daughter, Jigyasa Oram, 10, and son, Bihanshu Oram, 5, with an axe, before slitting her neck with a sharp blade. Hearing the screams, Sitaram along with his elder brother, broke open a rear window and entered the house. However, the girl had already died, while the boy, who was found in a critical condition died at the DHH. The SP said Ranjita admitted that she committed the crime over Sitaram's affairs with another woman.

US-Iran talks collapse



REUTERS

Islamabad, April 12: US and Iran failed to reach an agreement to end their war despite marathon talks that concluded Sunday in the Pakistani capital Islamabad, jeopardising a fragile ceasefire. "The bad news is that we have not reached an agreement, and I think that's bad news for Iran much more than it's bad news for the United States of America," said Vice President JD Vance, the head of the US delegation. "So we go back to the United States having not come to an agreement. We've made very clear what our red lines are." Iran's Parliamentary Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, who led his coun-

Trump orders Navy to block Hormuz

US President Donald Trump Sunday said the US Navy would "immediately" begin a blockade to stop ships from entering or leaving the Strait of Hormuz. Trump sought to exert strategic control over the waterway responsible for the transportation of 20% of global oil supplies before the war, hoping to take away Iran's key source of economic leverage in the fighting. "Effective immediately, the United States Navy, the Finest in the World, will begin the process of BLOCKADING any and all Ships trying to enter, or leave, the Strait of Hormuz," Trump said in his Truth Social post. **P8**

and it's time for them to decide whether they can earn our trust or not," Qalibaf said on X. Both the US and Iranian delegations have now left Islamabad to return home, Pakistani sources told Reuters. The talks, after a ceasefire earlier in the week, were the first direct US-Iranian meeting in more than a decade and the highest-level discussions since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Vance said Iran had chosen not to accept American terms, including not to build nuclear weapons. "We need to see an affirmative commitment that they will not seek a nuclear weapon and they will not seek the tools that would enable them to quickly achieve a nuclear weapon," he said. "That is the core goal of the President of the United States, and that's what we've tried to achieve through these negotiations," he added.

Music legend Asha Bhosle dies at 92

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 12: Asha Bhosle, the legend who refused to be bracketed into any one genre and stepped out of the shadows of her sister's greatness to create her own universe in Hindi playback singing, died in a Mumbai hospital Sunday. She was 92. Asha, one half of the Mangeshkar duo whose versatility was unmatched even by her sister Lata, was admitted to Breach Candy Hospital Saturday evening due to chest infection and exhaustion, her granddaughter Zana Bhosle said. The singer, who defied

convention to add heft, depth and even oomph to women's voices in cinema, be it the lovelorn Meena Kumari in "Hum Intezar Karengi" or the unapologetically seductive Helen in "Piya Tu Ab To Aaja", is survived by her son Anand. The last rites will be held Monday. "People can pay their last respects to her at 11am Monday at Casa Grande, Lower Parel, where she lived. Her last rites will be performed at 4pm tomorrow at Shivaji Park," Anand told reporters. Her voice - which got listeners jiving to "Aaja, Aaja" just as skilfully as she got them to mourn lost love in "Chain Se Ham Ko Kabhi"



1933-2026

of Asha Bhosle ji, one of the most iconic and versatile voices India has ever known. I will forever cherish the memories of my conversations with her. My condolences to her family, fans and music lovers. She will continue to inspire generations and her songs will forever resonate in people's lives." Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi said, "Deeply saddened by the passing of legendary singer Asha Bhosle ji. Her timeless voice was not just music, it was an emotion that defined generations. The void left by her departure is truly immeasurable." **More Leisure P**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Humour is being controlled by the gov't. Music is leaving us too. Dark days ahead

Three electrocuted in Dhenkanal

Dhenkanal/Angul, April 12: Three 'Danda' performers died and two others sustained severe injuries after coming in contact with an 11kV transmission line in Dhenkanal district Sunday evening, police said. The deceased were identified as Milan Mahalik, 34, Laxmidhar Sahu, 24, and Sudhakar Sahu, 40.

The incident occurred at Patala village under Balimi police limits in Hindol block when preparations were underway for a 'Danda Yatra' performance. Reports said a group of performers was setting up a stage for the ritual when a steel bar being used during the work accidentally touched the overhead livewire. The contact led to severe electric shock, leaving several per-

sons critically injured. The victims were rushed to Angul District Headquarters Hospital, where doctors declared three of them dead. The injured were undergoing treatment, and their identities were yet to be ascertained. Informed, Balimi police reached the spot and launched an investigation. Hindol SD-PO Satyakumar Nanda also visited the hospital.

15001/13/2627

MESSAGE OF HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF ODISHA ON THE OCCASION OF CAPITAL FOUNDATION DAY

On the momentous occasion of 78th Capital Foundation Day of Odisha, I extend my heartiest greetings and good wishes to the people of Bhubaneswar & the State. The City envisioned as a modern city steeped in ancient values, stands today as a shining example where tradition harmoniously blends with modernity. I appeal to the citizens of Bhubaneswar, to take pride in our capital and contribute wholeheartedly towards making Bhubaneswar cleaner, greener and more vibrant that reflects the true spirit of a Viksit Odisha.

(Signature)
(Hari Babu Kambhampati)

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜଧାନୀ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ଦିବସ ଅବସରରେ ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ବାର୍ତ୍ତା

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜଧାନୀ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ଦିବସ ଅବସରରେ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରବାସୀ ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଓ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ । ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ଏକାମ୍ର କ୍ଷେତ୍ରର ଶୈବ ସଂସ୍କୃତି ସହିତ ଆଧୁନିକତାର ସମନ୍ୱୟ ହେଉଛି ଆମ ରାଜଧାନୀ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର । ଶିକ୍ଷା, ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛତା, କ୍ରୀଡ଼ା, ପର୍ଯ୍ୟଟନ, ପ୍ରଯୁକ୍ତିବିଦ୍ୟା ଓ ପ୍ରଯୁକ୍ତିଭିତ୍ତିକ ଶିଳ୍ପ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ ଆଜି ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ଦେଶରେ ଏକ ପ୍ରମୁଖ ସହରର ମାନ୍ୟତା ପାଇଛି । ବର୍ତ୍ତମାନ ଅନେକ ଭବିଷ୍ୟମୁଖୀ ଯୋଜନା ସହିତ ଆମ ରାଜଧାନୀ ଏକ କାୟାକଳ୍ପ ପରିବର୍ତ୍ତନ ଦିଗରେ ଅଗ୍ରସର ହେଉଛି । ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ଆମ ରାଜ୍ୟର ପରିଚୟ ଓ ଆମ ଗୌରବ । ଏବେ ସମୟ ଆସିଛି ଆମ ସହର ପାଇଁ ଆମକୁ କିଛି କରିବା ପାଇଁ । ଆସନ୍ତୁ, ଆମର ଐତିହ୍ୟ ନଗରୀର ସୁରକ୍ଷା ସହିତ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରକୁ ଆହୁରି ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛ, ସୁନ୍ଦର ଓ ପ୍ରଦୂଷଣମୁକ୍ତ ସହର ଭାବେ ଗଢ଼ିତୋଳିବା ଦିଗରେ ସମସ୍ତେ ଉଦ୍ୟମ କରିବା ।

(Signature)
(ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାଝି)
ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

ରାଜଧାନୀ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ଦିବସ ଅବସରରେ ମାନ୍ୟବର ବାଚସ୍ପତିଙ୍କ ବାର୍ତ୍ତା

ରାଜଧାନୀ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ଦିବସ ଅବସରରେ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରବାସୀ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଓ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା । ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ସାମାଜିକ, ସାଂସ୍କୃତିକ ଓ ଆଧ୍ୟାତ୍ମିକ ପ୍ରାଣକେନ୍ଦ୍ର ମନ୍ଦିରମାଳିନୀ ସହର ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର ପ୍ରତ୍ୟେକ ଓଡ଼ିଆଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଗର୍ବ ଓ ଗୌରବ । ଆମ ରାଜଧାନୀ ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱରକୁ ଦେଶର ଏକ ସ୍ୱଚ୍ଛ, ଆକର୍ଷଣୀୟ ଓ ପ୍ରଗତିଶୀଳ ସହରରେ ପରିଣତ କରିବା ପାଇଁ ସମସ୍ତ ରାଜ୍ୟବାସୀ ସଂକଳ୍ପବଦ୍ଧ ହୋଇ ସମ୍ମିଳିତ ପ୍ରୟାସ ଜାରି ରଖିବେ ବୋଲି ମୋର ବିଶ୍ୱାସ ।

(Signature)
(ସୁରମା ପାଢ଼ୀ)
ବାଚସ୍ପତି

OIPR-15001/15001/2/26-27/0013



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
Right now you need to summon all your mental abilities as you will have to take quick, on-the-spot decisions. However, Ganesh cautions you to take proper advice as your decisions may have a long-term impact, more so if they involve monetary matters.

TAURUS
You have an easy carefree day ahead. There will be no woes or worries, says Ganesh. But to will be inclined to take up too many things at one time, more than you can handle. This may, in turn, get you stressed and uptight. You are advised to be practical and not to overdo things.

GEMINI
Emotions, not acidity, will be the cause of your uneasiness. Something important is going on in your life and you are nervous. It can be related to a matter concerning law, ethics, prejudice, education, or social customs. You are, however, likely to win admiration from all quarters for your fine taste in arts, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Today, you will be at the centre of all your plans. Your responsibilities at home are likely to be unnecessary digressions for you, with your help-yourself-only attitude. However, you may feel that you are not getting enough returns of your hard work. Ganesh advises you to become more responsible at home, and your family's love and affection will make up for the insufficient returns.

LEO
Love, respect and quality time together – this might just be the perfect recipe for a happy family life, says Ganesh. So on this day, make it a point to spend time with your loved ones, and show them just how much you care for them and what they mean to you. It may be a small gesture, but the returns you get in the evening will be priceless, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
A renewed zest for life will bring in a transformation in you. It is a good time to let people know how important and intelligent – yes, you can be both – are. Your eminence will be obvious as you show how things are meant to be done.

LIBRA
All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy! You don't want to be Jack, now, do you? It's high time you took a break from your busy work schedule. Go on a vacation to recharge your batteries. There are chances that evening could bring with it some hurtful remarks from loved ones.

SCORPIO
Two words will define your day – eloquence and elegance. Sweet talk and compliments may take you a long way, but do not become complacent and get carried away with your success. Sometimes, saying the right thing may be more beneficial than saying what the other person wants to hear.

SAGITTARIUS
Friendship with a few like-minded people is likely to develop today. You shall spend a large share of your time discussing issues like attitude, beliefs and values. Those with you will enjoy sharing their ideas and opinions, and casting them in a new mould.

CAPRICORN
The wait for some good news may have been too long, but it will surely find its way to you today, says Ganesh. Your focus will remain fixed on work, and you may feel like you are finally starting to like your job. This, in turn, will lead you to take some well-informed decisions about your future.

AQUARIUS
Today is an important day in the larger scheme of things. You may finally decide to buy a home, change your job, or marry! Sudden and unexpected profits are on the cards too. Reputation and rewards are all yours today.

PISCES
Your inherent talents, competitive colleagues and supportive superiors will spur you on to great heights at the workplace, beginning today. Make sure that you do not get carried away by little victories, says Ganesh. There is many a slip between the cup and the lip!

The voice that lent soul, magic and splendour to generations of Indian cinema has fallen silent. Legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle, whose extraordinary versatility and timeless melodies shaped the soundtrack of modern India, leaves behind a musical legacy unmatched in scale and influence.

A VOICE BEYOND TIME

The world bids farewell to Asha Bhosle, one of India's most versatile and enduring musical legends, whose voice defined generations of cinema and music. With a career spanning over seven decades, she leaves behind a legacy that transcends language, genre, and geography. Her passing marks the end of an era in Indian playback singing.

Versatility redefined
What sets Asha apart is her unparalleled versatility. She effortlessly moved between genres—romantic melodies, classical compositions, ghazals, cabaret songs, and even pop. Her collaborations with composers like R.D. Burman produced iconic tracks such as *Dum Maro Dum* and *Piya Tu Ab To Aaja*, which remain cultural touchstones. She was never confined by convention, constantly pushing the boundaries of playback singing.

Global reach and recognition
Asha Bhosle's talent resonated far beyond India. She collaborated with international artists and explored global musical styles, earning Grammy nominations and worldwide acclaim. Her concerts across continents introduced Indian film music to diverse audiences, strengthening her status as a global cultural ambassador. Even in later years, she remained relevant, embracing new sounds and audiences with remarkable ease.

A legacy that resonates
More than just a singer, Asha Bhosle is an institution. Her vast repertoire—spanning thousands of songs in multiple languages—continues to inspire aspiring artists. Her voice carries not just melody, but emotion, storytelling, and a fearless spirit of innovation. In an ever-changing musical landscape, she remains a timeless figure whose influence is both profound and enduring.

TOP 10 SONGS



- 1. Piya Tu Ab To Aaja
- 2. Dum Maro Dum
- 3. In Aankhon Ki Masti
- 4. Chura Liya Hai Tumne Jo Dil Ko
- 5. Yeh Mera Dil
- 6. O Mere Sona Re
- 7. Sajna Hai Mujhe
- 8. Aaiye Meherbaan
- 9. Rangeela Re
- 10. Zara Sa Jhoom Loon Main

Early life and musical roots

Born into the illustrious Mangeshkar family, Asha was introduced to music at a young age by her father, Dinanath Mangeshkar. Despite facing personal hardships and the challenge of stepping out of the towering shadow of her sister, Lata Mangeshkar, she carved her own identity through persistence and resilience. Her early years in the film industry were marked by struggle, but they laid the foundation for a remarkable journey.



LIFE IN PICTURES

It's truly sad to learn about Asha tai's passing.. her voice has been one of the pillars of Indian cinema and will continue to resonate world over for centuries to come. A talent that will outlive many, she always showered me with blessings and love and I will miss her. Rest in Peace Asha tai.. love you :
SHAH RUKH KHAN

Curtain down to one of the Greatest ever crooners of all times. The last standing warrior of the Pioneering Era of Indian Film music, has called Quits today and bid her Final Goodbye to us all. All I can say is Chale gaye ho par Dil abhi bhara nahin See you on the Other Side. Omshanti:
SUNU NIGAM

Today, we lost a voice that defined generations... a spirit that redefined music itself. Asha Bhosle ji wasn't just legendary, she

was limitless. I grew up listening to her, learning from her, being in awe of her effortless versatility... The way she could make every note feel alive, every emotion feel personal:
SHREYA GHOSHAL

Gone, but never forgotten. I feel immensely grateful to have met you, to have felt your presence, and to have received your blessing in this lifetime. Rest in peace, Goddess:
ANTARA CHAKRABORTY

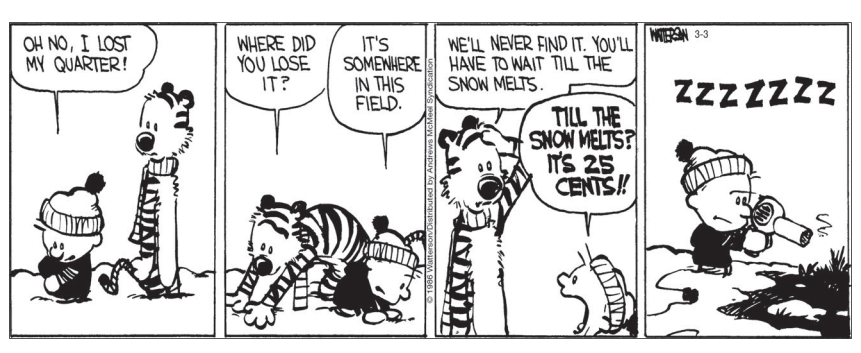
Deeply saddened by the loss of a legendary voice, Asha Bhosle ji. Your songs were never just melodies—they were emotions that lived and breathed across generations:
SWAYAM PADHI

That timeless voice still resonates in every corner of our hearts. Asha Bhosle ji was not just a singer, but an emotion—a legacy that transcends generations:
SUSMITA DAS

PEANUTS



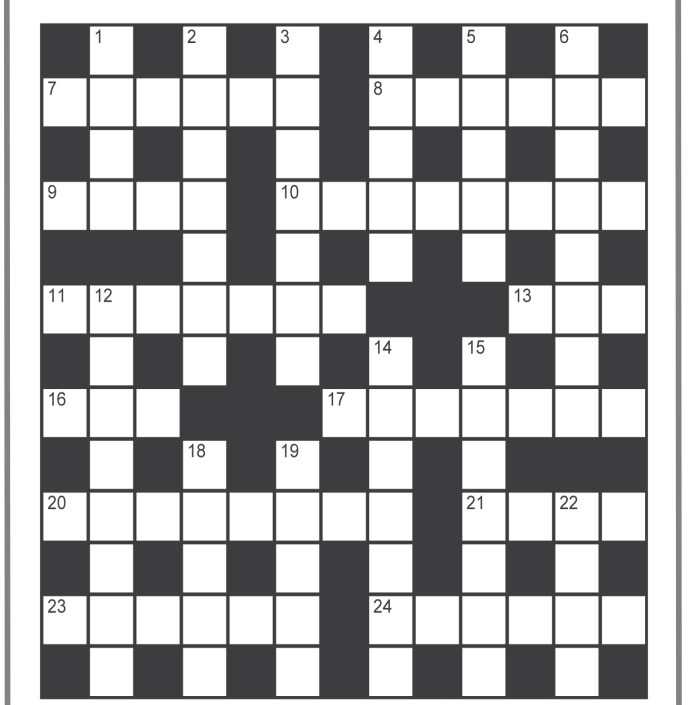
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



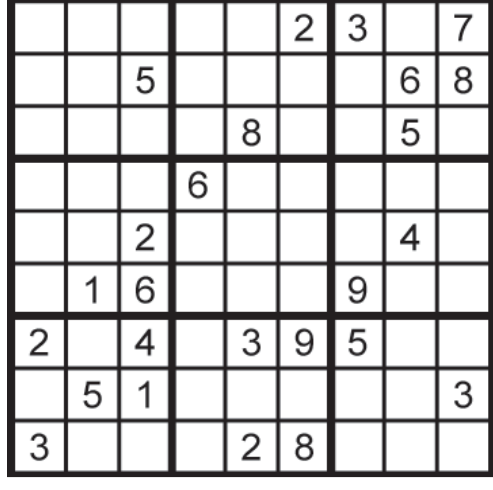
FUN POST CROSSWORD



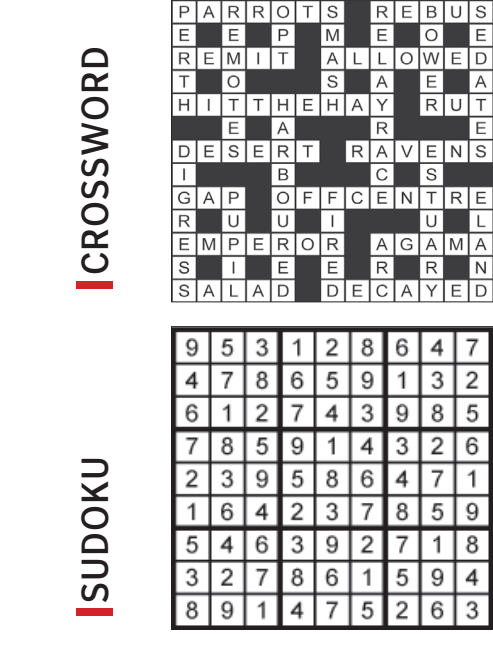
- Across**
- 7 Protect
 - 8 Tree droppings
 - 9 Blue-pencil
 - 10 Large jellyfish (3-2-3)
 - 11 Like some fans
 - 13 Foxy
 - 16 Female hare
 - 17 Chewy candy
 - 20 Snail dish
 - 21 Chess piece
 - 23 Kind of artist
 - 24 Show the way
- Down**
- 1 Garden intruder
 - 2 Sermon
 - 3 Unyielding
 - 4 Not very exciting
 - 5 Faux pas
 - 6 Former French president (2,6)
 - 12 Armageddon finale
 - 14 Classifieds (4,3)
 - 15 Dracula, for one
 - 18 Small sample
 - 19 Ice house
 - 22 Taper

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

800 schools to be developed as model institutes, says CM



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 12: Around 800 schools will be developed as model educational institutes under the PM SHRI scheme, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said while speaking during an event at Kushaleswar Government High School in Keonjhar district. He announced that a new auditorium will be constructed at the school to enhance its infrastructure. Under the PM SHRI Scheme, the school will be developed into a model institution with modern facilities, including digital learning systems, smart classrooms, and innovative teaching methods.

Majhi advised students to focus on discipline, time management, creativity, and innovation, while staying goal-oriented and avoiding distractions. "A good school prepares students not only for careers but also for the challenges of life," he said.

These 800 schools will be developed with modern infrastructure, digital education, smart classrooms and innovative teaching methods, under the PM Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) scheme, Majhi said.

Hailing the education system of the school, Majhi said that not only textual knowledge, but ethics, discipline and values are also taught in the institution.

Addressing the students,

Majhi said education is not just for securing a job, but a way to build a life. "In today's competitive era, along with academic knowledge, skills, creativity and new ideas are essential," the chief minister said. Majhi added that a provision of more than ₹31,997 crore has been made for the school and mass education department in the state budget for 2026-27.

Around 20,000 teachers were appointed in the last one-and-a-half-years, while steps have been taken to appoint another 45,000 teachers, Majhi said. Efforts are also underway to set up Godabarish Mishra Adarsh Primary Schools in every panchayat, he said.

He also announced key infrastructure projects for the region. Road construction work between Sarei and Hatishila is underway with an investment of ₹6.34 crore, improving connectivity. Additionally, ₹3.07 crore will be invested for the development of the Baba Kushaleswar Temple area.



ECSTASY: Excited tourists pose for photographs near Atal Tunnel after fresh snowfall hits Kullu, Himachal Pradesh, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

Traditional healer hacked to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Gopalpur, April 12: Unidentified assailants hacked a 65-year old man to death at Panchama village under Golanthara police limits in Ganjam district Sunday afternoon.

The incident sparked tension and panic in the area as locals gathered at the scene after the news about the murder spread.

The deceased was identified as Ekadasi Nayak, a resident of Panchama village. According to reports, Nayak, who was known locally for practicing traditional healing rituals, had stepped out of his house around 2 p.m. to go to a nearby orchard when he was attacked.

Unidentified assailants allegedly waylaid him near a mango grove at Kamalia and attacked him with a sharp weapon. He sustained grave injuries on his neck and hands. Profusely bleeding, he died on the spot, police said.

The motive behind the killing remains unclear, and an investigation is underway. On being informed, a team from Golanthara police station reached the spot and launched an investigation. However, family members and villagers initially refused to allow the body to be taken for postmortem, demanding the presence of a sniffer dog squad and a scientific team. They staged a protest for several hours.

India rejects China's renaming of Arunachal places

New Delhi, India, Sunday, categorically rejected China renaming some places in Arunachal Pradesh and said such claims and attempts to manufacture baseless narratives cannot alter the "undeniable reality" that they are part of Indian territories. China should refrain from actions which inject negativity into relations and undermine efforts to create better understanding, it said. New Delhi's reaction came in response to Beijing announcing Chinese names for several places in Arunachal Pradesh. "India categorically rejects any mischievous attempts by the Chinese side to assign fictitious names to places which form part of the territory of India," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. "Such attempts by China at introducing false claims and manufacturing baseless narratives cannot alter the undeniable reality that these places and territories, including Arunachal Pradesh, were, are, and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India," he said. Jaiswal said these actions by the Chinese side "detract from ongoing efforts to stabilise and normalise India-China bilateral ties." "China should refrain from actions which inject negativity into relations and undermine efforts to create better understanding," he said.

159 candidates held for paper leak in excise recruitment exam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, April 12: A total of 159 candidates, appearing for the Jharkhand Excise Constable Competitive Examination (JECCE) 2023, and five others, were arrested Sunday over allegations of paper leak, a senior official said.

The five main accused are part of a gang involved in irregularities in competitive examinations, he said.

Jharkhand Staff Selection Commission (JSSC) Chairman Prashant Kumar said over 159 students were ar-



rested, after the Ranchi SSP received a tip-off that a large number of students gathered at a building in Rargaon under Tamar police station limits.

"The students were provided four sets of question papers, which were claimed to be the questions of the JECCE examination. The question papers provided in printed and digital formats

were seized. Those, however, did not exactly match with the questions asked in the examination today," Kumar told reporters here. During investigation, it came to light that the accused candidates were brought to the location by agents of the gang, at the rate of ₹10-Rs 15 lakh per aspirant, in order to provide them with the exam questions and answers, according to a statement issued by the JSSC.

"Interrogation is underway, while police raids are on to nab others involved in this," the JSSC chairman said.

Undertrial dies in Nilagiri Sub-Jail

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nilagiri, April 12: An undertrial prisoner died at the Nilagiri Sub-Jail in Balasore district, officials said.

The deceased was identified as Srikant Nayak (40) of Totapada village under Oupada block in Nilagiri subdivision. He was lodged in jail as an undertrial prisoner in connection with a murder case. According to officials, Nayak was arrested June 19, 2021, in a murder case registered at Oupada police station (Case No. 43/21) under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code. He had been in judicial custody since then and

was later shifted to Nilagiri Sub-Jail September 25.

The incident occurred when Nayak complained of chest pain and began trembling Sunday around 2.50pm. On being informed, jail authorities rushed him to the Nilagiri hospital. However, doctors declared him dead before he could reach the hospital, jailer Supak Kumar Nayak said.

The body will be sent for post-mortem examination Monday to ascertain the exact cause of death.

Meanwhile, the deceased's daughter, Gauri Nayak, who reached the Nilagiri hospital, demanded a high-level probe into the incident.

BJP struck ₹1K-cr deal to oust TMC: Mamata

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 12: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Sunday alleged that the BJP has struck a ₹1,000-crore deal to unseat the Trinamool Congress from power in the state.

She made the apparent reference to a viral video of Aam Janata Unnayan Party chief Humayun Kabir, who was purportedly heard saying that he was in close touch with BJP leaders, including Suwendu Adhikari, to unseat Banerjee from power and receiving ₹200 crore as an advance payment of a ₹1,000-crore deal to split minority votes to defeat the TMC.



However, the authenticity of the video is yet to be verified.

"They (BJP) have struck a ₹1,000-crore deal to unseat the TMC from power in West Bengal," the party supremo said at a poll rally at Onda in Bankura district.

Banerjee also alleged that central forces deployed in the state for the upcoming polls were

"disrespecting" women in the name of conducting searches.

She also accused the BJP of bribing voters before elections, and called the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls the "country's biggest scam" in recent times.

At an earlier rally at Khandaghosh in Purba Bardhaman district, Banerjee claimed that the BJP would "snatch everything" from the people of West Bengal if it came to power in the state. "The BJP bribes voters before the elections. But they forget their promises soon after the polling is over. That was seen in the Bihar elections," Banerjee said. The TMC chief further

alleged that the BJP would try to manipulate the polling process to win the election and urged the people to remain alert and keep a tab on the voting machines.

"Be alert about the voting machines. The BJP has planned slow voting and slow counting. Foil all their plans," Banerjee said.

"The SIR is the biggest scam the country has seen in recent times," she said, further predicting that the BJP government in the Centre would topple in 2026.

"Everyone in the world knows that your government will topple in 2026. We will then scrap all the anti-people laws brought in by your government," she added.

Want Turkey's most beautiful lady, \$1bn: Ugandan Gen

Uganda's Chief of Defence Forces, Muhoozi Kainerugaba, has sparked controversy after making a series of unusual and provocative demands directed at Turkey, combining geopolitical grievances with a personal request that has drawn widespread criticism.

In a string of posts on social media platform X April 11, which were later deleted, General Kainerugaba called on Ankara to pay Uganda \$1 billion, describing it as compensation for the country's long-standing military role in Somalia. Ugandan forces have been actively involved in African Union missions combating the Islamist militant group Al-Shabaab for nearly two decades.

Kainerugaba argued that while Uganda has borne the brunt of security operations in Somalia, Turkey has benefited economically through infrastructure investments, including projects linked to ports and airports in the Somali capital, Mogadishu. He referred to the \$1 billion demand as a "security dividend."

However, it was his second demand that triggered the strongest backlash. In the same posts, Kainerugaba said he wanted "the most beautiful woman" in Turkey to be given to him as a wife—remarks widely criticised as inappropriate and sexist.

The Ugandan army chief went further, issuing a 30-day ultimatum.



He warned that failure to meet his demands could result in serious diplomatic consequences, including shutting down Turkey's embassy in Kampala, banning Turkish Airlines from Ugandan airspace, and severing diplomatic ties altogether.

Kainerugaba, who is the son of Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni, described relations between the two countries as strained and accused Turkey of "stabbing Uganda in

the back." He also advised Ugandan citizens to avoid travel to Turkey, citing safety concerns.

In the same series of statements, he shifted focus to international politics, expressing support for Israel and claiming readiness to deploy 1,00,000 Ugandan troops to the region to "protect the Holy Land."

As per an 'India Today' report, this is not the first time Kainerugaba has drawn attention for controversial remarks. In 2022, he publicly offered 100 Ankole cows, which he described as "the most beautiful cows on earth" for marrying Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, even suggesting military action if the offer was

rejected. The comments forced President Museveni to issue an apology, distancing the government from his son's statements.

That same year, Kainerugaba also threatened military action against neighbouring Kenya, claiming Ugandan forces could capture its capital within weeks. The incident led to his temporary removal from his military position and another official apology from Kampala.

Despite the latest remarks, there has been no official response so far from Turkish or Somali authorities. Ugandan officials have also not clarified whether the statements reflect official government policy or Kainerugaba's personal views.

OrissaPOST

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Caterers warn of statewide agitation over LPG shortage

Catering Association of Odisha (CAO) raises concern over acute LPG crisis disrupting operations across the state



Over 2,000 catering units and more than one lakh workers face uncertainty due to non-availability of 19 kg commercial LPG cylinders

Association alleges inadequate supply of commercial cylinders by gas agencies despite government denying any shortage

Supply disruptions, reportedly linked to ongoing Middle East tensions, have further worsened the crisis

According to association president Binaya Bhusan Pattnaik, the industry—already hit hard by losses during the Covid-19 pandemic—is now struggling to sustain day-to-day operations.

While the government has maintained that there is no shortage of LPG cylinders, the association alleged that gas agencies across the state are failing to ensure adequate supply of commercial cylinders, leading to confusion among business owners.

Kidnap-for-ransom bid foiled; 4 nabbed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 12: Kharvela Nagar Police foiled a kidnap-for-ransom attempt near the Master Canteen railway station area under Kharvela Nagar police limits here and rescued a youth, arresting four persons in this connection, officials said Sunday.

The accused have been identified as Asish Kumar Nayak (21), Chinmay Kumar Behera (28), Pranab Kumar Behera (23), and Dipak Kumar Sahoo (22). According to police, the incident occurred around 7:30 am April 11 near Master Canteen Square, when the complainant, Amardip Dung Dung (30), and his friend Ashish Minj had just booked a cab. A car arrived at



the spot, and a group of miscreants forcibly abducted Minj before fleeing the scene.

The accused later contacted the complainant from different phone numbers, demanding a ransom of ₹15 lakh for the victim's safe release and threatening to kill him.

During the investigation, police tracked the victim's mobile location and, based on technical inputs and necessary approvals, reached the Jatni Gate area where the suspected vehicle was identified. Minj was rescued safely from the vehicle. Four accused present at the

spot were apprehended, while one accomplice managed to escape. During interrogation, the accused confessed to their involvement and revealed that the crime stemmed from a business dispute with the victim.

Police seized the vehicle used in the crime along with four mobile phones during the investigation.

Verification of records revealed that Ashish was involved in three previous cases at Nayapalli, Bharatpur, and Bhawanipatna Town police stations, while Dipak has one case registered at Chandanpur police station.

The accused have been forwarded to the court, and further investigation into the case is underway, police said.

Aluminium-led growth strategy stressed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar: Experts at a recent policy seminar here called for a focused aluminium-led industrial strategy to drive Odisha's next phase of economic growth, highlighting the state's vast bauxite reserves and strong potential for downstream value addition. The seminar, titled "Odisha's Strategic Opportunity to Lead Globally in the Industries of the Future," was organised by Think Change Forum (TCF) in partnership with the Bhubaneswar City Knowledge Innovation Cluster Foundation (BCKIC) under the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India.

Workshop stresses Netaji's ideals

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 12: A four-day state-level workshop organised by Azad Hind Bahini concluded here Sunday, with speakers highlighting the relevance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's ideology in present-day India.

Hundreds of members from across the state participated under the leadership of Laxmi Dora, Disha Azad, Rinki Sahu, and others, pledging to work towards nation-building based on Netaji's principles.

The workshop saw participation of hundreds of members from across the state under the leadership of Laxmi Dora, Disha Azad, Rinki Sahu, and



others, who pledged to work towards nation-building based on Netaji's principles.

Addressing the valedictory session, senior columnist Tushar Kanta Satapathy, journalist-poet Kedar Mishra, senior journalist Surendra Patra, and Forward Bloc leader Purna Chandra Padhi highlighted Bose's socialist vision and his struggle for the nation. They noted that India is passing through a critical phase

and stressed the need to adopt his ideals to safeguard national interests and citizens' welfare.

Presiding over the workshop, Azad Hind Bahini national coordinator Jyoti Ranjan Mohapatra expressed concern over the growing corporate control over natural resources. He alleged that Odisha's valuable resources—land, water, and forests—are being handed over to big businesses, undermining the rights of common people.

NCET aspirants flag out-of-state centres

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 12: Thousands of aspirants from Odisha have raised concerns over the allotment of examination centres for the NCET (National Common Entrance Test), conducted by the National Testing Agency for the four-year Integrated BEEd programme.

The examination is scheduled for April 17 and 18. However, despite opting for preferred cities within Odisha during the application process, many candidates have reportedly been allotted centres outside the state, including West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan.

According to students, the city intimidation slip was released April 9, while admit cards are expected to be issued April 13. With limited time left, candidates are expressing anxiety over travel arrangements, as train tickets are largely un-



available and bus connectivity to several locations remains inadequate.

Many aspirants have stated that reaching distant centres on such short notice is extremely challenging, leading to heightened stress. Some candidates have even indicated that they may be forced to skip the examination due to logistical constraints.

The issue has triggered widespread dissatisfaction among students, who are demanding immediate intervention. They have appealed to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan to address the situation by either reallocating centres within Odisha or re-scheduling the examination to ensure a fair opportunity for all candidates.

Clash between 2 groups; 7 arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 12: Police Sunday arrested seven persons, including two women, in connection with a clash between two groups that broke out over a minor dispute related to vehicle movement in Beseswar Basti under Saheed Nagar police limits, officials said.

According to police, the incident occurred late on the night of April 11 at Tala Sahi in Beseswar Basti. What began as a trivial argument over vehicular movement escalated into a major confrontation, with members of both groups assembling and engaging in violence.

In this connection, both groups involved in the clash lodged complaints at the Saheed Nagar police station.

The accused from the first group have been identified as



Amit Naik (26), Mukesh Kumar Naik (26), Chiku Naik (22), Kabita Bhol (54), and Nirmala Naik (50), all residents of Bis-eswar Basti.

Similarly, the accused from the second group have been identified as Chandan Panigrahi (27) and Rajendra Panigrahi (35), residents of Majhi Sahi in the same locality.

Police said members of the first group allegedly trespassed into the rival group's house and attacked occupants and their associates using sharp weapons, sticks, bricks, and stones, causing injuries. They also allegedly snatched gold or-

naments during the attack. The opposing group retaliated, leading to further violence, verbal abuse, and death threats from both sides.

Several persons from both groups sustained injuries in the clash.

During the investigation, police found that the violence stemmed from prior enmity coupled with sudden provocation, with both groups forming unlawful assemblies and attacking each other.

Based on written complaints from both sides, Saheed Nagar police registered two counter cases and launched an investigation. All the accused were apprehended during raids in the locality.

Following confirmation of their involvement, the accused were forwarded to the court, and further investigation into the cases is underway, police said.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Susanta Mohapatra, S/o. Bhagaban Mahapatra, At.-Chitreswar, PO-Daulatabad, PS-Choudwar, Dist.-Cuttack, by an Affidavit before the Notary Public Cuttack, vide no. 79AA 198413, I swear and declare that henceforth, I shall be known as Susanta Mohapatra, S/o. Bhagaban Mahapatra for all purposes, record and future reference.

I, Madhyamika Mishra, D/o Narayan Mohapatra, W/o Aurobinda Mishra, At-Tareni Bihar, PO-Kapaleswar, PS-Choudwar, Dist.-Cuttack, by an Affidavit before the Notary Public Cuttack, vide no. 79AA 198591, I swear and declare that myself Madhyamika Mishra and Madhyamika Misha both are same and one person and now onwards, I shall be known as Madhyamika Mishra for all purposes.

BALANCING LEGACY & LIVABILITY

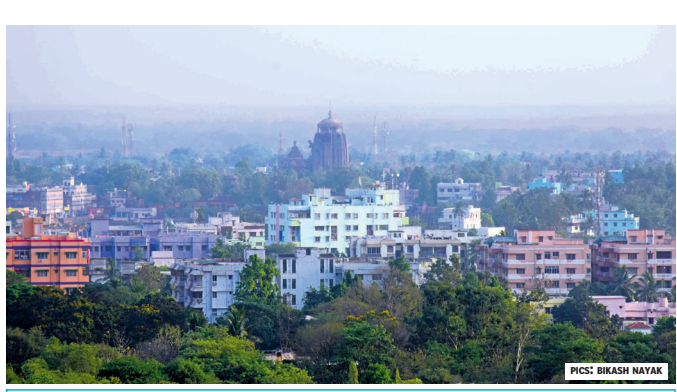
ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 12: The Capital city celebrated its 78th Foundation Day Sunday, marking nearly eight decades of planned urban growth, rich heritage, and evolving aspirations. As the City commemorated this milestone, experts, planners, and citizens reflected on what makes Bhubaneswar unique—and what lies ahead in its journey towards becoming a more inclusive and citizen-friendly Capital.

Archaeologist and cultural curator Jitu Mishra highlights Bhubaneswar's deep historical legacy, noting that it is among the few major Indian cities with continuous archaeological roots dating back to the 3rd century BCE, during Emperor Ashoka's reign. "Over time, the City has been shaped by Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism, Shakti worship, and Vaishnavism," he says.

"This confluence reflects a tradition of tolerance, artistic excellence, and spiritual diversity," Mishra says, adding that this historical synthesis continues to shape modern Bhubaneswar, which now thrives in commerce, culture, sports, education, and innovation.

Urban planner Piyush Ranjan Rout notes that modern Bhubaneswar was



The 78th Capital Foundation Day Celebration-cum-Rajdhani Mahotsav 2026 will be held April 13 and 14, featuring a series of ceremonial and cultural programmes across the City. The celebrations will begin with a morning programme at PMG Square, including garlanding of the foundation stone, flag hoisting, and a ceremonial parade from Rabindra Mandap to Jaydev Bhawan. The schedule will also include a photo exhibition, the presentation of the Rajdhani Gaurav Samman, and cultural performances. Evening programmes at Utkal Mandap will feature vibrant cultural events, culminating in a grand finale on April 14. As Bhubaneswar turns 78, the City stands at a pivotal moment—rooted in a glorious past yet poised for transformation.

conceived in 1948 under the vision of Otto H. Königsberger, making it one of India's



earliest planned cities. He says that while its design drew inspira-

tion from global cities like Barcelona, London, and Rio de Janeiro, its true identity lies in blending tradition with modern urban planning. Rout, however, cautions that the City risks losing its original planning ethos, and stresses the need to preserve key heritage zones such as Ekamra Kshetra, Dhauli, Khandagiri Caves, and Udayagiri Caves. Healthcare expert and resident Amrit Patojoshi says the human-scale design remains one of the City's greatest strengths. "What makes Bhubaneswar

unique is its balance—planned infrastructure, green spaces, and a relatively calm pace of life compared to other capitals," he says.

He further emphasises that modernisation must prioritise citizen experience through better roads, improved pedestrian safety, strengthened last-mile connectivity, and a more vibrant urban culture.

At the same time, he cautions against emerging social challenges, including substance abuse among youth, calling for proactive measures in awareness, enforcement, and mental health support.

Social activist Saroj Barik underscores the importance of inclusive development as Bhubaneswar attracts investments and a diverse workforce.

"The City's growth must benefit everyone," he says, stressing the need for affordable housing, efficient transport, improved living conditions, and strong social security systems to ensure dignity and opportunity for all sections of society.

Experts agree that while Bhubaneswar has grown rapidly, infrastructure development has not always kept pace with future needs. Investments in mass rapid transit systems—including metro rail, trams, and advanced bus networks—are seen as essential to achieving the vision of a developed Odisha by 2036.

ECoR GM reviews Paradeep rail infra

POST NEWS NETWORK



compliance with prescribed railway standards.

Bhubaneswar, April 12: East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Parmeshwar Funkwal Sunday conducted a comprehensive inspection of Paradeep Yard, station, and the Routine Overhaul (ROH) depot.

The inspection was carried out during his visit from the Mancheswar-Paradeep section, during which he reviewed railway infrastructure and operational facilities in and around the Paradeep area.

Given Paradeep Port's significance as a vital freight hub, the visit primarily focused on enhancing the efficiency, safety, and capacity of rail operations linked to port logistics.

During the inspection, the General Manager reviewed key aspects including the yard layout and signalling systems, overall operational efficiency, passenger amenities and cleanliness at the station, the functioning of the ROH depot and maintenance practices, as well as safety measures and

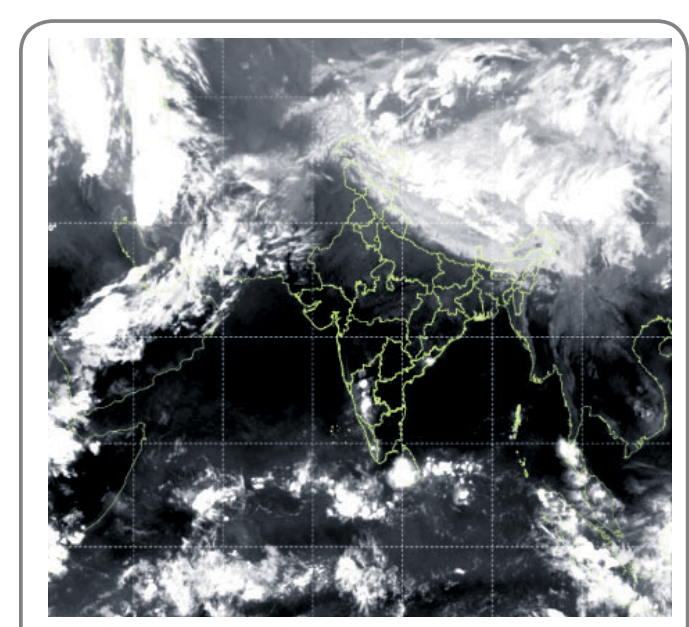
compliance with prescribed railway standards.

Funkwal emphasised the need to strengthen safety protocols, adopt improved maintenance practices, and ensure better coordination among departments to meet the growing freight and passenger demand in the region.

Senior officials, including Principal Heads of Departments and the Divisional Railway Manager of Khurda Road, accompanied him during the inspection. The Khurda Road Division plays a pivotal role in managing railway operations in the region.

Funkwal also directed officials to maintain high standards of sanitation, ensure proper upkeep of rolling stock and undertake continuous monitoring of infrastructure to deliver safe, efficient, and reliable services.

The inspection reflects East Coast Railway's continued commitment to strengthening infrastructure and enhancing service reliability across Odisha.



WEATHER		FORECAST	
	BBSR	CTC	
Max Temp	37.7°	37.4°	Dry weather very likely to prevail over the districts of Odisha
Min Temp	26.0°	24.6°	
Humidity	79%	82%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

Suspected food poisoning leaves 128 students sick



POST NEWS NETWORK

Morada/Rasgovindpur, April 12: As many as 128 students of a government-run Ashram school, under the Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste Welfare department, at Kakabandh in Rasgovindpur block of Mayurbhanj district fell ill Sunday and were admitted to a hospital, officials said. The students complained of stomach pain and vomit-

ing, triggering tension at the Rasgovindpur Community Health Centre, where they were undergoing treatment. Agitated parents gathered at the facility and accused hostel authorities of negligence. According to reports, the residential school houses around 290 students from Classes I to VIII. The headmaster, Jayant Kumar Panigrahi, has been serving as the hostel superintendent for several years.

The incident came to light around 9am, when several students reported feeling unwell. They were initially taken to the hospital by auto-rickshaws. As the number of affected students rose to 128, all were shifted to the hospital for treatment. Attending physician Dr S Mandal said the students likely fell ill after consuming contaminated food. When contacted, Panigrahi said food had been served to students as per the prescribed menu. "Pakhala, potato chutney and fried items were served in the morning," he said. However, Child Development Project Officer (CDPO) Malati Marndi, who visited the spot and reviewed the situation, said upma was supposed to be served as per the menu, but pakhala had been given instead. She added that some students had skipped meals, which may have contributed to their condition. Marndi said an inquiry would be conducted to ascertain the exact cause of the incident.

Female elephant found dead

SATAMILE: A female elephant was found dead in the Hindol forest range of Dhenkanal district Sunday, officials said. The carcass was discovered in the Bargoj reserve forest under the Sinkol range of the Hindol forest division during the morning hours, triggering concern among forest officials. According to sources, the elephant had been unwell for the past few days, and the Forest department had been closely monitoring its movement and health condition. The animal was reportedly roaming in the area before it was found dead. Forest personnel and a team of veterinarians reached the spot and began an investigation. The exact cause of death remains unclear. Officials said the cause would be determined after a post-mortem examination.

Man dies of electrocution

RAIRAKHOL: A 45-year-old man died after coming into contact with a live electric wire in a village under Rairakhol police limits in Sambalpur district Sunday. The deceased was identified as Babula Munda of Kharshali village under Luhapank panchayat. According to reports, Munda came in contact with electricity while installing a water pump in a well in his backyard. Family members rushed him to Rairakhol hospital, where doctors declared him dead. Police sent the body for post-mortem and registered a case of unnatural death.

School headmaster suspended for negligence, financial irregularities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, April 12: A headmaster in charge of a state government-run upper primary school in Ganjam district has been suspended for negligence in duty and alleged involvement in financial irregularities, officials said Sunday. The district administration Friday suspended the in-charge headmaster of Upper Primary School, Landajuali in Aska block and has also held up the monthly salaries of six teachers of the school and the concerned Centre Resource Cluster Coordinator (CRCC), the officials said. After finding some financial irregularities, shortage of mid-day meal (MDM) rice and lack

of maintenance of the attendance registers of the students, a show-cause notice was issued to headmaster Suman Bartiya March 30 and he was asked to reply within three days, said Aska Block Education Officer (BEO) Munrani Mohanty. "We have suspended him Friday as he failed to reply satisfactorily," Mohanty said. She said during their visit to the school March 23, they found the attendance register was not maintained for the entire year of 2025-26. The class teachers of the school said the attendance registered was with the headmaster of the school. The school authorities are supposed to draw the rice for the MDM as per the attendance of the students.

The school has 350 students from Shishu Vatika (pre-schooling) to Class VIII. During the verification, they also found some irregularities in school funds and shortage of at least 20 bags of rice for the MDM, she said. The salaries of the class teachers were held up because they did not bring notice to the higher authorities about the non-maintenance of the students' attendance records. The CRCC, who was supposed to verify the school documents and bring the notice of its irregularities to the higher authorities, also failed to discharge his duties. Hence, his salary was held up from March, said the BEO.

Villagers detain Rungta Company's drilling machine, driver

POST NEWS NETWORK

Talcher, April 12: Residents of Dharampur panchayat in Talcher block of Angul district detained a drilling machine and its driver belonging to Rungta Company, protesting what they alleged was unauthorised borewell work in Sareilo village, a report said Sunday. According to villagers, a truck carrying the drilling

machine entered Sareilo to begin borewell operations. On being informed, men and women from Khairapala, Dharampur and Sareilo villages gathered near a temple and stopped the vehicle, detaining the driver and the machine for several hours. Earlier, April 9, more than 500 residents from three villages under Dharampur panchayat had held discussions with the Sub-Collector, Tehsildar, SDPO

and company representatives. It was reportedly agreed that drilling work would proceed only with the consent of villagers. However, locals alleged that company officials later consulted only a few individuals and brought the machine in the evening to begin work, triggering strong opposition. Villagers said no senior company official arrived at the spot despite the standoff. Police later reached the scene to

secure the release of the driver and equipment, but protesters refused, demanding a written assurance that no work would be carried out without the consent of the panchayat. In the presence of police, a written agreement was drafted stating that no drilling activity would take place until a fresh decision is made at the panchayat level. The driver and the machine were subsequently released.

7 pilgrims rescued after losing way in Gandhamardan forest



POST NEWS NETWORK

Paikmal, April 12: Seven pilgrims who lost their way in the forested hills of Gandhamardan near Nrusinghanath in Bargarh district were rescued Saturday, officials said. The rescued pilgrims were identified as Gourang Nayak, Bhagyadhar Nayak, Shanti Nayak, Jashoda Nayak, Rajendra Nayak, Dharmendra Nayak and Mohan Nayak; all members of a family from Gadabandh village under Narla police limits in Kalahandi district. The group had visited Nrusinghanath Temple to immerse the bone of a departed member

of the family. After completing the rituals, they set out towards Harishankar temple, trekking across the Gandhamardan hills. However, midway near Bhimamandua, they strayed off the trail and wandered deep into the forest, unable to find their way back. The group later managed to contact forest officials and informed them of their situation. Acting on the alert, forester Ramesh Pradhan, along with forest officials and a fire services team led by officer-in-charge Bharat Kumar Singh, launched a rescue operation. After trekking to the location, the team found the stranded pilgrims, provided them with food and water, and began evacuation. One elderly member, Gouranga Nayak, had fallen unconscious and had to be carried for some distance by rescuers. The group was brought down to Kapiladhara waterfall on foot and later transported by vehicle to Nrusinghanath.

National seminar on Indian classical texts organised at Baripada Women's College



POST NEWS NETWORK

BARIPADA: A one-day national seminar on "Re-reading Indian Classical Texts" was organised Saturday at Baripada Government Women's College by the Departments of English and Sanskrit in collaboration with IQAC. Prof JSR Prasad of Hyderabad Sanskrit University, Assistant Professor Dr Uttar Kumar Jena of KD College, Medinapur, and Postdoctoral Fellow Dr Shantanu Sarkar of IIT Kharagpur attended as key speakers. They stressed the need to re-evaluate Indian classical works to explore their relevance in contemporary times. Principal Sagarika Singh patronised the event, while Head of the English Department Rajanikanta Shankhwa served as convener. Padma Shri Dr Damayanti Besra, chairperson of the governing body, attended as chief guest and spoke on the importance of classical languages. Faculty members Debahuti Das and Gayatri Pattnaik coordinated the programme. A total of 23 research papers were presented, including 10 offline and 13 online. Faculty from nearby colleges also attended.

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ଅଶ୍ରୁଯାତ ସତକର୍ତା

ଲକ୍ଷଣ

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

ସତକର୍ତା

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- ଧଳା ରଙ୍ଗର ଢିଲା ପୋଷାକ, ଛତା ଓ ଜୋତା ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତୁ
- ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଛାଇରେ ବିଶ୍ରାମ ନିଅନ୍ତୁ
- ଖରାରେ କଠିନ ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ ଅଧିକ ଦୂର ଚାଲନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ
- କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ମାଦକ ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ ସେବନ କରନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ

ପ୍ରତିକାର

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

ବୟସ୍କ ତଥା ଅସୁସ୍ଥ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଏବଂ ଗର୍ଭବତୀ ମହିଳାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଅଶ୍ରୁଯାତର ଆଶଙ୍କା ଅଧିକ

ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

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Dhiraj Dhanuka	Anoushka Panda	N. Shreya Amolika	Suvram Jyoti Behera
NEET	AILET 2026	CLAT 2026	
STATE RANK #2 AIR 128	STATE RANK #1 AIR 8	STATE RANK #1 AIR 14	
Aditya Kiran Bal	Prathmesh Gaurav	Prathmesh Gaurav	

*Conditions Apply

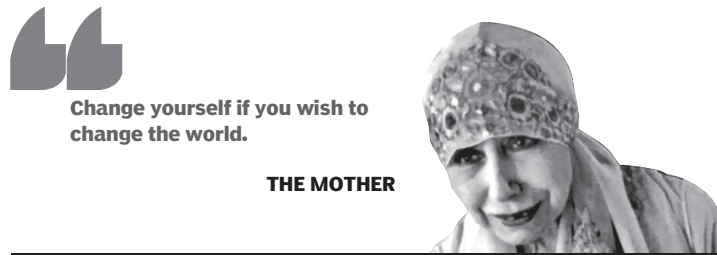
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THE MOTHER

Consigned to Sidelines

The collapse of the Iran-US peace talks in Islamabad marks yet another sobering moment in a conflict that has already destabilised West Asia and sent ripples through much of the global economy. Despite marathon negotiations lasting over 20 hours during the high-level direct engagement, both Washington and Tehran walked away without an agreement, and blamed each other for the impasse. The US delegation led by Vice President JD Vance reiterated its demand that Iran must forgo any pathway to acquiring nuclear weapons. For America, this has been a non-negotiable term as it concerns the country's broader geopolitical posture. At the same time, Vance's assertion that the failure of the talks will be "worse for Iran" reflects a mindset that still believes in American military and economic might, despite the sobering lessons from Iran's response to US-Israel strikes over the past month and more.

Tehran, on the other hand, views the matter through a radically different lens. Led by its parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the Iranian delegation framed the breakdown of talks as a consequence of "excessive demands" and a persistent lack of trust. "Before the negotiations, I emphasised that we have the necessary good faith and will, but due to the experiences of the two previous wars, we have no trust in the opposing side," Ghalibaf said in a series of posts on social media platform 'X'. For Iran, the trust deficit is rooted in decades of hostility marked by economic sanctions, military confrontations, and broken agreements with America. Iran's resolve to retaining its nuclear programme, while denying any intent to build weapons, signals its unwavering stand on what it considers its sovereign right.

The Islamabad talks, mediated by Pakistan, were significant not only for their content but also for their context. They followed a six-day ceasefire that had briefly raised hopes of de-escalation after weeks of conflict triggered by US and Israeli airstrikes on Iran. Yet, even as diplomats negotiated, the region remained volatile with Israeli operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon continuing full force.

What stands out sharply in this diplomatic episode is the central role played by Pakistan's leadership. Islamabad emerged as a crucial interlocutor, hosting and facilitating a high-level engagement between Washington and Tehran. Under the stewardship of Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and backed by its military establishment, Pakistan positioned itself as a credible mediator capable of engaging both sides. This is a notable geopolitical moment for a country often seen as a failed state. Pakistan's role as mediator deserves recognition, even if the immediate outcome fell short. Similar to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announcing a large basket of funds for Pakistan while a kind of mock war with India (labelled Operation Sindoor by India) was in progress, Pakistan has again been bestowed with another huge largesse of the Saudis and Qataris who have committed US\$5 billion for the yeoman service rendered for peacemaking efforts in the Middle East.

India's absence from this diplomatic high table is unfortunate. Its historical ties with Iran got severed recently by the sudden desertion from Chabahar and strategic partnership with the US came to nought while 'friend' President Trump constantly threatened India with high tariffs. Likewise, in the case of India's superficially deep stakes in West Asia, especially in energy security and the welfare of its diaspora, New Delhi found itself on the margins. This diplomatic sidelining of India raises uncomfortable questions about the effectiveness and agility of its foreign policy in a fast shifting geopolitical landscape. The directionless diplomacy pursued by New Delhi over the last decade has made enemies out of the country's neighbours, while major world powers like the US, China and the European Union see India not as a geopolitical power, but as a vast market for their companies.

In spite of India's leadership constantly talking against Pakistan, trying to discuss 'terrorism' on every international forum and making efforts to tag that country as a 'failed' and 'terrorist state', these talks held in Islamabad have proven that Pakistan's consistent diplomatic endeavours have succeeded while India has, sadly because of a few incompetent individuals, failed miserably on the global platform. Of course, all these failures may get washed away from the minds of Indians after impending election results are declared but the world is not waiting for Tamil Nadu, West Bengal or Kerala Assembly outcomes.

While Pakistan seized the opportunity emerging out of the tensions in West Asia to act as a bridge, India appeared incapable to assert a mediating role, thereby ceding diplomatic space to its archrival.

Meanwhile, the consequences of the failure of the peace talks are likely to be borne by the whole world. The Strait of Hormuz, a critical artery through which nearly a fifth of global oil supplies flow was completely safe and open till 28 February 2026, till the attack by US-Israel on Iran commenced, has now become a moot point for ending the war. Iran's demands for control over the Strait and the imposition of transit fees are seen by the West as untenable, while Tehran views them as leverage in a conflict where it faces overwhelming economic pressure. After the failure of the talks with Iran, Trump has said that the US will blockade the Strait of Hormuz. For India, one of the world's largest energy importers, prolonged instability in this corridor has immense direct economic ramifications.

The Islamabad talks may have ended without an agreement, but they have also exposed shifting diplomatic equations, where new actors have emerged, while few others, like India, have been consigned to the sidelines.

ASSESSING DEMOCRATIC DECLINE

FOCUS POLITICS



In the absence of consistent data, our views on why certain democracies thrive or falter are often driven by prejudice rather than by evidence

Democracy is inherently fraught. At its core lies the difficulty of translating individual preferences into a coherent social choice, a problem famously captured by Nobel laureate economist Kenneth Arrow's impossibility theorem and later developed by another Nobel laureate, Amartya Sen, in his 1970 book *Collective Choice and Social Welfare*. Just as Euclid did for geometry long before them, Arrow and Sen gave political economy a rigorous axiomatic framework, in the process revealing the limits of collective decision-making.

Yet, even as the theoretical understanding of democracy has advanced, empirical analysis has lagged behind. In the absence of consistent data, our views on why certain democracies thrive or falter are often driven by prejudice rather than by evidence. To address this gap, the V-Dem Institute publishes its annual Democracy Reports, among the first systematic efforts to measure and compare democratic health across countries and over time.

The Institute's latest report offers a stark assessment of the United States' current trajectory. The "speed with which American democracy is currently dismantled," it warns, "is unprecedented in modern history." Given America's position as the world's leading democracy, such rapid deterioration has implications far beyond its borders. While countries like Turkey and India have experienced democratic erosion in recent years, the report points to sharper declines across Western Europe, where populist leaders are increasingly taking cues from US President Donald Trump.

Of course, any effort to measure democracy is open to criticism, not least because democracy has no single, universally accepted definition. Still, the V-Dem report represents one of the most rigorous efforts possible under the circumstances, developing and refining a set of indicators that track the resilience of democratic institutions and limit the scope for personal bias in evaluating countries with very different political cultures. Unsurprisingly, V-Dem's 2026 index places Denmark, Sweden, and Norway at the top, and Eritrea, North Korea, and Myanmar at the bottom.

The report paints a bleak picture, noting that the gains of the late-20th-century democratization wave have been "almost eradicated." But it also highlights some encouraging developments. Sri Lanka, for example, has experienced a remarkable democratic turnaround under President Anura Kumara Dissanayake. And Brazil, following President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's 2022 election victory, has shown that democratic backsliding can be reversed.

Even so, the broader trend is unmistakable. Following Por-

tugal's Carnation Revolution in 1974, identified by political scientist Samuel Huntington as the start of the "third wave" of democratization, democracy spread to dozens of countries. As that wave recedes, democratic progress is being set back by nearly five decades.

Can the trend be reversed? As CNN journalist Brian Stelter has observed, the two institutional avenues that offer the greatest hope are elections, which enable citizens to force a change in course, and independent judiciaries that act as a check on executive overreach.

But the answer also depends on how we define and measure democratic backsliding. While V-Dem's methodology offers valuable insights, it has an important limitation. To construct its rankings, V-Dem assigns each country a democracy score based on multiple sub-indices and then aggregates these into a global measure. If the goal is to reflect the experience of individuals rather than countries, a population-weighted average would seem more appropriate. That is, after all, how institutions like the World Bank aggregate GDP.

Democratic health, how-

ever, cannot be aggregated in the same way as GDP. To understand why, imagine a world in which every country is democratic. Now, suppose that a major power goes rogue and begins to undermine the rights of individuals in other countries while maintaining its own domestic democratic institutions. In such a scenario, even though each country's own score remains unchanged, global democracy would clearly decline.

As I argued in my 2016 book *Beyond the Invisible Hand*, in an interconnected global economy shaped by geopolitical asymmetries, the leaders of major powers can matter as much to ordinary people as—if not more than—their own governments. This is especially true for smaller countries that are economically or strategically dependent on larger ones. The problem would be less acute if all governments adhered to international norms. In reality, powerful countries have numerous ways to bully the weak.

For this reason, measuring the health of global democratic governance cannot rely solely on aggregating national scores. It must also account for how major powers influence, constrain, and violate rights beyond their own borders.

To be sure, designing such a measure would be a complex task. But without it, our understanding of democracy's current decline—and how to reverse it—will remain incomplete.

The writer, a former chief economist of the World Bank and chief economic adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University.

PROJECT SYNDICATE



Kaushik Basu

MEASURING THE HEALTH OF GLOBAL DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE CANNOT RELY SOLELY ON AGGREGATING NATIONAL SCORES

SPECTRUM GEOPOLITICS

Dependence comes at a cost

The Iran-Israel conflict has abruptly exposed the fault lines in India's growth story—energy dependence, imported inflation, and policy vulnerability. With the Strait of Hormuz under threat, even a modest spike in crude prices can ripple through the economy, raising fuel costs, widening the trade deficit, and feeding directly into inflation.

It is just not the IMF, but the RBI and NITI Aayog also express deep concern. India was earlier seen by the IMF as a key global growth engine, the post-Iran conflict environment has sharply increased downside risks, with the Fund warning that such shocks are "asymmetric" and disproportionately hit energy-importing economies like India.

The RBI's April 2026 Monetary Policy decision to hold the repo rate at 5.25% reflects caution, not comfort. Its 6.9% growth projection for FY27, against 7.6% of budgetary speculation, already carries downside risks; sustained high oil prices could drag it closer to 6.7% while pushing inflation towards 4.6-5%, squeezing consumption.

This is not just a cyclical shock—it is a structural warning. Voices from NITI Aayog,

including ex-CEO Amitabh Kant, are urging a faster pivot to renewables, but the immediate reality is stark: India remains deeply exposed to external energy disruptions. The question is no longer whether to diversify, but how long the economy can absorb repeated geopolitical shocks before growth, stability, and policy space begin to erode.

The NITI Aayog observes that rising crude prices could add billions to India's annual fuel import bill, weakening the rupee and raising inflation. A sustained 10% increase in oil prices could potentially lower GDP growth by 20-25 bps.

Data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) shows that India remained the world's second-largest importer of major arms from 2021 to 2025, accounting for 8.2% of total global imports.

India also needs to reconsider its decision to stick to Western carbon-reduction and euphemistic carbon trading methods. The decision to go for mobile nuclear reactors is fraught with hazardous radiation dangers.

In 2005-06, India voted with the US and the EU at the International Atomic Energy Agen-

cy to declare Iran non-compliant with nuclear safeguards, paving the way for referral to the UN Security Council. These votes were closely tied to the Indo-US civil nuclear deal, with American officials indicating India's support on Iran was key to securing Congressional approval. Under pressure to project "responsible" nuclear conduct despite being a non-NPT signatory, India shifted from its earlier strategic engagement with Iran—marked by the 2003 New Delhi Declaration—to a more US-aligned position.

The 2005-2006 votes marked a significant shift from the cordiality of 2001-2003, when Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Tehran and signed the New Delhi Declaration, establishing a "strategic partnership" with Iran.

The void created has now become a pivot of the discussion across the world. A "rogue" Pakistan, supporting various terrorist actions is now at the centre of talks between Iran and the US—space that is believed normally belong to India.

India has to reclaim the pre-2016 SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) regional leadership

for a friendly economic and security alternative. The Iran war and the irony of the Gulf security failures call for a relook at the subcontinent for refurbishing Indian efforts. India has done well to ensure petroleum supplies to Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka during the Hormuz closure.

It may be a new beginning. Nations falter, do corrections and pave new ways. India has to evolve the new path to turn the region as the global engine. The eight SAARC nations, including Pakistan, can become the strength for new energy and economic growth. India stands at an inflection point where external shocks are exposing internal policy gaps. Energy vulnerability, strategic drift, and weakening regional engagement cannot be addressed through incremental fixes. The lesson from West Asia is clear: dependence—whether on fuel, arms, or alliances—comes at a cost.

India must build resilience through energy diversification, stronger domestic capacity, and renewed regional leadership—reviving SAARC despite challenges. The choice is clear: react to crises or shape a stable, self-assured future.

INFA



Shivaji Sarkar

INDIA STANDS AT AN INFLECTION POINT WHERE EXTERNAL SHOCKS ARE EXPOSING INTERNAL POLICY GAPS

WISDOM CORNER

The fishermen know that the sea is dangerous and the storm terrible, but they have never found these dangers sufficient reason for remaining ashore.

VINCENT VAN GOGH

Joy can only be real if people look upon their life as a service and have a definite object in life outside themselves and their personal happiness.

LEO TOLSTOY

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

ROBERT FROST

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1919: British troops massacre around 400 unarmed civilians in India. Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer ordered his men to shoot into the crowd, in his own words "to punish the Indians for disobedience." The Indian independence movement grew considerably after the Amritsar massacre, popularly known as the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.
- 1941: Japan concluded a neutrality pact with the Soviet Union in World War II.
- 1963: Garry Kasparov, who in 1985 became the youngest world chess champion, was born in Azerbaijan.
- 1970: An oxygen tank explodes on Apollo 13, leaving the spacecraft crippled. The emergency prompted Jack Swigert's famous quote "Houston, we've had a problem". The crew managed to return to Earth safely.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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Eternal Asha

Sir, Born on 8 September, 1933, in Sangli, Maharashtra, Asha Bhosle emerged from modest beginnings to become one of India's most dynamic and versatile playback singers. Trained in classical music by her father, she entered the film industry at a young age, facing early personal struggles and professional challenges. Through perseverance and sheer talent, she gradually established her identity in the 1950s, distinguishing herself with a voice that could adapt to every mood and genre. Her early recognition came with songs like "Ude Jab Jab Zulfein Teri" from Naya Daur and "Aaiye Meherbaan" from Howrah Bridge, which highlighted her expressive style. As the decades progressed, she broke conventional boundaries with bold and sensuous renditions such as "Aao Huzoor Tumko" (Kismat) and "Piya Tu Ab To Aaja" (Caravan). Her iconic partnership with composer RD Burman produced evergreen songs that continue to resonate across generations. Over a career spanning more than seven decades, Asha Bhosle recorded over 12,000 songs in numerous Indian and international languages, making her one of the most prolific singers in history. Her passing marks a profound and irreplaceable loss to India's cultural and musical heritage. Yet, each song she left behind stands as a living memory, ensuring that her legacy will endure far beyond her years.

RS Narula, PATIALA

Nuclear breakthrough

Sir, India's breakthrough at the Kalpakkam nuclear plant marks a defining moment in its nuclear energy journey. By successfully advancing an indigenously built Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR), India has achieved what even technologically advanced nations like US and France have struggled to commercialize, with only Russia operating a similar system. This innovation is critical for India, which has limited uranium reserves but abundant thorium deposits. The FBR technology enables a self-sustaining nuclear cycle, converting fertile thorium into usable fuel, thereby unlocking a long-term energy solution. This reduces dependence on costly energy imports and enhances energy security. As India moves closer to harnessing thorium at scale, the Kalpakkam success not only strengthens its strategic autonomy but also positions the country as a global leader in next-generation nuclear technology.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

End of Naxalism starts journey of development



While 224 villages across 67 gram panchayats in Bijapur district have been covered under Niyad Nellanar initiative through 42 security camps, 1,744 development works have been completed under MGNREGA, generating over five lakh person-days of employment

REGA has become the primary water source for more than 100 residents in terrain unsuitable for borewells. In Palnar, once inaccessible to the administration, construction of a panchayat bhawan, anganwadi centre and gauthan (cow shelter) are underway, employing over 200 workers, the official said. Kavargaon, after decades of isolation, now has 100 per cent job card coverage among its rural workforce, along with roads, electricity, drinking water, schools and mobile towers.

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In Palnar, once inaccessible to the administration, construction of a panchayat bhawan, anganwadi centre and gauthan (cow shelter) are underway, employing over 200 workers, the official said.

Kavargaon, after decades of isolation, now has 100 per cent job card coverage among its rural workforce, along with roads, electricity, drinking water, schools and mobile towers.

"In Savnar and Pusukonta villages, newly built anganwadi centres are serving children with education and nutrition support. Fair Price Shops have been established in Dharmaram, Todka and Bangoli. In Bangoli, 524 families no longer need to travel 18 kilometres to obtain essential supplies," he said.

To promote self-reliance, rehabilitated former Naxalites and local youth are being trained in masonry, enabling them to secure work in construction and infrastructure projects, the official said.

"The transformation in Bas-tar's remote villages demonstrates that sustainable peace and prosperity can only be achieved when development reaches the last mile," Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said.

In villages where development had never reached before, new hope and self-confidence have emerged through schemes like Niyad Nellanar and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, he asserted.

"This change proves that even the most challenging regions can be transformed through sensitive policies, coordinated efforts and public participation," Sai said.

The government declared Chhattisgarh Naxal-free Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana March 31 this year after a relentless campaign by security forces deep into the forested strongholds of the ultras left the movement without leaders and cadre, most getting neutralised or preferring to lay down arms.



A man rows a 'shikara' on a sunny day, at Dal lake, in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir, Sunday

Amarnath Yatra to begin from July 3

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 12: The annual pilgrimage to the holy cave shrine of Amarnath in south Kashmir will commence July 3 and conclude after 57 days August 28, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said Sunday.

Pilgrims between the ages of 13 and 70 can undertake the yatra and registrations will begin from April 15, the LG told reporters at the Lok Bhavan here.

The dates for the yatra were decided at a meeting of the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board (SASB) chaired by Sinha.

"The Amarnath Yatra will commence July 3 and conclude August 28. Overall, this year's pilgrimage will be slightly longer, lasting about 57 days," the LG said.

Registration for the pilgrimage has been made mandatory and will begin from April 15. The minimum age for pilgrims has been fixed at 13 years and the maximum at 70 years, he said.

"Advance registration can be done through nearly 556 designated bank branches across the country, while online registration will also be available through the official website of



the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board," Sinha said.

Yes Bank, ICICI Bank, Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India and Axis Bank will facilitate registrations through their branches, he said.

He said the first puja will be performed June 19, on the occasion of Jyeshtha Purnima.

The pilgrimage will commence from the twin tracks -- the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag district and the shorter but steeper 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district.

Sinha said that several new initiatives have been introduced over the past four years to improve facilities for pil-

grims undertaking the annual yatra, including mandatory Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) cards and enhanced insurance cover.

"RFID cards have been made mandatory and 100 per cent pilgrims are issued these cards. Group accidental insurance has been increased from ₹5 lakh to ₹10 lakh, with an additional ₹50,000 provided in case of natural or accidental death of pony/walas," he said.

The use of technology has also increased significantly, with RFID systems being extended to multiple services.

"Two years ago, fewer people were availing these services, but last year, nearly 70 per cent

of pilgrims used them, indicating considerable success," he said.

Highlighting infrastructure upgrades, Sinha said that both pilgrimage routes have been widened significantly to ensure smoother movement of pilgrims.

"The Baltal and Nunwan routes have been expanded up to around 12 ft at several places and vulnerable stretches and bridges have been improved considerably by the BRO, which has done commendable maintenance work over the years," he said.

On capacity enhancement, the LG said arrangements have been made to accommodate more pilgrims even during adverse weather conditions.

"Holding capacity has been increased and several shelters have been set up so that a large number of people can stay comfortably during bad weather," he said.

LG said that yatri niwas facilities have been expanded at Chandanwari, Baltal and Srinagar in Kashmir. While the Nunwan facility will become operational this year, the Jammu facility is also expected to open soon.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bijapur, April 12: The end of Naxalism in Chhattisgarh is ushering in visible transformation in several villages in Bijapur district, with works under Niyad Nellanar scheme and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act giving them first-time access to essential civic infrastructure, an official said Sunday.

While 224 villages across 67 gram panchayats in Bijapur district have been covered under Niyad Nellanar initiative through 42 security camps, 1,744 development works have been completed under MGNREGA, generating over five lakh person-days of employment, he said.

"More than 16,000 families

Army organises cultural event for residents of border town in Kupwara

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, April 12: Indian Army organised a cultural and musical event for residents of Tithwal town along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district, officials said Sunday.

"In a stirring confluence of culture, community and country, Shaam-e-Watan, a musical extravaganza suffused with patriotic fervour and nationalistic spirit, was organised by the Indian Army at Azmat-e-Hind, Tithwal, in the Karnah region of Kupwara, North Kashmir," the officials said.

They said the event was a testament to the changing social consciousness of a resurgent Kashmir, where the youth are emerging as confident custodians of a progressive and harmonious future.

"The evening unfolded as an exquisite mosaic of performances, soul-stirring patriotic songs, evocative poetry, and graceful dance recitals that captivated the audience and evoked a profound emotional resonance.

Bhaderwah school to get heritage makeover

The school located in Bhaderwah town of Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district was the first high school of the Chenab valley region, established in 1920 by the then Dogra Ruler Maharaj Pratap Singh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhaderwah, April 12: One of the oldest educational institutions in Jammu and Kashmir, the Boys Higher Secondary School here has received a major boost, with the government deciding to redevelop the 106-year-old institution into a heritage school.

The foundation stone for the ₹3.06 crore redevelopment of the 20th-century institution -- earlier known as Amar Singh High School -- was laid by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Bhaderwah, Sunil Kumar Bhutyal, in the presence of the school's Principal and alumnus, Kailash Chander.

The school located in Bhaderwah town of Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district. It was the first high school of the Chenab valley region, established in 1920 by the then Dogra Ruler Maharaj Pratap Singh.

Bhutyal said the ₹3.06 crore redevelopment project, being undertaken under the 'Prerna' Heritage School scheme, is envisioned to serve as a centre of in-



spiration for students through an immersive learning experience.

The initiative is also expected to instil a sense of pride among the school's alumni, as the historic institution -- known for producing distinguished achievers over the decades -- enters a new era of preservation and renewal, he said.

"Aligned with the vision of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this first-of-its-kind school redevelopment initiative, 'Prerna', is being undertaken

to inspire the youth of the region to emerge as catalysts of change," the ADC said. Chander termed the development a proud moment, highlighting that his grandfather, father, and he himself are alumni of the institution.

"Leading the school as its Principal after it has been accorded heritage status is a milestone which I will cherish for the rest of my life," he said.

Before Independence, locals said the school was affiliated

with the University of the Panjab, Lahore, until 1947. It was subsequently linked to Banaras Hindu University and later to the University of Jammu and Kashmir.

Following the establishment of the Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education, the institution was affiliated with JKBOSE in 1974. It was later rechristened as Model Higher Secondary School during the 2015-16 academic session, they said.

'Over 4,100 manuscripts reported in Chhattisgarh so far'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, April 12: More than 4,100 manuscripts have been reported from eight districts in Chhattisgarh so far under the Centre's Gyan Bharatam National Manuscript Survey, officials said Saturday.

The initiative, launched in March, aims to document

and preserve manuscripts and make them accessible through digital platforms, they said.

Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said 'Gyan Bharatam National Manuscript Survey' is a visionary initiative and urged the people of Chhattisgarh to actively participate in the drive to preserve the

state's rich cultural heritage and ancient knowledge.



"Manuscripts are a living testament to the country's civilisation, culture, and intel-

lectual wealth. Safeguarding them for future generations is a shared responsibility. The nationwide survey is a landmark step towards identifying, preserving, and digitising ancient manuscripts," Sai said.

He appealed to citizens to register details of any handwritten texts or palm-leaf

manuscripts in their possession through the 'Gyan Bharatam' mobile app.

"Even small efforts by individuals can play a meaningful role in protecting the state's cultural identity. Public participation will help bring wider recognition to Chhattisgarh's knowledge traditions," the CM said.

First vacuum wool collection centre set up in J&K's Rajouri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rajouri (J&K), April 12: The Jammu and Kashmir government has set up a first-of-its-kind vacuum bag-based wool collection centre in Rajouri, a move expected to streamline wool handling and significantly benefit sheep breeders across the border district.

Rajouri is among the highest wool-producing districts in the country, with nearly seven lakh kilograms of wool produced annually, but the tribal population has long struggled to market their produce due to inadequate infrastructure and lack of proper facilities.

Rajouri Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma said the setting up of the first such centre is part of the effort to address long-standing challenges faced by the tribal BAKERWAL community associated with the sector.

Referring to his interactions with tribal leaders and local communities, he said the lack of infrastructure and logistical constraints have prevented breeders from turning wool into a reliable source of income, often forcing them to

sell at low prices or even burn the produce.

To tackle these issues, he said authorities conducted field visits last year, including to high-altitude pastures, to assess ground challenges. Based on the findings, interventions have been initiated under the Strategic Investment Plan and Holistic Agriculture Development Program, including the distribution of shearing machines to improve efficiency and reduce manual effort.

To address quality and logistics concerns, the vacuum bag-based wool collection system has been introduced for the first time in the district, he said, adding that the technology helps compress wool to nearly one-tenth of its volume, enabling transport of larger quantities while protecting it from moisture, damage and pests.

Sharma said efforts are also underway to encourage farmer producer organisations (FPOs) to set up wool processing units under the government schemes, which offer financial assistance of up to ₹30 lakh with 50 per cent subsidy.

आईआरईएल (इंडिया) लिमिटेड IREL (India) Limited
Formerly Indian Rare Earths Limited
(A Government of India Undertaking)
CIN: U15100MH1950CO001817 Website: www.irel.co.in
ISO 9001:2015, ISO 14001:2015 & ISO 45001:2018 Company
Date: 09.04.2026
Ref: ADVT. NO.26-27/01
आइआरईएल, ऑस्कोम इंडिया प्राइवेट लिमिटेड के लिए भारत में गैर-सुरक्षा अर्थसंग्रहण के लिए IREL, OSCOM invites request for proposal for the following items / Job descriptions
बिडिंग / Bid No. और / Job Description / Job/Item Description
GEM/2026/B/7410988 AMC for Mechanical Maintenance work at REEP
GEM/2026/B/7414448 Supply of 11500 MT Coal
GEM/2026/B/7414448 Supply of Oxalic Acid Crystals
बिडिंग लिंक: <http://irel.co.in>, <http://gem.gov.in> या <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> से उपरोक्त बिडिंग सूचना के लिए केंद्रित करें। / बिडिंग लिंक: <http://irel.co.in>, <http://gem.gov.in> या <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> से उपरोक्त बिडिंग सूचना के लिए केंद्रित करें।
Bidder may download tender document from <http://irel.co.in>, <http://gem.gov.in> or <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. Any corrigendum / Extension to above tenders shall be hosted in above websites only.
CBC 48146/12/0002/2627 ह. / Sd/- महाप्रबंधक एवं प्रमुख, ऑस्कोम / GM & HEAD, OSCOM



America wanted all the gains made by Iran during this war to be handed over to it. How can that be done? I am happy that Iran has stood firm and the US had to return empty-handed

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT

ARMY STARTS SIKKIM'S 1ST BORDER VILLAGE RADIO

Indian Army's Trishakti Corps has launched Sikkim's first border village community radio station to improve connectivity in remote areas, officials said. The Radio 'Sikkim Sundari' aims to boost communication and information access in remote high-altitude border areas, they said participation, the Defence PRO said in a statement



of the day quote

It is not 4-cornered or 40-cornered fight. There are only two sides here: One is DMK, the other is TVK. Do you want an anti-people Stalin government, or Vijay, who loves people? That's all this election is



VIJAY | TVK CHIEF

Without the Constitution, what we call India would not have been there. Today, the people who are of the mindset of RSS-BJP want to finish off the Constitution. Whatever they say, their main objective is to erase the Constitution because they don't want everyone in India to be considered an equal



DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHA CM

Bengal has now become the place of 'goonda gardi', which was common in UP before the BJP came to power there. There was a lack of development and growth in UP. But see the changes now



YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

Kannur Dental College faces probe after student's alleged suicide

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kannur (Kerala), April 12: Police have launched a probe against faculty members of Kannur Dental College after a first-year student died after falling from a building in a suspected suicide, officials said Sunday.

Chakkarakkal police, who registered a case of unnatural death, initiated the probe after the parents and friends of the deceased alleged that he had been subjected to emotional harassment by faculty members.

The deceased has been identified as Nithin Raj R L (22), a native of Uzhamalackal, Puthukulangara in Thiruvananthapuram district and a first-year BDS student at the college located in Anjarakanady. According to police, Raj was found critically injured near the medical college block after falling from the building on the afternoon of April 10. Though he was rushed to the hospital and provided treatment, he later succumbed to his injuries.

Following the incident, the college initiated an internal inquiry and Saturday suspended Dental Anatomy Department Head M K Ram and Associate Professor K T Sangeetha Nambiar.

Police said Raj had sent an audio message to his friends alleging harassment by faculty members, including threats of physical assault and academic repercussions such as a reduction of marks in examinations. Officials at Chakkarakkal police station said a detailed probe is underway, with digital evidence being collected.

Statements from Raj's classmates, college authorities and



KANNUR DENTAL COLLEGE IS UNDER INVESTIGATION AFTER A FIRST-YEAR STUDENT DIED IN A SUSPECTED SUICIDE FOLLOWING ALLEGATIONS OF FACULTY HARASSMENT... THE DECEASED STUDENT'S FAMILY CLAIMS HE FACED EMOTIONAL AND VERBAL ABUSE FROM FACULTY MEMBERS, INCLUDING DISCRIMINATION BASED ON CASTE AND COLOUR... POLICE ARE COLLECTING DIGITAL EVIDENCE AND RECORDING STATEMENTS FROM CLASSMATES, COLLEGE AUTHORITIES, AND FAMILY MEMBERS TO INVESTIGATE THE HARASSMENT CLAIMS

complexion. They also threatened to harm him academically," Rajan alleged.

He said they have lodged a complaint against the faculty members with the police and are expecting a fair probe into his son's death.

Raj's sister, Nikitha, said he had faced "repeated harassment" based on caste and complexion.

She claimed Raj had filed a complaint with the college principal, but no action was taken.

She also claimed that Raj was once called a "slum dog" in the classroom in front of other students by a faculty member. When contacted, college authorities told PTI that two faculty members had been suspended and that they were cooperating with the police investigation.

"We will fully cooperate with the investigation and share all details. Further action will be taken based on the outcome of the police probe," an official said. The body of Raj was brought to his residence in Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday and buried on family-owned land.

family members will also be recorded, police added.

Raj's father, Rajan, told reporters that his son was subjected to "emotional and verbal harassment" by teachers over his "dark complexion and poor family" background.

"He worked hard without any support to secure admission on a merit seat in the dental college. But he was harassed by faculty over his caste and

Amarnath Yatra to begin from July 3

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 12: The annual pilgrimage to the holy cave shrine of Amarnath in south Kashmir will commence July 3 and conclude after 57 days August 28, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said Sunday.

Pilgrims between the ages of 13 and 70 can undertake the yatra and registrations will begin from April 15, the LG told reporters at the Lok Bhavan here. The dates for the yatra were decided at a meeting of the Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board (SASB) chaired by Sinha.

"The Amarnath Yatra will commence July 3 and conclude August 28. Overall, this year's pilgrimage will be slightly longer, lasting about 57 days," the LG said.

Registration for the pilgrimage has been made mandatory and will begin from April 15. The minimum age for pilgrims has been fixed at 13 years and the maximum at 70 years, he said.

"Advance registration can be done through nearly 556 designated bank branches across the country, while online registration will also be available through the official website of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board," Sinha said.

Yes Bank, ICICI Bank, Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India and Axis Bank will facilitate registrations through their branches, he said. He said the first puja will be performed June 19, on the occasion of Jyeshtha Purnima. The pilgrimage will commence from the twin tracks - the traditional 48-km Nunwan-Pahalgam route in Anantnag district and the shorter but steeper 14-km Baltal route in Ganderbal district.

Sinha said that several new initiatives have been introduced over the past four years to improve facilities for pilgrims undertaking the annual yatra, including mandatory Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) cards and enhanced insurance cover.

India boosts 5-kg LPG supply



MORE THAN 13 LAKH 5-KG FREE TRADE LPG CYLINDERS HAVE BEEN SOLD SINCE MARCH 23, WITH

DAILY SALES RISING ABOVE 100,000 UNITS, AS AUTHORITIES EXPAND ACCESS FOR MIGRANT WORKERS AND LOW-INCOME CONSUMERS

AT THE SAME TIME, OVER 424,000 NEW PNG CONNECTIONS HAVE BEEN ACTIVATED SINCE MARCH, WITH MORE THAN 30,000 CONSUMERS SURRENDERING LPG CONNECTIONS AS PART OF THE TRANSITION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: India has ramped up supply of smaller 5-kg LPG cylinders and accelerated the rollout of piped natural gas (PNG) connections as it manages fuel availability amid disruptions triggered by the West Asia conflict.

More than 13 lakh 5-kg free trade LPG cylinders have been sold since March 23, with daily sales rising above 100,000 units, as authorities expand access for migrant workers and low-income consumers, according to an official statement.

At the same time, over 424,000 new PNG connections have been activated since March, with more than 30,000 consumers surrendering LPG connections as part of the transition.

The six-week long war in West Asia has disrupted global energy supply. India relied on import of half of its crude oil, 40 per cent of its gas and 85-90 per cent of LPG from the region was also impacted.

While it has managed to make up for the shortfall in crude oil by sourcing from other regions, LPG supplies have been impacted.

The government has prioritised LPG supply to domestic households at the cost of cuts in supplies to commercial users like hotels and restaurants. To

make up for the shortfall for those who do not have subsidised cooking gas LPG connections, it has ramped up supply of market priced 5 kg cylinders.

As against sale of about 77,000 5 kg cylinders in pre-crisis February, daily sales have topped over 1 lakh in the last two-three weeks. The statement said domestic LPG supplies remain stable overall, with no reported stockouts and over 52 lakh cylinders delivered April 11. Online bookings account for about 98 per cent of demand, while delivery authentication systems now cover 93 per cent of transactions to curb diversion.

Commercial LPG availability has been restored to about 70 per cent of pre-crisis levels, supported by targeted allocations and increased supply measures. State-run oil marketing companies - Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited - are coordinating with state governments to streamline distribution.

The government has prioritised natural gas allocation, ensuring full supply for household PNG and CNG transport while increasing supplies to fertiliser plants to about 95 per cent of recent average consumption, aided by additional LNG imports.

J'khand HC suspends 28 cops after Bokaro teen's remains found

BOKARO: Twenty-eight police personnel were suspended after the skeletal remains of an 18-year-old woman, who had been missing for eight months, were recovered in Jharkhand's Bokaro district, an official said Sunday. The remains of the woman, including bones and hair, were recovered Saturday from a secluded area near Chas College in the Pindrajora police station area, Superintendent of Police Harvinder Singh said. "A total of 28 police personnel, including the officer-in-charge of Pindrajora, have been suspended for dereliction of duty in the probe into the victim's abduction and murder," he said. "The suspended police personnel colluded with the accused, and were even seen partying with him. They also breached confidentiality. Money was also transacted with the accused. Because of this, the image of the police has been tarnished among the common people," he added. Singh said the accused was apprehended following analysis of the victim's mobile phone call detail records and other technical inputs.

SNIPPETS

Two women trampled to death by wild elephants

GUMLA/BOKARO: Two women were trampled to death by wild elephants in Jharkhand's Gumla and Bokaro districts Sunday, police said. In Gumla, the incident took place in a forest area near Karoloya village under the Basia Police Station limits, when a jumbo attacked a 56-year-old woman, a senior officer said. Gumla District Forest Officer Ahmad Belal Anwar said that Rs 25,000 has been provided to the deceased's family as immediate compensation, while the rest of the amount would be given after the completion of formalities. In another incident, a 48-year-old woman was trampled to death by a herd of 12 elephants in Bokaro district, a forest official. The incident happened around 10 am Sunday in the Jageshwar forest of the Tenughat range under the Jageswar Vihar Police Station limits.

Tripura tribal council election records 83% voting

AGARTALA: Around 83 per cent of the 9.62 lakh voters exercised their franchise in the elections to the 28-member Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council Sunday, which witnessed a few stray incidents of violence, officials said. Voting started at 7 am at 1,257 booths in all eight districts of the northeastern state, as 9,62,547 electors are eligible to decide the fate of 173 candidates from different political parties in the elections. The TTAADC comprises two-thirds of the state's geographical area and is home to a population of 13 lakh.

Delhi HC to hear Kejrival's plea today

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court will Monday hear a plea by former chief minister Arvind Kejrival and others discharged in the liquor policy case seeking the recusal of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma from hearing a CBI petition against the trial court decision. The AAP leader will argue his plea, which will come up for hearing at 2.30 pm, before Justice Sharma. On April 6, the judge had taken the AAP chief's application for her recusal on record and listed it for hearing April 13.

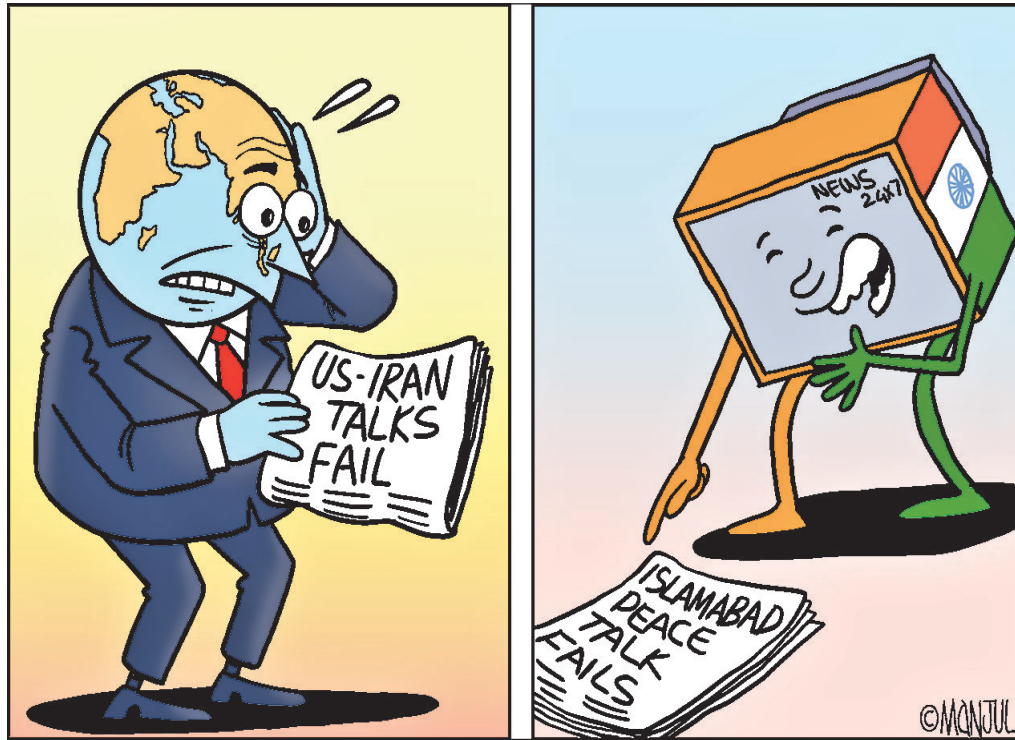
Techie dies while visiting waterfall

Piridi (Andhra Pradesh): A techie from Andhra Pradesh, working in the US, died in an accident at a waterfall in California while on a trip with friends, police said Sunday. The deceased, identified as Singireddy Sai Sriharikrishna, was a native of Piridi village in Vizianagaram district. "The techie died in an accident during a visit to a waterfall in California," the official told PTI. The incident left relatives and villagers in shock. The techie is survived by his parents, Singireddy Srinivasa Rao and Ramadevi.

7 held for links with ULFA (I)

Tinsukia: Seven people were arrested for their alleged connection with the banned militant group ULFA (I), police said Sunday. The arrests were made from different parts of Assam's Tinsukia district and neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh on the basis of intelligence inputs, they said.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



TMC, BJP battle to woo same set of voters through poll promises

MAMATA BANERJEE IS BANKING ON THE SOCIAL COALITION OF WOMEN, MINORITIES AND SC-ST VOTERS THAT HAS KEPT THE TMC IN POWER SINCE 2011, WHILE THE BJP IS TRYING TO UPEND THAT BASE THROUGH FINANCIAL AID PROMISE, HIGHLIGHTING BENGALI PRIDE, VOWS TO IMPLEMENT THE UNIFORM CIVIL CODE AND PROVIDE CITIZENSHIP FOR HINDU REFUGEES, BESIDES ITS ANTI-INFILTRATION RHETORIC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 12: The TMC and BJP, through promises made in their respective manifestos for the West Bengal polls, have made it clear that they are fighting to woo the same bloc of voters "women, youth and welfare scheme beneficiaries" even as they seek to shape the contest through different pitches on identity, minorities, polarisation and nationalism.

While Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is banking on the social coalition of women, minorities and SC-ST voters that has kept the TMC in power since 2011, the BJP is trying to upend that base through financial aid promise, highlighting Bengali pride, vows to implement the Uniform Civil

Code and provide citizenship for Hindu refugees, besides its anti-infiltration rhetoric.

The Left Front and Congress have also unveiled their respective manifestos. But unlike the TMC and BJP, which are battling to capture power, they appear to be fighting mainly to reclaim political relevance through promises centred on jobs, industry and anti-incumbency.

Political analyst Biswanath Chakraborty summed up the poll manifestos this way: "The manifestos reflect their ideological and political positioning. The TMC is fighting to hold together its old social coalition. The BJP is fighting to break it with its own mix of promises and ideological push. The Left and Congress



are fighting to remind voters that they still exist."

If the TMC manifesto seeks to preserve its social coalition, the BJP's 'Sankalp Patra' is an attempt to prise that coalition apart seat by seat, community by community and grievance by grievance.



The party has doubled down on the formula that transformed Banerjee from a street-fighter into perhaps the country's most durable regional leader - direct cash transfer, women-centric welfare schemes and careful outreach to minorities and

backward communities.

The proposed hike in Lakshmir Bhandar to Rs 1,500 for women in the general category and Rs 1,700 for SC and ST women is not merely a welfare announcement. It is TMC's attempt to consolidate women, who have repeatedly turned out in greater numbers than men and rescued the party whenever anti-incumbency threatened to gather force.

The BJP has recognised that women are the TMC's strongest fortress. Its response is not to bypass it, but to storm it.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah promised Rs 3,000 a month for every woman, free bus travel, 33 per cent reservation in government jobs and a network of women police stations and 'Durga Suraksha Squads'.

The BJP believes that below the surface of the TMC's welfare success lies anger over crimes against women, the RG Kar outrage, Sandeshkhali incidents and a wider feeling that the state has become unsafe. Shah repeatedly spoke of 'respect', 'security', and 'fear-free living', trying to convert social anxiety into political anger.

The TMC manifesto also speaks directly to West Bengal's Muslims, who account for nearly 30 per cent of the electorate and influence results in more than 110 seats. Promises on Waqf properties, Aliah University and skill training in minority areas are meant to reassure a constituency unsettled by the BJP's growing aggression and by fresh tensions over the Waqf issue.



Farmers are facing neglect under the BJP government, even as unseasonal rains, strong winds and hailstorms have caused widespread crop damage in Uttar Pradesh
 AKHILESH YADAV | SP PRESIDENT

INDIA-UZBEKISTAN MILITARY EXERCISE FROM APR 12-25
 Troops from India and Uzbekistan will take part in a joint military exercise from April 12 to 25 to foster cooperation and enhance their capability to conduct combined operations in semi-mountainous terrain



of the day quote

The progress of any society is intrinsically linked to the extent to which women are empowered to lead and shape decisions
 PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

However, with the blessings of Ajitdada and the support of the people of Baramati, I found the strength to face the challenge
 SUNETRA PAWAR | MAHARASHTRA DY CM

For every insult, humiliation, exploitation and persecution inflicted on Bengal, you will receive a massive '440-volt jolt' May 4. Be ready. Your democratic funeral procession in Bengal has already begun
 ABHISHEK BANERJEE | TRINAMOL CONG LEADER



A farmer holds the harvested wheat crops ahead of the Baisakhi festival, at a village, outskirts of Amritsar, Punjab

SC to hear pleas on SIR of electoral rolls in WB today

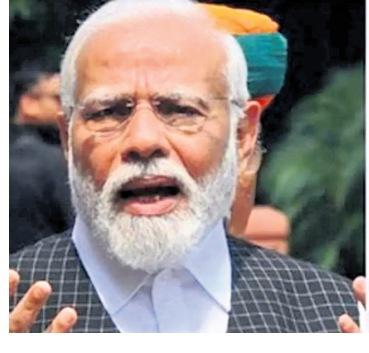
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, April 12: The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear Monday a batch of pleas pertaining to the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in poll-bound West Bengal.
 As per the apex court's cause list of April 13, the pleas would be heard by a bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi.
 On April 10, the top court had agreed to hear April 13 a fresh plea along with pending ones challenging the freezing of electoral rolls by the Election Commission ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls in West Bengal.
 The poll panel has frozen and finalised the electoral rolls April 9 for the assembly seats which are going to polls in the first stage.
 Assembly elections in West Bengal will be held in two phases April 23 and 29 and

votes will be counted May 4.
 The freezing of electoral rolls means that no new person, who has been deleted, can be added to the voters list for this assembly polls.
 On Monday, the bench would also hear the suo motu case related to the 'gherao' of seven judicial officers engaged in the SIR exercise in West Bengal's Malda district.
 While hearing the matter on April 6, the top court ordered the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to take over cases related to the 'gherao' of seven judicial officers in Malda, observing that the bureaucracy's credibility was being lowered and politics was being injected into the West Bengal secretariat and government offices.
 The apex court had exercised its plenary power under Article 142 of the Constitution to transfer around 12 cases related to the April 1 incident, as rioting is not a scheduled offence under the NIA Act.

X POST OF THE DAY

The wealth difference in India is ridiculously bad. If you are a common person, ₹10 cr is a life changing amount. If you are an IPL cricketer, ₹50 cr is a life changing amount. If you are a business guy, ₹75 to 80 cr is a life changing amount. But if you are in the govt, ₹100 cr is a rounding error
 @theakaipullai

Congress: BJP wants to put caste census in cold storage



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: The Congress Sunday alleged that the government wants to put the caste census in "cold storage" and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to amend the women's reservation law with the agenda of "misleading" the country.
 Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh claimed the Modi government wants to amend Article 334-A on the grounds that the "caste census results will not be available for a few years", overlooking the fact that both Bihar and Telangana completed the comprehensive caste survey in less than six months.
 Article 334-A includes the provision that reservation of seats for women would take effect following an exercise of census and delimitation. The government has, however, decided to delink the implementation of the women's quota from the census exercise, which will include caste enumeration, to fast-track it.
 "It is clear that the Modi government wants to put the caste census in cold storage," Ramesh claimed on X, dubbing it the "hidden agenda".
 There was no immediate response from the government to



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

the Congress' allegations.
 Ramesh said that the government had been averse to a caste case and pointed out that July 20, 2021, it answered a question in Lok Sabha stating that it decided as a matter of policy not to enumerate caste-wise population other than SCs and STs in the Census.
 On September 21, 2021, the Modi government filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court that it has taken a conscious policy decision not to conduct a caste census, Ramesh said.
 "On April 28, 2024, in a television interview, the Prime Minister accused the Congress of having an urban naxal mindset for championing the cause of a caste census," the Congress leader said. On April 30, 2025, as the country was still in shock after the Pahalgam terror attack that occurred a few days earlier, the Modi government suddenly announced that the caste census would be conducted as a part of the upcoming census, he said.
 Ramesh pointed out that in a widely-reported press conference on March 30, 2026, the Registrar-General and Census Commissioner said most of the results of the ongoing Census 2027 would be available in 2027 itself since the entire Census is being conducted digitally.

India rejects China renaming places in Arunachal Pradesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: India Sunday categorically rejected China's efforts to assign "fictitious names" to Indian territory, asserting that such attempts to create "baseless narratives" cannot alter "undeniable reality" and could derail efforts to normalise bilateral ties.
 New Delhi's sharp reaction came against the backdrop of Beijing establishing a third new administrative county in Aksai Chin, a region India maintains is its sovereign territory. "India categorically rejects any mischievous attempts by the Chinese side to assign fictitious names to places which form part of the territory of India," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.
 "Such attempts by China at introducing false claims and manufacturing baseless narratives cannot alter the undeniable reality that these places and territories, including Arunachal Pradesh, were, are, and will always remain an integral and inalienable part of India," he said.
 Jaiswal said these actions by the Chinese side "detract from ongoing efforts to stabilise and normalise India-China bilateral ties."
 "China should refrain from actions which inject negativity into relations and undermine efforts to create a better understanding," he said.
 Though Jaiswal, while responding to a media query, did not specify the name of the territories, it is learnt



that New Delhi's comments were in reaction to Beijing's formation of the new county.
 On March 26, China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region announced the creation of Cenling county, a strategic region located near the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Afghanistan. It is also reportedly close to the western sector of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India.
 Cenling, located near the Karakoram mountain range, is the third new county established by China in Xinjiang, a predominantly Muslim Uygur region.
 India last year lodged a protest with China over the creation of Hean and Hekang counties, stating that parts of their jurisdiction fall within its Union territory of Ladakh. The relations between the

two countries witnessed a major downturn following the 2020 eastern Ladakh border row. In the last one-and-a-half years, the two sides have initiated a series of measures to rebuild relations.
 India had previously objected to China renaming certain places in Arunachal Pradesh, including in May last year as well as in April 2024.
 The Chinese Civil Affairs Ministry released the first list of the standardised names of six places in Zangnan in 2017, while the second list of 15 places was issued in 2021, followed by another list with names for 11 places in 2023. Zangnan is the Chinese name for Arunachal Pradesh.
 China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet.

163 minors rescued from train in Katni; 8 held for trafficking

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Katni (MP), April 12: As many as 163 minor boys, allegedly being trafficked from Bihar to Maharashtra to work as labourers, were rescued from an express train in Madhya Pradesh's Katni district, the railway police said Sunday.
 The eight accused arrested in the case have, however, claimed that the children, aged between six and 13, were being taken to a madrasa in Latur for education, they said. Based on a tip-off from the Child Welfare Committee, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) and the Government Railway Police (GRP) conducted an overnight joint operation, intercepting eight persons, who were travelling with the boys without proper tickets and documents onboard the Patna-Purna Express at Katni railway station.
 According to preliminary information, the children were being taken from the Araria region in Bihar to Latur in Maharashtra, RPF Katni inspector Virendra Singh told PTI.
 The force received a tip off about the trafficking of children and grew suspicious after they found no valid travel documents, prompting a joint rescue operation, which was wrapped up at Sunday dawn, he said.

PM to address women's conference today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend a national-level women's conference here Monday ahead of a Parliament sitting during which the proposed amendments to the women's reservation law are expected to be brought for consideration and passage.
 The conference, 'Nari Shakti Vandana Sammelan', is being organised to reinforce the commitment towards greater participation of women in shaping India's development trajectory, an official statement said.
 It will also highlight the increasing role of women in governance and leadership across all levels -- from panchayats to Parliament. The conference will underscore the importance of enhanced representation of women in decision-making processes. It will highlight the role of women in the journey towards 'Viksit Bharat 2047', the statement said.
 It will reflect the government's continued commitment to women-led development as a central pillar of the vision for 'Viksit Bharat 2047', it said.
 The programme will witness participation of eminent personalities and women achievers from diverse fields.

Access to justice is biggest challenge: CJI

Emphasising the urgent need to bridge the gap between legal rights and their practical availability, the CJI noted that while India possesses a robust framework of rights and policies, these benefits often fail to reach the needy due to issues of distance, delay, and implementation gaps

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, April 12: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant Sunday said that the greatest challenge facing the country's legal system is not a dearth of laws, but rather the limited access that ordinary citizens have to them.
 Emphasising the urgent need to bridge the gap between legal rights and their practical availability, the CJI noted that while India possesses a robust framework of rights and policies, these benefits often fail to reach the needy due to issues of distance, delay, and implementation gaps.
 The CJI was addressing a two-day North Zone Regional Conference, titled 'Justice Beyond Barriers: Rights, Rehabilitation, and Reform for the Most

Vulnerable,' organised jointly by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), the Uttarakhand High Court, and the Uttarakhand State Legal Services Authority.
 He remarked, "The mere existence of justice is not sufficient. Rather, it must reach the doorstep of every last citizen in a timely manner. The strength of a republic should be measured not by its declared rights, but by the rights that are actually realised."
 Highlighting the unique challenges faced by hilly states like Uttarakhand, the Chief Justice observed that rugged geographical terrain and limited connectivity infrastructure hinder access to justice. In such regions, it is imperative to make the judicial system more accessible and responsive, tailored to suit



local conditions.
 Sharing his experiences from various parts of the country, including Ladakh, Srinagar, Nagaland, and Kerala, he noted that citizens often struggle not due to a lack of rights, but due to the absence of accessible platforms through which to claim them. The CJI

observed that the true test of the Constitution lies not in major cases, but in the availability of justice in the daily lives of ordinary citizens, underscoring that the success of institutions would be measured by their effectiveness in delivering justice to those most in need. He identified legal aid schemes, awareness campaigns, and multi-service camps as effective measures in this regard.
 The CJI also cited his experiences from across the nation, including his interactions with Army personnel in Ladakh, tribal communities in Srinagar and Nagaland, and fishing communities in Kerala.
 Describing this conference as a crucial platform for deliberating on regional legal challenges, the CJI said that,

keeping in mind the distinct problems of various regions, it is essential to adopt local and context-specific strategies to ensure that vulnerable sections of society do not become marginalised.
 Emphasising the promotion of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms, such as mediation, pre-litigation conciliation, and Lok Adalats, the CJI noted that these measures not only facilitate the speedy and cost-effective resolution of disputes but also aid in preserving social relationships. Commending the Uttarakhand State Legal Services Authority's 'Nyay Mitra' portal initiative, he described it as a significant step towards facilitating access to justice, particularly in geographically challenging regions.

international

of the day quote

The campaign against Iran is not over, we still have more to do. But even now it can be clearly stated that we have historic achievements

Any decision to pursue, structure, or conclude an agreement on oil and gas cooperation, with China or any other foreign government, will be made solely in accordance with the Philippine Constitution and the country's laws, jurisprudence and regulations, and in full assertion of its sovereign prerogatives

There is plenty of it for now. But alternative markets are very voracious, there are a great many requests for supplies

SHORT TAKES

Youtuber held for criticising Nepal PM

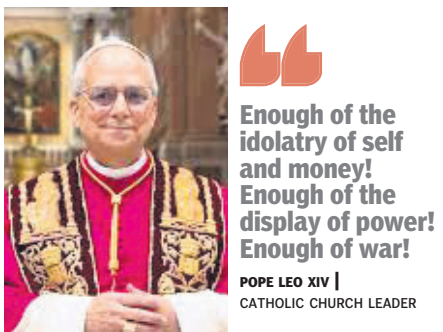
Kathmandu: A journalist, who was arrested on charges of using abusive language against Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah 'Balen' on his youtube channel, was Sunday released following criticism and objection by Gen Z activists. Roshan Pokharel, who ran the YouTube channel 'Hades', was arrested Thursday in Panchthar district in eastern Nepal. He is from Falgunananda Rural Municipality in that district. A spokesperson at Panchthar District Police Office said that after four days in police custody, Pokharel was released on personal guarantee with the condition to be present before the police as and when required.

SA coalition party elects Cape Town mayor

Johannesburg: South Africa's Democratic Alliance (DA) elected Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis as its leader Sunday, as the ruling coalition's second-biggest party sought to capitalise on discontent to expand its power base in local polls this year. The 39-year-old was widely considered the favourite to succeed Agriculture Minister John Steenhuisen, who has led the pro-business party since 2019 and is stepping down. "If we work hard, we can win more towns and cities than we've ever won before," Hill-Lewis said in his acceptance speech at a party conference near Johannesburg, while laying out broad ambitions for the next national election in 2029. "I am not satisfied being a junior partner in a coalition government. Our ambition must be to lead the national government," he said.

Oz, US boost support for critical minerals

Sydney: Australia and the US have committed more than A\$5 billion (\$3.5 billion) to back a range of critical mineral projects, nearly double the amount pledged when the two countries struck a co-operation agreement six months ago, Canberra said Sunday. The funding seeks to support Australian ventures to develop and refine metals vital to industries including defence, advanced manufacturing and the energy transition, a market that has long been dominated by China. By doing so, they would support the re-industrialisation of America's high-tech manufacturing base, while helping to "counter China's export dominance and ensure Western supply-chain resilience," the two nations said when they reached a framework deal last October.



FIRST-EVER LIFE-SIZE VIVEKANANDA STATUE IN US UNVEILED IN SEATTLE

The first-ever life-size statue of Swami Vivekananda in the US was unveiled in Seattle, honouring the renowned Indian philosopher and spiritual leader. The life-size bronze statue, installed at the busy Westlake Square in downtown Seattle, is the first such installation hosted by a city government anywhere in the US. Sculpted by Indian artist Naresh Kumar Kumawat, it was jointly unveiled Saturday



Trump vows to blockade Strait of Hormuz

Iran's Revolutionary Guards warns that military vessels approaching the strait will be considered a ceasefire breach and dealt with harshly and decisively, underlining the risk of a dangerous escalation

Miami/Islamabad, April 12: President Donald Trump said Sunday the US Navy would start blockading the Strait of Hormuz, raising the stakes after marathon talks with Iran failed to reach a deal to end the war, jeopardising a fragile two-week ceasefire. Trump also said in a post on Truth Social that the US would take action against every vessel in international waters that had paid a toll to Iran, and begin destroying mines that he said the Iranians had dropped in the strait, a choke point for about 20% of global energy supplies that Iran has blocked.



US PRESIDENT SEES POTENTIAL FOR FURTHER TALKS

Iran's Revolutionary Guards responded with a statement warning that military vessels approaching the strait will be considered a ceasefire breach and dealt with harshly and decisively, underlining the risk of a dangerous escalation. "Effective immediately, the United States Navy, the Finest in the World, will begin the process of BLOCKADING any and all ships trying to enter, or leave, the Strait of Hormuz," Trump said in his Truth Social post.

"I have also instructed our Navy to seek and interdict every vessel in International Waters that has paid a toll to Iran. No one who pays an illegal toll will have safe passage on the high seas," Trump added.

"Any Iranian who fires at us, or at peaceful vessels, will be BLOWN TO HELL!" he added. Six weeks of fighting has killed thousands, roiled the global economy and sent oil prices soaring as Iran prevented traffic through the strait.

MORE NEGOTIATIONS?

In an interview with Fox News after his post about the strait, Trump said that he believed Iran would continue to negotiate and called the weekend discussions "very friendly". "I do believe they're going to come to the table on this, because nobody can be so stupid as to say, 'We want nuclear weapons,' and they have no cards," Trump told Fox News from his golf course near Miami, Florida.

Trump also said that NATO allies, whom he has criticised for failing to back the war he launched along with Israel February 28, wanted to help with the operation in the strait.

The weekend talks in Islamabad, which followed the announcement of a ceasefire last Tuesday, were the first direct US-Iranian meeting in more than a decade and the highest-level discussions since the

1979 Islamic Revolution. "The bad news is that we have not reached an agreement, and I think that's bad news for Iran much more than it's bad news for the United States of America," said Vice President JD Vance, who headed the US delegation.

A US official said Iran had rejected Washington's call for an end to all uranium enrichment, the dismantling of all major enrichment facilities and the transfer of highly enriched uranium. The two sides also failed to reach agreement on the US demand that Iran cease funding for Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis as well as fully open the strait, the official added.

Iran's Parliamentary Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, who led his country's delegation along with Foreign Minis-

ter Abbas Araqchi, blamed the US for not winning Tehran's trust, despite his team offering "forward-looking initiatives".

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian, who discussed the talks in a call with Russian President Vladimir Putin, said Tehran wanted "a balanced and fair agreement".

"If the United States returns to the framework of international law, reaching an agreement is not far off," he told Putin, Iranian state media reported.

ISRAEL CONTINUES BOMBING LEBANON

Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency said "excessive" US demands had hindered reaching a deal. Other Iranian media said there was agreement on a number of issues, but the strait and Iran's nuclear programme were the main sticking points.

Despite the stalemate, three supertankers fully laden with oil passed through the Strait of Hormuz Saturday, shipping data showed, in what appeared to be the first vessels to exit the Gulf since the ceasefire deal.

Israel has continued bombing Tehran-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon, insisting - along with Washington - that that conflict was not part of the Iran-US ceasefire. Iran says the fighting in Lebanon must stop.

The Israeli military said it struck Hezbollah rocket launchers overnight into Sunday and black smoke could be seen rising in the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital Beirut.

And in Israeli villages near the border, air raid sirens sounded, warning of incoming rocket fire from Lebanon.

Russia, Ukraine trade blame over violating Easter truce



REUTERS

Kyiv/Moscow, April 12: Russia and Ukraine accused each other Sunday of breaching the 32-hour ceasefire in their four-year war, reporting more than a thousand drone and shelling attacks just hours after the truce began Saturday to mark Orthodox Easter.

The Russian defence ministry said it recorded 1,971 ceasefire violations overnight into Sunday, while Ukraine's general staff reported 479 shelling attacks and more than 1,700 drone strikes by Russian troops.

According to the calendar of the Orthodox faith dominant in both countries, Easter is celebrated this year Sunday.

A soldier from Ukraine's 65th brigade fighting in Zaporizhzhia said Russian reconnaissance drones were still circling the area despite the ceasefire, blocking efforts to recover the bodies of fallen troops.

"We wanted to evacuate our fallen comrades today, but (the Russians) are not letting us do so just yet," the soldier, known by the call sign Spider, said at a candle-lit military Easter service.

Russia said a child was among civilians injured in a Ukrainian drone attack on the Kursk region, while the Belgorod region's governor Vyacheslav Gladkov reported two people killed by Ukrainian shelling.

Ukraine's State Emergencies Service said two civilians were wounded Sunday by a Russian drone attack in Kharkiv region.

Reuters could not independently verify reports of military activity.

'HUMANITARIAN GESTURE'

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Sunday that the truce was a "humanitarian gesture" from Russian President Vladimir Putin, but that Russian troops would resume fighting as soon as it ends.

"Putin has instructed the Russian military to remain on high alert in case of provocations," Peskov said.

Putin announced the temporary Orthodox Easter ceasefire April 9, and it is set to end at midnight (2100 GMT) Sunday.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, whose previous ceasefire proposals were turned down by Moscow agreed to the truce.

SNIPPETS

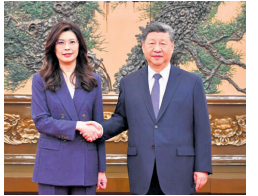
Hungarians vote in record numbers that could oust Orban, rattle Russia



BUDAPEST: Hungarians were voting Sunday in an election that could end Prime Minister Viktor Orban's 16-year hold on power, rattle Russia and send shockwaves through right-wing circles across the West, including US President Donald Trump's White House. Orban, a eurosceptic nationalist, has carved out a model of an "illiberal democracy" seen as a blueprint by Trump's Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement and its admirers in Europe. But many Hungarians have grown weary of Orban, 62, after three years of economic stagnation and soaring living costs, along with reports of oligarchs close to the government amassing more wealth. Opinion polls have shown Orban's Fidesz party trailing Peter Magyar's upstart centre-right opposition Tiszsa party by 7-9 percentage points, with Tiszsa at around 38-41%. Pollsters predicted a record voter turnout and data at 1300 GMT showed 66% of voters had cast their votes, up from 52.75% at the same time in the 2022 election.

China to resume some of suspended ties with Taiwan

BANGKOK: China said Sunday it would resume some ties it had suspended with Taiwan, such as direct flights to cities across China and imports of Taiwanese aquaculture products, as the island's Opposition party leader concludes her visit. The Taiwan Work Office under China's Communist Party issued a statement saying it would explore setting up a longstanding communication mechanism between the Communist Party and Taiwan's Kuomintang Party, and facilitate the import of Taiwan's aquaculture products, after it banned them in recent years. Cheng Li-wun, the head of the Kuomintang, and China's President Xi Jinping held a high-profile meeting Friday during which both called for peace without offering specifics. Taiwan is self-ruled, but China claims the island as part of its territory.



Seagulls are pictured at the Baltic Sea beach in Timmendorfer Strand, Germany, on a sunny Sunday

China, Iran weaponised global economy to beat US at its own game

WASHINGTON: China and Iran have weaponised the global economy to corner the US by squeezing global supply chains, leveraging commercial links to make strategic gains, according to a report in The Washington Post. The report cited China limiting rare earth minerals exports to the US last year and the recent closure of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran that led to a rise in oil prices across the world as examples of adversaries beating Washington at its own game of economic warfare. "Washington once enjoyed a near-monopoly over this type of economic warfare, punishing wayward nations by barring them from using the dollar or enjoying access to Silicon Valley's most advanced technologies," the report said. The US Treasury Department had performed no pre-war analysis of the conflict's potential energy market consequences, the report said, quoting Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon, the senior Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee. Sriprakash Kothari, nominated to become assistant treasury secretary for economic policy, told committee staffers "that not only did he not perform any work related to energy markets leading up to the war, but that he wasn't aware of anyone at Treasury who did," Wyden said in an April 9 letter to Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent.

China sets up new county in Xinjiang near PoK, Afghan border

The county, named Cenling, is located near the Karakoram mountain range and close to the borders with PoK and Afghanistan, underscoring its strategic significance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, April 12: China has set up a new county in its volatile Xinjiang province near Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and the Afghanistan border in an apparent move to beef up security along the narrow Wakhan Corridor to curb infiltration of Uyghur separatist militants. The county, named Cenling, is located near the Karakoram mountain range and close to the borders with PoK and Afghanistan, underscoring its strategic significance.

India last year lodged a protest with China over the creation of Hean and Hekang counties, stating that parts of their jurisdiction fall within its union territory of Ladakh. Hean includes much of the disputed Aksai Chin plateau, which is part of Ladakh occupied by China in the 1962 war and has remained a focal point of the India-China border dispute. The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region government announced the establishment of Cenling March 26, though details of its administrative divisions and exact boundaries were not specified. It will be administered by Kashgar prefecture, according to a report in the Hong



Kong-based South China Morning Post. Kashgar, a historic city located on the ancient Silk Road, is a strategic gateway connecting China with South and Central Asia. It is also the starting point of the controversial \$60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which passes through PoK and has been op-

posed by India. Experts say the creation of Cenling reflects Beijing's growing focus on border security and governance.

Lin Minwang, a professor at the Institute of International Studies in Shanghai-based Fudan University, said the move "reflects China's deeper recognition of the strategic importance of this region".

"At a broader level, the decision signals China's emphasis on its borderlands," Lin was quoted as saying by the Post.

He noted that the new county is geographically connected to Afghanistan's narrow Wakhan Corridor, a 74-km strip bordering Xinjiang that separates Tajikistan and PoK, highlighting China's security and counter-

terrorism concerns. Beijing in past has expressed concern about Uyghur militants of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) using the Wakhan Corridor as a route to enter Xinjiang from Afghanistan.

Yun Sun, a senior fellow at the Stimson Centre in Washington, said the new county represented a drive towards a "stronger grass-roots level government structure for effective governance and control".

"It helps to strengthen the stabilisation efforts by the government in the frontier region, which is traditionally more subject to ethnic turbulence and potential infiltration of foreign militants from Central Asia," she said.

business

of the day quote

We have made 25,000 offers to freshers for FY27. Clarity on demand will lead to more hiring

We need to improve efficiency. Efficiency comes from better pricing. We need to do pricing reform

The ceasefire has come at the right time, and it is very important from a luxury buyer viewpoint because lot of our customers are dependent on how things are panning out in international market

SHORT TAKES

India-UK FTA likely from May 2nd week

New Delhi: The India-UK free trade agreement, signed in July last year, is likely to come into force from the second week of May, according to an official. India and the UK, on July 24, 2025, signed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), under which 99 per cent of Indian exports will enter the British market at zero duty, while tariffs on British products, such as cars and whisky, will be reduced in India. "We are expecting the pact to be implemented from the second week of May," the official said. The two countries have also signed the Double Contributions Convention (DCC) pact to ensure temporary workers would not have to duplicate social levies in either country. The official said that both pacts are likely to be implemented in parallel. CETA aims to double the USD 56 billion trade between the two economies by 2030. While India has opened its market to various consumer goods, including chocolates, biscuits, and cosmetics, it will gain greater access to export products, such as textiles, footwear, gems and jewellery, sports goods, and toys. Under the pact, tariffs on Scotch whisky will be reduced from 150 per cent to 75 per cent immediately, and further lowered to 40 per cent by 2035.

Shell steps up LNG supplies to India

New Delhi: Global energy major Shell plc has ramped up natural gas supplies to India in the wake of disruptions triggered by the West Asia conflict, leveraging its global liquefied natural gas (LNG) portfolio to capture a larger share of spot and term demand, including key fertiliser sector tenders. Industry sources said Shell emerged as a leading supplier in last month's bulk LNG procurement by Indian fertiliser companies, securing a supply of 4 trillion British thermal units out of 6 Tbtus volumes tendered, as the government moved to ensure feedstock availability for urea production amid constrained supplies from the Gulf. With supplies from India's largest LNG supplier in Qatar disrupted by the West Asia conflict, Shell plc's India arm stepped in, importing its largest-ever monthly LNG volumes in March, they said. Besides fertiliser, Shell India also supplied gas to other industrial users and retailers. In March, it became India's largest supplier of imported gas. Shell's ability to step up supplies is backed by its 5 million tonnes-per-year LNG import terminal at Hazira in Gujarat and associated storage infrastructure, along with its position as the world's largest LNG portfolio player, allowing it to source cargoes from multiple regions beyond West Asia to meet demand.

FPIs extend sell-off in April, pull out ₹48,213cr



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: Foreign investors maintained their aggressive sell-off in Indian equities, withdrawing ₹48,213 crore (USD 5.14 billion) in the first 10 days of April, as rising geopolitical tensions and global macroeconomic uncertainties reduced risk appetite. The sell-off follows a record outflow of ₹1.17 lakh crore (about USD 12.7 billion) in March, the worst monthly exodus on record. The sharp reversal comes after FPIs had infused ₹22,615 crore in February, marking the highest monthly inflow in 17 months.

With the latest withdrawals, total outflows by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have surged to ₹1.8 lakh crore in 2026 so far. In April alone, foreign investors withdrew equities worth ₹48,213 crore from the cash market till April 10, according to NSDL data.

Market participants attributed the sustained selling pressure to a combination of global macroeconomic headwinds and heightened geopolitical risks. Himanshu Srivastava, Principal - Manager Research at Morningstar Investment Research India, noted that selling was largely driven by risk aversion triggered by escalating tensions in West Asia,

which pushed up crude oil prices and revived concerns about inflation globally.

Echoing similar concerns, VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments, said the energy crisis stemming from the West Asia conflict, coupled with the potential spillover impact on the Indian economy and continued depreciation of the rupee, has kept FPIs firmly in sell mode.

He also pointed out that markets such as South Korea and Taiwan are currently more attractive to FPIs, given their stronger earnings growth outlook compared to the relatively modest expectations for India in FY27.

Even the recent US-Iran ceasefire failed to arrest the selling momentum. "FPIs used the relief rally as a liquidity window to exit further," said Vaqarjaved Khan, Senior Fundamental Analyst at Angel One.

According to Khan, a reversal in flows would depend on three key factors - credible reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, stabilisation of the rupee, and a positive surprise from India's Q4 earnings season.

"Flows can reverse quickly, but only if macro conditions begin to support the shift," he added.

Mcap of 8 of top-10 most valued firms jumps ₹4.13L-cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: The combined market valuation of eight of the top-10 most valued firms surged by ₹4,13,003.23 crore last week, with HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank emerging as the biggest gainers, in tandem with an optimistic trend in equities.

Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 4,230.7 points or 5.77 per cent, and the NSE Nifty surged 1,337.5 points or 5.88 per cent.

"Sentiment remained buoyant amid optimism surrounding a temporary US-Iran ceasefire, although lingering geopolitical uncertainties capped the pace of gains as the week progressed," Ajit Mishra, SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said.

A sharp decline in crude oil prices below the USD 100 mark eased domestic concerns and triggered a strong rebound across markets, he added.

From the top-10 pack, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Bajaj Finance, Larsen & Toubro and Hindustan Unilever were the winners, while Reliance Industries and Infosys faced erosion from their valuation.

HDFC Bank added ₹91,282.67 crore, taking its market valuation to ₹12,47,478.57 crore. The valuation of ICICI Bank jumped ₹76,036.36 crore to ₹9,46,741.85 crore, and that of Bajaj Finance surged by ₹60,980.35 crore to ₹5,75,206.47 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Larsen & Toubro zoomed by ₹47,624.97 crore to ₹5,44,736.59 crore, and that of Bharti Airtel climbed ₹45,873.43 crore to ₹10,66,293.69 crore.

State Bank of India's mcap soared ₹43,614.67 crore to ₹9,84,629.98 crore, and that of TCS edged higher by ₹26,303.49 crore to ₹9,13,331.92 crore.

The market valuation of Hindustan Unilever rallied ₹21,287.29 crore to ₹5,06,477.89 crore.

IMF, WB meets to take stock of global economic shocks

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 12: Finance ministers and central bankers from the 191 member countries will attend the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank's spring meetings, to be held from April 13-18 in Washington, DC, to take stock of the global economic uncertainties amid the fragile ceasefire between the US and Iran and continuing uncertainties over the outcome of the peace talks.

IMF managing director Kristalina Georgieva has warned that the new economic forecasts, to be published Tuesday, along with a report on global financial stability, are likely to be downgraded amid the economic shocks of the Middle East conflict.

In January, world output was seen rising 3.3 per cent this year, with expansions of 2.1 per cent in the US, 1.4 per cent in the euro zone and 5.4 per cent across emerging Asia.



These are likely to be scaled down when the new estimates are announced.

Georgieva has pointed out that the resilient world economy is being tested again by the war in the Middle East. The conflict has caused considerable hardship around the globe.

"When we welcome ministers and central bank governors to our Spring Meetings next week, our focus will be on how best to weather this latest shock and ease the pain on economies and people. This requires understanding the nature of the

shock, the channels through which it affects the economy, the size of the impact, and the policies that can mitigate it," she said.

The world's daily oil flow has been cut by some 13 per cent, and its LNG flow by some 20 per cent, resulting in prices shooting up and disruption in supply chains across the world.

The annual and spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group each year bring together central bankers, ministers of finance and develop-

ment, private sector executives, civil society representatives, and academics to discuss the state of the global economy and issues of international concern, such as the growth outlook, financial stability, and poverty reduction.

The Board of Governors consists of a high-level representative from each of the 191 member countries, typically the finance minister, central bank governor, or minister of development. During the Meetings, the Governors participate in a plenary session and discuss the challenges for the global economy. They also decide on major policy issues related to the future work of the two organisations, which are subsequently implemented by their respective Executive Boards.

In addition, the IMF's International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) and the joint IMF-World Bank Development Committee (DC) meet to discuss progress on the work of the two organizations.

Gold, silver brace for turbulent week as US-Iran talks break down

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: Precious metals may witness heightened volatility when markets open Monday as the collapse of US-Iran negotiations keeps sentiment fragile and investors track domestic inflation and Chinese economic data, analysts said.

Besides developments related to West Asia, traders will also monitor the US Producer Price Index (PPI), crude oil prices and speeches from several Federal Reserve officials for further direction on bullion prices, they said.

Domestic commodities market will remain closed Tuesday for the morning trade on account of Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar Jayanti but will resume

trading in the evening session. Iran's parliamentary speaker, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, said the US delegation "failed to gain the trust of the Iranian delegation in this round of negotiations".

Ghalibaf, who led the Iranian delegation, said his country's delegation negotiated in good faith and raised "forward-looking initiatives".

Meanwhile, US Vice-President JD Vance said the negotiations finished without a deal after Iranians refused to accept American terms to refrain from developing a nuclear weapon.

"Focus will be on the key Chinese data on trade, investments and growth, etc. along with inflation numbers from Euro zone economies. In the



domestic market, traders will monitor the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation earlier in the week," Pranav Mer, Vice President, EBG, Commodity & Currency Research, JM Financial Services Ltd, said.

He added that volatility in the bullion remained high as markets across the world focused on peace talks between the US and Iran and any progress would be positive for risk assets such as equities and commodities, etc., and may push up precious

Senco Gold & Diamonds opens first showroom in Rourkela



ROURKELA: Ahead of Akshaya Tritiya, Senco Gold & Diamonds inaugurated its first showroom in Rourkela Sunday. The ceremony was attended by the brand's Managing Director and founder, Suvankar Sen, and Bollywood actress Bhumi Pednekar. Designed as a modern jewellery destination in Udit Nagar, this 8,000 sq. ft. showroom spans two floors and showcases Senco's unique craftsmanship in gold, diamond, and platinum collections. During the inauguration, Pednekar said, "I have always admired how Senco creates jewellery that is both simple yet incredibly attractive. I am excited that the people of Rourkela will experience jewellery that doesn't just look beautiful but feels personal and purposeful." Sen said, "Rourkela represents a promising market where people have a deep cultural and emotional connection with jewellery, especially during auspicious occasions like Akshaya Tritiya. As we continue to expand across India, our focus remains on exceptional quality, design excellence, and a customer-centric shopping experience." With this inauguration, Senco continues to strengthen its presence in Odisha, expanding its reach across major cities and bringing its unique craftsmanship to a wider audience.

metals as well. However, any change on the contrary will again trigger increased volatility in the financial market.

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, precious metals settled the week on a green territory. Silver futures jumped ₹10,779, or nearly 5 per cent, while gold appreciated ₹2,972, or 2 per cent.

"Gold prices closed in positive for the third straight week, supported by a weaker dollar, safe-haven buying amid ongoing geopolitical uncertainty in West Asia, and reports of a rebound in physical demand in countries such as India and China," he said.

Mer noted that weaker-than-expected US economic data and signs of elevated infla-

tion due to high oil prices raised expectations that the Federal Reserve may keep interest rates steady at current levels.

In the international markets, Comex gold futures rose USD 107.7, or 2.3 per cent, during the last week, while silver gained USD 3.56, or nearly 5 per cent.

Silver prices also ended the week with gains of more than 4.5 per cent, supported by positive momentum in gold, renewed buying in industrial metals, a structural deficit in the physical market and a weaker US dollar.

According to analysts, market participants will also closely track developments around expected negotiations between Israel and Lebanon next week in Washington for further cues on the trajectory of bullion prices.

COAL IMPORTS FALL 8.5%

India's coal import dropped 8.5 per cent to 16.55 million tonnes in February on record stockpile of domestic coal and firmness in seaborne prices. The country's coal import is poised to maintain a weak trend this month with domestic miners making efforts to liquidate stockpiles.



Youth must embrace hard work, innovation: Karim

Karim Kabiruddin is the Executive Director of Health Food Products Pvt Ltd (HFPL), the Cuttack-based manufacturer of the popular Frostee Ice-cream brand later renamed as 'Fun India'. Established in 1997, the company has grown from a local operation into a significant player in the Odisha dairy market, competing with major national brands. Under Karim's leadership, HFPL has created employment opportunities across the state while building a popular brand known for its wide range of flavours enjoyed by all age groups. Excerpts...



KARIM KABIRUDDIN Executive Director of Health Food Products Pvt Ltd

How was your childhood and how did your interest in business grow after higher education?

I was born in Cuttack and completed my schooling at Stewart School, followed by a degree in Commerce (Honours) from Ravenshaw College and a law degree from Madhusudan Law College. Coming from a business family with roots in Malgodown since my grandfather's time, my interest in business developed naturally. After my father's untimely demise, I gradually became involved and eventually took on full responsibility of the family business.

Why did you choose the food processing industry, particularly ice cream?

Alongside my involve-

ment in the Malgodown business, I wanted to explore something more meaningful—an avenue that would not only sustain me but also create employment opportunities for others. Supporting livelihoods, directly and indirectly, has always been a key motivation. Around that time, I received a proposal to take over an ice cream company. This sparked my interest, and I went on to establish Health Food Products, initially launching it under the 'Frostee' brand, which was later rebranded as 'Fun India'.

What precautions are essential in the food processing industry?

In the food processing industry, strict adherence to government regulations is crucial at every stage of production. Continuous supervision and a strong focus on hygiene are essential, given that the products are directly consumed by customers. The use of high-quality raw materials, along with automated machinery, helps maintain safety, consistency and quality from production through to packaging.

What challenges do you face in producing and selling ice cream in Odisha?

Producing and selling

ice cream in Odisha comes with several challenges. As a highly perishable product, it must be stored at around -30°C, making frequent power cuts a major concern. Competing with established national and international brands also demands consistent quality and continuous effort. Additionally, transportation requires specialised temperature-controlled vehicles, and any delays or disruptions in transit can impact timely delivery and product integrity.

What are your future plans for business growth and expansion?

We plan to upgrade our machinery to enhance production capacity and expand our market reach. Our goal is to strengthen the presence of 'Fun India' across eastern India and gradually extend into southern and northern markets.

What advice would you give to the youth in building a developed nation?

I believe young people must stay focused on their goals and work with dedication and consistency. It is important to prioritise customer needs and remain open to adopting new technologies. Above all, they should remember that there are no shortcuts to success.

61 YEARS LATER

Shetty's silver lining

The 20-year-old signs off with a silver medal that breaks a six-decade wait, signalling the return of Indian men's singles to relevance at Badminton Asia Championships



used his repertoire of strokes and deception to deny Ayush the opportunity to play his natural attacking game.

"For the final, think a bit disappointed. I really wanted to have a great match uh and I think Shi Yi Qi was by far the better player today. He really kept the pressure going and he never let me come back into the match," he said.

"Yeah, definitely there a lot of learnings from this. I definitely have to work on my endurance and my strength. Yeah, and again, the variations from the back. I think it's a good lesson for me and I would take it as a learning."

Shi dictated the geometry of the court from the outset, controlling the net exchanges and forcing Ayush into the forecourt battle early. The variation in the Chinese player's game blunted the Indian's attack, as his smashes lacked pre- and he succumbed to pressure, rushed to shot-making.

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ROAD TO HISTORIC SILVER

- Li Shi Feng (China)- World No 7, reigning Asian Games champion
- Chi Yu Jen (Chinese Taipei)- World No 20
- Jonatan Christie (Indonesia)- Olympian, World No 4
- Kunlavut Vitidsarn (Thailand)- World No 1

I think it was a really good week for me. I had some great wins and all the matches were really tough. And yeah, achieving this after 61 years is something really special for me and it motivates me to keep working harder and come back even more stronger

AYUSH SHETTY



Barwal: New marathon king

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rotterdam (Netherlands), April 12: Long-distance runner Sawan Barwal Sunday scripted history by breaking the 48-year-old marathon national record, the longest standing mark in Indian athletics, at the NN Marathon Rotterdam.

Barwal clocked 2 hours 11 minutes and 58 seconds in a world class field to finish 20th in the elite marathon race and erase the previous national record of 2:12:00 which stood since 1978 in Shivnath Singh's name.

The other Indian in the fray, Gopi Thonakal finished 23rd as he ran the 42.195km distance with a time of 2:13:16. Barwal's achievement was all the more praiseworthy as the Rotterdam event was his first marathon race. He had not run any official marathon race before Sunday.

This was his second competition of the season after taking part in the World Athletics Cross Country Championships in the USA in January.

Hailing from a village in Joginder Nagar in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh, the 28-year-old Barwal has trained hard for many years, establishing himself as a reputed long-distance runner.

His feat Sunday was the culmination of that hard work, as he literally emerged from the hills of Himachal Pradesh to the flat roads of Rotterdam.

Barwal ran at a steady pace in the gruelling race but windy conditions in the last 5km took a toll on the Indian runner.

"It was pretty cold and windy. I made a mistake of pouring water on my head at the water station," Barwal said.

"I was running at a comfortable pace until the 37km mark. But the last 2km was more challenging as I had to just plod to

RUNNING INTO HISTORY



POETIC MARATHON DEBUT

- Sawan Barwal breaks Shivnath Singh's 48-year-old marathon national record
- With this feat, he shatters the longest-standing national record in Indian athletics

cross the finish line.

"I was mentally and physically prepared to clock 2:10:00. But tough conditions robbed me of further improving my national record." The Army runner fell down after crossing the finish line due to exhaustion. He was taken for medical assistance.

"I've recovered and am feeling better," he added. Barwal, an Armyman, was at the 27th spot at around the halfway mark (21km) with a time of 1:04:43 while Gopi was 33rd with 1:04:44. At the 30km mark, he was below the 2:10:00 marathon pace.

At the 40km mark, Barwal's time was 2:03:39. In the closing stages of the gruelling race, he slowed down to cross the finish line at 2:11:58.

"It was a good learning experience in Rotterdam," he said.

Barwal's past race record on the World Athletics website does not mention any marathon though he has run many half marathons, and 5000m and 10000m races.

He first broke onto the national scene when he won a 10000m silver at the 2022 Federation Cup National Championships. The same year, he won a 5000m bronze at the National Games in Gujarat.

His first international medal came in 2023 when he won a bronze in the Asian Half Marathon Championships in Dubai. Barwal won his first national title at the Federation Cup in 2024 with a 5000m gold. But 2025 was the most productive year

I was running at a comfortable pace until the 37km mark. But the last 2km was more challenging as I had to just plod to cross the finish line. I was mentally and physically prepared to clock 2:10:00. But tough conditions robbed me of further improving my national record

SAWAN BARWAL

for Barwal as he won the 5000m and 10000m gold at the National Games in Uttarakhand, 10000m gold at the Federation Cup and a 5000m bronze in the World Athletics Bronze Level Continental Tour event in Bhubaneswar.

Trained by Gopal Thakur, Barwal has also been a regular participant in the Delhi Half Marathon and World 25K Kolkata Run. He won gold among Indian elite runners in the Delhi Half Marathon in 2024.

Shooters conclude WC campaign with one gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: Sonam Maskar put up a brave fight but finished fifth in the women's 10m air rifle final as India concluded their World Cup (Rifle/Pistol) campaign in Granada with one gold medal Sunday.

Sonam shot 188.5, bowing out after the 18th shot of the 24-shot final. World No 1 Wang Zifei of China won gold with a score of 252.9. Women's 3P world champion Jeanette Hegg Duestad of Norway took silver with 252.4, while former air rifle world champion Han Jiayu of China claimed bronze with 231.5.

Indians reached seven finals, but only the 10m air pistol pair of Mukesh Nelavalli and Palak won gold on the opening day of competition.

Sonam shot 632.8 in the first qualification relay to qualify in seventh place for the final. Mehuli Ghosh, with 627.3, was placed 44th, while Shruti, the third Indian in the field, shot 624.8 to finish 63rd in the 91-strong field.

Asian Wrestling C'ships: India's 17-medal finish

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

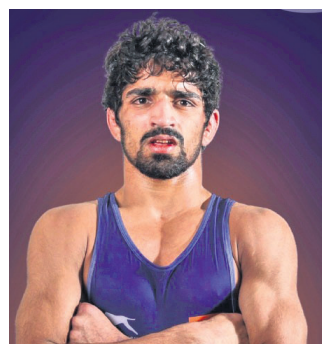
New Delhi, April 12: India signed off their campaign with two silver and a bronze medal to take their overall tally to 17 medals, including two gold, in the 2026 Asian Wrestling Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Sunday.

With an overall tally of two gold, six silver, and nine bronze medals, India finished second in the table behind Asian superpower Iran.

The Indian freestyle wrestlers finished with two gold, three silver, and two bronze medals, while the women bagged one silver and four bronze medals.

On the final day of competition, India had two wrestlers in gold medal bouts, but neither could find a way past their respective opponents.

In the 61kg freestyle final, Aman went down to Kwang Myong Kim of North Korea in a high-scoring final that ended 13-10 in the Korean's favour. Aman, a Paris Olympics bronze



medallist in the 57kg weight category, was playing in a higher weight category in Bishkek.

Later, Mukul Dahiya went down 0-7 against Iran's Kamran G Ghasempour in the men's 86kg freestyle final to take India's silver medal tally to six.

Dinesh then signed off the Indian campaign with a bronze medal as he registered a dominant 12-1 win over Arslanbek Turdubekov of Kyrgyzstan in the men's 125kg freestyle bout.

With Iran topping the Team Rankings with 178 points, India were second with 162 as Japan ended third with 127 points.

Aarit becomes youngest Indian IM norm holder

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: Delhi-based 10-year-old Aarit Kapil became the youngest Indian chess player to make an International Master norm after he drew with Samuel Asaka of Australia in the final round of an international tournament at Menorca in Spain.

After a brilliant start that included a victory over former world under-20 champion and Grandmaster Nogerbek Kazymbek of Kazakhstan in the second round, Aarit, who is just 10 years and seven months old, became the youngest Indian to hold an IM norm.

Stepping into the shoes of ace Indians like D Gukesh, Arjun and R Praggnanandhaa might be some time away, but with his sheer talent Aarit has shown that he could be the next big thing in Indian chess with his performance in Spain. Winning the under-11 national championship last year was a turning point for the young Delhiite and he has taken it forward in a big way. He is currently ranked number two in the world among players born in 2015.

The highest point for Aarit was a draw against 12-year-old International Master Oro Faustino of Argentina who is often regarded as the 'Messi of Chess' in the chequered world. Aarit gave nothing away except for a brief moment in the game and held on to his own, and the draw helped him gain world-wide attention.

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

RCB defend MI in thriller

Salt, Kohli, Patidar fifties power Royal Challengers Bengaluru's 18 run win over Mumbai Indian

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 13: Superb all-round bowling by the Royal Challengers Bengaluru strangled Mumbai Indians' hopes of successfully mounting the highest-ever chase at the Wankhede, as the visitors romped to an 18-run victory in Match 20 of the Indian Premier League (IPL) Sunday.

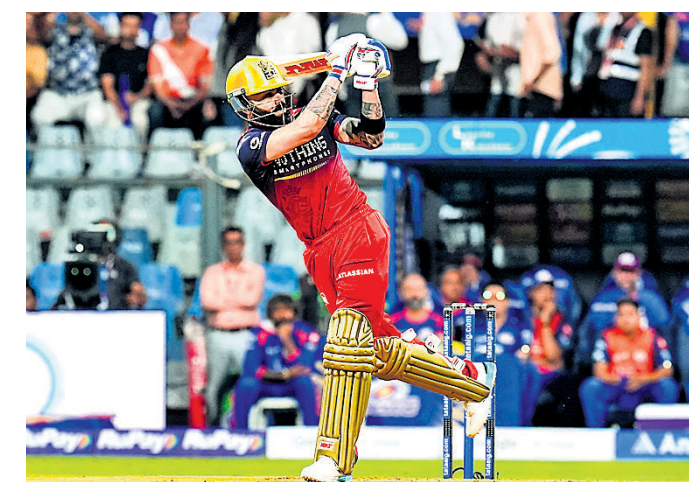
RCB rode on brilliant, blazing half-centuries by Phil Salt (78) and Rajat Patidar (53) and a sedate fifty by Virat Kohli to post 240/4 in 20 overs. Krunal Pandya and Suyash Sharma came up with some fine efforts

TODAY'S MATCH

SRH VS RR

TIME: 7:30 PM

Star Sports channels & JioHotstar



with the ball on a pitch that offered little assistance and capitalised on the scoreboard pressure to restrict the Mumbai Indians to 222/5.

Sherfane Rutherford's valiant 31-ball 71 and his 68-run partnership with Mitchell Santner (8) went in vain as the Mumbai Indians slumped to their third successive defeat. But the bigger concern for the five-time champions would be the hamstring injury suffered by former champion and opener Rohit Sharma, who had to walk off retired hurt in the sixth over.

RCB won their third game in four matches and moved up

TEAMS	P	W	L	NRR	PTS
RR	4	4	0	2.055	8
PBKs	4	3	0	0.720	7
RCB	4	3	1	1.148	6
DC	4	2	2	0.322	4
GT	4	2	2	-0.029	4
LSG	4	2	2	-0.427	4
SRH	4	1	3	-0.024	2
MI	4	1	3	-0.772	2
CSK	4	1	3	-1.532	2
KKR	4	0	3	-1.315	1

Gill, Buttler power GT victory

kipper Shubman Gill and Jos Buttler backed up Prasadh Krishna's excellent four-wicket burst with flamboyant half-centuries, guiding Gujarat Titans to a comfortable seven-wicket win over Lucknow Super Giants in an Indian Premier League match here Sunday.



Prasadh shone bright with figures of 4 for 24 as GT restricted LSG to 164 for eight and then the visitors rode on Gill (56) and Buttler (60) to chase down the target with eight balls to spare. The Titans made 165 for three. GT started brightly with Gill and Sai Sudharsan stitching 45 runs off 31 balls before the latter was dismissed by Digvesh Rathi, caught by Avesh Khan at fine leg. Buttler grabbed with both hands the life offered to him by LSG skipper Rishabh Pant. The Englishman was dropped by the wicketkeeper off Rathi in the eighth over. Thereafter, it was Gill and Buttler show, as the duo dismantled the LSG attack with brute force. The duo shared 85 runs for the second wicket off just 58 balls and took the attack to the opposition bowlers. While Gill made 56 off 40 balls and decorated his knock with six fours and one six, Buttler returned to form with an equally well-executed fifty. But after doing all the hard work, Gill gloved a Prince Yadav bounce to Pant while trying to pull the bowler. It was double blow for GT as Buttler departed an over later while trying to hit a slower delivery from Mohammed Shami out of the park, brilliantly caught by Aiden Markram at long-on boundary.

Brief Scores
Lucknow Super Giants: 164 for 8 in 20 overs (Phil Salt 78, Rajat Patidar 30; Prasadh Krishna 4/28, Ashok Sharma 2/32) lost to Gujarat Titans: 165/3 in 18.5 overs (S Gill 56, J Buttler 60; Prince yadav 1/31) by seven wickets

to six points and the third spot in the points table behind Rajasthan Royals (8) and Punjab Kings (7).

The Mumbai Indians started their chase of 241 on a bright note with Ryan Rickelton, who started with a six off Jacob Duffy in the opening over, and Rohit Sharma raising 50 runs for the team in the fifth over. The five-time champions reached 62 for no loss in the six overs of Power-play, but the dugout was not that happy as former captain Rohit Sharma had to retire hurt because of a hamstring injury, for which he received treatment on the ground. He was batting on 19 in the sixth over when he decided to return to the dugout and receive more treatment.

Brief Scores
Royal Challengers Bengaluru 240/4 in 20 overs (Phil Salt 78, Rajat Patidar 53, Virat Kohli 50, Tim David 34 not out; Shardul Thakur 1-32, Hardik Pandya 1-39) beat Mumbai Indians 222/5 in 20 overs (Sherfane Rutherford 71 not out, Hardik Pandya 40; Suyash Sharma 2-47, Krunal Pandya 1-26) by 18 runs

MONTE CARLO Sinner dethrones No 1 Alcaraz

In another Sincaraz showdown, the Italian beat the Spaniard in straight sets in the final to reclaim No 1 ranking

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Monaco, April 12: Jannik Sinner beat defending champion Carlos Alcaraz 7-6 (5), 6-3 Sunday to win the Monte Carlo Masters for the first time and reclaim the No 1 ranking from his biggest tennis rival.

"The result is amazing," Sinner said. "Getting back to No 1 means a lot for me."

Four-time Grand Slam champion Sinner met seven-time major winner Alcaraz in their ninth final in what is often called the "Sincaraz" rivalry.

Sinner trimmed Alcaraz's head-to-head lead to 10-7 in clinching his 27th career title overall and his first Masters title on clay. The 24-year-old Italian will return to No 1 in the ATP rankings Monday. Sinner rallied from 3-1 down in the second set amid blustery conditions at the Monte Carlo Country Club and served out the match, clinching it on his first match point when Alcaraz returned

a forehand long. "It was a bit windy, a bit breezy. Different conditions from what the tournament has brought," Sinner said. "I am very happy to win."



big title on this surface, I haven't done it before and it means a lot to me."

Sinner dropped to his knees after Alcaraz's shot landed out and then jogged over to celebrate with his box.

It was Sinner's third title of the year after sweeping Indian Wells and Miami - also winning those finals in straight sets - to become only the fourth man to reach the final at the first three Masters of the season. Sinner joined tennis great Novak Djokovic (in 2015) as the only one to win the first three Masters tournaments.

I am very happy to win a big title on this surface, I haven't done it before and it means a lot to me

JANNIK SINNER