



Bebo in soup

A viral Mumbai airport video has placed actor Kareena Kapoor Khan at the centre of a growing social media debate

LEISURE | P2

NATO against Trump

America's NATO allies resist President Donald Trump's plan to blockade the Strait of Hormuz

INTERNATIONAL | P10

Crude breaches \$100

Crude prices are back above \$100 per barrel after ceasefire talks failed to end Mideast crisis

BUSINESS | P11

Underlining greatness

Rory McIlroy secures his second consecutive Masters title, edging out world No 1 Scottie Scheffler

SPORTS | P12



POLICE BRUTALITY

Cops resort to a lathi charge on protesters demanding a salary hike in Noida, Monday (Report P8)

Magyar to take over as Hungary PM May 5

BUDAPEST: Hungary's election winner, Peter Magyar, called Monday on the country's president to convene the parliament to form a new government "as quickly as possible," in hopes that he can take over from Viktor Orban as PM as early as May 5. Magyar pledged to cooperate with other European countries, ending Orban-era obstruction of Europe-wide policies, while also representing Hungarians' wishes. At a news conference Monday in Budapest, he promised to restore rule of law and overhaul government structures to make them more independent and able to fight corruption.

CM's ₹1900cr infra push for Keonjhar



POST NEWS NETWORK

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- THE MUCH-AWAITED ₹1,581.21 CRORE BARBIL BYPASS RING ROAD
- RAPID PROGRESS ON GROUNDWORK FOR A MEGA STEEL PLANT
- FOUNDATION FOR 51 NEW PROJECTS WITH AN OUTLAY OF ₹326.43 CRORE

Sunstroke claims one

RAJNAGAR: A 65-year old man allegedly died of sunstroke in Brahmanisahi village under this block in Kendrapara district Sunday, in what is being reported as the season's first such death in the area. The deceased was identified as Nirajan Jena. According to reports, he had taken cattle out for grazing in the morning but did not return home. Family members and villagers launched a search and later found him lying dead in a field. It is suspected that he succumbed to extreme heat and humidity. Sources said most families in Brahmanisahi own cows and bullocks, and villagers take turns grazing them. Jena had taken more than 150 cattle to nearby fields for grazing, about 1 km from the village Sunday morning.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

I want my spine removed urgently, doctor, I'm in the CM race

Trump's fresh threat to Tehran

After Iran's warning that no Gulf ports would remain safe if its own security is threatened, US President Donald Trump has issued a fresh threat. If any Iranian ships come anywhere close to American blockade, they will be immediately eliminated, posted Trump on his social media handle. Iran's stance reflects an attempt at deterrence and strategic leverage, while the US seeks to limit Tehran's influence over key shipping routes. As both sides assert their interests, the risk of broader conflict and economic disruption, particularly rising oil prices, remains a serious global concern

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, April 13: After announcing the blockade of all Iranian ports and coastal areas on Monday, US President Donald warned on social media

that any Iranian warships that come "anywhere close" to the US blockade will be destroyed. Trump said Iran has some "fast attack ships" remaining even after much of its navy was destroyed by US strikes.

"Warning: If any of these ships come anywhere close to our BLOCKADE, they will be immediately ELIMINATED, using the same system of kill that we use against the drug dealers on boats at Sea," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform. He added: "It is quick and brutal."

It wasn't clear whether the blockade had started by the designated time of 10 a.m. EDT. The move sets the stage for a showdown as Iran has responded with threats against ports in the Persian Gulf and

the Gulf of Oman. "Security in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman is either for everyone or for NO ONE," the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting reported Monday. "NO PORT in the region will be safe," according to a statement from the Iranian military and the Revolutionary Guards. Ceasefire talks between the US and Iran over the weekend ended without an agreement, raising questions about what happens when the current two-week truce expires April 22. P10

15001/15/2627

MESSAGE OF HON'BLE GOVERNOR OF ODISHA ON THE AUSPICIOUS OCCASION OF MAHA VISUBA SANKRANTI & ODIA NEW YEAR

On the auspicious occasion of Maha Visuba Sankranti and on the first day of Odia New Year, I greet sisters and brothers of the State and extend my good wishes. I call upon all to work devotedly to make Odisha as one of the best States of the country and transform it to Viksit Odisha.

(Hari Babu Kambhampati)

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନବବର୍ଷ ଅବସରରେ ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା

ପବିତ୍ର ମହାବିଷୁବ ସଂକ୍ରାନ୍ତି ତଥା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନବବର୍ଷ ଅବସରରେ ସମସ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀ ଏବଂ ବିଶ୍ୱର କୋଣ ଅନୁକୋଣରେ ରହୁଥିବା ପ୍ରିୟ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଭାଇ ଓ ଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଆନ୍ତରିକ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଓ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଜଣାଉଛି ।

ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଅପାର କରୁଣାରୁ ନୂତନ ବର୍ଷ ଆପଣ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଜୀବନରେ ଅପାର ସୁଖ, ଶାନ୍ତି ଓ ସମୃଦ୍ଧି ଭରିଦେଉ, ଏହାହିଁ ମୋର ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା ।

କଳା, ସାହିତ୍ୟ, ସଂସ୍କୃତି, ଐତିହ୍ୟ ଓ ପରମ୍ପରାରେ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ଆମ ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଜାତି ଆଜି 'ଓଡ଼ିଆ ଅସ୍ମିତା'ର ପୁନଃ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା ପାଇଁ ପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ସମର୍ପଣ କରୁଅଛନ୍ତି । ଆଜିର ଓଡ଼ିଶା ନୂଆ ଉତ୍ସାହ, ଅସୀମ ଉଦ୍ଦୀପନା ଓ ଗଭୀର ଆତ୍ମବିଶ୍ୱାସର ସହିତ ଏକ 'ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ଓ ବିକଶିତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା' ଗଠନ ଦିଗରେ ଦୃଢ଼ ସଂକଳ୍ପର ସହ ଅଗ୍ରସର ହେଉଛି ।

ଆସନ୍ତୁ, ଏହି ପବିତ୍ର ଅବସରରେ ଆମେ ସମସ୍ତେ ମିଳିମିଶି ଆମର ଏହି ସଂକଳ୍ପକୁ ସିଦ୍ଧିରେ ପରିଣତ କରିବା ଏବଂ ଓଡ଼ିଶାକୁ ବିକାଶର ଶିଖରରେ ପହଞ୍ଚାଇବା ପାଇଁ ନୂଆ ଶପଥ ନେବା ।

ବନ୍ଦେ ଉତ୍କଳ ଜନନୀ !

(ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାଝୀ)
ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

OIPR-15001/15001/2/26-27/0015

leisure

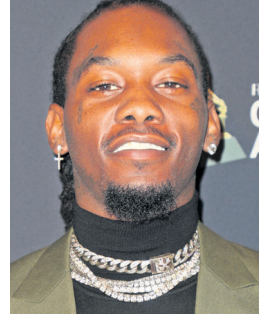


BRITNEY SPEARS CHECKS INTO REHAB AFTER DUI ARREST

Pop icon Britney Spears has reportedly entered a rehabilitation facility voluntarily following her DUI arrest in California last month. The Grammy-winning singer sought treatment weeks after being arrested on suspicion of driving while intoxicated March 4

OFFSET RETURNS TO STAGE DAYS AFTER BEING SHOT

Rapper Offset returned to the stage just days after being shot outside Florida's Hard Rock Casino April 6. The rapper took to his Instagram, and shared a video of himself on the stage in a wheelchair before rising to his feet as the crowd cheered



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
Today you will be perplexed by some inexplicable and fantastic event. Either that, or you may experience an unforeseen but favourable incident. It may not be earth-shaking, but it will definitely make you assess things. Besides, you could have difficulties meeting deadlines.

TAURUS
You will not lose your cool today despite the overwhelming odds, feels Ganesh. Rationale and reason will be the rhyme of your attitude as you diagnose the problems and uproot them successfully. Success beckons and you are ready to reach out and grab it by hook or by crook.

GEMINI
You will tend to be religiously inclined today, feels Ganesh. For this purpose, you may spend some time visiting a temple, mosque or church. You are also likely to go shopping, and chances are that this too is for a religious purpose. May God bless you, says Ganesh.

CANCER
Today, you will put your heart and soul into whatever task you take up. But the results may not be too forthcoming. However, that should not be a reason for you to get dejected or anxious. You will get your due sooner or later. Also, spending some time with your loved ones will be quite gratifying emotionally.

LEO
A mixed bag of fortunes, a bittersweet pill, call it what you will, but today brings with it a lot of things packed within its 24-hour period. Ganesh foresees a hectic morning, and an even more frantic afternoon. So, respite will be a luxury for you today. If this was the bitter end of the pill, then its sweet results will be like a balm on your frayed nerves, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Pay due attention to your innate feelings. A small tour may be in the offing. You will get along famously with people today, says Ganesh. Your loved ones will receive your sincere feelings and emotions. Work your magic to improve relationships more.

LIBRA
When you aim big, it is the small things that somehow manage to irritate you the most. Ganesh foresees you being troubled immensely by minute things today. But do not let this dampen your spirit, because today is also a day when you shall be receptive to new ideas. Allow for things to be absorbed by you today and maintain an even balance. Do that and you may produce wonderful results at work and rake in the money from various sources, says Ganesh.

SCORPIO
A cascade of let-downs will dent your confidence and shake your determination, says Ganesh. But don't let these failures affect you as they are temporary. At work, your subordinates may force you to take drastic measures.

SAGITTARIUS
A day full of cheer and joy is in store. You will probably enrol in a part-time course and sharpen your skills. But for those in police and legal professions, you will be the lions of the jungle! Roar and stamp your authority, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
After running about helter-skelter for getting your work done, you will sit back and spend the day planning the course of future action. Sudden and unexpected profits are on the cards, but you will need to be mindful of how best you utilise it. You can expect a few good opportunities to knock at the door, but open the door before they turn to look for shelter elsewhere.

AQUARIUS
You may find your schedules running haywire today! Your workload may be daunting, especially if you're an administrator. However, Ganesh says your diligence and commitment will tide you through. And you are still ready to party in the evening. What energy!

PISCES
You are human enough to make mistakes, and humble enough to admit them, and it is this honesty that people admire in you. Your affectionate nature will see you excel at tending to the needs of your family members today, says Ganesh.

KAREENA UNDER FIRE

MUMBAI: Actor Kareena Kapoor Khan has sparked a heated social media debate after a viral video appeared to show her bypassing a long security queue at Mumbai airport and moving directly ahead of other passengers. Dressed in a peach-coloured traditional outfit, the actor was seen walking through the security checkpoint while several travellers waited in line, prompting allegations of preferential treatment.

The clip quickly triggered criticism online, with many users questioning why celebrities are seemingly allowed to avoid queues while ordinary passengers wait their turn. Several social media posts accused the system of promoting VIP culture, with some users calling the incident unfair and reflective of broader social inequality. Others tagged government authorities, including the Ministry of Civil Aviation, demanding clarification on whether special privileges had been granted.

The incident has reignited the larger conversation around celebrity entitlement and VIP treatment in public spaces, a recurring topic whenever public figures appear to receive preferential access or exemptions. Neither Kareena nor her team has responded to the controversy so far. Amid the online backlash, Kareena was later seen attending the ongoing IPL match between Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bengaluru at Wankhede Stadium alongside husband Saif Ali Khan and their children, where the family cheered for Mumbai Indians from the stands.



MUMBAI: Actor Sonam Bajwa recently recounted a startling fan encounter, revealing that a woman once told her she had called off her engagement because her fiancé was excessively obsessed with the actor. Speaking on a show, Bajwa shared how the woman approached her and said that her relationship had ended because of the actor's influence.

Recalling the moment, Bajwa said she was taken aback when the fan told her, "Because my engagement broke." In-shocked, said she did not know how to react, but she quickly clarified that she was a happier and engaged person else. The woman reportedly explained that her former fiancé constantly compared her to Bajwa and pressured her to resemble the actor physically. According to Bajwa, the fan said her ex-partner wanted her to "look like" the actor and have a similar body, creating unrealistic expectations that became overwhelming.

Bajwa said she was pleased to hear the woman had moved on and found a healthier relationship with someone who truly valued her. The anecdote sparked conversation online about how celebrity admiration can sometimes fuel unhealthy comparisons and unrealistic standards within relationships, affecting self-esteem and emotional well-being.

Sonam recalls startling fan encounter

ATHIYA'S blunder

MUMBAI: The death of legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle April 12 triggered an outpouring of grief across the country, with tributes pouring in from the film and music fraternity. Amid the mourning, actor Athiya Shetty found herself at the centre of controversy after mistakenly posting a photograph of late singer Lata Mangeshkar while paying tribute to Asha Bhosle on social media.

The apparent mix-up was swiftly noticed by users online, sparking widespread criticism and backlash. Though Athiya deleted the post soon after and later shared the correct image of Asha Bhosle, screenshots of the original post had already gone viral, prompting many to question the actor's attentiveness and sincerity.

Several social media users labelled the mistake insensitive, with many criticising what they saw as a careless approach to paying homage during a moment of national mourning. Asha Bhosle passed away in Mumbai at the age of 92 after battling prolonged health issues. She had reportedly been admitted to the ICU of Breach Candy Hospital following cardiac and respiratory complications.

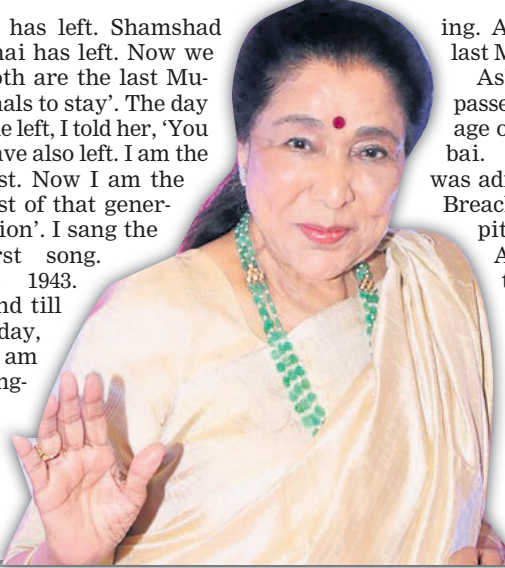
Widely regarded as one of the greatest voices in Indian cinema, Asha Bhosle enjoyed a career spanning over eight decades, earning multiple Filmfare and National Awards, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, and the Padma Vibhushan for her unparalleled contribution to Indian music.



When Asha called herself the 'last of Mughals'

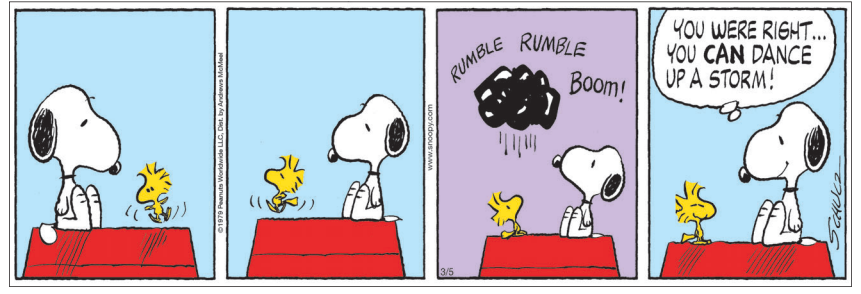
MUMBAI: Legendary playback singer Asha Bhosle, who passed away Sunday, once recollected the words of her elder sister, the Bharat Ratna awardee Lata Mangeshkar about the two of them being the 'last of the Mughals'.

An old video of the late singer, which has gone viral on social media, shows her talking about Lata Mangeshkar in a singing reality show. She recollected the words of her sister as she said, "Didi used to say that all the music directors have left. All the singers have left. She recollected the names, as she said, 'Look, Kishore has left, Rafi sahab has left, Mukesh bhai has left, Geeta has left. Shamshad bhai has left. Now we both are the last Mughals to stay'. The day she left, I told her, 'You have also left. I am the last. Now I am the last of that generation'. I sang the first song. In 1943. And till today, I am singing. And I am the last Mughal".

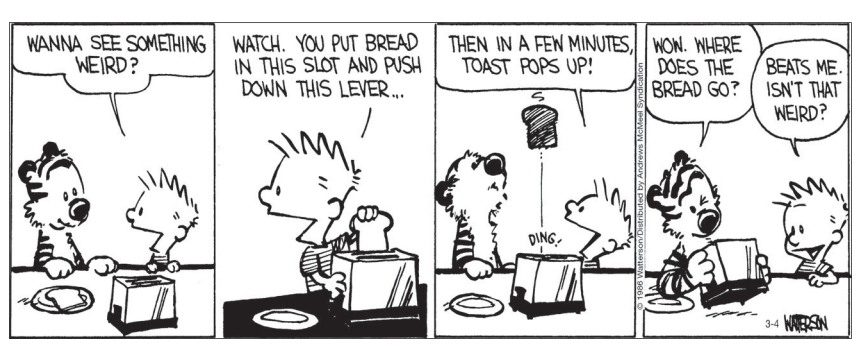


One of the most influential singers of her time, Asha Bhosle, sang her first song as a playback for the 1943 Marathi drama *Majha Bal*. She is known for lending her voice to some noteworthy numbers such as *Chura Liya Hai Tumne Jo Dil Ko, Do Lafzon Ki Hai Dil Ki Kahani, Kya Ghazab Karte Ho Ji, O Haseena Zulfonwale Jane Jahan*, and *Ye Ladka Hay Allah Kaisa Hai Diwana*, to name just a few. Along with Hindi, she has sung in around 20 Indian and foreign languages. In 2006, Asha Bhosle herself disclosed that she has almost 12,000 songs to her credit.

PEANUTS



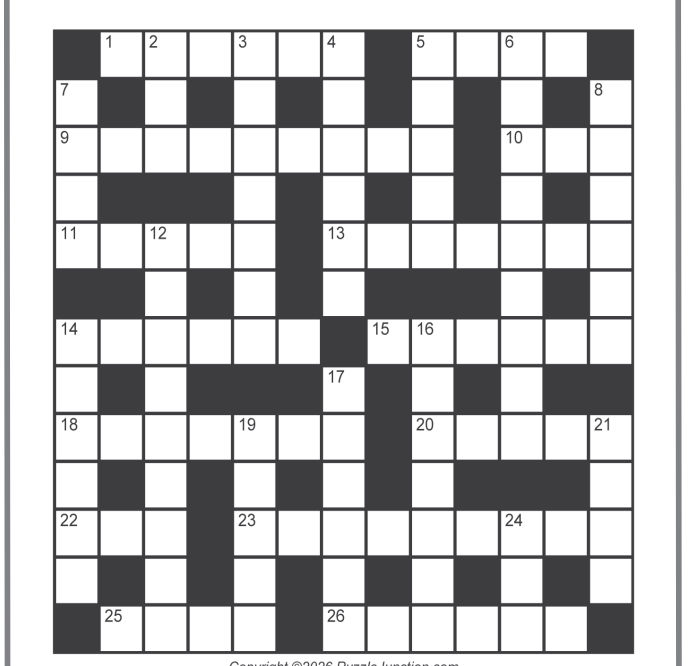
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN POST CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Calamitous
 - 5 Distress signal
 - 9 Twilled fabric
 - 10 Large snake
 - 11 Kick out
 - 13 Taxing
 - 14 Kind of fin
 - 15 Confused
 - 18 Cry weakly or softly
 - 20 Guitar relative
 - 22 Stately tree
 - 23 Soar upwards
- Down**
- 2 Swindle
 - 3 Silverback
 - 4 Kind of tie (4-2)
 - 5 Sharp narrow ridge
 - 6 Folklore creature
 - 7 Malarial fever
 - 8 Took a breather resembling a plum
 - 12 Orange fruit
 - 14 Depressing experience
 - 16 Uncertain
 - 17 Colouring implement
 - 19 Basil-based sauce
 - 21 Swear words
 - 24 New Zealand parrot

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

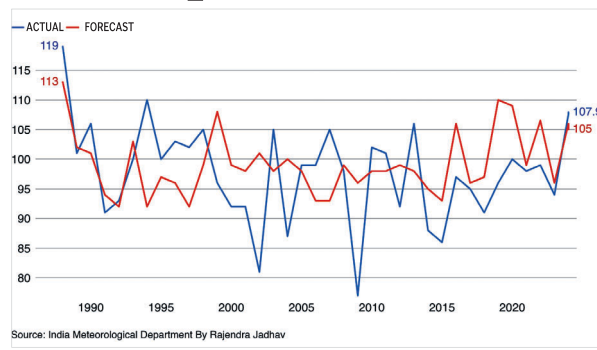
W	L	A	B	G	D
D	E	F	E	N	D
E	C	A	A	F	G
E	D	I	M	A	N
O	U	A	A	D	E
A	D	O	R	I	N
O	E	T	W	V	L
D	O	E	C	A	R
M	T	I	N	M	
E	S	C	A	R	G
D	S	L	A	I	I
T	A	T	T	O	O
Y	E	O	S	E	K

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Sub-par monsoon likely



Source: India Meteorological Department By Rajendra Jadhav

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 13: India is likely to see below-normal monsoon rains for the first time in three years in 2026, the government said Monday, stoking concerns over farm output and growth in Asia's third-largest economy as it battles inflation driven by the Iran war.

The monsoon is the lifeblood of India's nearly \$4 trillion economy, delivering almost 70 per cent of the rainfall needed to water farms and replenish aquifers and reservoirs.

The monsoon, which typically arrives over the southern state of Kerala around June 1 and retreats by mid-September, is expected to reach 92 per cent

The monsoon is expected to reach 92% of the long-period average this year

The IMD defines normal rainfall as between 96% and 104% of a 50-year average of 87 cm for the four-month season

of the long-period average this year, M Ravichandran, secretary in the Ministry of Earth Sciences, told a news conference.

The India Meteorological Department defines normal rainfall as between 96 per cent and 104 per cent of a 50-year average of 87 cm (35 inches) for the four-month season.

"Currently weak La Nina-like conditions are transitioning to neutral conditions. But after June it's very likely that El Nino

will develop," Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, director-general of the India Meteorological Department, said.

El Nino is a weather phenomenon that occurs when ocean temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean rise above normal, typically resulting in hot and dry weather in Southeast Asia and other parts of the world. In the past, India has experienced below-average rainfall during most El Nino years, sometimes leading to severe droughts that destroyed crops and forced authorities to limit the export of some grains.

"But in the latter part of the monsoon season, positive Indian Ocean Dipole conditions are likely to develop and that will help the monsoon," Mohapatra said.

Indian Ocean Dipole is a climate pattern marked by differences in sea-surface temperatures between the western and eastern Indian Ocean.

A positive Indian Ocean Dipole, defined by warmer-than-normal waters in the western Indian Ocean, often supports stronger monsoon rainfall in India.



CELEBRATION TIME: A man sells bael and banana in Bhubaneswar, Monday, as the state gears up to celebrate Maha Bishuba Sankranti, Tuesday

THANE: 11 DEAD AS VAN HITS TRUCK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thane, April 13: Eleven people, including three women, were killed after an overcrowded van collided with a transit mixer truck on a bridge in Maharashtra's Thane district Monday, police said.

The fatal crash occurred around 10.45 am on the newly constructed bridge over the Ulhas River near Raithe village on the Kalyan-Murbad-Malshej highway, an official from the rural district police said. The van, which provides shuttle taxi services to locals, was heading to Murbad from Kalyan when it collided head-on into the transit mixer coming from the opposite direction, he said. All 11 occupants of the van, including the driver, were killed, Murbad Tehsil District Abhijit Deshmukh said.

"The impact was so severe that the vehicle was completely mangled, and the occupants were crushed inside. The bodies have been shifted to the Goveli primary health centre for post-mortem," Deshmukh said.

State Transport Minister Pratap Sarmaik said the van was overcrowded.

Australia gets first female army chief

REUTERS/AGENCIES

Sydney, April 13: Australia Monday said a woman would lead its army for the first time in history, as part of a reshuffle of the country's defence force leadership.

Lieutenant General Susan Coyle, 55, the current chief of joint capabilities, will become chief of army in July, the government said in a statement. She will replace Lieutenant General Simon Stuart.

Coyle's appointment comes as Australia's military seeks to boost the number of female officers in its ranks. It faces a wave of allegations of systematic sexual harassment and discrimination. "From July, we will have the first ever female chief of army in the Australian Army's 125-year history," PM Anthony Albanese said.



Inflation rises to 3.4% Man kills wife, hides body in septic tank

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 13: Retail inflation inched up marginally to 3.4 per cent in March compared to 3.21 per cent in the preceding month, mainly due to uptick in certain food items, amid the ongoing West Asia crisis, according to government data released Monday.

The food inflation, based on the consumer price index (CPI), was estimated at 3.87 per cent in March as against 3.47 per cent in February.

The retail inflation released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) is based on a new series with a base year 2024. The March CPI remains below the Reserve Bank's median target of 4 per cent.

High inflation was noticed during March in gold and silver jewellery, coconut (copra), tomato, and cauliflower. On the



other hand, inflation was in negative in onion, potato, garlic, arhar dal, and chickpeas, according to the NSO data.

The CPI was at 1.65 per cent in electricity, gas and other fuels' segment during March as against 1.52 in the preceding month. Inflation rates for rural and urban segments are 3.63 per cent and 3.11 per cent, respectively. Housing inflation rate for March 2026 was 2.11 per cent.

Highest inflation was in Telangana at 5.83 per cent and the lowest in Mizoram at 0.66 per cent.

Commenting on CPI data, ASSOCHAM President Nirmal K Minda said the government's approach to manage prices by keeping petrol and diesel rates unchanged, despite a sharp rise in international crude oil prices, is highly commendable. The RBI has also supported economic activity by maintaining a stable repo rate, he added.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said the CPI inflation rose slightly to 3.4 per cent in March over February, indicating a mild initial impact of the West Asian crisis on the headline number.

"The sequential uptick in year-on-year inflation was driven by food and electricity, gas and other fuels groups, with the latter reflecting the impact of the West Asia crisis across LPG and alternate fuels," she said.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Raigarh, April 13: A man allegedly killed his wife and hid her body in a septic tank in an attempt to pass off the crime as a case of disappearance at Bargaon under Raigarh police limits, sources said Monday.

Police and local sources said Subash Gand and his wife, Manei Gand, had returned home Saturday afternoon after attending

a family wedding. Soon after, the couple entered into an altercation over an issue. In a fit of rage, Subash allegedly attacked and killed his wife in front of their children.

Investigators believe the accused kept the body inside the house for several hours before hiding it in a septic tank around midnight.

The following day, he

attempted to mislead villagers by claiming that Manei had left the house without informing anyone.

However, suspicion grew as his statements appeared inconsistent. The turning point came when the couple's four-year-old son told villagers that his father had killed his mother, exposing the crime.

Villagers immediately

alerted the police, who reached the spot and recovered the woman's body from the septic tank late Sunday night.

"The accused has been arrested, and a case has been registered," a police official said, adding that further investigation is underway to establish the exact sequence of events and the motive behind the crime.

Manas Mangaraj BJD's new leader in Rajya Sabha

Bhubaneswar: BJD president Naveen Patnaik has appointed MP Manas Ranjan Mangaraj as the party's leader in Rajya Sabha, official sources said Monday. He replaced Sasmit Patra, who resigned from the post last week. Similarly, Sulata Deo has been appointed as the deputy leader and chief whip of the BJD Parliamentary Party in Rajya Sabha. In a letter to the Rajya Sabha chairman April 12, Patnaik said, "It is requested that due official recognition may kindly be given to the newly appointed leaders of Biju Janata Dal in Rajya Sabha."

SC notice to Centre, EC on biometric voting plea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 13: The Supreme Court Monday sought responses from the Centre, Election Commission (EC) and others on a plea seeking to implement finger and iris biometric identification system at polling stations to prevent duplicate voting.

While agreeing to hear the plea, a bench of CJI Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi made clear that the prayer sought in the petition can't be considered for the current Assembly elections in some states.

"However, whether such recourse deserves to be followed before the next

parliamentary election and/or state Assembly elections needs to be examined," the bench said.

The SC issued notice to the Centre, the EC and several other states seeking their responses on the plea filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay.

Upadhyay, who appeared in person, told the bench that the prayer sought in the plea would prevent bribery and proxy voting. The SC observed that it would require major changes in the rules and would incur huge financial burden.

The plea stated that the EC, by exercising its plenary powers under Ar-

ticle 324, may implement fingerprint and iris-based biometric authentication to strengthen voter identification and eliminate bribery, undue influence, personation, and duplicate or "ghost" voting.

The plea said that adoption of finger and iris biometric verification at the polling booths in elections would ensure that only genuine and duly registered electors are permitted to cast their votes.

"The injury to citizens is extremely large as bribery, undue influence, personation, duplicate voting and ghost voting still affects the purity and integrity of the electoral process," it submitted.

Pope: I have no fear of Trump

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, April 13: US-born Pope Leo XIV pushed back Monday President Donald Trump's broadside against him over the US-Israel war in Iran, telling reporters that the Vatican's appeals for peace and reconciliation are rooted in the Gospel, and that he doesn't fear the Trump administration.

"To put my message on the same plane as what the president has attempted to do here, I think is not understanding what the message of the Gospel is," Leo told AP aboard the papal plane en route to Algeria. "And I'm sorry to hear that but I will continue on what I believe is the mission of the church in the world today."

History's first US-born pope stressed that he was not making a direct attack against Trump or anyone else with his general appeal for peace and criticisms of the "delusion of omnipotence" that is fuelling the Iran wars and other conflicts around the world.

"I will not enter into debate. The things that I say are certainly not meant as attacks on anyone. The message of the Gospel is very clear: Blessed are the peacemakers," Leo said. "I will not shy away from announcing the message of the Gospel and inviting all people to look for ways of building bridges of peace and reconciliation, and looking for

ways to avoid war any time that's possible."

Speaking to other reporters, he added, "I have no fear of the Trump administration."

Trump delivered an extraordinary broadside against Leo Sunday night, saying he didn't think the US-born global leader of the Catholic Church is "doing a very good job" and that "he's a very liberal person", while also suggesting the pontiff should "stop catering to the Radical Left".

Flying back to Washington from Florida, Trump used a lengthy social media post to sharply criticise Leo, then kept it up after deplaning, in comments on the tarmac to reporters.

"I'm not a fan of Pope Leo," he said. Trump's comments came after Leo suggested over the weekend that a "delusion of omnipotence" is fuelling the US-Israel war in Iran. While it's not unusual for popes and presidents to be at cross purposes, it's exceedingly rare for the pope to directly criticise a US leader - and Trump's stinging response is equally uncommon, if not more so.

"Pope Leo is WEAK on Crime, and terrible for Foreign Policy," the president wrote in his post, adding, "I don't want a Pope who thinks it's OK for Iran to have a Nuclear Weapon."

Later, Trump posted a picture suggesting he had saint-like powers akin to those of Jesus Christ.

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ଚଳଚ୍ଚିତ୍ର

50th Anniversary

ବୈଶାଖୀ

BAISHAKHI

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନବବର୍ଷର ଅନନ୍ୟ ମହୋତ୍ସବ

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ତଥା ଦେଶର କୋଣ ଅନୁକୋଣରୁ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ଓ ନୂତନ, ପାରମ୍ପରିକ ଓ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ନୃତ୍ୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ବଳ ଏହି ମହୋତ୍ସବର ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର କଳା-ନୈପୁଣ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ କରିବେ ।

ଚିତ୍ରା ଓ ଚେତନା ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରୀୟ ସମ୍ମାନ ବିଜିତ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ କୃତବିଦ୍‌ମାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯିବ (ବିଗତ ବର୍ଷର) ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅସ୍ପୃତାକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦିତ କରିବାରେ ଚିତ୍ରା ଓ ଚେତନା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନବବର୍ଷ ମହୋତ୍ସବ ଚଳ ଚଳ ବୈଶାଖୀ ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଆପଣାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଭିକାରଦେବ । ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ଦେଶ ଓ ରାଜ୍ୟର ବିଭିନ୍ନ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରର ଖ୍ୟାତନାମା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିଗଣଙ୍କ ଅତିଥି ଭାବେ ଯୋଗ ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି ।

ଅପ୍ରେଲ ୧୫ ରୁ ୧୮ ତାରିଖ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟା ୬ଟା ସ୍ଥାନ : ରବାହୁ ମଣ୍ଡପ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ସତ୍ତ୍ୱ ଆକର୍ଷଣ ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ଦିବ୍ୟ ପହଣ୍ଡି ଓ ଆରତି ନବବର୍ଷରୁ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ସହ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ସାଦର ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ

ଅପେକ୍ଷାରେ

ଚିତ୍ରା ଓ ଚେତନା ବୈଶାଖୀ ପରିବାର

www.sristiservice.com

Contact for Order

7606002174

9437055874

SRISTI SERVICE

Specialist in:

OUTDOOR CATERING

A-20, UNIT-4

BHUBANESWAR-1

Grand celebrations to mark Odia New Year

FORTNIGHT-LONG 'ODIA PAKHYA' TO CONCLUDE TODAY, CELEBRATING LANGUAGE, HERITAGE AND IDENTITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 13: Odisha is all set to welcome the Odia New Year—Maha Bishuba Sankranti, popularly known as Pana Sankranti—April 14, with vibrant cultural fervour, marking the grand finale of the fortnight-long 'Odia Pakhya' celebrations dedicated to language, heritage and identity.

The concluding ceremony will be held at the Krushi Shiksha Sadan Auditorium of Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), where Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will grace the occasion as chief guest. The event is set to bring together cultural troupes, artists, scholars, students and citizens in a spirited celebration of Odia pride.

The Odia New Year is more than just a calendar transition—it is a cultural and spiritual milestone symbolising renewal, prosperity and harmony with nature. Celebrated across the state, Maha Bishuba Sankranti marks the Sun's transition into Aries (Mesha Sankranti), heralding the beginning of a new agricultural and seasonal cycle.

From villages to cities, the festival is observed through temple rituals, family traditions, folk performances and community gatherings, reflecting the enduring cultural continuity of Odisha's rich heritage.

This year's celebrations hold added significance as the state concludes 'Odia Pakhya', observed from April 1 to 14 by the Odia Language, Literature and Culture department. The initiative aimed to reconnect citizens—especially the youth—with Odisha's linguistic pride, traditional knowledge systems



and cultural identity. The fortnight-long observance unfolded across the state through a series of themed daily events showcasing Odisha's traditions, language and social values.

The celebrations began on April 2 and 3 with "Ama Poshak, Ama Parichaya," encouraging citizens to embrace traditional handloom attire and celebrate Odisha's rich textile heritage, with active participation across government offices and the public.

"Khadi Chhuan" ceremonies and school enrolment drives were held April 4 to promote education and reinforce the use of the Odia language in daily life. April 5 featured the "Heritage Run," organised near historical sites across the state, blending fitness with cultural awareness under the Fit India-Fit Odisha initiative.

April 6, a statewide cleanliness drive was carried out in temples and public spaces, reinforcing civic responsibility and environmental consciousness.

"Shishu Katha Divas" focused on storytelling traditions, with 18,000 children's books distributed to primary school students to promote folk tales and reading habits among young learners, April 7.

A massive "Blood Donation Drive" was held, collecting over 6,000 units of blood in a single day through coordinated efforts of the Health & Family Welfare and Higher Education departments, April 8.

The "Aasa Bahitit Kiniba Abhiyan" encouraged youth to develop reading habits and strengthen literary engagement across communities, April 9.

April 10 was dedicated to "Lokakala Paain Dinatit," celebrating Odisha's folk artists

and traditional performing arts while recognising their contribution to the state's cultural identity. April 11, the "Amrutapidhi Samaroh" highlighted creativity among children, adolescents and youth through diverse cultural and artistic expressions. April 12 featured the "Bandaneeya Baraputra" programme, introducing younger generations to the lives and ideals of Odisha's eminent personalities, inspiring values of leadership and service.

The celebrations continued on April 13 with "Ama Ruchi, Ama Khadya Divas," showcasing traditional Odia cuisine and local food culture, and highlighting indigenous culinary practices and regional flavours across households and public events. The grand culmination on April 14 will mark Maha Bishuba Sankranti, the Odia New Year.

Officials noted that the initiative has been implemented from grassroots villages to urban centres, ensuring widespread participation across the state.

The occasion is marked by deeply symbolic rituals that connect people with nature and spirituality. One of the central traditions is the preparation of Bela Pana, a cooling seasonal drink made from wood apple, jaggery, milk and spices. It is first offered to deities in temples and then distributed among devotees as a symbol of health and prosperity.

Another key ritual is the hanging of the Basundhara Theki—an earthen pot filled with pana and suspended over Tulsi plants. The slow dripping of water symbolises the cooling of the earth and the transition of seasons.

Devotees visit temples dedicated to Lord Shiva, Goddess Shakti and Lord Hanuman, offering prayers for well-being and prosperity in the year ahead. In many households, the reading of the Odia Panjika (traditional almanac) marks the beginning of the new religious and cultural calendar.

Cultural performances such as Chhau dance and Danda Nata, along with village fairs and urban melas, add vibrancy to the celebrations, showcasing Odisha's rich performing arts heritage.

Maha Bishuba Sankranti holds multidimensional significance—it marks the beginning of a new agricultural cycle, symbolises spiritual purification and renewal, and reinforces the shared cultural identity of the Odia people through collective rituals and traditions.

RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN RAYAGADA'S SIJIMALI Left parties seek Guv intervention

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Rayagada, April 13: Four Left parties—CPI(ML) Red Star Odisha, CPI(ML), CPI(ML) New democratic and Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI) have called for observing April 17 as 'Protest Day' across the state, strongly condemning alleged police excesses, repression, and violations of constitutional and legal rights in Sijimali.

In a joint statement issued by the parties, demonstrations, rallies, public meetings, and memoranda submission are planned at district, subdivision, and block levels throughout the state.

Monday, CPI, CPI(M), CPI(ML) Liberation and All India Forward Bloc representatives also submitted a memorandum to Governor Haribabu Kambhampati for urgent intervention against police excess and repression on Adivasis.

According to the statement, on the intervening night of April 6 & 7, hundreds of armed police personnel reportedly carried out a late-night raid in Kantamal village and nearby areas. The parties alleged that police resorted to lathi-charge and tear gas, leading to injuries among several villagers, including women and the elderly. The incident has allegedly created a climate of fear in the region, with residents still living under distress.

Serious allegations have also been raised regarding irregularities in Gram Sabha proceedings. The statement claimed that December 8, 2023, multiple Gram Sabha meetings were allegedly conducted simultaneously by the same officers, with even signatures of deceased persons appearing in official records—

raising concerns over the authenticity of the process.

CPI(M) State Secretary Suresh Chandra Panigrahi alleged that the developments in Sijimali violates provisions under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution, the Forest Rights Act, 2006, and the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act. They claimed that forest rights claims remain unresolved and that consent of the Gram Sabha has not been properly obtained.

CPI State Secretary Prashant Kumar Mishra criticised the role of Vedanta Limited, alleging that actions are being taken to facilitate a road project for the company, disregarding the rights of tribal communities. It further alleged that several villagers and leaders associated with the 'Ma Mati Mali Suraksha Manch' have been implicated in false cases. At least 24 individuals, including Lingaraj Azad, Suresh Sangram, and Umakant Nayak, are currently in jail, with even a pregnant woman reportedly among those detained.

Raising environmental concerns, the parties warned that the proposed bauxite mining project in Sijimali could severely impact forests, water sources, and local livelihoods. Key Demands include a judicial inquiry into alleged police atrocities and Gram Sabha irregularities, withdrawal of 'false' cases and immediate release of detained villagers and protesting leaders, proper implementation of constitutional provisions, FRA, and PESA laws, cancellation of the proposed Sijimali bauxite mining project, protection of tribal rights and natural resources, and halting forced mining projects in scheduled areas.

GUV, CM GREET PEOPLE ON CAPITAL FOUNDATION DAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 13: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati and Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Monday greeted the people of the state on the occasion of the 78th foundation day of Capital city Bhubaneswar.

"On Capital Foundation Day, we celebrate Bhubaneswar, a City that beautifully blends its timeless heritage with steady progress. Rooted in history and moving ahead with purpose, Bhubaneswar continues to grow, inspire, and make us proud," the Governor wrote on X.

Majhi extended his heartfelt greetings and congratulations to all the people of the state and especially to the residents of Bhubaneswar on this occasion.

"Our beloved City, the Temple City, stands as a unique confluence of heritage, culture, and modernity in the Ekamra Kshetra, has now created a new identity on the global stage as a prominent hub for education, IT, and sports," the chief minister said in a post on X.

"On this proud day, let us resolve to build our Capital into an even cleaner, more beautiful, and progressive one," he appealed to the denizens of Bhubaneswar.

Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo, in a message on social media, said, "On the 78th Capital Foundation Day, we celebrate Bhubaneswar—the heart of Odisha's identity and progress. From its historic roots to its modern aspirations, this City embodies resilience, culture, and innovation. I take pride in honouring the visionaries who shaped our capital and the people whose spirit continues to drive its growth. May Bhubaneswar keep shining as a beacon of heritage and development for generations to come."

Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik described the Capital city, Bhubaneswar, as green and beautiful and said the city has enriched the identity of Odisha with its ancient heritage, rich culture, and modern architecture. "Taking everyone along, it has added a new chapter to the path of development. Let us, on the 78th Foundation Day of the capital Bhubaneswar, resolve to build it as the best capital of the country," Patnaik wrote on X.

Rao takes charge as I-T chief for Odisha



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 13: D Sudhakara Rao Monday assumed charge as the Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax for Odisha, the Income Tax department said in a media briefing.

Rao has also been given additional charge as Principal Chief Commissioner for Bihar and Jharkhand, according to the department.

An Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer of the 1990 batch, Rao brings with him extensive administrative

and leadership experience across several states and Union Territories, including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Goa, Karnataka, Puducherry, Kerala and Maharashtra.

At the press meet, Rao said, "I will serve as the Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax for Odisha for about the next four months and will monitor, guide and support my fellow officers."

Rao expressed hope that officers would work diligently and live up to expectations. He emphasised timely redressal of public grievances and the smooth functioning of the department.

His appointment is expected to further strengthen the functioning and administration of the Income Tax department in the region.

Nod for Odisha State Public Universities Act

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 13: The Odisha State Public Universities (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2026, has come into force across the state from Monday, following Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati giving his assent to the new legislation.

The implementation of the new legislation will expedite the process of filling vacant teaching positions in state public universities, said Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj.

He said the Act was enacted after the Odisha State Public Universities (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Bill, 2026, got the nod of the Assembly following extensive discussions that continued late into the night March 31.

Expressing gratitude to the Governor, Suraj described the Act as a landmark initiative that will ensure adequate representation of Scheduled Tribes



(ST), Scheduled Castes (SC), and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) in the higher education sector. This act will bring a significant reform in the state's higher education system, he said.

The minister stated that the Act introduces a major shift in the reservation system by treating each university as a single unit for the purpose of implementing reservation in faculty

recruitment. This replaces the earlier department-wise reservation system.

Under the new framework, reservations will be applied in the direct recruitment of faculty positions, including Professors, Associate Professors, and Assistant Professors, thereby ensuring equitable representation of reserved categories across universities.

The minister further said that several long-vacant vice-chancellor posts in state public universities have also been filled recently, with appointments made in 14 universities.

Suraj noted that academicians from Odisha have been entrusted with leadership roles, which is expected to strengthen the academic ecosystem in the state. He expressed confidence that under the leadership of the newly appointed vice-chancellors, universities will focus on delivering quality and research-oriented higher education.

Meet on Mahanadi dispute; panel formed



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 13: The Mahanadi Bachao Andolan (MBA) Monday organised a meeting at Buddha Mandir here to deliberate on the long-pending Mahanadi water dispute.

Attended by intellectuals, experts, social activists and senior journalists, the meeting expressed serious concern over the delay in resolving the issue and alleged government inaction.

The meeting was attended by several political leaders and activists. Congress leader Sibandana Ray, Mahanadi Bachao Andolan convener Sudarshan Das, Basudev Bhatta, Girija Das, CPILM leader Ashok Pradhan and others took part in the discussion.

Presided over by Das, the discussion focused on the functioning of the Mahanadi Tri-

bunal and its failure to deliver justice to Odisha. Participants criticised the tribunal for not delivering even an interim order in the last eight years and stressed the need for urgent intervention.

The meeting resolved to intensify a statewide mass movement to protect the interests of Odisha and safeguard the Mahanadi River. It was also decided to strengthen organisational structures in districts located in the Mahanadi basin.

A seven-member technical committee, led by former engineer-in-chief and additional secretary Ashutosh Das, will prepare a comprehensive white paper on the tribunal's proceedings and the water dispute. The report will be based on scientific and research-oriented analysis and is expected to be completed within a month. It

will outline possible legal and alternative dispute resolution measures and will be submitted to the governments of Odisha, Chhattisgarh and the Centre.

The committee includes former chief engineers Harish Chandra Behera and Ramesh Chandra Tripathy, engineer Pradeep Pradhan, former Utkal University vice-chancellor Prof Binayak Rath, geologist Surya Nayak, scientist Subhranshu Ray and former professor Bijay Sahu, among others.

The meeting also decided to form a legal committee comprising eminent lawyers to examine judicial aspects of the dispute. The participants termed the Centre's claim of resolving the dispute through dialogue as misleading and questioned whether any Cabinet decision had been taken in this regard.

Ratna Bhandar: Day I inventory concludes

AGENCIES

Puri, April 13: The first day's inventory work of Lord Jagannath's ornaments stored in the inner chamber of the Puri temple's Ratna Bhandar (treasury) concluded Monday amid tight security arrangements both inside and outside the shrine, an official said.

Gold, diamonds, gems, silver and other valuables never seen by ordinary devotees are stored in the inner chamber. These are being catalogued in the third phase of the inventory which will resume April 16.

The exercise, the first in 48 years, began March 25, and the daily-use ornaments of the deities were inventorised in the first phase. Elaborate security measures have been made by the Puri district police in view of the exercise, officials said.

The authorities maintained strict access control, multi-layered security, deployment of striking forces at key locations, and standby teams of executive magistrates, fire services, medical staff, and anti-sabotage units. Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) Chief Administrator Arabinda Padhee said that the entire inventory process is being carried out with strict adherence to the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) approved by the state government.

MARKET WATCH table with columns for CURRENCY, BOURSES, and COMMODITIES, showing values for DOLLAR, EURO, SENSEX, NIFTY, GOLD, and SILVER.

WEATHER section featuring a satellite image of Odisha and a table with Max Temp, Min Temp, Humidity, Rainfall, BBSR, CTC, and FORECAST.

Lesbianism, love triangle behind Jajpur murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur Town, April 13: Police have cracked the murder case of a youth, revealing that the killing was allegedly driven by a lesbian relationship and a love triangle, involving the wife of the deceased, a youth and another woman, officials said Monday.

The victim was identified as Soumya Sagar Samal, 23, of Kalimegha area in Jajpur town, and the main accused as Soumya's wife Subhashree Behera; Pritiprabha Priyadarshini, alias Chinu, and Subhashree's paramour Tapas Khilar. Two other notorious history-sheeters Suraj Singh and Ankit Thakur were also arrested and produced in court Monday.

Addressing a presser at at Town police station, Jajpur SP Yashpratap Shrimal said that four persons, including Subhashree, were initially arrested. Police also seized a firearm and a motorcycle used in the crime.

According to police, the murder took place April 6 night on the busy Kalimegha road, where Soumya was shot at close range by assailants who later fled the scene.

He was first admitted to Jajpur DHH and later shifted to a hospital in Cuttack, where he succumbed.

Soumya's brother-in-law, Om Prakash Behera, lodged a complaint at Jajpur Town police station April 7, following which police registered a case (142/26) and began an investigation.

Acting on the SP's direction, three police teams were formed



under the supervision of SDPO Prashant Kumar Majhi.

A team led by IIC Sarat Kumar Nayak, along with Additional IIC Bhuban Mohan Sethi, ASI Subas Chandra Muduli, SI Mahendra Kumar Sethi and woman constable Truptimayee Rout, conducted raids at multiple locations.

During investigation, police found that the murder was linked to a complex relationship involving same-sex and triangular romantic ties. The accused allegedly conspired to eliminate Soumya.

Police said Subhashree had married Soumya in a love marriage about one-and-a-half years ago. While Soumya hailed from Kuansarapur, the couple was living in a rented house near Kalimegha.

Investigators said Subhashree, who worked at a beauty parlour, developed a same-sex relationship with Pritiprabha of Mirzapur village under Jajpur Sadar police limits in 2020.

During her visits, she also developed a relationship with Pritiprabha's cousin, Tapas Khilar, leading to a love triangle. Tapas allegedly pressured her

to divorce her husband.

After Soumya learned about the relationships, a heated argument broke out between him and Tapas during Holi festival this year. Police said that following the incident, Tapas, Subhashree and Pritiprabha conspired to kill Soumya.

Pritiprabha provided ₹49,000 to Tapas to procure a firearm, said the police.

Tapas, who works as a driver in Rourkela, allegedly contacted Suraj and Ankit and procured the weapon. He later used it to shoot Soumya and fled to Rourkela the same night, police said.

They later disposed of the weapon in a drain behind Jajati Keshari Medical College and Hospital, the SP added.

"Tapas was in constant touch with Subhashree before the murder and received updates on Soumya's movements via mobile phone. Communication was carried out through WhatsApp calls," he added.

Pritiprabha was arrested from her residence in Mirzapur, while Tapas, along with the two alleged arms suppliers, was arrested from Rourkela.

Bridge over Kolab reservoir sparks concern

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nandapur, April 13: Serious concerns have been raised over alleged environmental damage to the Kolab reservoir during the construction of a bridge at Sindhiput in Koraput district.

According to a letter (No-1350) to the government authorities, Kolab Chief Engineer Karuna Sagar Behera said more than 50,000 cubic meters of soil have been dumped inside the reservoir to facilitate pillar construction for Sindhiput bridge. The project, undertaken by Roads and Buildings (R&B) department, aims to connect Nandapur and Lamtaput blocks.

The dumping of soil has split the reservoir into two parts, the engineer noted after a site inspection. A significant portion of the soil has already been washed into the water body, leading to siltation and a reduction in the reservoir's depth.

Behera warned that the project, if not addressed properly, could adversely affect both the reservoir's capacity and the local environment.

In his official communication, he wrote to the chief engineer of R&B, Koraput Division; Indravati Kolab chief engineer-cum-basin manager; and Koraput Collector. The letter alleged that the soil dumping



and embankment formation inside the reservoir were carried out without prior approval.

He urged authorities to take immediate steps to remove the deposited soil from within the reservoir to prevent further ecological damage.

When contacted, R&B Sub-Divisional Officer Sarat Patra said the soil dumped for centering work during construction of the bridge would be removed after the project is completed.

However, the assurance has failed to quell public resentment, with locals expressing concern over the environmental impact of the project. They alleged that similar lapses were observed earlier during

Kolab Chief Engineer warned that the project could adversely affect the reservoir's capacity and the local environment

how much has already been washed into the reservoir during monsoon flows."

Biswal warned that removing the deposited soil from the reservoir would be a costly exercise. He also urged authorities to conduct site inspections at Sindhiput, Suku and other construction sites across the district where work is underway over water bodies. He called for verification of whether royalty has been duly collected on the soil used in these projects.

Social worker and lawyer Anup Kumar Patra has also expressed concern over the alleged illegal construction within the reservoir.

In a letter to the Governor, Chief Minister, Chief Secretary, R&B Secretary, and the Koraput Collector and Sub-Collector, he sought a probe into the matter and urged authorities to take exemplary action against the construction agency.

Leopard skin seized; 5 held in Nabarangpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dabugaon, April 13: Dabugaon Forest Division officials in Nabarangpur district Monday seized a leopard skin and arrested five persons during a raid.

According to officials, the accused—suspected wildlife traffickers from the Moidalpur area—had procured the skin from Karlapat Wildlife Sanctuary in neighbouring Kalahandi district and were transporting it to Koraput. Acting on instructions from Divisional Forest Officer Shubhendu Prasad Behera, forest officials conducted an operation in Sikili Reserve Forest near Dabugaon and intercepted



a group attempting to traffic the skin. They seized the leopard skin and two motorcycles (OD 24P 2425 and OD 24P 6562) from them. Forest officials initially apprehended two persons, who were taken to Dabugaon forest office for questioning. Based on their interrogation, three more associates were later detained from Moidalpur. All five were subsequently arrested.

The arrested were identified

as Arjun Harijan, 30, of Bania village and Mihir Harijan, 25, of Pokhanaguda village under Nabarangpur police limits; and Shiba Kalar, 38, Kedarnath Bishoyi, 42, of Moidalpur, and Baichandra Mangali, 49, of Gopiguda village.

Dabugaon Forest Range office registered a case (1/2026-27).

The operation was carried out under the leadership of Assistant Conservator of Forests Dibyamadhuri Sethi, with the participation of Range OIC Ramchandra Bathra, Forester Madhusudan Patra, and forest guards Ankus Das, Kartik Majhi, Lalu Bishoi, Tapas Pattnaik, Rita Rani Biswasray, along with other forest staff.

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER
Tender No. BR-HQ-CHK-26-27-01, dated 10.04.2026. e-Tender is invited by General Manager (Engg.), S.E. Railway, Garden Reach, Kolkata-700043 for and on behalf of the President of India for the following works: **Description of the work :** "Bridge Zonal Works for maintaining and repairing of bridges including new addition & alteration in the jurisdiction of Sr. Section Engineer/BR/Sr. Siner Assistant Divisional Engineer-Br-Line/Chakradharpur in Chakradharpur Division period ending up to 30.09.2027 (For Period of Two Years i.e. from 01.10.2025 to 30.09.2027). (4th Call)"
Tender Value : ₹ 2,33,47,031.60. **Earnest Money :** ₹ 4,67,000/- **Tender Document Cost :** Nil. **Tender Closing Date & Time:** 04.05.2026, 11.30 hrs. **Period of Completion :** 24 (Twenty Four) Months. Interested Tenderer's may visit website www.irps.gov.in for full details/description of the tenders and to know the status of this tender so as to submit their bids online. Physical/manual tender for this work will not be accepted. (PR-40)

Raze illegal hotels in Bhitarkanika, DM urged



AGENCIES

Kendrapara, April 13: Forest officials have urged the Kendrapara Collector and District Magistrate (DM) to take immediate steps to demolish six illegal hotels operating inside Bhitarkanika National Park.

These hotels, reportedly violating Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) norms, are said to be causing significant harm to the park's fragile ecosystem.

Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Rajnagar Mangrove Forest and Wildlife Division Varadaraj Gaonkar sent an official letter to the Collector—who also chairs the District Coastal Zone Monitoring Committee (DCZMC)—requesting urgent legal action against the hotel owners.

The hotels in question, which have not received approval from either the DCZMC or the Forest department, are located within a protected area of the national park.

Sources revealed that the establishments are contributing to the degradation of coastal waters through pollution and

encroaching upon sensitive ecosystems. Gaonkar stated that once the district administration grants permission, the Forest department will proceed with an eviction and demolition drive to remove these illegal structures.

Under the CRZ Act, construction activities within 500 metres of the high tide line or in environmentally sensitive coastal zones are prohibited without proper legal clearance. Violations typically lead to the demolition of structures, fines, and legal repercussions for the developers.

"We will not tolerate encroachment on government and forest lands," said Gaonkar, stressing that strict legal action will be taken against any hotel owners who refuse to vacate.

The Forest department is also working on gathering detailed information about other encroachments within the park.

The crackdown is part of ongoing efforts to preserve the biodiversity of Bhitarkanika, one of India's most ecologically sensitive regions.

Jailhouse degree: Sabyasachi Panda earns MA in Sociology

Berhampur: Maoist leader Sabyasachi Panda, who is lodged in a prison in Berhampur, has cleared a Master's in Sociology from IGNOU, officials said Monday. While the Maoist leader had cleared the first year of the course in June last year, he appeared for the second year exam in December-January at a special centre set up in the circle jail. Panda cleared the exam, the results of which were recently published by the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), they said. Panda, along with another convict, had appeared for the second-year examinations. While Panda passed the exams, the other inmate cleared only three of the four papers, a prison official said. The Maoist leader had also enrolled in the MA (Public Administration) course under the Odisha State Open University (OSOU) last year. While he cleared some of the papers in the first-year exams, he will appear for the second-year exam along with the first-year back papers this time, he said. Panda had completed his graduation through correspondence from IGNOU in December 2022, while being lodged in jail. He was allegedly involved in over 130 Maoist-related cases in different districts and was arrested July 18, 2014. He was lodged in Berhampur circle jail here since then, the official said. While he was acquitted in several cases, a local court here sentenced him to undergo life imprisonment on the charge of waging war against the nation, he said. In jail, he has shown interest to pursue higher studies and enrolled in MA after completing his graduation in distance courses in two different universities. The IGNOU and OSOU have opened their centers in the circle jail, senior superintendent of the prison, DN Barik, said.

3 killed in separate mishaps



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 13: Three people were killed and more than a dozen sustained injuries in two separate mishaps in Jajpur and Ganjam districts late Sunday night.

In the first instance that occurred near Oupada under Korei police limits in Jajpur district, a private college bus carrying over 50 students was hit by a heavy vehicle.

One person, the driver of the heavy vehicle, died in the crash, while 15 others sustained injuries, some of them critical. Among the seriously injured were a teacher, the bus driver, and a student.

Locals, along with police personnel, launched rescue operations and rushed the injured to nearby medical fa-

cilities, including hospitals at Jajpur Road, the District Headquarters Hospital, and SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack.

Reports indicate that 11 injured were admitted to Jajpur Road hospital, while others were referred to different facilities for advanced treatment. Some students were discharged after receiving initial care.

Eyewitnesses stated that the accident occurred when the truck was allegedly travelling on the wrong side, colliding with the bus that was en route from Panikoili to Jajpur Road. Police from Panikoili and Jajpur Road have initiated an investigation into the incident.

In yet another incident, two persons were killed and three others critically injured in a head-on collision between two motorcycles near Podapokhari under Sorada police station in Ganjam district.

The injured were rushed to Berhampur Medical College and Hospital for treatment. According to reports, the victims were on their way to watch the Danda dance when the accident occurred.

NOTICE
 Notice is hereby given to the Policyholder(s) of the Company that our office at 2nd Floor, Plot No- 101, Unit-5, Infront of G.M College, Noorie Light New Building, Fatak Road, Sambalpur - 768004 will be shifted to 2nd Floor, Sai Sadan, Opp Max Mall, Budharaja Road, Sahayog Nagar, Ainthapali, Sambalpur - 768004 w.e.f 8th June 2026. For any assistance write to us on care@libertyinsurance.in or call us on our Toll-Free number 1800 266 5844 (between 8:00am to 8:00pm, 7 days of the week). All are requested to take note of the above information.
 Authorised Signatory
 Sd/-
Liberty General Insurance Limited
 Unit 1501&1502, 15th Floor, Tower 2,
 One International Center, Senapati Bapat Marg,
 Prabhadevi, Mumbai - 400013
 CIN U66000MH2010PLC209656 - IRDAR Reg. No. 150

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER BHUBANESWAR (R&B) DIVISION NO. III BHUBANESWAR
bbsrandb03@yahoo.com
 No.34001/54/2627
 60Estg. No. - 2675
 Government of Odisha "e"-Procurement Notice No (01) of 2026-27
 Bid Identification No : C.C. (R&B) 03
 Date - 10.04.2026

1 Name of the Work	Road Works
2 Total No. of works	2 Nos. work
3 Estimated Cost	i) Rs.42,71,000.00, ii) Rs.22,92,500.00
4 Class of Contractor	"C" & "B" Class Contractor
5 Period of Completion	1 (One) Calendar Month
6 Type of Tender	Single Cover System (Online)
7 Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal	From 15.04.2026 at 10.30 A.M. to 22.04.2026 at 2.00 P.M.
8 Last Date & Time for Receipt of bids in the Portal	22.04.2026, upto 2.00 P.M.
9 Name & Address of the Officer inviting Bid	Er.Narendra Kumar Ghadai, Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No. III, Bhubaneswar

 Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>
 N.B : Subsequent corrigendum / addendum if required shall be available in the website as indicated above.
 Sd./- Superintending Engineer
 BBSR (R&B) Division No. III,
 BBSR
 OIPR-34001/34185/1/26-27/0002

Form No. URC-2
 Advertisement giving notice about registration under Part I of Chapter XXI (Pursuant to section 374(b) of the companies Act, 2013 and rule 4(1) of the companies (Authorised to Register) Rules, 2014]
 1. Notice is hereby given that in pursuance of sub-section (2) of section 366 of the Companies Act, 2013, an application has been made to the Registrar at Central Registration Centre, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, Plot No. 6, 7, 8, Sector 5, IMT Manesar, Dist: Gurgaon, Haryana, India-122050 that M/s. SONU MONU ROADLINES, a partnership firm may be registered under Part I of Chapter XXI of the Companies Act 2013, as a company limited by shares.
 2. The principal objects of the company are as follows:
 To act as transporters, carriers, contractors, fleet owners, logistics service providers, freight forwarders, clearing and forwarding agents, warehouse keepers, packers and movers, handling contractors and to provide end-to-end logistics solutions including loading, unloading, handling, storage, distribution and allied services.
 3. A copy of the draft Memorandum and Articles of Association of the proposed company may be inspected at the firm's office at SH-10, Sandasingha, Sason Sambalpur, Odisha-768200.
 4. Notice is hereby given that any person objecting to this application may communicate their objection in writing to the Registrar at Central Registration Centre, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, Plot No. 6, 7, 8, Sector 5, IMT Manesar, Dist: Gurgaon, Haryana, India-122050, within twenty one days from the date of publication of this notice, with a copy to the company at its registered office.
1.Sonu Tulsian, Partner
2.Monu Tulsyan, Partner
3.Abhishek Tulsyan, Partner
Dated this 12th
Day of April, 2026

MAN KILLED IN LIGHTNING

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, April 13: A 39-year-old agricultural labourer died after being struck by lightning in Gajapati district Sunday afternoon, police said.

The deceased was identified as Abhimanyu Pariga of Labanyagada village under Garabandh police limits in Gosani block. Pariga had gone to the farmland but never returned till late night.

A search was launched by relatives and villagers, and his body was found lying near the farmland at around 10pm. Garabandh police reached the spot and initiated an investigation. The body was seized and sent to the DHH in Paralakhemundi for postmortem.

Stray dog saves 30 kids, dies fighting snake

POST NEWS NETWORK

Udala, April 13: In a rare display of loyalty and sacrifice, a stray dog named 'Kali' died after saving more than 30 children from a venomous snake at Dhirakula village under Udala block in Mayurbhanj district.

Villagers bid an emotional farewell to the animal, performing its last rites with full rituals usually reserved for humans.

Reports said over 30 kindergarten students of Sri Jagannath Sishu Vidya Mandir were sitting outside their school premises around 8:30am Monday when a poisonous snake approached them. 'Kali' noticed the danger and immediately sprang into action.



The dog confronted the snake before it could reach the children. A fierce struggle ensued between the two. While 'Kali' managed to kill the snake, it was bitten on the

mouth during the fight and later succumbed to the impact of the venom.

Villagers were grief-stricken after news of Kali's death spread. Recognizing its sac-

rific, they organised a ceremonial funeral. The carcass was placed on a trolley, covered with flowers and a white cloth, and taken in a procession around the village before being buried.

Villagers said the dog was dearly loved by everyone and its sacrifice would be remembered forever. "Kali saved the lives of our children and will remain immortal in our hearts," they said.

The last rites were conducted under the supervision of Ramesh Chandra Prusti, with assistance from several villagers, including Bhagirath Sahu, Dardana Prusti, Kamalakanta Hati, Sarbeswar Hati, Himanshu Hati, Krishna Das, Baidhar Singh and Pramod Sahu.

FOCUS CURRENCY

THE DOLLAR DOMINANCE



The Chinese renminbi currently constitutes less than 2% of global foreign-exchange reserves, and the Brazilian real and Indian rupee account for even less

risk, making it a crucial “safe haven” during geopolitical crises. Though reserve currencies are more liquid and may earn interest, expanding gold holdings makes sense strategically.

This process is already underway: since 2008, central banks, including in the Global South, have been consistent net buyers of gold. China has increased its gold holdings from 600 tons in 2008 to 2,306 tons last year, India from 358 to 880 tons, and Brazil from 34 to 172 tons. Nonetheless, as of last year, gold still constituted a small share of these countries’ reserves—7.2% in Brazil, 8.5% in China, and 16% in India.

Bilateral currency-swap agreements are another good option. Such arrangements act like a financial safety net, protecting against unexpected sudden stops and surges in capital outflows, and reducing a country’s need to accumulate massive foreign-exchange reserves. But very few developing economies currently have them.

Finally, countries in the Global South should work to develop regional payment systems, which would enable them to bypass dollar channels and the SWIFT system for cross-border transactions. This is another area where efforts are already underway, with China’s CIPS (Cross-border Interbank Payment System) as one example.

While the US dollar will not retain its preeminent status forever, countries in the Global South cannot afford to wait out its dominance. With a strategic approach, they can reduce their dependence on the dollar, thereby mitigating the associated risks and fostering a more balanced and resilient global financial landscape.

The writer is a senior fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

The US dollar’s share in global foreign reserves peaked in 2001, and has been declining ever since. But while this trend is likely to continue, it is progressing very slowly, meaning that the greenback will retain its relative dominance—and the Global South will continue to suffer the consequences of US policy—for years to come.

There is currently no easy alternative to the dollar. For a currency to attain reserve status, it generally must be freely convertible, with a market-determined exchange rate. Moreover, the issuing country would typically possess a large economy, extensive international trade ties, deep and liquid financial markets, and stable macroeconomic conditions and policies.

That reserve-issuing country should also be willing to run consistent fiscal and current-account deficits, in order to deliver sufficient liquidity, even as ever-expanding twin deficits risk undermining confidence in its economy (the so-called Triffin dilemma). On all these counts, the US still performs exceptionally well.

But dependence on a dollar-based system carries significant risks for countries in the Global South. Highly exposed to shocks originating in the US, these countries often have to align their monetary policies with America’s, in order to maintain currency stability and manage dollar-denominated debts.

Moreover, when the dollar appreciates, dollar-denominated imports, such as oil, become more expensive, driving up inflation and complicating macroeconomic management. If sanctions are imposed on the dollar-denominated international payment system, developing economies’ ability to engage in cross-border trade and finance is impeded. Finally, the US dollar’s dominance hampers the growth

of deep and liquid capital markets for developing economies’ currencies internationally.

Diversification away from the dollar is thus a strategic imperative for many countries. The question is how to go about it. Given that the dollar’s preeminence stems largely from its use in international transactions, one obvious action would be to promote the use of local currencies in international trade, such as through bilateral trade agreements.

Many developing and emerging economies are already doing this, especially when it comes to energy. India has begun rupee-based trade settlement with Iran, Russia, and the United Arab Emirates. China and Saudi Arabia are moving toward similar arrangements. Argentina and Brazil have begun to discuss establishing a common currency, which could go a long way toward advancing the shift away from the dollar, though it would have to be expanded to include all major trading partners in the Global South.

Central bank digital currencies are expected to bolster such efforts. The Reserve Bank of India has reportedly proposed putting CBDC interoperability on the agenda for this year’s BRICS summit. If successfully

implemented, the interconnection of digital currencies, along with increased local-currency trade, could significantly reduce foreign-debt burdens, lower cross-border trade costs, and make imports more affordable.

Meanwhile, major emerging economies like Brazil, China, and India should work to expand their currencies’ share of international reserves. They have a long way to go: the Chinese renminbi currently constitutes less than 2% of global foreign-exchange reserves, and the Brazilian real and Indian rupee account for even less.

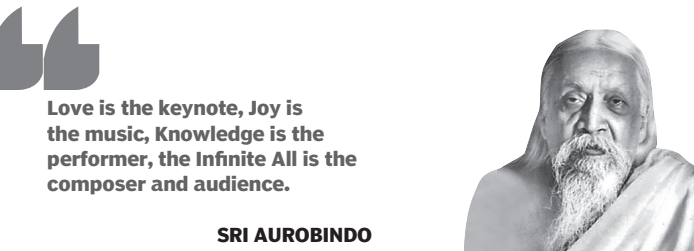
But a few key steps—in particular, opening capital accounts further and developing deeper and more liquid financial markets—could go a long way toward accelerating progress. The inclusion of these currencies in global bond indices would also boost their international appeal and utility as reserve assets.

A third step that developing countries should take to reduce their exposure to the US dollar is to increase their holdings of gold. Whereas reserve currencies are exposed to macroeconomic policy risks, inflationary pressures, and geopolitical instability, gold provides a reliable hedge against external inflation and currency devaluation, and carries no credit



Janak Raj

WHILE THE US DOLLAR WILL NOT RETAIN ITS PREEMINENT STATUS FOREVER, COUNTRIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH CANNOT AFFORD TO WAIT OUT ITS DOMINANCE



Love is the keynote, Joy is the music, Knowledge is the performer, the Infinite All is the composer and audience.

SRI AUROBINDO

Hungary’s Full Circle

The landslide victory of Hungary’s opposition Tisza party, led by Peter Magyar April 12, bringing an end to Prime Minister Viktor Orban’s 16-year grip on power is a major blow to Far-Right politics across Europe. Orban had, over the years, become a poster boy of all the ills that his brand of extreme politics represented. It is jolt for US President Donald Trump whom Orban was beholden to while, at the same time trying to get close to Russia’s Vladimir Putin. During the election campaign, Trump even directly asked Hungarians, in a dramatic phone call made by Vice President JD Vance in Budapest at a rally, to vote for Orban and he promised to pump in huge capital for the country. The election results have come at a crucial time and the country’s relationship with the EU is going to be reset.

With 98.74% of the votes counted, Magyar’s Tisza party was projected to have won 138 of the 199 seats in the country’s Parliament, giving them a super-majority capable of amending the constitution and key laws. This will enable Tisza to reverse some of the changes made by Orban and his party Fidesz which won 55 seats, while the extreme-right Mi Hazank party won six.

The results were only expected as Hungarians appeared to have been fed up with the extremist policies of Orban that led to unbridled corruption, ruthless suppression of free speech and appointment of judges to ratify Orban’s policies whenever they were legally challenged. These are all elements of typical Far-Right politics with an unmistakable Trumpian stamp. The popular discontent first arose from inflation of more than 40% since 2022 and a sluggish economy, hit both by the suspension of 18 billion in European Union funds and by endemic corruption that scared off foreign investors and discouraged Hungarian entrepreneurship. Having already lost the support of liberal voters in Budapest, Orban had also alienated small business owners and middle-class professionals, who long formed the core of the electorate for Fidesz. Many would be able to observe similarities of the Hungarian situation with the current Indian economic picture. Foreign investors are fleeing India on a daily basis.

When he realised there had been erosion of his main vote bank, Orban resorted to a policy of overtly supporting Russia making Ukraine and its President Volodymyr Zelensky Hungary’s main adversaries. Hungarians mostly were not supportive of Kyiv. However, they do not, at the same time, believe that Ukraine poses any serious threat to their country. This is contrary to the narrative pushed throughout the campaign by the government’s propaganda machine. Thus Orban’s war cry for this election went unheeded.

The youth of the country were particularly disenchanted with Orban’s brand of politics, especially since, unlike Orban, they have no wish to leave the European Union. On the other hand, Magyar pledged to repair Hungary’s strained relationship with the EU, crack down on corruption and funnel funds towards long-neglected public services. This tilted the balance overwhelmingly in his favour. He hailed the victory with the jubilant cry - “My fellow Hungarians, we have done it!” - as he thanked tens of thousands of supporters who had gathered along the banks of the Danube river to celebrate. This marked the fall of another strong Rightist leader.

The election was being closely watched around the world as a test of the resilience of the global Far-Right, many of whom have looked upon Orban as their role model. Trump had repeatedly endorsed Orban. In recent months, Orban got support from rightwing and Far-Right leaders ranging from France’s Marine Le Pen to Italy’s Giorgia Meloni and Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu. However, realizing the significance of Orban’s defeat Meloni promptly congratulated Magyar. In fact, leaders from across Europe hailed the result, with Keir Starmer describing it on social media as a “historic moment, not only for Hungary, but for European democracy”.

The development in Hungary sends out the message loud and clear that Far-Right politics experimented in the country for long 16 years could not solve people’s problems, including livelihood, health and education. It also shows the Far Right is now on back foot. The divisive and polarization politics creates more problems than solves despite manipulation of media, the judiciary and use of muscle power. The same ills are plaguing many countries, including India, and now Hungary has shown where the world is headed. The wheel, it seems, has taken a complete turn.

WISDOM CORNER

You do not need to leave your room. Remain sitting at your table and listen. Do not even listen, simply wait, be quiet still and solitary. The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked, it has no choice, it will roll in ecstasy at your feet.

FRANZ KAFKA

A dreamer is one who can only find his way by moonlight, and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world.

OSCAR WILDE

Your entire life only happens in this moment. The present moment is life itself. Yet, people live as if the opposite were true and treat the present moment as a stepping stone to the next moment - a means to an end.

ECKHART TOLLE

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1471: The deposed and exiled king of England, Edward IV, defeated King Henry VI’s forces at the Battle of Barnet, near London, enabling him to retake the throne.

1828: Noah Webster published An American Dictionary of the English Language; based on the principle that word usage should evolve from the spoken language, the work was hugely influential, though it was initially attacked for its “Americanism.”

1865: US President Abraham Lincoln is shot. The assassin, John Wilkes Booth, wanted to revive the Confederate cause, mere days after their surrender to the Union Army, bringing the American Civil War to an end. Lincoln died the next day.

1866: Anne Sullivan Macy, Helen Keller’s teacher, was born near Springfield, Massachusetts.

1912: Doomed passenger liner RMS Titanic hits an iceberg in the North Atlantic. The subsequent sinking of the world’s largest ocean liner of the time resulted in more than 1500 deaths. It was one of the worst peacetime maritime disasters in history.

1939: American author John Steinbeck’s classic The Grapes of Wrath—which was set during the Great Depression and traces the migration of an Oklahoma Dust Bowl family to California and their subsequent hardships as migrant farmworkers—was published.

1986: A force of US warplanes based in Britain bombed several sites in Libya, killing or wounding several of Muammar al-Qaddafi’s children and narrowly missing Qaddafi himself.

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

The politics of cowardice

In society, the insidious politics of crony capitalism is accelerating at an unprecedented pace, supported by the reckless growth of AI and other technologies designed to dominate, domesticate, and dehumanise people and their societies. Alongside this, an illiberal politics of cowardice is emerging to aid this broader project of dehumanisation, amid growing imperialist wars and conflicts across the world. The push-button culture of digitally displayed keyboards is shaping social media networks into a disconnected, individualised, Hobbesian society, where the puritan pursuit of self-interest is becoming central to human existence.

In such a condition, the hollowness of social life and the alienation of individuals are normalised as merely personal problems, disconnected from their social, cultural, religious, economic, and political roots—roots fundamentally shaped by capitalism—where performance replaces creativity. Civic space erodes under the politics of cowardice, where secular and scientific convictions are treated as weaknesses, while the monetisation of time, a culture of performance, and exploitative profit-making compliances are celebrated as success.

In politics, moral and ideological convictions are increas-

ingly replaced by a merely project-driven approach, where propaganda-oriented policymaking undermines social, political, economic, and cultural transformation along a progressive path toward liberty, equality, and justice. Idealistic opposition to war, exploitation, inequality, and injustice is branded as hollow utopianism—the pacifism of the weak. Politics is no longer a tool of social and political change but a project of powerful. Politics that breeds conflicts and wars to serve ruling-class interests is reframed as nationalism, where risks are socialised while the safety of life and property of the governing class is secured.

The politics of cowardice produces authoritarian leadership devoid of reason and accountability. It abdicates responsibility, avoids challenges, ignores facts, and governs through fear—the fear of the “other.” “Othering” becomes a central weapon of reactionary forces, enabling them to sustain power while producing and reproducing inequality and exploitation in various forms. It divides people in the name of caste, race, class, gender, sexuality and nationalism to sustain the exploitative system.

In culture, consumerism absorbs the exploitative system and takes over the material, social, and spiritual interactions of people, where moral outrage

is replaced by a culture of pragmatism in which “all forms of compromise” are branded as the best “survival skills.” Collective cultures are dismantled or replaced by an insidious individualism, where the consumption of everyday “utility, pleasure, and satisfaction” shapes individual actions in pursuit of a supercilious form of self-actualisation—resembling a quasi-religious logic of emancipation after death.

In religions, individuals learn to institutionalise their spiritual practices, reducing them to customs and traditions that often serve to assert the supremacy of one over another. All institutionalised religions—and their agents and agencies—frequently act as intermediaries for governing classes, reinforcing capitalism as a system.

All social, political, economic, cultural, religious, and legal institutions—and their practices—are designed in ways that discipline labour, as well as the processes of production, consumption, and distribution. Families, states, governments, and society—through their institutions, traditions, customs, and practices—condition individuals in pursuit of goals not necessarily aligned with their own passions or interests. Therefore, individuals are, to a significant extent, products of

their society and upbringing. Breaking out of such systemic processes is a difficult choice, requiring radical consciousness and a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of human lives and experiences.

All these forces shape individual lives in such a way that individuals end up merely working all life for basic survival, while also being blamed for the many evils of contemporary society. In reality, individuals are trapped within patriarchal, feudal, and capitalist structures and processes of power controlled by governing classes. From the idealisation of pragmatism to the culture of performance, these systems are designed to domesticate individuals and undermine the collective foundations of their lives and survival. Therefore, it is imperative to break away from such constructed systems and processes, which exist to discipline and domesticate individual lives in the service of capitalism in all its forms. Capitalism produces cowardice and kills ideals of all human values and their collective foundations. It is time to reclaim the collective foundations of individual freedom—so that people can truly pursue their own dreams, desires, and lives.

The writer teaches at the London Metropolitan University.



Bhabani Shankar Nayak

POLITICS IS NO LONGER A TOOL OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE BUT A PROJECT OF POWERFUL

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Police brutality

Sir, While condemning the ten police criminals found guilty of using extreme brutality and torture that led to the death of the father-son duo, Jayaraj and Bentic in police custody in Sathankulam, the honourable judge of the Special Sessions Court, Madurai has rightly termed it as one of the rarest of rare cases of extreme cruelty and brutality exhibited by all the ten policemen, which shook the conscience of the entire nation. While the verdict has been acknowledged by the people as the right one, one only wonders whether the higher courts should consider any appeal to be made by the condemned against the punishment and ultimately the President should entertain their clemency petition at all. Though generally death penalty is not a welcome one, considering the heinous and brutal manner in which the ten policemen who are expected to be the saviours of the people, have done to death two innocent persons under custody, have lost all moral rights to live on Mother Earth. Their execution should serve as an eye opener to all policemen who barge on people under custody like wild animals, use third degree methods on them and finally murder them in cold blood.

Tharcus S. Fernando, CHENNAI

Maternal mortality

Sir, Notwithstanding the fast pace of development of healthcare and infrastructure in India, maternal mortality rate (MMR) remains a cause for concern though over the years there has been a welcome drop in the maternal deaths. Death of mothers during and after pregnancy, and within six weeks of delivery constitutes maternal mortality. The number of maternal deaths in a given period per 1,00,000 live births during the same period is defined as MMR. Where institutional childbirth is still a mirage, it is appropriate to set proactive safety measures in right earnest. Mindsets of elders and mothers should shift for the better because many households are opting for home deliveries notwithstanding access to health institutes. It should not be hard for a woman to undergo the four mandated ante-natal (before birth or during pregnancy) checkups.

Ganapathi Bhat., AKOLA

4 Murshidabad men to vote to prove identity after B'desh pushback

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Murshidabad (WB), April 13: For years, elections for Minarul Sheikh were about the familiar litany of roads, jobs, ration and the hope that something might change.

This time, standing outside his mud-walled house at Beldanga in West Bengal's Murshidabad district, with a plastic folder containing documents tucked under his arm, the 34-year-old said he would walk to the polling booth not merely to vote, but to take back what was "snatched" from him - the right to belong.

"Last year, they threw me into another country, saying I was not Indian. This vote is my answer," Sheikh said, clutching

the voter slip that he got back after eight months, four hearings and repeated visits to the block office.

Minarul is among four migrant workers from Murshidabad, who were picked up in Maharashtra in June last year, branded Bangladeshis, pushed across the border and briefly lodged in Bangladesh before being brought back after the West Bengal Police established their citizenship.

Officials earlier said six migrants from the district were pushed back to Bangladesh, but the migrant labour board corrected it to four and said the remaining two were assaulted and sent back.

Six men had travelled to Maharashtra for work and re-

Across the riverine belt of Murshidabad, where migration to states in north and south India is common, the story of the six men has travelled from tea stalls to mosque courtyards

In several villages, residents say they now check the electoral rolls more carefully than before, and are fearful that a missing name can become the first step towards being marked as an outsider

turned carrying not only trauma but also a new fear -- that even after coming home, they would have to prove they belonged to the country.

This anxiety is sharper in Muslim-majority Murshidabad, where the TMC had swept most of the district's 22 seats in 2021. According to the revised electoral rolls, 7.48 lakh names have been deleted from the district, triggering apprehension across villages where many migrant families fear that they would

be treated as outsiders.

Mahboob said when he went to check the draft electoral roll in January, his name was there, but the name of one of his family members had disappeared.

"We stood in line three times. They asked for Aadhaar, voter card, land paper, everything. We submitted all papers. If we had all this, why were we called Bangladeshis in the first place?" he said.

Nazimuddin Mondal of Hari-

harpara still keeps the 300 Bangladeshi Taka that was given to him before being pushed across the border.

Nazimuddin said his name made it to the voters' list after repeated hearings, but that of his younger brother has still not been restored. Shamim Khan, another of the four, said the polls have left him angrier than excited.

Nizamuddin Sheikh, who spent two days in a Bangladeshi detention camp before returning, said he has stopped going outside Bengal for work.

Another worker, Jamaluddin Sk, who was allegedly assaulted in Maharashtra after being accused of being a Bangladeshi infiltrator and sent back home, said he had voted in every elec-

tion since turning 18, but this will be the first time he will enter the booth carrying all his documents in a plastic folder.

The issue has entered the campaign in Murshidabad, where political parties are trying to turn the men's ordeal into competing narratives.

Senior TMC leader and MP Abu Taher alleged that the incident showed how "BJP governments treat Bengali-speaking Muslims as suspects".

Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said the case exposed "the collapse of institutions".

The BJP rejected the charge, saying infiltration remains a major concern in Bengal and that no genuine citizen would be harassed.

IIT Kharagpur rolls out AI, ML executive courses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 13: Indian Institute of Technology-Kharagpur has launched a series of online executive certification programmes in artificial intelligence, machine learning (ML) and technology leadership, the institute said in a statement Monday.

The programmes are designed to equip working professionals with end-to-end, production-ready AI capabilities, it said.

These include the Executive Post Graduate Certificate in Generative AI & Agentic AI and Executive Post Graduate Certificate in AI-Native Software Engineering, both offered by the Department of Computer Science and Engineering.

The certifications draw insights from real workforce needs and target engineers and technology professionals seeking practical, job-relevant skills, the statement said.

The programmes are delivered entirely through live online classes by IIT-Kharagpur faculty, expanding access to the institute's AI-led technology curriculum. Commenting on the launch, IIT-Kharagpur Director Prof Suman Chakraborty said "innovations are happening at an unmatched pace, and the scale at which fields like artificial intelligence are advancing require us to reach experienced professionals beyond the physical campus."

"It is designed for practitioners who seek true capability, not just exposure, and who want to take AI systems all the way from idea to dependable deployment," he said.

BENGAL'S 65-SEAT FAULTLINE

SIR deletions, tight margins may decide who forms govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 13: West Bengal's 2026 election may be decided not by the arithmetic of 294 seats that dominate campaign speeches, but by around 65-70 constituencies where victory and defeat are separated by little more than a few booths and where the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has suddenly redrawn the battlefield.

Crucial among those are seats such as Nandigram to Bhabanipur, and regions like the Matua belt of North 24 Parganas and the minority-heavy stretches of Murshidabad and Malda, where the Assembly-wise lead in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls was often no more than 8,000 to 15,000 votes. Several MLAs had scraped through in 2021 in these areas by less than 1,000-8,000 votes, and now, thousands of names have disappeared from the rolls.

This is why, beneath Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's claim that the TMC will return with a bigger mandate than the 215 seats it won in 2021, and Union Home Minister Amit Shah's assertion that the BJP will cross 170 seats from its present tally of 77, both parties are quietly fighting a grimmer battle -- one booth, one deleted voter and one marginal constituency at a time.

More than 90.83 lakh names have been deleted across West Bengal till April 7, nearly 11.85 per cent of the electorate identified last October. Of those, 27.16 lakh deletions came from the "under adjudication" category alone. The epicentre lies in nearly 70 seats across 11 districts. Twenty-five are in Kolkata and the adjoining belt of North 24 Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly. The rest are in Murshidabad, Malda, Bankura, Purulia, the two Bardhamans and the two Medinipur.



North 24 Parganas alone has 13 such closely fought seats, Murshidabad 10, Bankura-Purulia nine, Howrah-Hooghly eight and the twin Medinipur and Bardhamans another eight.

The 2021 election showed how narrow the divide had become. Of the 57 seats decided by 8,000 votes or less, the TMC won 29 and the BJP 28. In the 19 seats where the margin was below 3,000, the BJP won 12 and the TMC seven.

Kulti in Paschim Bardhaman was won by the BJP by just 679 votes. Dantan by 623, Ghatal by 966, Bankura by 1,468, and Nandigram, where Suwendu Adhikari defeated Mamata Banerjee, by 1,956.

Kulti has seen around 38,000 names deleted -- more than 50 times the victory margin. Nandigram -- the BJP's most symbolic victory and the constituency that turned Adhikari

into the saffron camp's key leader -- has witnessed 14,462 deletions, more than seven times the margin by which Banerjee lost there. In North 24 Parganas and Nadia, where the BJP has tried to build a Hindu refugee-Matua coalition around the citizenship issue, the mismatch between margins and deletions is even starker.

Bongaon South, which the BJP won by around 2,000 votes, has seen nearly 7,000 names deleted. Kalyani, another BJP-held seat won by roughly 2,000 votes, witnessed around 9,000 deletions.

In North 24 Parganas, more than 55 per cent of the names kept under scrutiny were eventually deleted. In Nadia, the figure was nearly 78 per cent.

'Dil' song used in ECI poll peace campaign

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, April 13: A popular Bollywood number featuring superstars Aamir Khan and Madhuri Dixit has become the tool of the Election Commission of India (ECI) to spread the message of the Commission's determination to ensure free and fair and violence-free elections in the forthcoming two-phase polls in the state.

The song is "Hum Pyar Karne Wale Duniya Se Na Darne Wale" (We the lovebirds will not be scared of the world) from the movie 'Dil', which was released nationally in June 1990 and featured Aamir Khan, Madhuri Dixit, Anupam Kher, and Saed Jaffrey, among others, in the lead roles.

The district electoral officer

(DEO) of the electoral district of Kolkata (South) has uploaded this song on X. The message is loud and clear -- just as the love birds are not scared of this world and the society, the Commission is also not bothered about the criticisms it faces in the course of achieving its mission to ensure free, fair and violence-free polls in West Bengal this time.

In the message attached with the video, the DEO of Kolkata (South) has also advised anti-social elements to be ready with "ointments to apply on the itching and burning sensations because of the counteractions by the security forces to prevent any attempt to disrupt the peaceful polling process".



BENGAL ELECTIONS

"All our mothers, uncles, sisters, and brothers are invited to vote freely without any fear, even if some people get angry and burn in heat. Intimidators, hooligans, history sheeters, and lumps beware, keep sufficient stocks of Burnol and Boroline with you, else the heat will be so severe that you will burn from inside and remember it for a lifetime. We are here for all our dear

Delhi waste crisis continues; MCD expands processing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 13: Delhi's three towering landfill sites continue to loom large over the city's waste management challenge, with fresh data showing that biomining and legacy waste clearance remain work in progress, even as thousands of tonnes are handled daily.

According to officials, at Okhla, about 23.04 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste (accumulated, long-term municipal solid waste stored in dumpsites or landfills for years) remained as of December-end, with an additional 3.34 lakh metric tonnes of fresh waste, taking the total to 26.38 lakh metric tonnes. The Bhalswa landfill site poses a steeper challenge, with 36.52 lakh metric tonnes of legacy waste and 11.45 lakh metric tonnes of fresh accumulation, bringing its total burden to 47.97 lakh metric tonnes. Ghazipur, long seen as one of the city's most visible garbage mountains, continues to carry the heaviest load at 77.29 lakh metric tonnes, according to the officials.

Delhi generates over 14,000 tonnes of municipal solid waste every day, underlining the scale of the capital's daily sanitation challenge even as processing capacities remain higher on paper.



Sannyasis ahead of the rituals for the Gajan festival at Sonapalashi Buro Shiv Tala, in Purba Bardhaman district, West Bengal. The festival, dedicated to Lord Shiva and observed on the last day of the Bengali year, involves devotees performing rigorous penance and traditional rituals

Delhi transforms Anganwadis into creative care spaces

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 13: As their footsteps cross the threshold of a newly transformed anganwadi, children are greeted by a burst of colour and playful dolphins dancing across walls, bright carpets inviting them to sit and play and shelves filled with toys designed to spark young minds.

As the Delhi government has begun upgrading anganwadi centres into 'Samarth Anganwadis', the basic care centre is now being reimagined as a vibrant, child-friendly space where learning begins with curiosity and joy.

The upgradation focuses on modern facilities with the introduction of parent-teacher meetings to strengthen early childhood care and family engagement.

Authorities aim to merge centres into schools and government buildings so that children can be easily transferred



to regular schools.

An official told PTI that 611 centres have been identified for the upgrade, of which 509 are currently operational, catering

to around 5,000 children. The remaining centres are expected to be refurbished in phases during the current year.

"The idea is to ensure that

- Under the revamp, the centres are being equipped with 11 categories of new items, including brain stimulation toys, napping mattresses, cradles and indoor games
- Improved furniture and learning materials are also being provided through a centralised procurement process
- The move is part of a broader plan to improve service delivery by rationalising the city's over 10,000 anganwadis, many of which currently operate from school or DUSIB premises

children receive quality care in a well-equipped and child-friendly environment. By merging nearby centres and investing in infrastructure, we are aiming for better utilisation of resources," a senior official in the Women and Child Development Department said.

Last year, ₹206 crore was allocated to redevelop 1,000 anganwadi centres into modern centres. The official said the re-designed anganwadis are being

visually enhanced with colourful themes, including cartoon characters such as dolphins and popular animated figures, along with bright carpets and play-friendly interiors to create an engaging environment for children.

A key feature of the upgraded centres will be the introduction of regular parent-teacher meetings, aimed at improving communication between caregivers and families and ensuring better monitoring of children's progress. The rationalisation exercise also seeks to address the issue of fragmented funding. With multiple anganwadis operating within the same locality, resources were often spread thin, affecting the quality of services. The consolidation is expected to streamline operations and enhance overall efficiency.

The government said the initiative is part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen grassroots-level child welfare services in the national capital.

Cops launch community traffic initiative

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 13: Thousands of e-challans, towing and clamping drives and on-ground traffic improvements have been carried out across parts of Delhi under a new citizen-centric initiative.

The action followed the launch of Project 'SANGAM' (Synergistic Action and Networked Governance for Area Mobility) by the Delhi Traffic Police earlier this month to address local traffic issues through community participation, according to a statement.

The initiative was rolled out following directions by Lieutenant Governor Taranjit Singh Sandhu April 2, who had emphasised the need for involving Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) and Market Welfare Associations (MWAs) in finding area-specific solutions, it stated.

It said that since April 3, around 30 meetings involving over 6,000 residents have been



held in areas such as Connaught Place, Khan Market, Chanakypuri, Defence Colony, South Extension, Rajouri Garden, Saket and Karol Bagh. "More than 50 suggestions were received during these interactions on issues including unauthorised parking, e-rickshaw management, wrong-side driving, encroachments, signal timing and pedestrian safety," it read.

Based on these inputs, enforcement action was intensified with the issuance of e-challans and towing and clamping of vehicles. Infrastructure-related measures such as signal timing adjustments and coordination with civic agencies, including MCD and PWD, were also undertaken, the statement stated.



Large sections of marginalised communities, including Matuas, Namashudras and other backward class voters, were disproportionately affected by the SIR, despite possessing valid documents. BJP means detention, and TMC means no tension

ABHISHEK BANERJEE | TMC LEADER

SC REFUSES TO QUASH CBI FIR, CHARGESHEET AGAINST LALU

In a setback to Lalu Prasad Yadav, the Supreme Court Monday refused to quash a CBI FIR in the land-for-jobs case involving the RJD chief and his family members. A bench of Justices M M Sundresh and N Kotiswar Singh, however, granted exemption to the 77-year-old former Bihar chief minister from appearance before the trial court during the proceedings



of the day quote

The Opposition alleges that there is no money for development works, that the treasury has been emptied due to guarantee schemes, and that development has come to a standstill. However, our government has ensured development alongside the implementation of guarantees



SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

As long as our country exists, the world will be fine because if the world is the body, then India is its soul



MOHAN BHAGWAT | RSS CHIEF

Today, coal adequate for 90 days, either with thermal power plants or at pitheads where mining takes place, is there. Earlier, we used to have coal adequate for only 21 to 25 days. But, today, more than 200 million tonne of coal adequate for 90 days is there with us



G KISHAN REDDY | UNION COAL & MINES MINISTER

Protest over wage hike turns violent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Noida/New Delhi, April 13: Vehicles, including police SUVs, were torched, public property vandalised, and stone-pelting reported from industrial hubs in Noida on Monday as protests by factory workers demanding a wage hike turned violent, paralysing traffic.

The Uttar Pradesh Police used mild force to disperse the agitators and later registered FIRs against two X handles, charging them with spreading rumours linked to the unrest. The state government also formed a special panel to address the crisis.

Violence was first reported in afternoon, with sporadic stone-pelting and vandalism continuing till 5 pm. No major incidents of arson or violence were reported thereafter, officials said.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath assured support to the worker community and said Uttar Pradesh was progressing steadily, but "some people were conspiring to obstruct its growth". His remarks drew sharp criticism from Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, who flagged an intelligence failure and said the CM should step down if unable to handle the state. The unrest, which began in the morning, left thousands of commuters stranded on key routes leading to Delhi during peak hours. Long queues of vehicles stretching several kilometres were reported at the Delhi-Noida border, with major congestion at Sector 62, National Highway-24, Sector 63 and the Chilla border. Protesters blocked key routes, including stretches connecting Sector 62 to Sector 16 and NH-9. Officials said a large number of workers from industrial units in Phase-2 and Sector 60 gathered to press for long-pending wage revision demands and raised slogans.



Factory workers in Noida protested demanding a hike in wages, leading to violent clashes

The protests involved arson, vandalism, and stone-pelting in Phase-2 and Sector 60 areas of Noida

Vehicles and property were damaged, causing traffic congestion and public inconvenience

Police have deployed forces to control the situation and are working to restore normalcy

Authorities are appealing to the public to avoid spreading or believing rumours

Similar protests were reported from Sector 62 and Sector 84, including at a Motherson company unit. NH-9, a key link between Delhi and western Uttar Pradesh, was also blocked.

The protests soon escalated, with some protesters torching vehicles, vandalising property and pelting stones. Officials said workers had been mobilising support for their demands on a wage hike and better working conditions in factories over the last two days. However, it was not clear what sparked the violence during the protest. Heavy deployment was rushed to affected areas, while senior administrative and police officials

remained on the ground to monitor the situation. The protests triggered widespread traffic snarls across Noida and Greater Noida. Traffic police said diversions were put in place and movement was gradually being restored at key points, including the Chilla border and the Noida-Greater Noida Expressway. A woman worker alleged irregularities in wage payments, saying workers are often made to sign for double shifts while being paid for a single duty.

Another woman protester said, "Everything is becoming expensive, but our salaries remain around Rs 11,000-12,000. They should be increased to at least Rs 20,000-25,000."

The violence came a day after the state government announced measures to strengthen labour welfare, including mandatory double overtime

RS to elect its dy chairman Apr 17



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 13: The Rajya Sabha will hold the election for the post of deputy chairman April 17, and the ruling NDA is likely to push for re-electing Harivansh to the key post.

The post of the deputy chairman of the Rajya Sabha fell vacant after the tenure of Harivansh ended April 9. Harivansh has since been nominated to the Upper House by President Droupadi Murmu and took oath April 10.

Union minister and BJP leader J P Nadda, who is also leader of the house in Rajya Sabha, is learnt to have discussed the re-election of Harivansh as deputy chairman with leaders of various parties, while trying to bring about a broad consensus on his name. However, the Congress, TMC and Left parties have raised objections to the "keenness" the ruling party is showing in holding elections for filling the post of deputy chairman of the Upper House, when the post of deputy speaker in Lok Sabha has been vacant since 2019.

An official announcement said that the election for the post of deputy chairman will be held April 17 at 11 AM. "The office of the Deputy Chairman

J P Nadda is learnt to have discussed the re-election of Harivansh as deputy chairman with leaders of various parties, while trying to bring about a broad consensus on his name

of the Rajya Sabha having fallen vacant. The Chairman has, under rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States (Rajya Sabha), fixed Friday, the 17 of April, 2026, as the date for holding the election to the said office of the Deputy Chairman."

Members can give notices of motions for election to the office of deputy chairman up to 12 noon Thursday, April 16, 2026. Those members who have yet to take oath as members of the Rajya Sabha will also take their oath/affirmation Thursday, April 16, when the upper house meets for a special session, during which the amendments to the Women's Reservation Act will be taken up.

SHORT TAKES

Apex court grants bail to Anosh Ekka

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Monday suspended the seven-year imprisonment awarded to former Jharkhand minister Anosh Ekka and granted him bail in an alleged land acquisition case involving violation of Chota Nagpur Tenancy (CNT) Act. The top court, however, asked him to provide a formal undertaking to assist in the restoration of tribal lands to their original status. The apex court was hearing Ekka's appeal against the Jharkhand High Court's December 2025 order, which dismissed his challenge to a trial court's verdict of sentence, saying that prima facie no case for suspension of sentence was made out.

Hajipur, Kishanganj courts get bomb threats

Hajipur/Kishanganj (Bihar): Hajipur and Kishanganj civil courts Monday received bomb threats through email, which later turned out to be hoax, officials said. Talking to PTI, Hajipur Sadar SDPO Subodh Kumar said, "Officials at the Hajipur civil court received an email containing a bomb threat around 11 am. Police carried out an intensive search of the premises."

158 drivers stranded in Lachen rescued

Gangtok: A total of 158 drivers of tourist and private vehicles stranded in Lachen in North Sikkim due to a road breach were rescued, and the vehicles moved out, officials said Monday. A total of 1,321 tourists stranded in those vehicles were rescued April 9 through a footbridge constructed on the spot after the road breach at Taram Chu along the Chungthang-Lachen axis April 5, they said.

₹500cr 'fraud': ED raids Gurugram realty group

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate Monday conducted raids against a Gurugram-based realty group as part of an investigation into alleged Rs 500 crore fraud with investors, officials said. Authorities raided seven premises linked to the entity named 32nd Avenue. The group operates in Delhi-NCR and Goa, the officials said. The company or its promoter could not be reached for comment.

Asha Bhosle cremated with state honours



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 13: "Abhi Na Jaao Chhodkar..." The strains of that wistful song played in the background at the Shivaji Park crematorium Monday as hundreds of people gathered inside -- and outside -- to bid music legend Asha Bhosle a final sayonara.

A gun salute rang out as the last rites of Bhosle, perhaps the last of the singing greats who ruled the soundwaves for decades and still do, were held in accordance with Hindu rituals and with full state honours. Her son Anand performed the rituals. Bhosle, one half of the legendary Mangeshkar sisters, passed away Sunday due to multi-organ failure. She was 92 as was her Lata didi when she died in February 2022.

Priests recited mantras around the funeral pyre, decorated with vibrant yellow and orange marigolds. Granddaughter Zanai was inconsolable. Sister Usha Mangeshkar, also a

singer, and brother Hridaynath Mangeshkar, a music composer, were there too.

Among those gathered to pay their last respects to India's singer nonpareil were Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Sunetra Pawar, director Ramesh Sippy and actors Aamir Khan and Vicky Kaushal. It was a moment of sorrow and song too.

Before the pyre was lit, singers Shaan, Sudesh Bhosle and Anup Jalota paid a musical tribute to the enduring legend who sang some 12,000 songs in an incredible eight-decade career that started when she was just 10. While Sudesh Bhosle crooned "Zindagi Ek Safar Hai Suhana", Shaan sang "Pyaar Ke Mod Pe".

And they were not the only ones. Many fans, their hands folded in prayer, were heard singing the many numbers that made Bhosle the star that she was for music lovers of all ages and through many generations. Snatches of "Aaiye Meherbaan", the languid song of love filmed on Madhubala, and "Chura Liya Hai Tumne Jo Dil Pe", romance of another hue pictured on Zeenat Aman many decades later, and many others, could be heard.



A fisherman cleans his net on the exposed riverbed of the Ganga amid receding water levels on a hot summer day, in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh

PTI PHOTO

Delhi Police probes assault on Army brigadier and son

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 13: An Army brigadier and his IIT graduate son were allegedly assaulted, while his wife was threatened by a group of men in southwest Delhi after the officer objected to two people consuming alcohol inside a parked car near their house, police said Monday.

The incident took place Saturday night when two men sitting inside a Mercedes were

drinking liquor outside the officer's residence in the Vasant Enclave area.

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN CAR

When the brigadier objected, a group of men gathered at the spot, assaulted him and his son, and threatened his wife.

Taking cognisance of the matter, Delhi Police has reg-

istered an FIR under sections 115(2) (voluntarily causing hurt), 126(2) (wrongful restraint), 351(2) (criminal intimidation), 79 (any word, gesture, act, or object intrusion intended to insult the modesty of a woman or violate her privacy), 191(2) (rioting) and 190 (unlawful assembly) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

The Indian Army has also taken cognisance of the incident.

Civil society seeks draft, raises transparency concerns

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 13: Expressing concerns over the "lack of transparency" in the proposed legislations on women's reservation and delimitation, a group of civil society members and activists urged the Centre Monday to place the draft Bills in the public domain for wider consultation even as they "wholeheartedly" supported reservation for women in legislatures.

In a statement, signatories including Anjali Bhardwaj, Nivedita Menon, Annie Raja, Meera Shankar, Harsh Mander

and Amrita Johri flagged concerns over the manner in which legislations are proposed to be introduced during the special extension of the Budget Session from April 16 to 18.

The proposed laws, which reportedly include amendments linked to women's reservation and a delimitation exercise, are expected to have far-reaching implications for India's electoral framework and democratic processes, the statement said.

Highlighting their key demands, the signatories said the government should "make the text of the draft Bills public immediately and

WOMEN'S RESERVATION BILL

Parliament is set to meet from April 16 to 18 to consider Bills to ensure the implementation of the 33-per cent quota for women in legislative bodies for the 2029 elections

It includes increasing the strength of the Lok Sabha from 543 to 816 seats, with 273 seats reserved for women, and amendments to the Delimitation Act to enable a redrawing of constituencies

ensure wide dissemination through various modes, and



in multiple languages". They also urged that the draft

legislations be "put through robust public consultation, in line with the Pre-legislative Consultation Policy".

Raising concerns over the process, the statement said "the citizens of the country have been kept completely in the dark about the contents of the Bills, their implications and the rationale" behind those, adding that information about the proposed laws is largely emerging through media reports based on sources.

While reiterating its support for reservation for women in legislatures, the group opposed "the secretive, non-dem-

ocratic manner" of introducing such measures, stressing that reforms of such magnitude require a transparent debate, public scrutiny and inclusion of diverse voices.

Parliament is set to meet from April 16 to 18 to consider Bills to ensure the implementation of the 33-per cent quota for women in legislative bodies for the 2029 elections. It includes increasing the strength of the Lok Sabha from 543 to 816 seats, with 273 seats reserved for women, and amendments to the Delimitation Act to enable a redrawing of constituencies.



I pay my humble tribute to all the immortal freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives in Jallianwala Bagh. This incident instilled a new consciousness and firm resolve for freedom among the countrymen. The nation will always remain grateful to them

DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT

GE AEROSPACE TO BOOST IAF JET ENGINE MAINTENANCE

US defence major GE Aerospace Monday announced firming up of a contract with the Indian Air Force (IAF) to set up a maintenance facility for its F404-IN20 jet engines which are powering India's Tejas light combat aircraft fleet



of the day quote

Even after 20 years of NDA rule, Bihar remains the poorest, with the lowest per capita income, the lowest per capita investment, and poor education and health facilities

The present CM of Assam is the most corrupt in the country. He will not escape the law. His abuse of state power to harass his political opponents and critics is against the Constitution

A total of 1,11,766 bookings were recorded April 12, while the three Oil Marketing Companies delivered 1,30,094 cylinders well above the number of bookings

POST OF THE DAY

Trump thinks he is Jesus, Modi thinks he is non-biological, When supporters become devotees, politicians become gods.

SHORT TAKES

Man held for killing college student

Shimla: One person has been arrested for allegedly killing a 19-year-old girl by slitting her throat in Himachal Pradesh's Mandi district, police said Monday.

EC launches 24x7 helpline in Bengal

Kolkata: The Election Commission launched a dedicated helpline to enable West Bengal voters and citizens to report law and order-related complaints during the election period, a senior official said Monday.

Mentally unstable man 'kills' wife, son

Agartala: A mentally unstable man allegedly killed his wife and son by striking them with a wooden stick while they were asleep in the early hours of Monday in Tripura's Gomati district, police said.

Punjab okays life term for sacrilege against Guru Granth Sahib

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 13: The Punjab Assembly Monday unanimously passed a Bill proposing stricter punishment, including life imprisonment and a fine up to ₹25 lakh, for any act of sacrilege against the Guru Granth Sahib.

Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann presented the Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Bill, 2026, during a special session of the Assembly here.

After the Bill was passed, Mann thanked the members of the House for supporting the Bill and said it would act as a strong deterrent against acts of sacrilege.

Mann also said the Bill does not need to be sent to the President, adding that it requires only the Governor's assent.

The Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Bill, 2026, proposes stricter punishments to deter incidents of 'beadbi' (sacrilege) and uphold the sanctity of the Guru Granth Sahib.

According to the Bill, any person who commits an offence of sacrilege of the 'Saroop(s)' (sacred scripture) of the Guru Granth Sahib under this Act shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than seven years but which may extend to 20 years.

There shall also be a fine which shall not be less than ₹2 lakh but which may extend to ₹10 lakh. Any person, who in criminal conspiracy, commits sacrilege with an intention to disrupt peace or communal harmony shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than 10 years but which may extend to imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine which shall not be less than ₹5 lakh but which may extend to ₹25 lakh, as per the Bill.

Any person who attempts to commit an offence shall be



- The Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Bill, 2026, aims to deter sacrilege with stricter penalties
The bill includes fines up to ₹25 lakh for sacrilege intended to disrupt peace or communal harmony
The investigation into sacrilege offences will be conducted by a police officer not below the rank of Deputy Superintendent
The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) will maintain a central register of Guru Granth Sahib 'Saroops'

punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than 3 years but which may extend to 5 years, and shall also be liable to a fine which shall not be less than ₹1 lakh but which may extend to ₹3 lakh.

Sacrilege for the purpose of this Act means any willful and deliberate act, committed with the intent of desecration by way of physical damaging, defacing, burning, tearing or theft of 'Saroop(s)' the Guru Granth Sahib or part thereof, or by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representations or through electronic means or otherwise, which is of such a nature as to hurt the religious feelings of persons professing the Sikh faith, as per the bill.

The investigation into the sacrilege offence will be conducted by a police officer, not below the rank of deputy superintendent of police or assistant commissioner of police. The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee shall maintain a central register containing details with regard to the record of printing, storage, distribution, and supply of the 'Saroops' of the Guru Granth Sahib, as per the bill.

Mamata: 19 states, Centre have united against me

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Suri/Galsi/Durgapur, April 13: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Monday claimed that 19 states and the Centre have come together to counter her, and that she is single-handedly fighting for the common people.

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance has governments in 19 states of the country. Addressing poll rallies at Suri in Birbhum, Galsi in Purba Bardhaman and Paschim Bardhaman's Durgapur, the TMC supremo said the BJP won't be able to win the West Bengal elections using forces from Delhi.

"The Trinamool Congress will secure over 226 seats in the West Bengal assembly elections," she asserted. Banerjee alleged that the BJP was threatening and intimidating people to secure votes, and dared the party to act against her, contending that even if she is jailed, she would secure more votes from prison.

In an apparent reference to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, she said, "The 'Mota Bhai' (elder brother in Gujarati) is thinking that by threatening people, they will get votes."

"Do you think you will get votes this way? Send me to



jail, and I will get more votes even from there. Or else, shoot me dead?" she said, exuding confidence that people would give a befitting reply through the ballot box.

Alleging large-scale interference in the electoral process, she claimed that voters' names were being deleted from electoral rolls.

Banerjee also dared the BJP to fight the elections with the existing voters' list.

"If you have the guts, contest the polls with 2024 voters' list without deleting names. Otherwise, the PM elected based on that list should resign," she said.

"All those who are close to the BJP have been brought here and appointed to important posts. I have information that the chief secretary and the DGP are visiting districts today and asking the administration to arrest booth agents and key Trinamool workers in false cases," the CM claimed.

Banerjee also accused the BJP of planning to misuse the election machinery. "On polling day, BJP workers will pose as EC officials and sit in monitoring cells," she alleged.

She alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' programme is being telecast to influence young minds. "They (BJP) are distributing money... They have transferred everyone (bureaucrats and policemen) to other states so that nobody can catch them. Money, drugs, arms and voters are being smuggled into West Bengal. Voters are being brought in trains and buses from Bihar to cast their votes."

"A total of 19 states and the central government have come together against me... I am enough for them. I will continue my fight for the common people because I do not think I am alone. I have the blessings of the public," she said.

The TMC chief took a swipe at Modi, asking whether he wanted to become the chief minister of West Bengal, in response to his remark that he was the candidate in all the seats.

The PM, while addressing a rally in Siliguri Sunday, said he was the "BJP's candidate across all constituencies" in West Bengal.

'Gravely concerning': Tata on TCS Nashik harassment charges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 13: Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekar Monday termed sexual harassment allegations at TCS Nashik as "gravely concerning and anguishing", and announced an investigation into the matter under a senior executive.

"The complaints and allegations emerging from the Nashik branch of Tata Consultancy Services have been gravely concerning and anguishing," Chandrasekar said in a statement.

He also announced that a thorough investigation is underway under TCS' Chief Operating Officer Arathi Subramanian to establish the facts and identify individuals responsible for the situation.

There have been allegations of sexual harassment and forced religious conversion by eight female employees at the multinational company's office in Maharashtra's Nashik.

"This incident is being treated with utmost seriousness. Action has already been initiated against the accused employees, and the company is extending its full cooperation to the ongoing investigations," Chandrasekar, who was leading TCS as its chief executive and managing director before his appointment as the group chairman, said.

He added that the salts-to-software group maintains a "zero-tolerance policy" towards any form of coercion or misconduct by its employees.

Appropriate and stringent action will be taken against those found guilty in the investigation, he said, adding that process improvements or other corrective measures will be promptly implemented and strictly enforced.

Last week, police formed a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the complaints lodged by eight employees, who claimed that senior colleagues mentally and sexually harassed them, and the human resources department turned a deaf ear to their complaints.

Police have since arrested seven people, including the company's female HR manager.

In its first comments, TCS had on Sunday affirmed its commitment on zero tolerance in cases of harassment and informed that staff members have been suspended.



A vendor sells earthen pots on the eve of Baisakhi, in Jammu

PTI PHOTO

7 KILLED AFTER BEING RUN OVER BY TRUCK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Surendranagar (Gujarat), April 13: Seven persons were killed and four suffered injuries after being run over by a speeding truck on a roadside in Gujarat's Surendranagar district in the wee hours of Monday, police said.

The incident occurred on the Lakhtar-Viramgam highway at around 1.30 am when a group of pilgrims was walking from Rajkot to Bahucharaji as part of a procession to offer prayers at a temple, Lakhtar police inspector Yogesh Patel said.

A recklessly driven truck ran over the devotees on the outskirts of Bhaskarpara village

in Lakhtar taluka of the district. Six pilgrims and the driver of a dumper parked on the roadside were killed, he said, adding that the deceased included four women.

"The pilgrims were walking when they met with the accident. They had set out on foot to offer prayers at a temple in Bahucharaji when they were hit by a truck coming at full speed from behind," he said.

Six persons died on the spot and one succumbed at a hospital in Viramgam. Four others sustained injuries, in-charge Superintendent of Police Vedika Bihani said.

The truck, loaded with cotton, was on its way from Rajkot, the

official said.

"A group of 500 pilgrims was walking towards Chharad vilage, where they were planning a night halt, when they were hit by the truck. They tried to cross the (dumper) truck parked on the roadside when they met with the accident. Six persons died on the spot," she said.

"Another person died at Gandhi Hospital in Viramgam during treatment. Three persons sustained minor injuries, while another injured person was referred to a Rajkot hospital," the police officer said.

The truck driver, identified as Aditya Uganiya, fled after the accident, but was later taken into police custody, she added.

WB SIR: Security for judicial officers to continue

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Monday made it clear that the security cover provided to judicial officers engaged in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in West Bengal will remain in place until the conclusion of the upcoming assembly election and cannot be withdrawn without its prior permission. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi also wanted to know if those arrested by the NIA for the April 1 gherao of seven judicial officers in Malda district "had any political background", with the CJ saying "this has to be taken to a logical conclusion". The CJ declined to pass any order on fixing a timeline for the 19 appellate tribunals to decide the appeals of deleted voters.

Was almost declared corrupt by Justice Sharma: Kejriwal

New Delhi: Former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal Monday told Delhi High Court judge Swarana Kanta Sharma that her earlier decisions in the liquor policy cases "almost declared" him guilty and corrupt, and that he apprehends he would not get justice if she continues to hear CBI's plea against his discharge. Appearing before Justice Sharma to argue his application seeking her withdrawal from the case, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor contended that under the law on recusal, the question is not of a judge's integrity or uprightness, but of "reasonable bias" in the mind of the litigant. Justice Sharma reserved her verdict after hearing the AAP chief, the counsel for others discharged in the liquor policy case, and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta appearing for the CBI, till 7 pm Monday. Mehta said the applications for recusal should be dismissed with costs, and a contempt action should be initiated against the applicants.

Tusker rescued from 20-foot well in K'taka

Mangalore: A lone tusker that had fallen into an abandoned 20-foot-deep well in Dakshina Kannada district was successfully rescued after forest officials constructed an earthen ramp, allowing the animal to walk out safely, officials said. The incident occurred when the elephant, aged about 30 years and roaming in the forested Sampaje range of Sullia taluk in the Western Ghats, accidentally fell into the well in the early hours of Monday and was rescued at around 4 pm the same day, they said. The animal remained trapped inside the well for nearly 16 hours before being rescued, officials added.

Doctor offers fee cut if patients say 'Jai Shree Ram'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 13: A city-based cardiologist, who believes that a change in the political regime in West Bengal would help the state recover from its "current dip", is offering a ₹500 discount on consultation fee if patients utter "Jai Shree Ram" at his clinic.

Interventional cardiologist Dr P K Hazra put up a poster, featuring his photo wearing a Bengal going to Assam, Odisha, or South India, and not the reverse happening. I think we need a change in this trend. That is the reason I came up with this idea."

Responding to the issue, se-

nior Trinamool Congress leader Dr Nirmal Maji claimed that Hazra wants to be in the good books of the BJP to safeguard his wealth.

Speaking to PTI, Hazra said, "This is entirely my idea. As a doctor over the years, I have faced questions from several of my patients about why they have to go to other states for treatment. I feel bad every time I see patients from Bengal going to Assam, Odisha, or South India, and not the reverse happening. I think we need a change in this trend. That is the reason I came up with this idea."

The director of the Interventional Cardiology Department at a private hospital said he is offering this discount to patients who consult him at his chamber in south Kolkata and not at the hospital.

The poster, Hazra added, was prepared by one of his patients.

It states that patients invoking the 'Jai Shree Ram' slogan would receive a special discount on the doctor's consultation fees. "I am not directly associated with the BJP, but I admire the way other states under their rule have progressed," he said. The physician claimed that he



had expected to receive a ticket from the BJP from Pingla in

Paschim Medinipur district, from where he hails.

"When that did not happen, I thought this could be a better way to inspire people to vote for a change in the state," Hazra said. He, however, also praised Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for her work.

"She (Banerjee) has done good work, but given the pace at which other states have progressed, Bengal is lagging. But much more needs to be done. If the BJP comes to power, there may be some progress," he said. According to him, the "tussle" between

the Centre and the TMC government has impacted the progress of the healthcare system.

BJP Rajya Sabha MP Rahul Sinha welcomed the move by Hazra.

"I think this will inspire other doctors to come forward and take similar decisions to realise the state's need for a change for the betterment of the healthcare infrastructure," Sinha, a former Bengal BJP president, told PTI.

TMC leader Dr Nirmal Maji claimed that Hazra's attempt was a game plan to get into the good books of the BJP.

international



“If the time comes, I don't think there would be any justification for the United States to launch a military aggression against Cuba, or for the US to undertake a surgical operation or the kidnapping of a president”
MIGUEL DIAZ-CANEL | PRESIDENT, CUBA

ROMAN NEW MOSSAD CHIEF

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Sunday formally appointed a new chief of the country's foreign intelligence agency, the Mossad. Major General Roman Gofman, an army officer with no prior intelligence background, will assume the role June 2, 2026, when the current Mossad director, David Barnea, completes his five-year term



of the day quote

“I was not surprised by the decision to break off the talks in Islamabad. From the very beginning, I didn't get the impression that they were really well prepared”
FRIEDRICH MERZ | CHANCELLOR, GERMANY

“We're consulting on whether there should be a ban for under 16s. But I think equally important, the addictive scrolling mechanisms are really problematic to my mind. They need to go”
KEIR STARMER | PM, BRITAIN

“Full efforts are still being made to resolve the conflict between the U.S. and Iran”
SHEHBAZ SHARIF | PM, PAKISTAN

Hormuz plan deepens NATO divide

NATO's refusal to participate in Strait of Hormuz blockade plan is yet another point of friction with Trump, who has threatened to withdraw from the military alliance and is weighing pulling some US troops

REUTERS

London, April 13: The United States' NATO allies said Monday they would not get involved in President Donald Trump's plan to blockade the Strait of Hormuz, further ratcheting up tensions within the increasingly fragile alliance.

Trump said the US military would work with other countries to block all maritime traffic in the waterway, after weekend talks failed to reach an agreement to end the six-week conflict with Iran. The US military later specified that the blockade, due to start at 1400 GMT Monday, would only apply to ships going to or from Iranian ports.

"The Blockade will begin shortly. Other Countries will be involved with this Blockade," Trump said in a post on Truth Social Sunday.

But NATO allies including Britain and France said they would not be drawn into the conflict by taking part in the blockade, saying instead that it was vital to open the waterway through which one-fifth of the world's oil usually passes, which Iran has effectively closed since the conflict began February 28.

CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE
"We're not supporting the blockade," British Prime Minister Keir Starmer told the BBC.

"My decision has been very clearly that whatever the pressure, and there's been some



considerable pressure, we're not getting dragged into the war," he said.

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte told European governments that Trump wants concrete commitments in the near future to help secure the Strait of Hormuz, diplomats told Reuters last week.

NATO could play a role in the strait if its 32 members could agree on the formation of a mission, Rutte said April 9.

Several European countries have said they're willing to help in the strait but only once there is a durable end to hostilities and an agreement with Iran that their ships will not be attacked.

France will organise a conference with Britain and other countries to create a multi-

BRITAIN AND FRANCE REFUSE TO JOIN BLOCKADE
MACRON PROPOSES MULTINATIONAL MISSION TO RESTORE NAVIGATION
NATO ALLIES SEEK DIPLOMATIC, NON-MILITARY SOLUTIONS

national mission to restore navigation in the strait, French President Emmanuel Macron said on X on Monday.

"This strictly defensive mission, distinct from the belligerents, will be deployed as soon as the situation allows," Macron said. Britain is working on ways to reduce insurance premiums for ships passing through the strait once the fighting has stopped, according to a senior European official.

The Strait of Hormuz should be reopened by diplomacy, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said Monday, adding that creating an international force to oversee it would be complicated as he called for NATO to reset its ties with Trump at a summit in Ankara in July.

ASEAN URGES PEACE TALKS

Southeast Asian countries urged the United States and Iran Monday to keep going with peace negotiations, enforce a ceasefire and restore the safe passage of ships, seafarers and aircraft in the Strait of Hormuz. The foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations made the urgent plea as they held an emergency video conference, the second in recent weeks, to assess the impact of the war in the Middle East, including soaring fuel prices, and how they could cooperate in the face of global crises.

The 11-nation bloc reminded "the obligations of all states to resolve their differences through peaceful means, to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure in armed conflicts".

It called "for the full and effective implementation of the ceasefire, aimed at preventing further suffering and loss of lives, ensuring maritime security and freedom of navigation and overflight".

HORMUZ HALTED: LEADERS SCRAMBLE
France, UK to convene talks on Strait of Hormuz navigation mission
Russia's Lavrov to visit China for talks on Iran-US conflict, Hormuz blockade
Spanish PM Sanchez returns to China seeking deeper ties amid Iran war tensions

EVE OF HISTORIC TALKS

Israel presses assault on Lebanon border town

REUTERS

Beirut, April 13: Israeli troops launched an attack to seize a key south Lebanon town from Hezbollah fighters holed up inside Monday, pressing the war on the Iran-backed group on the eve of historic talks between Israeli and Lebanese government envoys.

With the Lebanese and Israeli ambassadors to the United States set to meet Tuesday in Washington, Lebanon's foreign minister said Beirut would use face-to-face negotiations to press for a ceasefire in the war that has complicated wider diplomacy to halt the conflict in the Middle East.

But the outlook for the meeting -- a rare, face-to-face encounter between countries formally in a state of war -- has been overshadowed, with Israel saying it won't discuss a ceasefire while Hezbollah has objected to negotiations with Israel, reflecting sharply worsening political tensions in Lebanon.

On the ground in south Lebanon, the Israeli military completed its encirclement of the town of Bint Jbeil just over the border and had begun a ground assault there, an Isra-

li military spokesperson and Lebanese security sources said. The Lebanese sources said Hezbollah fighters holed up inside were ready to fight to the death, citing the strategic and symbolic significance of Bint Jbeil, a Hezbollah stronghold, provincial capital, and gateway to surrounding villages.

An Israeli military official said full operational control of Bint Jbeil would be achieved within days, and that only a small number of militants remained in the area.

On Sunday, Hezbollah said it had attacked Israeli forces in and around Bint Jbeil with rockets, artillery fire and suicide drones.

A foreign security official based in Lebanon said seizing Bint Jbeil would give Israel better control over the entirety of Lebanon's southeastern border strip, leaving the western area of the border zone, which is largely forest and harder to clear.

Hezbollah opened fire on Israel in support of Tehran March 2, igniting an Israeli offensive that Lebanese authorities say has killed more than 2,000 people and forced more than 1 million people from their homes.

FIGHTING IN SOUTH LEBANON FOCUSED ON BINT JBEIL TOWN
LEBANESE, ISRAELI AMBASSADORS TO US TO MEET TUESDAY
LEBANON SEEKS CEASEFIRE, BUT ISRAEL HAS RULED THAT OUT
HEZBOLLAH AGAINST TALKS WITH ISRAEL, SHOWING LEBANESE SPLITS

SHORT TAKES

Pak merchant ships cross Strait of Hormuz

Karachi: Two merchant ships from Pakistan were allowed to cross the Strait of Hormuz and sail to Kuwait and the UAE Monday after initially being denied permission to pass. Two merchant ships, Shalimar and Khairpur, of the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) are the first Pakistani ships to go into the Persian Gulf since the war broke out between Iran, the US and Israel. Initially, the two ships were stopped by Iranian authorities and told to go back from the Strait of Hormuz on Sunday, a PNSC official said. "But shortly afterwards they were allowed to cross the Strait of Hormuz into the Persian Gulf," he added. The ship captains, Asif and Shaheen, are now on their way to Kuwait and Das Island, from where they will bring back vessels loaded with millions of litres of diesel and crude oil. On Friday, MV Selen, became the first Pakistani vessel to reach the Karachi Port since the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz in the wake of the ceasefire between Iran and the US.

Israel killed over 750 Gazans since truce

Cairo: An Israeli airstrike killed at least three Palestinians in the Gaza Strip Monday, health officials said, as mediators met leaders from Hamas in an effort to shore up a US-brokered ceasefire deal. Medics said the strike had hit a group of men outside a school in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip. There was no immediate comment by the Israeli military. More than 750 Palestinians have been killed since the deal took effect, while militants have killed four Israeli soldiers. Israel and Hamas have traded blame for ceasefire violations.

Carney on verge of majority government

Toronto: Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney is on the verge of securing a majority government as special elections are held in three districts Monday. Votes are being cast in the Toronto-area districts of Scarborough Southwest and University-Rosedale, which are considered safe seats for Carney's Liberals, and in the Montreal-area district of Terrebonne, which is considered a toss-up. Winning just one of them would give Carney a majority. The Liberals now have 171 members of Parliament in the House of Commons. They need 172 to secure a majority government, which would allow them to unilaterally pass any bill.

Nigerian air force 'misfire' on market leaves 100 dead

At least 500 civilians have died since 2017 in such misfires



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Maiduguri (Nigeria), April 13: A Nigerian Air Force strike targeting jihadi rebels hit a local market in northeastern Nigeria, killing over 100 civilians including children and injuring many others, a rights group and local media reported Sunday. Officials confirmed a misfire without providing details.

Amnesty International cited survivors as saying that at least 100 people were killed in the airstrike on Saturday on a village in Yobe state, near the border with Borno state, which is the epicentre of the jihadi insurgency that has ravaged the region for over a decade.

"We have their pictures and they include children," Isa Sa-

nusi, Amnesty International's Nigeria director, told The Associated Press, referring to the casualties.

"We are in touch with people that are there, we spoke with the hospital," he said. "We spoke with the person in charge of casualties, and we spoke with the victims."

A worker at the Geidam General hospital, in Yobe, said at least 23 people injured in the incident were receiving treatment. The worker spoke anonymously as he was not authorised to speak to the media. Such misfires are common in Nigeria, where the military often conducts air raids to battle armed groups who control vast forest enclaves. At least 500 civilians have died since 2017 in such misfires, according to an AP tally of reported deaths. Security analysts point to loopholes in intelligence gathering as well as insufficient coordination between ground troops, air assets and stakeholders.

The large, remote market located near the Borno-Yobe border is known to be often used by Boko Haram jihadis to buy food supplies.



The shoes of victims of a deadly stampede site by the main entrance of the Citadelle Laferriere in Milot, Haiti

STAMPEDE AT HAITIAN MOUNTAINTOP FORTRESS KILLS 25, INJURES DOZENS

PORT-AU-PRINCE: A stampede at a mountaintop fortress popular with tourists in northern Haiti has killed at least 25 people and injured dozens of others, authorities said, revising an earlier, higher number of fatalities. Municipal authorities in the city of Cap-Haitien in a statement said that Saturday's stampede in Milot "resulted in numerous cases of asphyxiation, trampling and loss of consciousness." Authorities said dozens of people who attended traditional festivities at the historical site were taken to hospitals while many others were reported missing. "According to preliminary information ... a situation of severe overcrowding, linked in particular to deficiencies in crowd management measures, triggered a stampede," local authorities said in the statement. The Haitian National Police in a separate statement said it had opened an investigation to determine the exact cause of incident. The investigation led authorities to update the death toll to 25 fatalities. Autopsies were underway Sunday. Police said 30 people remained hospitalized. The agency also asked the population to cooperate with authorities and avoid spreading rumors. Haiti's government offered its condolences to the families of the victims of the incident at the Citadelle Laferriere.

Hungarians see new future after Magyar's landslide

ORBAN, A KEY ALLY OF BOTH TRUMP AND PUTIN, OUSTED AFTER 16 YEARS AS HUNGARIANS FLOCK TO PRO-EU RIVAL

REUTERS

Budapest, April 13: Hungarians were waking up to a political earthquake Monday, after a landslide victory for the centre-right opposition reverberated everywhere from Washington to Kyiv, sending local markets surging and turning Budapest into a party zone.

The ballot's implications stretched far beyond the borders of the landlocked country of under 10 million people, as outgoing nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban was a key ally of both US President Donald Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin, and had frustrated European efforts to aid war-torn Ukraine.

Supporters of election winner Peter Magyar's Tisza party hope he can unblock billions in European Union funds frozen over concerns about democratic standards, bolster the rule of law and hold those they accuse of



PRO-EU TISZA PARTY WINS ELECTION IN LANDSLIDE
NO SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE'S FAST-TRACK EU ENTRY
THOUSANDS PARTY TILL EARLY HOURS IN BUDAPEST
TISZA SUPPORTERS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT BETTER EU TIES

wrongdoing under the previous government to account thanks to his two-thirds supermajority.

“It is an immense honour that you have empowered us to form a government with the most votes ever received, and to work for the next four years for a free, European, functioning, and humane Hungary”
PETER MAGYAR | OPPOSITION LEADER, HUNGARY

90-billion-euro (\$105 billion) loan to war-battered Ukraine. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Monday that decision-making in the EU, including with regard to Russia, would become easier after Magyar's win. The Kremlin said Monday Russia respected the choice of Hungarian voters and would continue what it called "pragmatic ties" with the new government in Budapest. Meanwhile Magyar said Monday that his government would not support Ukraine's fast-track entry to the European Union. He told a briefing that the issue of Ukraine's membership would have to go to a

referendum. **"WE WANT TO STAY WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION"**

In Budapest many residents were recovering from wild celebrations that saw the streets of the capital thronged with revelers well into the early hours. Among those letting themselves go was Zsolt Hegedus, a leading candidate for health minister, whose dance moves on stage following Magyar's speech went viral online.

Tisza supporters spoke Monday morning of their optimism about the end of Orban's adversarial relations with Brussels. "We are part of the European Union and we want to stay within the European Union," said network engineer Gyula Ferenc Teleki. Magyar has pledged a sweeping anti-corruption drive, including stronger judicial independence and tougher public procurement rules to help secure the release of the EU funds.

Judge junks Trump's \$10bn suit against WSJ, Murdoch

Washington: A federal judge dismissed President Donald Trump's \$10 billion defamation lawsuit against the Wall Street Journal and Rupert Murdoch Monday over a story on his ties to Jeffrey Epstein. US District Judge Darrin P Gayles in Florida wrote in the order that Trump had failed to make the argument that the article was published with the intent to be malicious, but gave the president a chance to file an amended complaint.

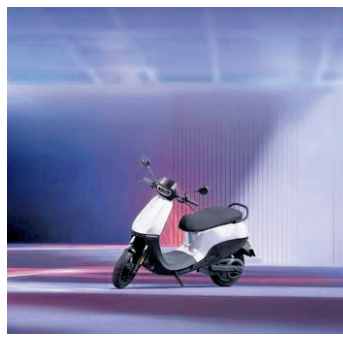
Epstein reporting
Trump filed the lawsuit in July, following up on a promise to sue the paper almost immediately after it put a new spotlight on his well-documented relationship with Epstein by publishing an article that described a sexually suggestive letter that the newspaper said bore Trump's signature and was included in a 2003 album compiled for Epstein's 50th birthday. The letter was subsequently released publicly by Congress, which subpoenaed the records from Epstein's estate. The ruling marks yet another blow in the Trump administration's efforts to manage fallout over its release of the Epstein files and the president's attempts to use the legal system to chill reporting he find critical of him.



Completion of this 100-bus delivery marks an important milestone in strengthening the country's transition to electric mobility, with tangible benefits for urban efficiency, environmental sustainability, and everyday commuter experience
GANESH MANI | CEO, SWITCH MOBILITY

OLA DEBUTS BHARAT CELL SCOOTER

Ola Electric Monday announced the launch of the new S1 X+ 5.2 kWh scooter, powered by its indigenously developed 4680 Bharat Cell at an introductory price of ₹1,29,999. With this, the company is bringing its advanced in-house cell technology to the mass market, making long range EV scooters accessible for every Indian, Ola Electric said in a statement



business

of the day quote

As demand for high-quality maternal and pediatric care grows, it is essential to scale both capacity and capabilities



AZAD MOOPEN | FOUNDER & CHAIRMAN, ASTER DM HEALTHCARE

When people choose to come back, it's a clear signal of what the culture enables. At Flipkart, that's growth with ownership and the opportunity to solve at an India scale



SEEMA NAIR | CHRO, FLIPKART

We are actually looking at India as making it a manufacturing hub. So, we want to make products in India and sell them in India and outside the world as well



ANIL SAWHNEY | MANAGING DIRECTOR, SLOAN

SHORT TAKES

Edible oil imports zoom 12% in March

New Delhi: India's edible oils imports rose 12 per cent annually to 11.73 lakh tonne in March on higher shipments of crude palm oil, and the imports may be subdued in coming months due to firm global prices and high freight cost amid the West Asia conflict, according to industry body SEA. In a statement Monday, the Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) said imports of edible oils increased to 11,73,168 tonne in March from 10,45,281 tonne in the year-ago period. India imports palm oil from Indonesia and Malaysia while soyabean oil is sourced from Argentina and Brazil. The country meets more than half of its domestic demand through imports.

Silver dips ₹1,800, gold drops ₹300

New Delhi: Silver prices declined ₹1,800 to ₹2.45 lakh per kilogram in the national capital Monday, while gold fell to ₹1.55 lakh per 10 grams amid weak global cues. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal decreased ₹1,800, or nearly 1 per cent, to ₹2,45,200 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) from Friday's closing level of ₹2,47,000 per kg. Gold of 99.9 per cent purity also edged lower by ₹300 to ₹1,55,000 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). The yellow metal had finished at ₹1,55,300 per 10 grams in the previous market session. In the international markets, precious metal prices also moved lower. Spot silver slipped \$1.58, or 2.09 per cent, to \$74.31 per ounce, while gold fell \$25.92 to \$4,722.26 per ounce.

ICICI Pru AMC profit up 10% in March qtr

New Delhi: ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company Monday reported a 10.4 per cent rise in profit after tax (PAT) to ₹763.4 crore during the March quarter, aided by higher income. The company had posted a PAT of ₹691.7 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal year. Revenue from operations during the quarter rose 19.5 per cent to ₹1,517.1 crore compared with ₹1,269.1 crore in the year-ago period, the company said in a regulatory filing. The board has recommended a final dividend of ₹12.40 per equity share for FY26, subject to shareholders' approval at the ensuing annual general meeting.

Oil on boil again

Fuel prices rise back above \$100 and stocks slip worldwide as hopes recede on the US-Iran war

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, April 13: Oil prices are back above \$100 per barrel, and stock markets are falling worldwide after 21 hours of ceasefire talks failed to end the war with Iran.

But Monday's moves are more modest than many of the extreme swings that have rocked financial markets since the start of the war in late February.

Analysts said that suggests Wall Street still hopes both sides may ultimately avoid a worst-case scenario for the global economy.

The S&P 500 slipped 0.2%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 238 points, and the Nasdaq composite fell 0.

Oil prices have been rising



as shipping through the strait has essentially stalled since late February. Brent crude oil, the international standard, has gone from roughly \$70 per barrel before the war in late February to more than \$119 at times.

On Monday, benchmark US crude jumped \$7.12 or 7.4 per cent to \$103.69 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, rose \$7.04 or 7.4 per cent to \$102.24 a barrel.

France's CAC 40 dropped 1.0 per cent to 8,174.44 in early trading, while the German DAX lost 1.0 per cent to 23,568.65. Britain's

\$150/barrel: Physical oil in Europe hits record high

European crude oil prices climbed to a record high near \$150 a barrel Monday as the US plan to block the Strait of Hormuz added to concern about tight supplies. The price of Brent crude futures for June delivery LCOc1, opens new tabrose 6% to more than \$100 a barrel as the US Navy prepared to block ships to and from Iran via the Strait of Hormuz in a move that could restrict Iranian oil exports after Washington and Tehran failed to reach a deal to end the war. This is far short of Brent's all-time high of \$147 a barrel set in 2008. However, the price of physical crude cargoes for immediate delivery is significantly higher as the effective closure of Hormuz has sent buyers in Europe and Asia scrambling to secure supplies. The outright price of North Sea Forties crude reached \$148.87 a barrel on Monday, LSEG data showed, exceeding its 2008 peak.

FTSE 100 slipped 0.4 per cent to 10,561.47. US shares were set to drift lower with Dow futures down 0.5 per cent at 47,911.00. S&P 500 futures fell 0.6 per cent to 6,815.50. In Asia, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 lost 0.7 per cent to finish at 56,502.77. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 shed 0.4 per cent to 8,926.00. South Korea's Kospi dipped 0.9 per cent to 5,808.62. Hong Kong's Hang Seng slipped 0.9 per cent to 25,660.85, while the Shanghai Composite was little changed, inching up less than 0.1 per cent to 3,988.56.

IRANIAN CRUDE RETURNS TO INDIA AFTER SEVEN YEARS

Two supertankers carrying Iranian crude have arrived at Indian ports on both the east and west coasts, marking the first such deliveries in nearly seven years, according to ship-tracking data. Felicity, a very large crude carrier operated by the National Iranian Tanker Company, anchored off Sikka in Gujarat's coast late Sunday, carrying about 2 million barrels loaded at Kharg Island in mid-March. A second tanker, Jaya, moored near Paradip on Odisha's coast around the same time. It is transporting a similar volume of crude, lifted from Kharg Island in late February, before the US and Israel launched military strikes against Iran, followed by Tehran's retaliation. The shipments are the first Iranian crude cargoes to reach Indian shores in nearly seven years, following a sanctions waiver issued by the United States last month. The one-month exemption permitted the sale of Iranian oil already in transit, aimed at easing global supply disruptions and containing prices. Historically, India was a major buyer of Iranian crude, importing significant volumes of Iranian light and heavy grades due to strong refinery compatibility and favourable commercial terms. Following sanctions tightening in 2018, imports ceased from May 2019, with volumes replaced by Middle Eastern, US and other grades. At peak, Iranian crude accounted for 11.5 per cent of India's total imports. India used to buy 518,000 barrels per day of Iranian oil in 2018, which slowed to 268,000 bpd between January and May 2019 when the US granted waivers to a few buyers. There have been no imports since. The key grades that Indian refiners used to purchase are Iran light and Iran heavy crudes.

Pvt companies' bond investments jump multi-fold in FY25: RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 13: Private sector companies' investments in bonds and debentures shot up manifold in FY25, the Reserve Bank said Monday.

Analysis of 15,919 non-government, non-financial private companies by the central bank revealed that such entities invested ₹35,981 crore in bonds or debentures in 2024-25, as against just ₹224 crore in the year-ago period.

During this period, corporate bond issuances increased to ₹9.87 lakh crore in FY25, compared to ₹8.38 lakh crore in the previous fiscal year.

The yield on these instruments remained broadly in the range of 6.5-15 per cent across maturities and ratings on the BSE and NSE electronic bidding platform.

Indian bond market has seen a sharp investment by the foreign investors, specifically in the government securities market after the JP Morgan announced the G-sec inclusion in to their index. The announcement came in the second half of FY24, and the actual inclusion happened in June 2024.

₹ weakens by 52 paise to settle at 93.35 against \$

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 13: The rupee slumped 52 paise to settle at 93.35 against the US dollar Monday after a failed US-Iran peace talk fuelled uncertainties in West Asia, leading to a surge in crude oil prices and a global chase for the greenback.

According to forex analysts, uncertainties over the opening of Strait of Hormuz following the US announcement to blockade Iranian ports further intensified withdrawal for for-

eign capital from domestic equities, weakening the Indian currency.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 93.30 against the US dollar and moved between a low of 93.40 and a high of 93.25 during the session. The unit closed the session at 93.35 against the greenback, registering a loss of 52 paise from its previous closing level.

On Friday, the rupee settled 32 paise lower at 92.83 against the US dollar.

Markets plunge nearly 1%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 13: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed nearly 1 per cent lower Monday as the failure of US-Iran negotiations heightened concerns of a prolonged conflict driving crude oil prices sharply higher.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 702.68 points or 0.91 per cent to settle at 76,847.57. During the day, it dived 1,681.93 points or 2.16 per cent to 75,868.32. The 50-share NSE Nifty



plunged 207.95 points or 0.86 per cent to end at 23,842.65.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Maruti, InterGlobe Aviation, Bajaj Finance, Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services and HDFC Bank were the biggest laggards. ICICI Bank, NTPC and Axis

More than just biz, education sector shapes futures: Somdutt

Somdutt Behura, co-founder of KT Global School, is a visionary educationist, philanthropist, and data management strategist with over 30 years of experience in the educational landscape. Under his stewardship, the institution has grown into a premier residential-cum-day boarding school in Bhubaneswar. Behura has been instrumental in shaping the school's 16-acre campus, which includes state-of-the-art facilities like the Design Thinking Lab, Sports and Arts Academies. His leadership focuses on holistic development, ensuring students excel in both academics and co-curricular fields such as sports and performing arts, while continuing to drive the school's mission of fostering global citizenship with a strong sense of social responsibility. Excerpts in collaboration with Mrs Manaswini Rout, the group's lead writer...



SOMDUTT BEHURA
CO-FOUNDER, KT GLOBAL SCHOOL

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

India's education system is built for a past reality, creating a gap between learning and real-world application. It prioritises marks over mastery, rewarding memory and speed instead of curiosity and deep understanding. Classrooms follow a passive model where students rarely question or think independently. Teachers often lack training, resources, and flexibility to encourage inquiry-based learning. At the same time, societal pressure discourages risk-taking, pushing students to focus on grades due to fear of failure, parental expectations, and comparisons. As a result, even top-performing students may struggle to apply knowledge effectively beyond the classroom.

The digital revolution is here. What implications will artificial intelligence have in the education sector?

The internet reshaped access to information, but AI

is redefining what it means to learn. At its core lies natural intelligence—the human ability to think, reason, and evolve—responsible for most human progress. However, AI risks amplifying existing imbalances by empowering a small group of creators while turning the majority into passive consumers, reducing independent thinking. Education must respond urgently. By integrating First Principles thinking early on, students can develop inquiry and problem-solving skills that counter this trend. Otherwise, growing dependence on AI may lead to a cognitive “blowback,” where our reliance reshapes human thinking and behavior—potentially redefining our needs and even our existence.

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

The traditional education system prioritises rote learning and test scores over true understanding. To improve it, we must shift from overloaded curricula to deeper learning and encourage questioning rather than memorizing answers. Schools should adopt experiential learning, allowing students to learn by doing and applying concepts in real life. Evaluation must assess depth of thinking instead of just outcomes. Students also need guidance to use AI responsibly without overdependence.

Finally, the learning culture should become more flexible, embracing failure as an essential part of growth and innovation.

How has your journey been so far? What makes KT Global School a preferable place for students?

Change is gradual and challenging, but deeply purposeful. With the vision of “Transforming Minds,” KT Global School aims to redefine traditional education. The journey requires re-training teachers, reshaping parent expectations, and re-designing curricula, while constantly innovating to stay aligned with our goals. Though progress takes time, the reward lies in seeing students think independently and generate original ideas. We are actively implementing these changes—focusing less on test scores and more on nurturing critical thinking, adaptability, and growth—preparing students to thrive in an evolving world.

Your vision and dedication have taken this institution to new heights. What advice will you give to the newcomers who want to start off their journey in this industry?

Well, I can only say that education is the only industry where the real output of your efforts may not be evident in the short term but will be irreversible in the long term. Hence, choose your path very carefully, because you are doing more than just business. Through your students, you are shaping society, the country, and the world. Be clear about your purpose and be patient with the results.

AI to reduce uncertainties, expand opportunities: RBI DG



POST NEWS NETWORK

Thanjavar, April 13: J Swaminathan, Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, stated that the expanding role of artificial intelligence (AI) in the financial ecosystem should help reduce uncertainties, enhance opportunities, and build trust among all stakeholders.

Speaking at the 20th CUB V Narayanan Memorial Lecture held at SASTRA University, he presented a five-point framework for the responsible adoption of AI in the banking and financial sector. The key pillars include human responsibility, fairness and explainability, robust data governance, institutional maturity in adoption, and inclusivity by design.

He noted that these principles are essential to ensuring equitable outcomes, transparency, a humane approach, wider access, and effective risk

mitigation. Addressing the theme “AI in Finance – What Can Change and What Should Not,” Swaminathan stressed the importance of protecting customer data and ensuring that small borrowers are not sidelined by automated systems. He also cautioned against the risks of unchecked or malicious automation, emphasizing the need for accountability in AI-led decisions.

“Financial decision-making cannot operate as a black box; it requires strong institutional responsibility,” he said, highlighting the continued importance of human oversight.

The lecture was attended by the Chairman and Board of Directors of City Union Bank, along with banking professionals, academicians, and students.

S Vaidhyasubramaniam delivered the welcome address, while N Kamakodi proposed the vote of thanks.

Union Bank of India partners NALCO to offer enhanced Corporate Salary Package

BANKS BUZZ

Bhubaneswar: Union Bank of India has entered into a strategic partnership with National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) to offer an enhanced Corporate Salary Package to NALCO employees, reinforcing its commitment to financial inclusion and employee-centric banking solutions. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was exchanged at an event held at Bhubaneswar marking a significant step toward delivering customised banking benefits tailored to the evolving needs of employees. Under this arrangement, Union Bank of India will provide a comprehensive suite of benefits, including preferential banking services, attractive loan offerings, and a range of value-added features. The Corporate Salary Package is specially designed to enhance financial security and convenience, featuring - free life insurance cover up to ₹20 lakh, free personal accident insurance cover up to ₹1.50 crore, hospicash facility up to ₹1 lakh, premium metal debit card facility and various lifestyle benefits. This partnership underscores Union Bank of India's continued focus on strengthening relationships with leading corporates and delivering innovative, need-based financial solutions. It also aligns with the broader objective of empowering employees through accessible, reliable, and rewarding banking services. With this collaboration, Union Bank of India further expands its presence in the corporate salary segment while contributing meaningfully to the financial well-being of NALCO's workforce.



Avishek new circle head of PNB Cuttack

Cuttack: Avishek Bhattacharyya has taken charge as the new circle head of Punjab National Bank (PNB) Cuttack Circle, marking a significant leadership transition for the bank in the region. Prior to this assignment, he was serving as MCC Head in Kolkata, West Bengal, where he played a key role in strengthening business performance and customer engagement. A native of Kolkata, Bhattacharyya began his banking career in 2009 with United Bank of India as a Scale II Officer. Over the years, he has accumulated nearly 18 years of rich and diverse experience, having worked in various operational and managerial roles across different parts of the country. His expertise spans credit management, branch operations, and strategic business growth. In his new role, Bhattacharyya aims to align the Cuttack Circle's performance with the bank's broader corporate vision, with a strong focus on Agriculture, MSME, and Retail banking segments. He emphasised that the MSME sector remains a vital engine for India's economic progress and requires enhanced financial support and policy focus. He has also set an ambitious target to add at least four new branches in the current financial year, aiming to expand PNB's outreach and accessibility. An M.Sc. in Economics and a Chartered Financial Analyst, Bhattacharyya highlighted that government-led greenfield projects are driving MSME growth across the country. He stated that this presents a timely opportunity for banks to empower small entrepreneurs and contribute to inclusive economic development.



INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

Dream debuts by Praful, Sakib

Pacers Praful Hinge, Sakib Hussain pick four scalps each as SRH end RR's winning run

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, April 13: In a debut performance that will be etched into the tournament's folklore, pacer Praful Hinge delivered the most successful first over in IPL history to engineer Sunrisers Hyderabad's 57-run mauling of Rajasthan Royals here Monday.

Hinge dismissed Vaibhav Sooryavanshi (golden duck), Dhruv Jurel, and Lhuan-dre Pretorius all in his opening over, the first instance of a bowler bagging three wickets in the first over of an IPL innings.

SRH, having posted 216 for six on the back of skipper Ishan Kishan's 44-ball 91, bundled out the in-form RR for 159 in 19 overs, returning to winning ways in style after back-to-back losses.

TODAY'S MATCH
CSK vs KKR
TIME: 7:30 PM
Star Sports channels & JioHotstar

The night though, without an iota of doubt, will be remembered for the 24-year-old Hinge's dream debut. He ended with figures of 4/34 from his 4 overs.

Originally slated to make

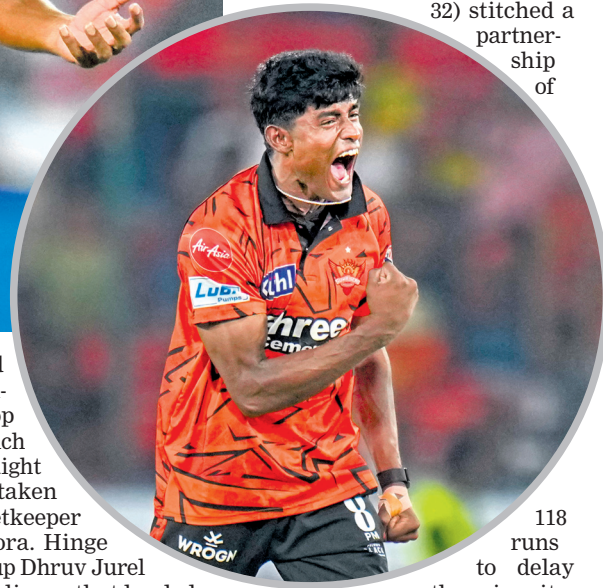


his debut on April 11 against Punjab Kings, Vidarbha pacer Hinge was robbed of the opportunity due to some last-minute changes by the team management.

However, when he finally got the opportunity, Hinge made the stage his own with an explosive start to his career in the league that is into its 19th year.

Sooryavanshi was beaten for

pace and the resultant top edge, which went straight up, was taken by wicketkeeper Salil Arora. Hinge cleaned up Dhruv Jurel with a delivery that landed just outside off and got an inside edge before crashing into



the stumps.

Pretorius looked to flick one but couldn't clear Nitish Reddy at deep backward square leg, bringing to an end a sensational first over.

Bihar's Sakib Hussain, also making his IPL debut, too made it memorable for him by returning excellent figures of 4/24 in 4 overs.

Hussain, too, got a wicket in his very first over, dismissing Yashasvi Jaiswal to leave RR tottering at 4/2, which became 5/9 when Hinge had Riyan Parag slashing one to slip.

The game was as good as over at that stage but Donovan Ferreira (69 off 44 balls) and Ravindra Jadeja (45 off 32) stitched a partnership of

118 runs to delay the inevitable and reduce the margin of defeat. Hussain returned to

pick up the wicket of Ferreira, Jofra Archer and Ravi Bishnoi. Hinge and Hussain combined to take 8/58 in eight overs, which best summed up the night.

Earlier, Kishan led from the front before a late charge by Reddy and Arora took the home team past 210. Kishan looked in sublime touch during his stay in the middle, hitting eight fours and six sixes while sharing 88 runs with Heinrich Klaasen (40 off 26 balls).

Brief scores:

Sunrisers Hyderabad: 216 for 6 in 20 overs (Ishan Kishan 91, Heinrich Klaasen 40; Jofra Archer 2/37) beat **Rajasthan Royals:** 159 in 19 overs (Donovan Ferreira 69, Ravindra Jadeja 45; Praful Hinge 4/34, Sakib Hussain 4/24) by 57 runs

IPL STANDINGS					
TEAMS	P	W	L	NRR	PTS
RR	5	4	1	0.889	8
PBKS	4	3	0	0.720	7
RCB	4	3	1	1.148	6
SRH	5	2	3	0.576	4
DC	4	2	2	0.322	4
GT	4	2	2	-0.029	4
LSG	4	2	2	-0.427	4
MI	4	1	3	-0.772	2
CSK	4	1	3	-1.532	2
KKR	4	0	3	-1.315	1

Vaishali under pressure in women's candidates



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paphos (Cyprus) April 13: After squandering the chance to extend her lead, Indian Grandmaster R Vaishali will be under pressure when she takes on former women's world champion Zhongyi Tan of China in the penultimate round of the Candidates chess tournament here.

Vaishali, who was leading by a full point, suffered a setback in the 12th round, playing with white she lost to China's Jiner Zhu, who has now drawn level at the top of the points table.

Vaishali will need to regroup after the final rest day of the tournament, which will determine the challenger to reigning world champion Wenjun Ju of China.

Apart from Zhongyi, Vaishali also faces a tricky challenge from Russia's Katerina Lagno, who may be out of title contention but remains a formidable opponent.

Kazakhstan's Bibisara Assaubayeva is also in the hunt after a hard-fought win over Lagno, while Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk too remains in contention.

The two are trailing the leaders by half a point, setting up a potentially thrilling finish.

Vaishali and Zhu share the lead on seven points, with Assaubayeva and Muzychuk close behind on 6.5 points. The Russian duo of Aleksandra Goryachkina and Lagno are on 5.5, while India's Divya Deshmukh and Tan are further back on five points.

It is clear that a lot can go right-or-wrong for all the four players in contention.

In the open section, Uzbekistan's Javokhir Sindarov is firmly in control with nine points and is just a draw away from securing a shot at the world title against India's D Gukesh later this year.

Dutch Grandmaster Anish Giri, who is on seven points, remains the only realistic challenger and is set to face Sindarov in a crucial clash in the next round.

If Hussain still has a chance. However, as things have been unfolding here, there is a very remote chance of that happening.

McIlroy turns elite, defends Masters crown

With the win, McIlroy joins an elite group of just four players to win back-to-back Masters titles, becoming the first to do so since Tiger Woods achieved it in 2001-02

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Augusta, April 13: Rory McIlroy secured his second consecutive Masters title, edging out world No 1 Scottie Scheffler by a single shot to claim victory.

With the win, McIlroy joins an elite group of just four players to win back-to-back Masters titles, becoming the first to do so since Tiger Woods achieved it in 2001-02.

A one-shot win over Scheffler gave McIlroy a 15-year span between his first and sixth major championships.

McIlroy finished the tournament at 12-under-par with a closing round of 71, maintaining at least a share of the lead throughout all four rounds. After finally capturing his first Masters title last year to com-



plete the career Grand Slam, a feat that took over a decade, he needed only one more year to add another green jacket to his collection.

Reflecting on the win, McIlroy noted that while the pressure of completing the Grand Slam made last year particularly challenging, he came to appreciate that winning the Masters is always a formida-

ble task regardless of circumstances.

"I thought it was so difficult to win last year because of trying to win the Masters and the grand slam. And then this year, I realized it's just really difficult to win the Masters. I tried to convince myself it was both," he said after the win.

Justin Rose, who entered the final nine holes with a two-

shot advantage and was aiming to become one of the oldest champions at age 45, faltered with four bogeys and ultimately finished tied for third at 10-under alongside Tyrrell Hatton, Russell Henley, and Cameron Young. Rose had also fallen short to McIlroy in a playoff the previous year.

Despite a bogey on the 18th hole, McIlroy managed to stay ahead of Scheffler, who delivered a strong final round of 68 and became the first player since World War II to complete the final 36 holes of the Masters without a single bogey.

The victory brings McIlroy's total major championship wins to six, placing him level with Nick Faldo as the second-most successful European golfer in majors, behind only Harry Vardon.

Acknowledging the difficulty of competing at the highest level, McIlroy remarked that winning tournaments no longer comes as easily as it once did earlier in his career, emphasising just how demanding the sport has become.

"I don't make it easy. I used to make it easy back in my early 20s when I was winning these things by eight shots. It's just hard. It's hard to win golf tournaments," he said.

Two teams should go: Ministry view on Asian Games vs WC in hockey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 13: The Sports Ministry would like Hockey India to nominate its best teams for the Asian Games amid an ongoing debate on whether separate sides should be finalised for the continental showpiece and the World Cup later this year to ensure players are not burnt out.

While the World Cup will be held from August 15 to 30 in Belgium and the Netherlands, the Asian Games are slated for September 19 to October 4 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan.

Although the two events are not clashing technically but the lack of turnaround time for the players, both men and women, is being seen as a major concern.

However, neither the men's head coach Craig Fulton, nor his women's team counterpart Sjoerd Marijne is in favour of sending two teams, insisting that same sides should go for both the high-intensity events.

"There should be two teams ideally and the A teams should be for the Asian Games because that's an olympic qualifier," said a ministry source.



"The ministry has already conveyed this to the national federations that they should have a highly competitive B team ready for competitions at all times. And in hockey, we have no dearth of players to pick two separate teams (for both men and women) keeping in mind the calendar," he added.

The gold-winners in both the men's and women's competitions in the Asian Games would make the cut for the Los Angeles Games in 2028.

The biennial World Cup is the marquee competition in the sport and both Fulton and Marijne are expectedly focussed on delivering results after a challenging last season and a topsy-turvy year so far for both teams.

"We will send the best teams in both the Asian Games and World Cup, we haven't decided or selected the squads yet. We are taking all factors into account," Hockey India Secretary General Bholanath Singh told PTI when asked for his reaction to the ministry's view.

Traditionally, burnout concerns have been raised in every year that has featured the Commonwealth Games and the Asiad in close proximity to each other.

However, the upcoming CWG edition in Glasgow features a curtailed roster that does not include hockey alongside a host of major disciplines like shooting, badminton, wrestling and table tennis.

Indians dominate US Open Pickleball Championship

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 13: Arjun Singh and Dhiren Patel clinched a gold medal each in their respective singles events in the US Open Pickleball Championship in Naples, Florida.

Arjun won the men's singles 5.0 after beating Ashton Patterson in straight sets (13-11, 11-6). Dhiren was stretched to the limit by Juan Arraya in the 40+ Pro men's singles category but eventually won 11-9, 3-11, 11-9.

Having won the US Open before in the same category, Dhiren's experience was the key factor in getting him across the line in the closely contested final.

India's tally in the tournament now stands at three gold medals.

"One of the tougher matches so far but I was able to execute my plans and bring home the gold. Winning this category more than once is very special," said Dhiren.

Ghanaian player killed in armed robbery attack

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Accra (Ghana), April 13: Dominic Frimpong of Ghanaian Premier League club Berekum Chelsea was killed after the team's bus was attacked by a group of suspected armed robbers, the country's soccer association said Monday.

The incident happened Sunday as Berekum Chelsea was returning from its game against Samartex in Samreboi in southern Ghana, the club said in a statement.

"Masked men welding guns and assault rifles started shooting at our bus as the driver tried to reverse. The players and staff fled into near by bushes to take cover," the statement read.

The club said one of the players was badly injured and receiving

medical attention at a nearby hospital.

The Ghanaian Football Association later said 20-year-old winger Dominic Frimpong was reportedly killed in the incident.

"This tragic incident is not only a huge loss to Berekum Chelsea but also to Ghana football as a whole. Dominic was a promising young talent whose dedication and passion for the game embodied the spirit of our league," the governing body said in a statement.

The GFA added it would strengthen security measures for clubs traveling for domestic competitions.

In 2023, another Ghanaian Premier League team's bus, Legon Cities, was attacked by suspected armed

robbers, though no injuries were reported.



Wheelchair racing pioneer Hall dies

Bob Hall, the father of wheelchair racing and a 2-time winner of the Boston Marathon, dead at 74

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Boston, April 13: Bob Hall, a childhood polio survivor who became known as the father of wheelchair racing after twice winning the Boston Marathon and then going on to build racing chairs for the generations of competitors that followed, has died. He was 74.

The Boston Athletic Association said on Sunday that Hall's family confirmed his death after a long illness.

In 1975, Hall convinced Boston Marathon organizers to let him into the race and was promised a finishers' certificate like the one the runners got if he completed the 26.2-mile distance in under 3 hours. In 1970, Vietnam War veteran Eugene Roberts, who had lost both of his legs in the war, needed more than six hours to finish.)



Hall crossed the line in 2:58. "It had nothing to do with, per se, the marathon, but it was about the inclusion," Hall said last year, when he served as the grand marshal in Boston on the 50th anniversary of his pioneering ride. "It was that I

was bringing people along." Hall returned to the Boston race in 1977, when it was designated as the site for the National Wheelchair Championship, and prevailed in a field of seven. As they crested Heartbreak Hill, eventual men's winner Bill Rod-

gers and fifth-place finisher Tom Fleming slowed to encourage him. "The interaction was a sign that we were fully accepted as athletes," Hall said.

Hall, who lost the use of both legs from childhood polio, sued in 1978 to have wheelchair racers admitted into the New York Marathon, a fight that wasn't settled until the race created men's and women's wheelchair divisions in 2000.

"Bob Hall is an incredible man," five-time Boston winner and eight-time Paralympic gold medalist Tatyana McFadden said last year. "I'm so thankful for him. And I think we all are, as wheelchair racers, because he really paved the way."

Hall finished in the top three in Boston three other times, and remained active with the race. More than 1,900 wheelchair racers have followed him from Hopkinton to Boston; this year's race on April 20 will include 50 more, along with 50 others in eight para divisions competing for more than \$300,000 in prize money.