



Nora's Mumbai love

Actor Nora Fatehi says she has always wanted to be able to connect with the people of Mumbai

LEISURE | P2



Rare diplomatic talks

Lebanon and Israel hold their first direct talks in decades in Washington Tuesday, after more than a month of Iran war

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Global growth risk

Iran war has stalled the world's economic momentum this year, likely pushing growth lower compared to 2025, the IMF warns

BUSINESS | P11



Cricketers honoured

Indian cricketers dominate the Wisden Almanack 2026 honours, with Deepti Sharma and Abhishek Sharma leading the way

SPORTS | P12

Ashram schoolgirl's death sparks protest

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, April 14: Death of a 12-year-old girl student following suspected food poisoning at a government-run residential school in Mayurbhanj district Tuesday triggered protest and raised serious questions about safety of students and school management.

Rupali Besra, a Class V student of Kakabandha SC&ST Ashram School under Rasgov-



indpur block, succumbed at around 9:10am Tuesday while undergoing treatment at PMR Medical College and Hospital at Baripada.

At least 146 students fell ill after consuming food at the school. They were initially taken to Rasgovindpur CHC, which struggled to cope due to inadequate staffing and infrastructure. With only two doctors on duty and insufficient beds, many students were treated in makeshift facilities, delaying critical care for the seriously ill.

Parents of the affected students claimed the children had fermented rice (pakhala), mashed potatoes, and mango chutney, Sunday, following which they suffered from loose motion and vomiting.

Rupali's condition worsened late at night, and she was shifted to Baripada after midnight. Despite intensive care, she could not be saved.

Her death sparked protests at the hospital and in Kakabandha village. BJD workers, led by district president Sudam Marnadi, staged a demonstration, demanding compensation and strict action against officials. Villagers also blocked roads and reportedly vandalised the school premises. One police personnel sustained injuries during the unrest.

Senior district officials, including Mayurbhanj Collector Hema Kanta Say and SP S Susree, visited the hospital to defuse tensions.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi announced ₹3 lakh ex gratia and an RDC-level inquiry into the matter. A team of doctors will visit the school Wednesday, said the CM.

Meanwhile, the district administration assured to provide ₹7 lakh compensation and jobs for the victim's parents.



CAPTIVATING POSE: Artistes perform Bihu dance during 'Rongali Bihu' celebrations organised by All Assam Students' Union in Guwahati, Assam, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

War may push 2.5mn Indians into poverty

Indians may face tough days ahead as the West Asia crisis threatens to significantly strain the economy. The war may push over 2.5 million people in India into poverty, as rising fuel costs and food inflation weaken household purchasing power. Since India's vulnerability lies in its heavy reliance on West Asia for essential imports, prolonged disruptions could significantly impact both agriculture and industry. The timing is particularly critical, as supply shocks may coincide with the Kharif sowing season, alongside rising fertiliser prices. Small businesses are especially at risk, facing higher input costs, supply chain disruptions, and reduced orders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, April 14: The conflict and military escalation in West Asia threaten to push 2.5 million people in India into poverty and the country is projected to experience some loss in its human development progress, according to estimates and projections by the United Nations.

The United Nations Development

US-IRAN TALKS MAY RESUME THIS WEEK

Washington: Negotiating teams from US and Iran could return to Islamabad this week to resume talks to end the war, sources said Tuesday, after the collapse of weekend negotiations prompted Washington to impose a blockade on Iranian ports. The sides are weighing new in-person negotiations in a bid to reach a deal aimed at ending their six-week war before the ceasefire expires next week, two US officials and person familiar with the development said. They said discussions are still underway about a new round of talks, while a diplomat from one of the mediating countries went further to say Tehran and Washington have agreed to it. Some Pakistani officials also said Tuesday that Islamabad has proposed a second round of talks to the US and Iran.

Trump dials Modi | P9

opment Programme (UNDP), in a report titled 'Military Escalation In The Middle East: Human Development Impacts Across Asia And The Pacific' noted that the conflict is "widening human development pressures across Asia and the Pacific. Through higher fuel, freight, and input costs, the shock is diminishing household purchasing power, raising food insecurity, straining public budgets, and weakening livelihoods."

The preliminary assessment, issued Tuesday, estimates that globally 8.8 million people are at risk of falling into poverty and the West Asia military escalation could cost Asia-Pacific up to USD 299 billion.

In India, poverty is expected to rise from around 4,00,000 to

2.5 million, the report said. It added that the number of people pushed into poverty in the world as a result of the conflict rises from approximately 1.9 million to nearly 8.8 million across scenarios, with South Asia accounting for the largest share, ranging from about 1.7 million to over 8 million, reflecting both the subregion's population size and its higher exposure to income and price shocks.

"India is projected to experience a loss of approximately 0.03-0.12 years of HDI progress, followed by Nepal at around 0.02-0.09 years and Vietnam at 0.02-0.07 years, while for China, the estimated effects on HDI remain limited in magnitude, ranging roughly 0.01-0.05 years," it said.

The report notes that among the region's larger importers, India meets over 90 per cent of its oil needs through imports, sourcing more than 40 per cent of crude imports and 90 per cent of LPG imports from West Asia. Further, West Asian countries supply over 45 per cent of India's fertiliser imports, while 85 per cent of the country's domestic urea production depends on imported regasified liquefied natural gas.

"In India, the timing is especially sensitive: any prolonged disruption would coincide with the preparations for the Kharif (the monsoon cropping season), which begins in June. Urea stocks stood at 6.114 million tons, providing a near-term buffer but not fully insulating the sector if disruptions persist into the planting season," the report added.

India's assessment shows that West Asian markets account for 14 per cent of exports and 20.9 per cent of imports, with roughly USD 48 billion in non-oil exports, particularly in basmati rice, tea, gems and jewellery, and apparel.

LS seats may go up to 850

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: Lok Sabha seats may be increased to up to 850 from the current 543 to "operationalise" the women's reservation law before the 2029 parliamentary polls following a delimitation exercise to be carried out on the basis of last published census.

According to the draft Constitution amendment Bill, which will be introduced and expected to be passed in the upcoming special sitting of Parliament, seats would also be increased in state and Union territory Assemblies to accommodate 33%



reservation for women. The seats reserved for women in Lok Sabha and legislative assemblies "shall be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a state or UT," the Bill circulated among Lok Sabha members said.

Besides other provisions, the Bill seeks to amend Article 81 of the Constitution.

It states that "The House of the People (Lok Sabha) shall consist of not more than 815 members chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in the states; and not more than 35 members to represent the Union territories, chosen in such manner as Parliament may by law provide."

The expression "population", according to the Bill, means the population as ascertained at such census, "as Parliament may by law determine", of which the relevant figures have been published.

As of now figures of 2011 Census are available. The 2027 Census exercise, which began April 1, is ongoing.

Samrat Choudhary to be new Bihar CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, April 14: Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary is set to be the state's first Chief Minister of BJP after he was elected the legislature party leader Tuesday.

Nitish Kumar, who heads the JD(U) and became a Rajya Sabha MP last week, resigned as the chief minister earlier

in the day.

Union minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, whom the BJP parliamentary board named central observer for the legislature party leader's election, said, "Samrat Choudhary was unanimously elected as the BJP's legislature party leader."

The BJP is the single largest party in the 243-strong Bihar Assembly with 89 MLAs.



IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Go home and be proud. Your country is now the fourth-largest economy.

REUTERS

Mumbai, April 14: At Indian startup Pronto's training hub, women hone their chopping and mopping skills while learning how to send SOS signals if they feel unsafe inside customers' homes. They are set to join India's newest consumer craze: house help for \$1 an hour, billed as the cheapest in the world.

Indu Jaiswar, 35, hopes doing household chores in her first job can help fund her son's dream of becoming a doctor. "This is what we've been do-

ing in our own homes for years. Might as well get paid for it," said the mother of two.

In a country with an entrenched culture of outsourcing household work, Indian startups Pronto and Snabbit and listed rival Urban Company are training thousands of domestic helpers. Urban Company estimates India's rapidly growing cleaning services market is worth an estimated \$9 billion and spread across 53 million households.

Like Uber drivers, the helpers receive bookings on their apps, directing them to apart-



ments in assigned neighbourhoods within minutes and press a countdown timer in their apps before starting work. The potential annual earnings from

working eight hours a day can be as high as \$3,000.

The companies are betting big, burning millions of dollars to lure busy professionals

in cities like New Delhi and Mumbai with under ₹99 (\$1) offerings that have no global parallel. Similar services can cost around \$30 an hour in the United States, and around \$7 in China.

However, the craze among consumers and workers is tempered by concerns about women's safety in a country with high rates of sexual harassment. Unlike e-commerce couriers who spend just brief moments at doorsteps, housekeepers may spend hours inside private homes, exposing them to greater risks.

8 PLACES RECORD ABOVE 40° CELSIUS

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 14: At least eight places in Odisha recorded above 40 degrees Celsius, even as severe heatwave conditions continued to grip the state Tuesday. Titlagarh recorded the highest temperature at 41.7 degrees Celsius, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD) sources.

Sambalpur and Hirkud recorded 41.5 degrees Celsius each, while Jharsuguda and Bhawanipatna registered 41 degrees Celsius, said the MeT department. Sonepur recorded 40.6 degrees Celsius, followed by Bolangir at 40.3 degrees Celsius, while it was 40 degrees Celsius at the coal town of Talcher.

The twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack recorded 37.3 degrees Celsius and 37 degrees Celsius, respectively, with relative humidity levels hovering above 80 per cent.

A 'yellow alert' has been issued for several districts, including Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam and Gajapati, warning of hot and humid conditions Wednesday.

Day temperatures are likely to rise by 2-4 degrees Celsius over the next three days, it said.

leisure



SWIFT LEADS 2026 AMA NOMINATIONS

Pop icon Taylor Swift is leading the pack at the American Music Awards (AMAs) with 8 nominations. The singer-songwriter has plenty of chances to extend her historic lead even further this year. The 36-year-old has a record 40 career wins at the AMAs.

NICOLE KIDMAN'S SHOCKING DISCLOSURE

Hollywood star Nicole Kidman has shared that she is training to become a death doula after being inspired by her own experiences before her mom Janelle Ann Kidman, passed away in September 2024 at the age of 84.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES
You may want to tap your feet to a beat only you can hear. Life for you today is sunny. You're able to take quick decisions, while other major ones may be kept on hold. Dance your way home, if that's what pleases you, says Ganesha.

TAURUS
The desire to rule your community, your neighbourhood is likely to get hold of you, today. Don't get carried away by the idea and go bossing around. No one is likely to appreciate your acting high and mighty. Be sure. You will be creating a lot of enemies. Ganesha urges you to reject such thoughts and wait for the evening.

GEMINI
You will be more busy with religious pursuits rather than work today. Religious rituals, charity, philanthropic work, service to the needy, these are some of the issues that will take up your time today. You will feel the need to go to a place of worship today and spend some time there to get mental peace and calm, says Ganesha.

CANCER
The day may not see you in best of the moods, yet you will manage to remain congenial, assures Ganesha. As a boss, you will be authoritative in your actions and that's not a bad thing at all. Although, on most occasions you are a lenient leader, today you will not spare the rod for those who cross lines.

LEO
A good deed is never wasted. Remember this as today, you shall find yourself in the incredible position of being of invaluable assistance to someone in need, says Ganesha. So lend out that helping hand and be assured that your generosity will not be forgotten. On a personal front, you may feel bothered by some minor problem in relationships, but do not fret too much.

VIRGO
First make an assessment of your situation today, and only then make your move, warns Ganesha. You may loosen your limbs in the afternoon, and relieve yourself of the burden that has piled up on your work table. However, Ganesha advises you to act wisely and use your extensive experience when it comes to sealed bids and tenders.

LIBRA
Today, you seem to have the Midas touch, so every task you take in your hands is bound to be a success. You may also want to take time out to spend with your loved ones and lavish them with attention. Also, don't forget to hand out credit to others for their valuable inputs. It pays to be in people's good books.

SCORPIO
The scales await you as many important decisions in life come calling for judgement today. Later in the day, sudden and unexpected profits are on the cards. In the workplace, reputation and rewards may come for previous efforts.

SAGITTARIUS
Ganesha foresees that today, you shall be more selfless and careful than ever. You might be slated to make some profit by involving yourself in shared actions. However, it comes naturally to you to mix business with pleasure, and you shall make the most of it.

CAPRICORN
You may have a good control over your temper, but Ganesha says you are very likely to lose it today, and most likely, at work. For this one day, think before you say anything and avoid getting into any sort of arguments or scuffle. Make sure you take measured steps, for it may not be a very good day, but you can do your bit to prevent it from getting worse.

AQUARIUS
That is only a reflection and not the moon in your soup bowl! Be reasonable in your expectations, advises Ganesha, and give happiness a chance. You may learn an important lesson from your beloved, while your associates will be friendly.

PISCES
You will be at your wit's end today, grappling with financial issues. You will decide to multiply your savings and increase your income by whatever means possible. The good news being you will find it easy to implement your new plans and schemes. Your friends could have some vital insights to share with you about your finances, says Ganesha.

LISA leads by example

Mumbai: Lisa Ray has shared a deeply personal reflection on the emotional challenges of balancing motherhood and a demanding career, offering a candid glimpse into the quiet struggles of working parents.

The Indo-Canadian actress has often used her voice to speak about identity, healing, and selfhood. In a heartfelt note posted on social media, Ray described leaving home early for a professional commitment, choosing not to wake her daughters. "It's never easy being a working mom," she wrote, recalling how she kissed them goodbye while they slept. The absence of a proper farewell, she noted, left behind a "quiet ache" that followed her through airport security. The moment took an emotional turn when she later discovered a note from her children in her bag. The gesture, she said, reaffirmed her purpose. While she acknowledged the deep sense of missing them, Ray emphasized her desire to set an example. She expressed that she wants her daughters to understand that "ambition doesn't expire when you become a parent" and that love and personal aspirations can coexist.

Ray further stressed on the fact that her work is not a choice over her children. Instead, it is a way of shaping a life where they can witness possibilities and independence. "I carry them with me. Always," she added. Known for her work in films like *Kasoor* and *Water*, Ray has built a diverse career across Indian and international cinema, while also inspiring many through her recovery from multiple myeloma.



IAN S

Nora's street connection

Mumbai: Dancing diva and actress Nora Fatehi has penned an "appreciation" post for the "heartwarming and joyful" locals in the heart of Mumbai. She said that she always wanted to connect with them in the rawest way.

Nora took to Instagram, where she shared a BTS video from the making of her song *Sajan Re* with rapper Badshah. In the video, the actress is seen dancing with the locals from area. She's even seen playing with the children and getting clicked with them. "This is an appreciation post to some of the most heart-warming joyful people in the heart of Mumbai. Can't get over how beautiful this moment was!" she wrote as the caption. Nora added: "I've always wanted to be able to connect with the people of Mumbai in the most raw; real way possible and we had the chance while shooting for *Sajan Re*."

Nora shared that the experience left her so "grateful, so humbled to be able to have the love and acceptance from these amazing people."

"Thank you for allowing us into your home. And thank you for being so spontaneous and joyful! Still not over it," she concluded the post. IANS



49TH BAISHAKHI Chinta O Chetana's 4-day summer fest from today



Bhubaneswar: Socio-cultural organisation Chinta O Chetana is set to organise the 49th edition of its flagship cultural festival 'Baishakhi' here at Rabindra Mandap from April 15 to 18.

Sharing the details, secretary Surendra Das said the festival will commence with the ceremonial 'Shree Jagannath Pahandi', creating a devotional ambience. The inaugural evening will feature vibrant performances by traditional 'Ghantuas' alongside classical Odissi and Gotipua dancers, symbolising a harmonious blend of spirituality and art.

The four-day cultural extravaganza will showcase a diverse array of performances, bringing together eminent artists from the state and beyond. Renowned Odissi exponent Aruna Mohanty will headline the opening day along with her troupe from the Orissa

Dance Academy, promising a spellbinding presentation.

In addition to the performances, around 28 distinguished personalities from various fields will be felicitated during the festival in recognition of their contributions.

Founded in 1980 by former Odisha Chief Minister Harekrushna Mahtab, Chinta O Chetana has evolved into a prominent socio-cultural organisation in the state. Beyond promoting art and culture, it remains committed to uplifting socially, economically, and educationally marginalised communities. The organisation continues to engage eminent personalities from diverse domains in its mission to foster inclusive socio-cultural development across India.

Dharitri and **Orissa POST** are the print media partners for the event. PNN

Taapsee channels her inner strength

Mumbai: Actor Taapsee Pannu is set to push her limits in the upcoming Netflix film *Gandhari*, where she will perform intense action sequences while blindfolded. Known for her strong screen presence and unconventional choices, Pannu has built a reputation with films like *Pink*, *Thappad*, *Badla*, and *Haseen Dillruba*, often portraying layered, resilient women navigating complex emotional and social landscapes.

The revenge drama is written by Kanika Dhillon and directed by Devashish Makhija.

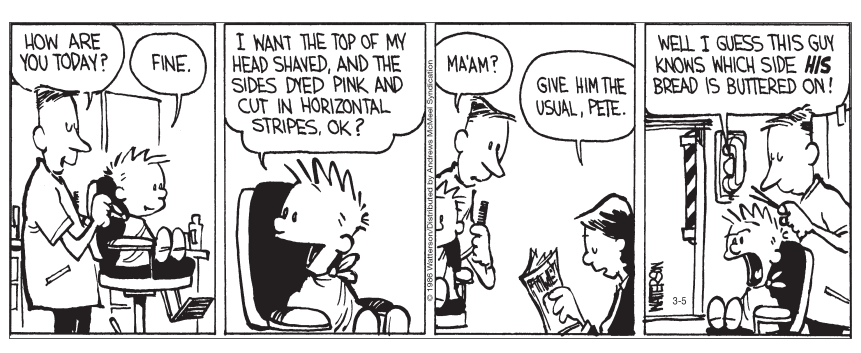
A source close to the project shared, "Taapsee Pannu is set to push boundaries like never before, performing intense action sequences while blindfolded, adding a whole new layer of challenge to her character." The source added, "This isn't just stunt work; rather, it's a new way of thinking about action heroes. In the blindfolded fight scenes, she cannot use her sight and must depend on instinct, muscle memory, and inner strength, turning her vulnerability into power."

Gandhari revolves around a mother's relentless search for her kidnapped child, placing emotional intensity at its core. Drawing inspiration from *Gandhari* in the *Mahabharata*, the film hints at symbolic parallels of strength, sacrifice, and resilience. AGENCIES

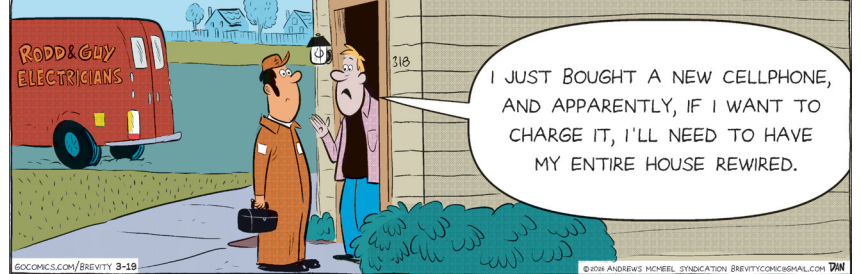
PEANUTS



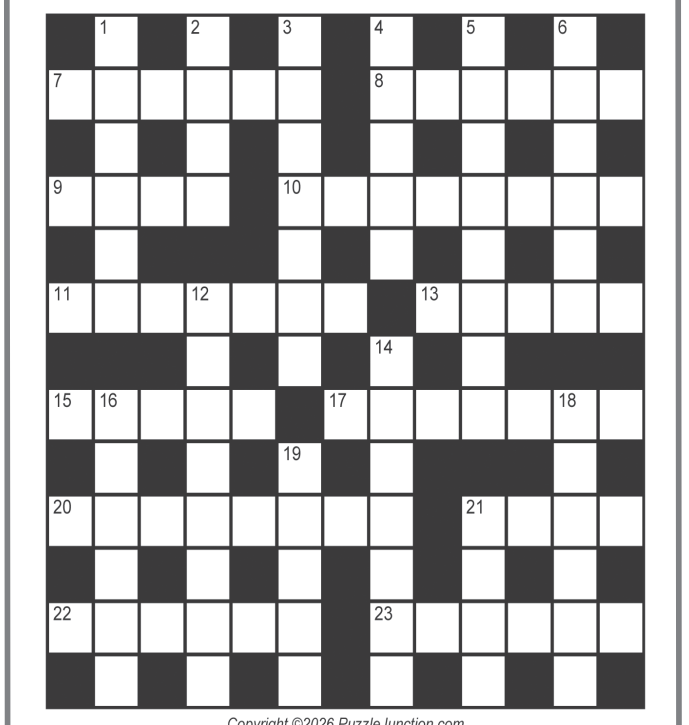
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



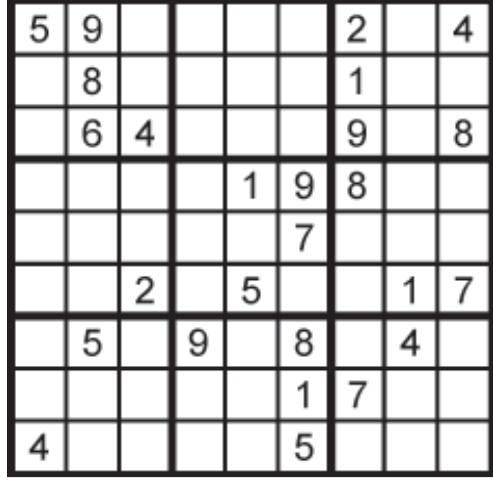
FUN POST CROSSWORD



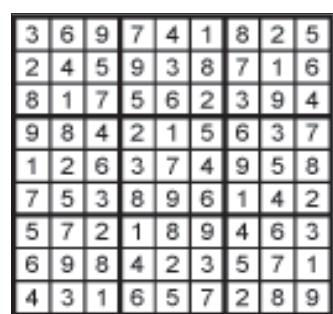
- Across**
- 7 Lentil, for one
 - 8 Bread units
 - 9 Scarf material
 - 10 Furnished
 - 11 Stableboys
 - 13 Kitchen gadget
 - 15 Ticket parts
 - 17 Showed the way
 - 20 Break up
 - 21 Shipshape
- Down**
- 22 The outback, e.g.
 - 23 Lay out funds
 - 1 Dangers
 - 2 Rubbish
 - 3 Cooking method (4-3)
 - 4 Permit
 - 5 Public park
 - 6 Ebb
 - 12 Kind of retriever
 - 14 Danger for sailors
 - 16 Motifs
 - 18 Novelist's need
 - 19 Artist's stand
 - 21 T-shirts and blouses

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Couple, toddler killed in mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, April 14: A couple and their one-and-a-half-year-old son were killed after a pickup van collided with their motorcycle in Bolangir Tuesday evening, police said.

The mishap occurred near Satamile Chhak and Bhaishapali toll gate on NH-57. The victims were identified as Ramakanta Naik, his wife Binapani Naik, and their son, all residents of Dumberbhal village under Puintala police limits.

According to police, the family was on its way home from Bolangir town on a motorcycle when a speeding pickup van coming from the opposite direction hit them. Ramakanta and the child died on the spot, while Binapani sustained critical injuries.

She was initially rushed to Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital in Bolangir. However, she succumbed to her injuries while being shifted to VIMSAR in Burla, officials said.

Following the incident, locals staged a protest at the accident site, demanding compensation for the victims' family. The protesters blocked the highway, disrupting vehicular movement for some time.

Police later reached the spot and pacified the agitated crowd, after which the road blockade was lifted.



SAFETY FIRST

Security personnel conduct a march in Sector 80 amid ongoing workers' protest to maintain law and order, in Noida, Tuesday (Report P9)

PTI PHOTO

India's Russian oil imports more than triple in March

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: India's crude oil purchases from Russia more than tripled to 5.3 billion euro in March as volumes doubled and a surge in oil prices pushed up the import bill.

European think tank Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), in a report, said after a drop in purchases in February, India was back to a buying binge in March.

"India was the second-highest buyer of Russian fossil fuels in March 2026, importing a total of EUR 5.8 billion of Russian hydrocarbons. Crude oil products constituted 91 per cent of India's purchases, totalling EUR 5.3 billion," it said. Coal (EUR 337 million) and oil products (EUR 178.5 million) constituted the remainder of their monthly imports.

In February, India was the third largest importer, purchasing Russian hydrocarbons worth 1.8 billion euro. Crude oil constituted the largest share at 81 per cent (EUR 1.4 billion), followed by coal (EUR 223 million) and oil products (EUR 121 million). "While India's total crude imports recorded a 4 per cent reduction in March, Russian imports doubled," CREA said. The spurt in volumes followed the US granting a one-month sanctions waiver on Russian oil, covering cargoes already at sea and shipments on previously sanctioned vessels.

13 killed in Chhattisgarh Vedanta plant explosion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sakti (Chhattisgarh), April 14: In a major industrial accident, at least 13 workers were killed and 21 others injured after a steam-carrying tube connected to a boiler exploded at a Vedanta Ltd power plant in Sakti district of Chhattisgarh Tuesday afternoon, police said.

The powerful blast occurred at around 2:30 pm in a tube supplying high-pressure steam from the boiler to the turbine at the Vedanta Ltd power plant in Singhitara village causing severe burns to workers, Sakti Superintendent of Police (SP) Prafull Thakur told PTI.

Soon after the accident, local administration personnel and police teams rushed to the spot and launched rescue operations, he said. While four workers died on the spot, around 30 others were injured and rushed to different hospitals in neighbouring Raigarh and Bilaspur districts, the IPS officer stated.

"Nine more workers succumbed to injuries later. Altogether 21 injured workers are being treated in different hospitals," an Industrial Safety



Department official in Raigarh said. The private company put the death toll at 10. At least six of the injured are stated to be in critical condition, said power plant officials. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai expressed grief over the incident and announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh to the kin of each deceased worker and ₹50,000 to those injured.

Sai ordered the Commissioner of Bilaspur division to conduct an inquiry into the tragedy and said the strictest possible action would be taken against anyone found guilty in the probe. The district administration has ordered a separate magisterial probe into the industrial accident, while Vedanta has initiated its own inquiry.

The CM termed the incident "extremely tragic" and expressed condolences to the bereaved families. In a statement, Sai said during these difficult times, the state government stands firmly with the affected families. The CM has directed officials to ensure proper and free medical treatment is arranged for all the injured individuals. While wishing for the speedy recovery of the injured, he emphasised that no negligence in their treatment would be tolerated, it said. In a statement released in Mumbai, Vedanta, which is listed on exchanges, put the death toll at 10 and said the affected workers were personnel from a sub-contractor hired by the diversified global natural resources conglomerate.

"We regret to inform that an unfortunate incident occurred at Unit-1 boiler of company's Athena Power plant located at Singhitara, Chhattisgarh on April 14, 2026, involving personnel of company's sub-contractor, NGSL. As of now 24 workmen of our sub-contractor have been affected by the incident and 10 have succumbed to their injuries," said the statement.

Ambedkar Bhavan to come up in City soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Tuesday announced that Ambedkar Bhavan will soon be constructed in Kharvela Nagar area of Bhubaneswar.

While attending a state-level event marking the birth anniversary of Dr BR Ambedkar at Soochana Bhavan here, the CM said that Ambedkar is not just a name, but an ideology that shows the path of equality.

Majhi stated that the creation of a society based on equality and justice would be the best tribute to 'Babasaheb'. "Ambedkar Bhavan will soon be constructed in Kharvela Nagar area," Majhi announced, directing officials to prepare the Detailed Project Report for the proposed facility.

In his speech, the CM highlighted Dr Ambedkar's life



Ranveer Brar named Odia cuisine ambassador

A significant step to take Odisha's culinary heritage to the global stage, celebrity chef Ranveer Brar was announced as the brand ambassador for the promotion of Odia cuisine during the concluding event of 'Odia Pakhya-2026' in Bhubaneswar Tuesday. The initiative aims to showcase Odisha's rich and diverse food traditions—ranging from everyday staples to festive delicacies—before a global audience. Chef Avinash was also named the 'Odia Culinary Champion', while chefs Anju and Manju will support efforts to preserve and promote traditional recipes and culinary knowledge. Following the announcement, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi delivered a keynote address, calling upon people to make Odia language, culture, and traditions an integral part of daily life rather than limiting them to symbolic celebrations. He said the success of 'Odia Pakhya' reflects a growing cultural consciousness and should evolve into a sustained people's movement.

struggles and dedication to education, noting that 'Babasaheb' fought throughout his life for social equality.

"The state government is committed to the advancement

of Dalits, tribals, and backward classes, inspired by the ideals of Dr Ambedkar," Majhi said. He added that a prosperous Odisha is not possible without the upliftment of the

most backward sections of society.

He further stated, "Since our government came to power in Odisha, several Central schemes have been implemented to ensure the rights of Dalits and Scheduled Castes. More than ₹6,649 crore has been allocated in the current Budget for the development of Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. In addition, special attention is being given to the development of the PVTG category." The CM described the new reservation system in engineering and medical education as a historic step, adding that talent is not limited to any caste or religion and can flourish when given the right opportunities.

On the occasion, Majhi also presented awards to winners of various state-level competitions organised by the Information and Public Relations department.

CBI RAIDS 77 LOCATIONS IN 8 STATES

NEW DELHI: The CBI has carried out extensive searches at 77 locations across eight states/UTs in connection with 22 new FIRs related to an alleged nexus between some builders and officials of financial institutions, resulting in cheating and defrauding homebuyers. "These coordinated search operations, conducted across different states, are part of a nationwide crackdown. The searches have resulted in seizure of incriminating documents, digital devices, and other materials, which are currently being examined," an official said.

Scorpions back in India after nearly 2 decades

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: Guitarist Matthias Jabs still remembers how he tried to learn sitar when he and fellow Scorpions band members—founder-guitarist Rudolf Schenker and vocalist Klaus Meine—toured India in 2007.

The German hard rock band is back and all the members are looking forward to collect many such memories when they perform in Shillong April 21, Delhi-NCR April 24, Bengaluru April 26 and in Mumbai April 30 as part of their Coming Home tour, produced and promoted by BookMyShow Live.

"We have great memories from playing in India almost 20 years ago. We played in Shillong, Mumbai... and we're going to play again in those cities this time around. The audience is fantastic, it's a rock audience and we have best memories. And now, since it's such a long time ago, we expect to play to



a new generation also because it's almost 20 years ago and it's time for us to come back now," Jabs said.

On their 60th anniversary tour, the band, which gave all-time rock hits like 'Rock You Like a Hurricane', 'Wind of Change', 'Still Loving You', 'No One Like You' and 'Send Me an Angel', was founded in Hanover in 1965 by Schenker.

"When we were in Mumbai, I went on a day off to a music store and I bought sitar and started learning it. But I real-

ised it's not easy. It's very difficult and you have to sit down in a certain way, which I'm not used to, because we are running around on stage with our guitars. But it was a nice experience and the very nice people in that music store tried to help me learn the instrument as a sort of a beginner," Jabs said.

Schenker, Meine and Jabs have been with the band for the longest time with bassist Pawel Maciwoda and drummer Mikkey Dee joining in the past decades.

Asked what was the secret to their longevity and success as one of the longest surviving bands ever, Schenker attributed it to their chemistry.

"You have to make sure that the chemistry in the band is the right chemistry, because out of this chemistry, the music comes out and that's a very important point. You have lots of things to say by travelling around the world and that's what we as a band (do)...," Schenker said.

"Also playing in India was a very outstanding kind of challenge and inspiration and that was fantastic and that makes the music even better because out of this inspiration, we had enough possibilities to write more great songs and getting more and more fans into our fan base," Schenker, who visited the country in 2012 again, said.

Meine also has fond memories of their trip to Shillong and how people there welcomed the band.

WATCH THEM LIVE

- Shillong April 21
- Delhi-NCR April 24
- Bengaluru April 26
- Mumbai April 30

On their 60th anniversary tour, the band, which gave all-time rock hits like 'Rock You Like a Hurricane', 'Wind of Change', 'Still Loving You', 'No One Like You' and 'Send Me an Angel', was founded in Hanover in 1965 by guitarist Rudolf Schenker

Schenker, vocalist Klaus Meine and guitarist Matthias Jabs have been with the band for the longest time with bassist Pawel Maciwoda and drummer Mikkey Dee joining in the past decades

Celebrating Golden Jubilee 50 Years

ବୈଶାଖୀ BAISHAKHI

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନବବର୍ଷର ଅନନ୍ୟ ମହୋତ୍ସବ

ଓଡ଼ିଆ ତଥା ବେଶର ଗୋଟିଏ ଅନୁକୋଶକୁ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ଓ ନୂତନ, ପାରମ୍ପରିକ ଓ ଶାସ୍ତ୍ରୀୟ ନୃତ୍ୟ ସଙ୍ଗୀତ ଦଳ ଏହି ମହୋତ୍ସବର ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସମ୍ପାଦନାରେ ସେମାନଙ୍କର କଳା-ନୈପୁଣ୍ୟ ପ୍ରଦର୍ଶନ କରିବେ ।

ତିରା ଓ ଚେତନାର ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରୀୟ ସମ୍ମାନ ବିଜିତ୍ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରରେ କୃତବିଦମାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯିବ (ବିଗତ ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷର) ।

ଓଡ଼ିଆର ଅସ୍ମିତାକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦିତ କରିବାରେ ତିରା ଓ ଚେତନାର ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନବବର୍ଷ ମହୋତ୍ସବ ୪୯ତମ ବୈଶାଖୀ ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ମହକରେ ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କୁ ଭିକାରଦେବ । ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସମ୍ପାଦନାରେ ଦେଶ ଓ ରାଜ୍ୟର ବିଭିନ୍ନ କ୍ଷେତ୍ରର ଖ୍ୟାତନାମା ଦ୍ୟାକିବିଶେଷ ଅତିଥି ଭାବେ ଯୋଗ ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି ।

ଅପ୍ରତି ୧୫ ଲୁ ୧୮ ଚାରିଶ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସମ୍ପାଦନା ୬ଟା
ସ୍ଥାନ : ରବୀନ୍ଦ୍ର ମଣ୍ଡପ, ଭୁବନେଶ୍ୱର

ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସମ୍ପାଦନା ସତର ଆକର୍ଷଣ ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ଶ୍ରୀକରନାଥଙ୍କ ବିଦ୍ୟ ପହଞ୍ଚି ଓ ଆରତି ନବବର୍ଷର ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ସହ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ସାଦର ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ
⇒ ଅପେକ୍ଷାରେ ⇐

ତିରା ଓ ଚେତନାର ବୈଶାଖୀ ପରିବାର

OrissaPOST

President, PM, CM greet people on Odia New Year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 14: President Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other dignitaries Tuesday greeted the people of Odisha on the occasion of 'Maha Bishuba Sankranti', also known as the Odia New Year.

Governor Hari Babu Kam-bhampati and Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Union ministers Amit Shah, Nitin Gadkari and Dharmendra Pradhan, and Leader of Opposition in the state Assembly Naveen Patnaik also extended their greetings.

Murmu, in an X post, said, "On the auspicious occasion of Baisakhi, Vishu, Vishuv, Bohag Bihu, Poila Baisakh, Mesadi, Vaishakhaadi, and Puthandu, I extend my greetings and best wishes to all my fellow citizens in India and abroad."

Modi, in a social media post, said, "Happy Maha Bishuba Pana Sankranti! Heartiest greetings to our sisters and brothers of Odisha on the auspicious occasion of Maha Bishuba Sankranti. May the blessings of Prabhu Jagannath bring happiness and good health to everyone."

Shah also extended his greetings on the occasion and prayed for the well-being of everyone.

The Governor said the festival highlights the grandeur of the state's culture, sweetness of its traditions, and pride of Odia identity.

Majhi said, "May this new year fill your lives with happiness, peace, and prosperity, and may it imbue us with renewed strength to further honour our culture and Odia identity on the global stage."

Patnaik hoped that the New



PANA RITUAL: Devotees partake of 'pana' at Ram temple in Bhubaneswar on Odia New Year, Tuesday

Miss India contestants celebrate at KIIT

Bhubaneswar: The Odia New Year was celebrated at the KIIT campus by 30 contestants of the 61st Femina Miss India competition, who immersed themselves in traditional Odia festivities. Dressed in Odisha's famed patta silk sarees, they savoured authentic Odia cuisine, including the traditional delicacy chhena poda. The contestants appreciated the state's rich culture and heritage and expressed their commitment to promoting Odisha's traditions across the country. The 30 state winners, who have qualified for the 61st Femina Miss India event scheduled to be held at KIIT on April 18, are currently staying on the campus. Femina Miss India 2024 Nikita Porwal also joined them during the celebrations. Organised in collaboration with the Tourism department, the event is being held with the support of KIIT and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta, with the aim of promoting Odisha's art, culture and heritage. This is the first time the event is being held in Odisha, marking a significant opportunity to showcase the state's rich cultural heritage.



Year would bring new hopes and possibilities for all.

Special rituals were held at Puri's Jagannath temple on the occasion and the newly prepared almanac was read before the sibling deities.

On the occasion, people observe fast and offer new clothes and 'pana' (sweet water) to the deities at different temples. The 'pana' is prepared with water, jaggery, yoghurt and spices.

On the occasion, people of Odisha also observe 'Jhamu Jatra', during which people walk barefoot on burning charcoal as part of their penance, and also to express gratitude to God for fulfilling their wishes.

The day is observed with various names in different regions of the state. While it is called 'Chadak Parva' in north Odisha, it is called 'Danda Nata' in the southern part of the state.

'Aarohan' launched to boost early education

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: The state government Tuesday launched 'Aarohan', a programme aimed at strengthening early childhood education and ensuring holistic development of young children across the state, on the occasion of Maha Bishuba Sankranti and the Odia New Year.

Deputy Chief Minister Pravat Parida inaugurated the initiative at the ICWS campus here. In a symbolic gesture, she applied tikka on the foreheads of children and distributed the 'Aarohan' kits, extending her blessings and encouragement as they begin the next phase of their learning journey.

The programme introduced by Women and Child Development department, carries the



inspiring tagline "Ujwala Bhabisyat Pain Pade Agaku" (Step Forward for a Bright Future), reflecting its goal of building a stronger foundation for every child in the state. The primary focus of 'Aarohan' is to reinforce early childhood education

and facilitate a smooth transition for children completing pre-primary learning at Anganwadi centres into Bal Vatika-3.

Addressing parents and children at the event, Parida underscored the importance of the first six years in a child's

life, calling it the most critical phase for brain development. She noted that during Poshan Pakhya 2026, the government is placing special emphasis on early childhood care. She also stressed that the responsibility of nurturing children extends beyond the government, requiring active involvement from families and society.

Commissioner-cum-Secretary of the department, Mrunalini Darswal, highlighted the importance of dedicated efforts from Anganwadi workers and officials to strengthen the centres and promote holistic child development.

The event was attended by senior officials including Swoyam Prabha Mohanty, Itishree Das, and Jyoti Ranjan, along with representatives from partner organizations.



CULTURAL FINALE: Artistes perform at Utkal Mandap in Bhubaneswar during the closing ceremony of Capital Foundation Day, Tuesday

Funkwal reviews Puri station devtpt works

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Parmeshwar Funkwal Tuesday inspected the Khurda Road-Puri section and reviewed station development works at Puri in view of the forthcoming Rath Yatra.

The inspection focused on assessing track conditions, signalling systems and overall operational efficiency along this key route, which witnesses a surge in passenger traffic during major pilgrimage occasions.



At Puri station, the GM undertook a comprehensive review of ongoing redevelopment and passenger amenity enhancement works, with a strong emphasis on pilgrimage centric infrastructure. Considering the massive influx of devotees during Rath Yatra, efforts are being prioritised to ensure smooth passenger handling and improved facilities.

During the inspection, emphasis was laid on augmentation and upgradation of passenger amenities to cater to the heavy pilgrim rush, including development of platforms, circulating areas, waiting halls, and overall improvement in passenger centric infrastructure to enhance convenience and ease of movement.

Funkwal laid special emphasis on the timely completion of all redevelopment works at Puri station ahead of Rath Yatra, directing officials to closely monitor progress and ensure readiness well in advance of the festival. He stressed that all works must be executed with a passenger-centric approach to facilitate safe, smooth, and comfortable movement of pilgrims.

He also underscored the importance of maintaining high standards of safety, sanitation, and inter-departmental coordination to ensure efficient train operations during the peak pilgrimage period.

Digital Census to begin April 16

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: The Directorate of Census Operations, Odisha, under the Ministry of Home Affairs, in collaboration with the Revenue and Disaster Management (R&DM) department, will commence the first phase of the Census and house-listing operations across all 30 districts from April 16.

Addressing a press meet here, Census Operations Director Nikhil Pavan Kalyan informed that trained enumerators and supervisors will carry out door-to-door data collection from April 16 to May 15 using a dedicated mobile application. He highlighted that this exercise marks a major step forward, as it will be India's first fully digital Census.

He further stated that the Self-Enumeration programme, currently underway from April 1, will continue till midnight of April 15. Citizens can submit their details online through the official portal (se.census.gov.in). So far, over 1.76 lakh families have already participated in the initiative.



Urging greater public participation, Kalyan appealed to citizens to complete the self-enumeration process within the stipulated timeline to ensure accurate and efficient data collection.

For the smooth execution of the programme, a robust administrative structure has been put in place. District Collectors and Municipal Corporation Commissioners will function as Principal Census Officers, while Additional District Collectors have been designated as District Census Officers. Tahsildars and Executive Officers of statutory towns will serve as Charge Officers under their respective districts.

The R&DM department has been appointed as the nodal agency for the exercise. Primary school teachers from the School and Mass Education Department will act as enumer-

ators, while high school teachers will supervise the process.

A toll-free helpline (1855) has also been set up to assist citizens with queries related to the Census and House Listing operations. As part of the awareness drive, a dedicated theme song on the Census will be formally launched during the programme.

Officials noted that along with the use of digital platforms such as the CMMS portal for creating house listing blocks, the self-enumeration data will be re-verified by field enumerators to maintain accuracy.

The Directorate has appealed to the public to extend full cooperation, emphasising that citizen participation is vital for the successful implementation of this large-scale national exercise.

Street plays highlight Nari Shakti Vandan Act

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: To raise awareness about the Nari Shakti Vandan Act, 2023, female students from colleges across the state have turned to street theatre as a medium of expression.

In Bhubaneswar, students from BJB Autonomous College, Rama Devi Women's University, Rajdhani College and Kamala Nehru Women's College staged impactful street plays highlighting the importance of women's empowerment and political participation.

The performances were held at prominent public locations, including Utkal Galleria Mall, Baramunda Bus Stand, Bhubaneswar Railway Station and Market Building, drawing significant attention from passers-by. A total of 32 students participated in the initiative.

The plays, centred on the Women's Reservation Act, were well received by audiences. The participating students described street theatre as a powerful medium of outreach.

AI capacity-building workshop concludes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: The four-day Artificial Intelligence (AI) Capacity Building Workshop, jointly organised by the Biju Patnaik University of Technology (BPUT) and Odisha Knowledge Corporation Limited (OKCL), concluded here recently.

More than 300 officials from 145 BPUT-affiliated technical institutions participated in the workshop, which was specifically designed for principals and placement heads.

BPUT Vice Chancellor Amiya Kumar Rath attended the closing ceremony as the chief guest. He interacted with the participants and expressed satisfaction with the workshop's outcomes. On the occasion, OKCL Managing Director

Manoranjan Puthal stated that the use of AI will enhance operational efficiency. He emphasised that OKCL is committed to advancing AI skill development programs across the state.

Director of the University's Graduate and Postgraduate Centre, Sivkumar Mishra advised participants to start using AI in their administrative work. Director of Curriculum Development Sujit Kumar Khuntia stressed the need to expand the scope of AI usage and explore its potential further.

The contributions of Anshuman Sar, Jayesh Mahato, and other staff members were instrumental in making the workshop a success.

During the closing ceremony, Rath and Puthal honoured all participants with certificates and various AI tools.

EASING HOLIDAY RUSH Railways rolls out summer specials

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 14: In order to manage the sharp rise in passenger traffic during the summer season, Indian Railways has announced a series of special trains aimed at ensuring smoother travel and better connectivity across major routes.

These additional services are designed to reduce the burden on regular trains while offering more comfortable travel options for passengers heading to popular destinations.

According to sources from East Coast Railway (ECoR), the summer special trains will operate on key routes including Anand Vihar-Khurda Road, Bhubaneswar-Kolkata, Visakhapatnam-Shalimar, Sambalpur-Shalimar, Patna-Khurda Road and Puri-Patna.

The Anand Vihar Terminal-Khurda Road Special (04066) will depart Anand Vihar every Monday at 12:30am from April



20 to May 11, reaching Khurda Road at 11:30am on Tuesday. In return, Khurda Road-Anand Vihar Terminal Special (04065) will leave Khurda Road every Tuesday at 3:30pm from April 21 to May 12, arriving at Anand Vihar Terminal at 3:40am Thursday.

Bhubaneswar-Kolkata Special (08401) will run every Tuesday at 12:50am from April 14 to April 28, reaching Kolkata at 11:30am the same day. Its counterpart, the Kolkata-Bhu-

baneswar Special (08402), will depart Kolkata every Tuesday at 5:10pm during the same period and arrive in Bhubaneswar at 12:45am the next day.

Additionally, the 08502 Visakhapatnam-Shalimar Special will operate every Friday until April 24, while the Shalimar-Visakhapatnam Special (08503) will run every Saturday until April 25.

The Sambalpur-Shalimar Special (08301) is scheduled ev-

ery Wednesday from April 15 to April 29, and the Shalimar-Sambalpur Special (08302) will run every Thursday from April 16 to April 30.

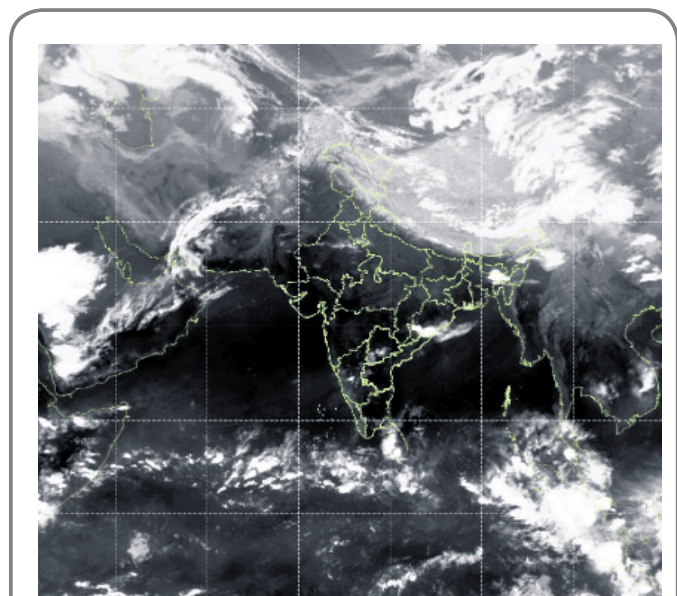
Further expanding connectivity, the Patna-Khurda Road Special (03230) will run every Thursday until May 14, while the Khurda Road-Patna Special (03229) will operate every Friday until mid-May.

The Puri-Patna Special (08439) will run every Saturday until May 16, and Patna-Puri Special (08440) will operate every Sunday until May 15.

Passengers are advised to check updated schedules and seat availability on the official Indian Railways website or at nearby railway stations before planning their journey.

These special trains are part of Indian Railways' continued efforts to ensure safe, efficient, and hassle-free travel during the peak summer holiday season, enhancing the overall passenger experience.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	93.07 ↓ 0.14	SENSEX	76847.57 ↓ 702.68	GOLD	₹154,067 ↑ ₹1995
EURO	109.78 ▲ 0.15	NIFTY	23842.65 ↓ 207.95	SILVER	₹252,192 ▲ ₹11,311



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	37.3°	37.0°	Dry weather very likely to prevail over all the districts of Odisha
Min Temp	26.9°	24.6°	
Humidity	81%	80%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

Nabarangpur: Lack of roads cripples healthcare



POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, April 14: Development has stalled for hundreds of villages in the district, cut off by poor or non-existent roads. In emergencies, residents are forced to carry patients to hospitals on slings or makeshift cots, highlighting the stark lack of basic infrastructure.

In as many as 259 villages in the district, the situation is so dire that even motorcycles cannot reach them—let alone ambulances. Pregnant women, new mothers, and critically ill patients are often carried on cots or on shoulders to the nearest motorable road, laying bare the severe gaps in rural infrastructure.

During monsoon, 124 villages become completely cut off due to muddy and uneven terrains, while 135 villages remain beyond the reach of ambulance services throughout the year.

Block-wise data underlines the scale of the crisis: Five villages in Papadahandi, 38 in Tentulikhunti, three in Nandahandi, 27 in Jharigaon, 42 in Raigarh, 14 in Chandahandi and two in Umerkote have no motorable roads.

The administration has set up nine maternity waiting homes, each with six beds, to support expectant mothers from remote areas. However, repeated demands to increase bed capacity from 10 to 15 have yet to be addressed.

Women from inaccessible regions are brought to these centres days before delivery to ensure safer childbirth. Despite such measures, poor connectivity continues to weaken healthcare outcomes.

The situation is further compounded by a shortage of doctors and specialists. Even where medical facilities exist, delays in reaching out to the

patients raise concerns about the effectiveness of healthcare services in the district.

Although multiple government schemes and grants target rural development, gaps in implementation—particularly in road infrastructure—remain evident. Many affected villages are located in forest areas, where road construction faces administrative and legal hurdles. Experts, however, question whether these challenges justify prolonged deprivation of basic services.

They call for a coordinated approach, including special policy measures and simplified clearances for road construction in forest regions. Expanding mobile medical units and organising regular health camps in remote pockets are also seen as critical. Incentives to attract doctors to underserved areas have been suggested.

“Roads are not merely a means of transport; they are lifelines,” observers say, warning that without connectivity, development efforts will continue to fall short.

When contacted, District Rural Development Agency Chief Development Officer Biranchi Narayan Darwan said road projects are progressing despite challenges related to forested areas. He noted that securing forest clearance in Papadahandi block remains difficult, while road works in Tentulikhunti block are nearing completion.

Youth suffers fall, dies during Chadak festival

MALKANGIRI: A tragic incident occurred in MPV-36 village under Manyamkonda panchayat in Kalimela block of Malkangiri district, where a young man died after falling from a date palm tree while performing rituals associated with Chadak Puja. According to reports, Chadak Puja is observed in several Bengali-inhabited villages of the district during the last week of the Chaitra month. As part of the ritual, devotees offer prayers near date palm trees and pluck dates to offer to Goddess Kali and Lord Shiva. The individual who climbs the tree to collect the dates observes a day-long fast and participates in the ritual as an act of devotion. While the festival was underway Tuesday, a youth climbed a date palm tree to pluck the fruits in MPV-36 village. Another young man was also attempting to climb the same tree. However, neither of them was using any safety equipment such as ropes or protective gear. After collecting the dates, the youth slipped while descending the tree and fell to the ground, losing consciousness. Villagers immediately rushed him to the Kalimela Community Health Centre, where doctors declared him dead. Following the incident, the Chadak Puja celebrations in the village were halted, and a pall of grief descended over the area.

2-tonne ganja haul seized in Gajapati

POST NEWS NETWORK

R Udayagiri, April 14: Gajapati police have seized over 2,010 kg of cannabis estimated to be worth ₹2 crore from a dense forest, marking a major breakthrough in their anti-drug drive.

The seizure comes days after IPS officer Rakesh Kumar Sahu took charge as the Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) of R Udayagiri. Since then, he has intensified operations against illegal cannabis trade while tightening law and order, putting organised smuggling networks under pressure.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



11-ft crocodile found dead in Hansua River

POST NEWS NETWORK



Rajnagar, April 14: A crocodile measuring 11 feet 3 inches in length was found dead in the Hansua River in Rajnagar area of Kendrapara district, forest officials said Tuesday.

The carcass was spotted floating near Sanaor Monday evening, following which local residents alerted the Forest department. A team reached the spot by boat, retrieved the dead reptile and later transported it to the Rajnagar range office for examination.

According to officials, the crocodile was missing its left limb, indicating it may have died following a territorial fight with another crocodile. Such incidents are more likely during the breeding season, which has recently begun.

A four-member team led by veterinary officer Dr Prakash Kumar Jena conducted an autopsy. Preliminary findings suggest the animal had died around eight to 10 days ago and the carcass had begun to decompose.

Forest authorities said further investigation is underway to confirm the exact cause of death.

NIT Rourkela gets nat'l quantum nod



POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, April 14: The National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela has secured national recognition at the Annual Quantum Conclave 2026 for advancing quantum education initiatives.

The honour was conferred by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, following a technical review of the institute's Minor Degree in Quantum Technology. The committee endorsed both the curriculum and a proposal to establish an undergraduate quantum technology laboratory under the National

Quantum Mission. The recognition was presented during the conclave held at Indian Institute of Technology Bombay April 10-11, where Prof JP Kar received the award on behalf of the institute.

The Minor Degree programme is jointly offered by the Departments of Physics & Astronomy and Computer Science & Engineering, underscoring an interdisciplinary approach to emerging technologies.

NIT Rourkela is among 23 institutions selected nationwide under the National Quantum Mission to set up quantum teaching laboratories. The initiative aims to provide students with advanced theoretical knowledge and practical exposure in quantum science, aligning education with future technological demands.

The conclave brought together scientists, policymakers, startups and academic leaders, highlighting India's growing push in quantum technologies.

TEACHERLESS FOR A DECADE Sanskrit school in deep crisis

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, April 14: A government Sanskrit school at Vedvyas in Rourkela has been functioning for the past 10 years under the sole supervision of a Grade-IV employee, raising serious concerns over the quality of education for its 180 students.

The Gurukul Vedvyas Government Sanskrit School, established in 1965, offers education from Class VI to Class X, combining traditional Vedic studies with upper primary and secondary-level curricula. However, the institution has been operating without a permanent headmaster or appointed teachers for over a decade.

As a result, students, around 90 per cent of whom belong to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe categories, are reportedly being deprived of proper academic instruction. Local residents and students have alleged that the absence of qual-



ified teaching staff has severely disrupted the learning process.

Despite its recognition as a prominent government educational institution in the Vedvyas area, the prolonged shortage of teachers has undermined students' fundamental right to education. Intellectuals and community members have also pointed out that the situation amounts to a blatant violation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Students from distant areas enrol in the school with the aim of gaining knowledge in Vedas and Upanishads and securing a better future. However, sources say the institution has failed to meet these expectations due to the lack of proper teaching personnel.

Locals and students have demanded immediate intervention by the authorities, urging the appointment of permanent teachers to restore normal academic functioning.

When contacted, District Education Officer Muralidhar Behera said that no government approval has yet been received for teacher recruitment in Sanskrit schools. “Once approval is granted, necessary teachers will be appointed in the school,” he said. He added that if the Grade-IV employee currently managing the school submits a written report highlighting the issues, deputation teachers may be assigned temporarily based on necessity.

Historic 'Para Bhadi' in Ganjam fading into oblivion

AN INQUIRY REVEALED THAT A PERSON HAS ALLEGEDLY FRAUDULENTLY SECURED A LAND TITLE IN HIS NAME FOR THE GOVERNMENT LAND WHERE THE PIGEON LOFT STANDS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Ganjam, April 14: The historic “Para Bhadi” or pigeon loft here, believed to be around 400 years old, is now in a dilapidated condition due to lack of maintenance, raising concerns over the loss of a rich heritage structure.

Once a vital communication hub, the structure served as a pigeon post centre from where hundreds of trained pigeons carried messages across long distances and reliably returned to their nests. The nearly 50-foot-tall monument houses more than 700 pigeonholes and stands as a reminder of the Nizam, British and Dutch eras.

Historical records indicate that the pigeon postal service at the site began in 1604 under the rule of the Hyderabad Nizam. The British later continued the system from around 1770. The pigeons were capable of delivering messages over distances as far as 1,075 km, including routes between Ganjam and Madras.

Specialised training was imparted to the pigeons for message exchange, often lasting up to four months. A dedicated staff member from the police department was appointed to oversee the operations and the



pigeons were trained rigorously for a period of four months.

The pigeon postal service played a crucial role during World War II, when conventional communication systems were disrupted. At a time when Ganjam served as the district headquarters, the pigeon loft functioned as a key medium of inter-regional communication among the provinces.

However, after India's independence and with the spread of modern technology, the service gradually ceased operations. Due to lack of maintenance, the structure now lies abandoned.

Despite its historical significance, the structure now faces neglect, with locals urging authorities to take immediate steps for its preservation.

A major dispute has also emerged over the historic site. An inquiry revealed that a person has allegedly fraudulently secured a land title in his name for the government land where the pigeon loft stands. Former Deputy Speaker Ramachandra Panda has written to the Chief Minister, urging that the land be restored as government property to protect the heritage site. Recently, Ganjam Collector V

Keerthi Vasan visited the site. A team of experts from IIT Madras also conducted an inspection. A detailed project report (DPR) is now being prepared for the development of the site.

The Collector said that the historic Potagarh will also be developed along with the pigeon loft. Proper conservation and recognition of the historic pigeon loft as a tourist destination could give Ganjam's heritage a new identity.

Local residents and intellectuals have demanded immediate restoration of the heritage structure.

MCL MAHANADI COALFIELDS LIMITED
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)
JAGRUTI VIHAR, BURLA-760020, DIST-SAMBALPUR, ODISHA
Ph.(EPABX):0663-2542461 to 469, Website:www.mahanadicoal.in

NOTICE

“All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on websites of Coal India Ltd. www.coalindia.in, respective subsidiary Company ([MCL, www.mahanadicoal.in](http://MCL.www.mahanadicoal.in)), CIL e-procurement portal <https://coalindiatenders.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in> In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in>”

R-5295

PUBLIC NOTICE OF M/S EVOS BUILDCON PRIVATE LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE

This is to inform the general public that the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Odisha has granted Environmental Clearance for a Residential Apartment Building Project to be developed by M/S EVOS BUILDCON PRIVATE LIMITED. The project is proposed to be developed over Plot No-1005/2186 & 1005/2187 under Khata No- 1288/1748 situated at Mouza-Sankarpur, Tahasil- Puri Sadar No-606, District- Puri, Odisha.

A copy of the Environmental Clearance granted vide EC Identification No. EC25C3801OR5434701N dated 08.04.2026 is available for reference with the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), Odisha and the Odisha State Pollution Control Board (OSPCB). The same may also be accessed on the official websites of the respective authorities. The environmental clearance has been granted under the provisions of the EIA Notification, 2006.

For M/s Evos Buildcon Private Limited
Kalinga Keshari Rath (Managing Director)
Authorized Signatory

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No.: MCSW-HIR-TRUCK-26-27-05
Name of the Work: HIRING OF TRUCK/TRAILER (CAPACITY: MINIMUM 09 MT AND ABOVE AS PER RAILWAY DEMAND) FOR TRANSPORTATION OF MATERIALS FROM ANYWHERE TO ANYWHERE OF VARIOUS UNITS OF INDIAN RAILWAY FOR CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP, MANCHESWAR.

Advertised Value: ₹ 72,60,000/-, EMD: ₹ 1,45,200/-, Period of Completion: 12 Months.

Bidding start date: 16.04.2026, Tender closing date & time: at 1500 hrs. of 30.04.2026.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Complete details & tender documents will be available at website www.irops.gov.in

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer/ POH-II/Mancheswar
PR-40/R/26-27

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No.: MCSW-PVCflooring-26-27-02
NAME OF WORK : PVC FLOORING WORK IN RAILWAY BG COACHES AT CARRIAGE REPAIR WORKSHOP, MANCHESWAR FOR A PERIOD OF 48 (FORTY-EIGHT) MONTHS.

Advertised Value : ₹ 2,01,79,200.00, EMD : ₹ 4,03,600.00, Period of Completion: 48 Months.

Bidding Start Date : 10.04.2026.

Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1500 Hrs. of 24.04.2026.

Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Complete information including e-Tender documents and corrigendum is available in website www.irops.gov.in

Dy. Chief Mechanical Engineer (POH-II),
PR-27/R/26-27 CRW/Mancheswar

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. 02/ET/SP/ENGG/ 2026-27, Dtd.: 08.04.2026
e-Tender No. 01-eT-SDENC-SBP-26

Name of the Work: CONSTRUCTION OF TRACKSIDE DRAIN FROM JT 25 (CLOSED LEVEL CROSSING) TO HKG END ALONG HIW SIDING FOR IMPROVEMENT OF DRAINAGE SYSTEM OF SAMBALPUR YARD UNDER SECTION OF ASSISTANT DIVISIONAL ENGINEER/ BARGARH ROAD.

Approx cost of the work: ₹ 1,09,63,823.94, Bid Security: ₹ 2,19,300/-, Completion period of the work: 03 months.

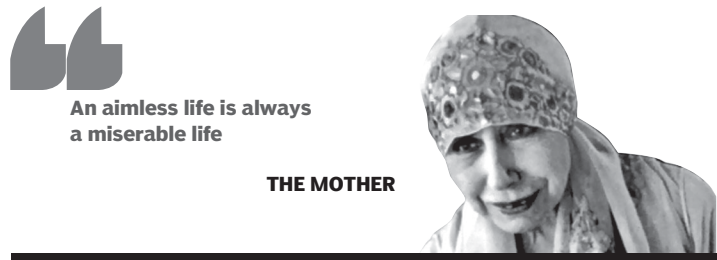
Tender closing date & time : at 1500 hrs. of 04.05.2026.

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website www.irops.gov.in

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 15 (fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender.

Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.),
PR-41/R/26-27 Sambalpur



An aimless life is always a miserable life

THE MOTHER

Hormuz Hitch

It is not difficult to understand US President Donald Trump's latest strategy of the US Navy blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. It is clearly intended to cripple the main source of Iran's economy and is essentially a posturing for greater leverage to force Iran to agree to a peace deal on US terms. Though Trump may not admit it, fact is he badly needs a way out of the war with Iran. This is for two reasons. His stocks for the coming mid-term polls in November are alarmingly dwindling for which he can ill afford to escalate the war that entails heavy risks for the US due to Iran's defiance and success in damaging US' vital interests in the Middle East with its incredible array of missiles and drones. Added to this, a new and unexpected development is Europe's increasing assertion against the US.

Iran appears keen to utilize this to its advantage. Its foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi had been briefing European nations on the nature of the offer Iran was willing to make about its stockpile of highly enriched uranium and future stewardship of the Strait of Hormuz during the weekend talks in Islamabad. After the inconclusive talks, Araghchi briefed over phone his counterparts of France and Germany - Jean-Noël Barrot and Johann Wadepuhl - and the Saudi, Omani and Qatari foreign ministers as well. Europe has been sidelined by the US in its war with Iran as Trump teamed up with Israel in the fight. Iran too did not, at that point of time, set much store by the European governments, seeing them as sycophants of America. But signs of the deepening transatlantic split and the intense pressure being applied to European economies have led Iran to rework its relationship with Europe as a potential leverage on Trump.

European countries have started a fine balancing act not to defy Trump overtly and at the same time send messages loud and clear across Iran that they are averse to be dragged into any conflict with it. To make the pretense of having some respect for Trump's demand that they provide military support for his war, they have focused on building a defensive non-belligerent naval alliance to ensure the freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, but only after the conflict ends. French president Emmanuel Macron announced a further joint conference with the UK to discuss the proposal with allies. Any scheme will require discussion with Tehran, including on its plan to impose tolls. Iranians are trying to quickly establish this mechanism at relatively low toll fees and to get as many countries as possible to agree to it. This will be a dangerous time for India. It will be forced to take a call whether to remain with the Israel-US alliance and allow fuel costs to overrun every last rupee of the budget. Alternatively, India may opt to switch sides and join the global bandwagon by siding with Iran and paying the toll at Hormuz in Chinese yuan.

The signs of the time are such that even the pro-Trump Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni is becoming circumspect about acceding to US plans in the Middle East following Trump's verbal attack on Pope Leo XIV and the defeat of Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán - a Trump prototype. Leo XIV - the first American to become Pope - has vehemently condemned the US-Israeli war against Iran for the loss of human lives and global economic sufferings it has brought in its train.

Iran has discovered a new weapon to keep the US at bay. Blocking the Strait of Hormuz, it turns out, is more effective than acquiring a nuclear bomb. On top of it, it is watching with glee the widening split between Trump and Europe over the Middle East.

A report suggests the Islamabad talks broke down because Iran proposed it would pause its nuclear programme for five years, while the USA demanded 20 years. Iran is also willing to show its good faith by diluting, not handing over to a third party, its stockpile of highly enriched uranium. Ali Nikzad, deputy speaker of Iran's parliament, said: "The Islamic republic was ready, to prove its good faith, to dilute - not hand over - 450kg of enriched uranium."

Both Iran and the US have given clear indications about resumption of talks. Meanwhile, Xi Jinping, the Chinese Supremo, has finally broken silence and has indicated China supports safeguarding the sovereignty of the Middle East and Gulf states. What that means could be anyone's guess.

WISDOM CORNER

If you can't tolerate critics, don't do anything new or interesting.

JEFF BEZOS

Growth is painful. Change is painful. But, nothing is as painful as staying stuck where you do not belong.

NR NARAYANA MURTHY

You should learn from your competitor, but never copy. Copy and you die.

JACK MA

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1912: The British luxury passenger liner Titanic sank en route to New York City from Southampton in England, after striking an iceberg during its maiden voyage. Of the approximately 2,200 people on board, some 1,500 people died.

1926: Robertson Aircraft, one of the companies that later developed into American Airlines, flew its first mail route, between Chicago and St. Louis, Missouri, with Charles Lindbergh as the pilot.

1955: Ray Kroc opened the first McDonald's franchise, launching an enterprise that would eventually become the world's largest fast-food chain, in Des Plaines, Illinois.

1980: French novelist and playwright Jean-Paul Sartre, who was a leading exponent of existentialism, died at age 74.

1989: Tragedy occurred at Hillsborough Stadium in Sheffield, England, when a crush of football (soccer) fans ultimately resulted in 97 deaths and hundreds of injuries; police mistakes were later blamed for the incident.

LOL

POLITICIANS' ACCIDENT

A bus load of politicians were driving down a country road one afternoon, when all of a sudden, the bus ran off the road and crashed into a tree in an old farmer's field. Seeing what happened, the old farmer went over to investigate. He then proceeded to dig a hole and bury



the politicians. A few days later, the local sheriff came out, saw the crashed bus, and asked the old farmer, "Were they all dead?" The old farmer replied, "Well, some of them said they weren't, but you know how them politicians lie."

BEYOND ELECTORAL SUCCESS

FOCUS HUNGARY

Tisza party's success shows that even a highly entrenched regime can be defeated at the polls, despite institutional capture, media dominance, and electoral engineering. It provided proof of concept for the global new right, demonstrating that a politics opposed to human rights and equality is viable in the West.

The Hungarian Opposition's decisive victory over Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's ruling Fidesz party has been greeted with relief across the democratic world. Armed with a constitutional majority, the center-right Tisza party and its leader, Péter Magyar, are now poised to dismantle Orbán's 16-year grip on state institutions. What will be harder, however, is confronting the public demand for illiberal rule that sustained it.

Tisza's success shows that even a highly entrenched regime can be defeated at the polls, despite institutional capture, media dominance, and electoral engineering. This matters because Orbán's Hungary has long been more than a national story. It provided proof of concept for the global new right, demonstrating that a politics opposed to human rights and equality is viable in the West.

Orbán was unusually explicit about this ambition. Educated at the University of Oxford on a scholarship funded by George Soros, he turned against the liberal order with a clarity and consistency that few of his counterparts could match. It is no coincidence that new-right figures like US Vice President JD Vance, who visited Hungary just days before the election to campaign for Orbán, have drawn intellectual and political inspiration from his rule.

Magyar now enters office with the institutional advantages that once sustained Orbán's rule. Hungary's majoritarian electoral law gives a significant advantage to the largest party. For years, Western observers



Center-right Tisza's victory in Hungary's election shows that even a highly entrenched new-right regime can be defeated at the polls. But the myths, resentments, and paranoia that fueled popular support for Viktor Orbán's brand of illiberalism have not suddenly vanished with his defeat

rightly criticized this system. Tisza should now be credited for using the system to its advantage. By consolidating virtually all support across the opposition spectrum, it secured roughly 53% of the vote—nearly matching Orbán's result four years ago—and translated that into a constitutional supermajority. Orbán's swift concession and personal congratulations to Magyar suggest that fears of institutional obstruction in the transition of power may not materialize. Taken together, these developments represent a genuine victory for European democracy.

The danger, however, is once again to declare "the end of history." Hungary's illiberal system endured for 16 years not only because of brinkmanship and repression, but also because it met a durable social demand—for xenophobia, hierarchy, and a politics of division.

That demand has not disappeared. By most conventional policy measures, Orbán's record has long been disastrous, with the economy lagging and public services in disarray. But Hungarian voters elected him four times. Even now, in defeat, Fidesz and Our Homeland Movement, a more extreme far-right party, command the loyalty of about 43% of the elec-

torate. This is hardly a fringe. We now have ample experience of liberal governments returning to power after new-right rule, from Joe Biden in the United States to Keir Starmer in the United Kingdom and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil. In none of these cases did electoral victory produce systemic catharsis. Swing voters changed sides, but the core electorate that sustained these regimes did not.

Nowhere is this clearer than in Poland. In 2023, after two terms of new-right rule, the broad coalition led by Donald Tusk won a result marginally stronger than Tisza's. Yet this did not produce a lasting political realignment. Less than two years later, Poles elected hard-right Karol Nawrocki as the country's semi-executive president. Electoral victory changed the government—but not the electorate.

Faced with that reality, Tusk adjusted. His government has shifted rightward on issues such as immigration and LGBTQ+ rights. Magyar is already decidedly following the same path. A longtime Fidesz insider, he has never been a committed liberal. Determined to defeat Orbán, liberal and left-wing voters showed unprecedented discipline by rallying behind Tisza, leaving their

own parties without representation in the new parliament. As a result, much of Orbán's conservative policy agenda may continue.

But this political calculus need not constrain liberal actors outside government, including civil-society groups, scholars, educators, and journalists. Since illiberal democracy endured because of popular demand, its defeat will require confronting that demand directly. Liberals must treat Hungary not as a system to repair, but as a society to persuade.

The current disillusion with Orbán creates a rare opening. Domestic and international experts can help a post-Orbán government deliver tangible gains, including better schools, more reliable healthcare, and a less corrupt state. But liberals should not fall into the trap of regarding such improvements as "non-political" and expecting them to speak for themselves. They must be framed and defended as the product of an open society—one that can deliver both effective government and a broader sense of dignity and social cohesion.

Hungary stands to gain politically and economically from moving closer to countries like Switzerland and the Netherlands. These societies manage to accommodate their more conservative elements while remaining open and globally engaged. It makes far more sense for Hungary to embrace such a model, rather than the authoritarian playbook of Russia or Turkey.

Reversing a decade and a half of normative change will not be easy. But unless addressed head-on, the myths, resentments, and paranoia fueling Orbán's brand of illiberalism will remain intact and available to be reactivated.

The writer is Associate Professor of Law and Strategy at Central European University.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

IN JEST THIS

Boring topics may spark meaningful conversations

Imagine you are waiting at a bus stop, reading something on your phone, when a student walks up. He's also waiting for the bus. You look up from your phone and notice that he's carrying a chemistry textbook and wearing a T-shirt with the periodic table printed on the front, along with this message: "I wear this shirt periodically."

It makes you smile and you wonder if you should say something or just go back to reading your phone. You are not particularly interested in the periodic table, but you decide to strike up a conversation.

You: "Nice T-shirt!" Student: "Thanks. It helped me learn all the elements."

You: "What's your favorite element?" Student: "Oxygen, of course. Without it, I'd be dead."

You: "What about gold? Without it, you wouldn't be alive."

Student: "What do you mean?"

You: "Well, was there any gold involved in your parents' marriage?"

The student laughs and your

conversation continues during the bus ride. He even gives you a Namaste before getting off at his stop. You're happy that you engaged in some "small talk" with a stranger. It has put you in such a good mood that you find yourself involved in small talk with everyone you encounter the rest of the day, even the neighbor's dog.

Small talk often leads to enjoyable conversations and meaningful connections, even if the topic is considered boring, according to a new study published in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.

"If people avoid talking to a co-worker at the coffee machine or a stranger at an event or a neighbor in the elevator because we assume it will be boring and unenjoyable, we may be depriving ourselves of small moments of connection that could improve our mood, our sense of belonging and decrease loneliness," Elizabeth Trinh, lead author of the study, told NBC News.

Trinh, a doctoral student at University of Michigan's Ross School of Business in the US, collaborated with researchers at Cornell University's School

of Industrial and Labor Relations and INSEAD, a business school in France, to complete the study, entitled "Conversations About Boring Topics Are More Interesting Than We Think."

The researchers conducted nine experiments in which participants were asked to participate in five-minute conversations on topics they had rated as either boring or interesting. The research found that the participants, whether talking to friends or strangers, consistently underestimated how enjoyable and interesting conversations about boring topics were.

What makes the conversation enjoyable, the researchers say, is the level of engagement that conversations require. You have to listen and respond to another person.

"Actually engaging in a conversation, being part of it, is what drives the interest and enjoyment," Trinh said.

What should we learn from this study? Well, we shouldn't shy away from chatting casually with other people. While a boring topic may indeed lead to a meaningful conversation,

it helps to pick a topic that the other person can relate to. Here are three good ways to spark a conversation:

1. Discuss the weather. Everyone loves talking about the weather. It's easy to start a conversation about the weather. Just say something like, "Hot day, isn't it?" The other person will nod and say something like, "I can't handle it anymore. I'm buying a penguin costume and moving to Antarctica."

2. Talk about sports. Just make a comment about a sporting event, such as "Great fight yesterday!" and you'll probably get a quick response: "Yeah, but I can't believe Trump is fighting with the Pope."

3. Give a compliment. This works really well because humans love compliments. While it may be inappropriate to compliment a stranger's looks, you can certainly say something nice about their shoes, clothing, vehicle or dog. Who knows, perhaps a compliment such as "I love your silver bracelet" may lead to a very exciting discussion of the periodic table.



Melvin Durai

WHAT MAKES THE CONVERSATION ENJOYABLE, THE RESEARCHERS SAY, IS THE LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT THAT CONVERSATIONS REQUIRE

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, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Pak hostility

Sir, Iconic Indian singer Asha Bhosle's death was mourned by one and all, transcending borders. However, in Pakistan, Geo News faced regulatory action after airing her songs in tribute. In fact, Pakistan's media regulator (PEMRA) issued a show-cause notice to the channel, citing violation of rules against broadcasting Indian content. This is clearly indicative of the hostile and inflexible stand of Pakistan with respect to India. It warns us that we should be forever on guard against our western neighbour. A bad neighbour is a misfortune, as much as a good one is a great blessing. - Hesiod, ancient Greek poet. India can ignore this ancient quote at its own peril.

Avinash Godbole, DEWAS (MP)

Industrial discord

Sir, The region of Delhi NCR specifically the Maruti Suzuki unit of Noida has been under the clutch of industrial discord recently. The labours were demanding the wage hike from their employers on genuine ground and the protest took the furious form. The factory workers are demanding the wage hike, but it is unfortunate to note that the demands go ending up in protesting manner. There is no doubt of the fact that India is a market where the salary structure do not match the actual inflation rate as a result the middle class section of the society have to walk the double edge sword with respect to managing their savings and their expenditure. Also the Government of Uttar Pradesh has already invited the committee to enquire the whole matter and settle the industrial discovered as soon as possible. But it is urgently required that the wages should be revised on regular basis without any delay. Ignoring workers wage demand would never deliver the industrial productivity, so required to run the Indian economy. It is therefore extremely important to immediately nip the problematic bud at the earliest by settling industrial peace of both the stakeholders.

Kirti Wadhawan, KANPUR

HEAT INTENSIFIES IN KERALA

Govt warns of sunstroke risk, issues guidelines



Amid the heatwave conditions, the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority (KSDMA), in a social media post, said extreme heat could lead to serious health conditions such as sunstroke, heat exhaustion, and dehydration, and called on the public to take adequate precautions

In a Facebook post, the CM said temperatures could reach 40 degrees Celsius in Palakkad, 39 degrees Celsius in Kollam, and range between 36 and 37 degrees Celsius in other districts

According to the advisory, people should avoid prolonged exposure to direct sunlight between 11 am and 3 pm and stay hydrated by drinking sufficient quantities of clean water even when not thirsty

It also advised avoiding alcohol, coffee, tea, and carbonated drinks during the daytime, as they may contribute to dehydration

avoid outdoor activities such as assemblies during peak heat hours and to take extra care while organising student trips.

Local self-government bodies and anganwadi workers have been instructed to ensure that children are not exposed to excessive heat.

Vulnerable groups, including the elderly, pregnant women, children, persons with disabilities, and those with existing illnesses, have been advised to remain indoors during peak hours.

The KSDMA also urged employers, particularly those engaging delivery personnel and

street vendors have been urged to reschedule work and ensure sufficient breaks.

The advisory stressed that animals and pets should not be left in direct sunlight or inside parked vehicles, and that adequate water should be provided to them.

It also emphasised water conservation and rainwater harvesting measures to address potential shortages.

The authority further warned about the harmful effects of prolonged exposure to UV rays, which can cause skin and eye-related issues, noting that the highest UV index is typically recorded between 10 am and 3 pm.

Those engaged in outdoor occupations, including fishermen, transport workers, bikers, and tourists, as well as individuals with skin or eye conditions and weakened immunity, have been urged to take extra precautions, including the use of sunglasses, hats, and full-coverage clothing.

Meanwhile, Vijayan also cautioned against the spread of misinformation regarding extreme temperatures, noting that messages claiming temperatures could rise to 45°C “55 degrees Celsius in the state are baseless and not issued by the India Meteorological Department.”

He urged the public to rely only on official sources for weather updates and to verify information through toll-free numbers 1070, 1077, and 1079.

The KSDMA advised people to seek immediate medical attention in case of discomfort and to closely follow official warnings issued by the India Meteorological Department and disaster management authorities.

Police personnel and media workers have also been advised to use umbrellas and ensure adequate hydration while on duty.

Event organisers have been asked to provide drinking water and shade at public gatherings and, if possible, avoid scheduling events between 11 am and 3 pm.

Travellers have been advised to carry water and take adequate rest during journeys, while labourers, farmers, and

On Ambedkar Jayanti, CM Vijayan calls for vigilance against caste bias

Vijayan cautioned that the emergence of caste-based discrimination, even within campuses, raises serious questions about whether Kerala's hard-earned progressive values are eroding



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, April 14: Marking the birth anniversary of B.R. Ambedkar, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Tuesday issued a strong call to uphold the values of equality and social justice, even as Kerala grapples with troubling allegations of caste discrimination in higher education.

In a message on Ambedkar Jayanti, the Chief Minister took to his social media to pay tributes to Ambedkar. He described Ambedkar as a towering figure who dedicated his life to building a society free from caste divisions.

The CM noted that Ambedkar's relentless fight against social inequality and his enduring contributions continue to guide the nation.

However, Vijayan expressed deep concern over recent developments, particularly the tragic death of a first-year BDS student at a private medical college in Ancharakandi, Kannur.

The student, Nithin Raj from Thiruvananthapuram, is alleged to have faced caste-based harassment, sparking widespread outrage.

Calling the incident deeply painful, the Chief Minister said that any act that drives a prom-

ising student to such a fate is unforgivable.

He cautioned that the emergence of caste-based discrimination, even within campuses, raises serious questions about whether Kerala's hard-earned progressive values are eroding. “This is a time for introspection as a society,” he said, urging collective responsibility in addressing such issues.

Vijayan also flagged the Centre's inaction on the long-pending demand for a dedicated law to curb caste discrimination in educational institutions, often referred to as the Rohith Vemula Act.

He pointed out that existing University Grants Commission guidelines have been stayed by the Supreme Court, leaving a regulatory vacuum.

Calling for unity against all forms of division and hatred, the Chief Minister urged society to draw strength from Ambedkar's ideals.

He emphasised that building an equitable and just social order remains an unfinished task that demands renewed commitment. Extending Ambedkar Jayanti greetings, Vijayan reiterated that safeguarding dignity and equality must remain central to Kerala's social fabric.

Rajasthan Police warns of cyber fraud ahead of Char Dham Yatra

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, April 14: Ahead of the Char Dham Yatra season, the Cyber Crime Branch of Rajasthan Police has issued a comprehensive advisory urging devotees to remain vigilant against rising cases of online fraud, officials said Monday.

Acting under the directives of Additional Director General of Police (Cyber Crime) VK Singh, the advisory aims to protect pilgrims from cybercriminals, who are targeting travellers through fake offers of helicopter bookings, hotel reservations, and VIP darshan services.

Deputy Inspector General of Police (Cyber Crime), Shantanu Kumar Singh, has cautioned that devotees should make all bookings only through official government portals or trusted travel agencies.

Fraudsters often circulate attractive advertisements on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, offering cheap packages or instant darshan, to lure unsuspecting victims.

Citizens are strongly advised not to share UPI details, OTPs, or card information with unknown individuals, and to avoid making payments in response to unsolicited calls. The advisory also highlights the importance of safe digital transactions during travel.

Devotees are advised not to conduct financial transactions over public Wi-Fi networks at railway stations, airports, or dharamshalas, as such networks may expose sensitive data to theft.

It further warns against scanning QR codes to receive money, emphasising that entering a PIN is only required when sending money, not receiving it.

Travellers should also use ATMs located in secure and crowded areas, preferably within bank premises.

LoP Satheesan urges 24/7 vigil at EVM storage centres



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, April 14: Amid heightened political scrutiny following the conclusion of polling in Kerala, Leader of the Opposition, VD Satheesan, Tuesday urged stringent vigilance at centres where Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are stored, calling for continuous monitoring to ensure transparency and safeguard electoral integrity.

In a letter addressed to all 140 United Democratic Front (UDF) candidates, their election agents, District Congress Committee (DCC) presidents, and district UDF chairpersons, Satheesan emphasised the need for special caution at EVM storage strongrooms across the state.

The directive comes at a crucial juncture as the state awaits the counting of votes, with political tensions running high. Highlighting existing provisions, Satheesan pointed out that candidates are permitted to deploy representatives in control rooms that monitor surveillance cameras installed at EVM strongrooms.

He stressed that this facility must be fully utilised, ensuring that a designated representative remains present 24 hours a day to oversee proceedings.

To facilitate this, the Opposition leader instructed candidates and their chief election agents to obtain the necessary permissions from respective District Collectors.

He underlined that uninterrupted presence of UDF representatives in these control rooms is essential to reinforce public confidence in the electoral process. The move reflects the Opposition's broader strategy to maintain strict oversight during the sensitive post poll phase, particularly in light of recurring concerns raised in past elections regarding the security of voting machines.

While election authorities have consistently maintained that EVMs are stored under robust security protocols, political parties often deploy their own monitoring mechanisms as an added layer of assurance.

Satheesan's communication signals a coordinated effort within the UDF to remain vigilant until the declaration of results, reinforcing the alliance's emphasis on procedural transparency and accountability in the electoral process.

Kerala went to the polls April 9 to elect 140 new legislators and the counting of votes will take place May 4, a day that is eagerly awaited by all political parties in the state.

Chikungunya cases reported in Ernakulam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, April 14: Health authorities Tuesday urged people to remain vigilant after cases of chikungunya were reported from parts of Ernakulam district in Kerala.

According to officials, clusters have been identified in Kunnukara and Chengamanad panchayats. So far, nine cases have been confirmed, while 19 are suspected, according to a statement.

Kunnukara reported 24 cases, including six confirmed and 18 suspected, while Chengamanad recorded four cases, including three confirmed and one suspected.

Authorities said intensified surveillance, preventive measures, and awareness campaigns are underway in the affected areas to contain the spread of the mosquito-borne viral disease.

Officials warned that the disease can cause sudden high fever, severe joint pain—especially in the hands, ankles, and knees—along with muscle pain, headache, fatigue, and, in some cases, skin rashes. People experiencing such symptoms have been advised to seek immediate medical attention and avoid self-medication, as per the statement.

Health experts cautioned against taking painkillers without a doctor's prescription and stressed the importance of timely diagnosis and treatment.

Infected individuals have been advised to rest under mosquito nets even during the daytime to prevent further transmission. Adequate hydration, nutritious food, and proper rest were also recommended.

Authorities urged residents to inspect their homes and surroundings regularly, especially after intermittent summer showers, and eliminate stagnant water from containers, tanks, flower pots, trays, discarded tyres, and other items.



Construction sites, rubber plantations, and water-storing vessels were also identified as potential breeding spots.

Weekly source-reduction activities have been emphasised, including special “dry day” observances in institutions, offices, public places, and households to eliminate mosquito breeding sites.

Officials warned that under the Kerala Public Health Act, 2023, a fine of up to ₹10,000 could be imposed if mosquito breeding is found in residential or commercial premises.

“Collective efforts are essential to control the spread of chikungunya,” authorities said, urging public cooperation in mosquito control measures and early reporting of symptoms.

Healthcare hit across Rajasthan as pvt docs go on daylong strike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 14: Medical services in private hospitals across Rajasthan took a hit Tuesday as doctors went on a strike following the arrest of a hospital director in Jaipur.

Responding to a call by the Indian Medical Association (IMA), Rajasthan Chapter, private hospitals and nursing homes went on a strike from 8 am April 14 to 8 am April 15.

In Jaipur, private hospitals remained shut for OPD services since morning. Patients who were already admitted, however, received treatment.

The impact was visible across small and large private hospitals. Some hospitals even suspended emergency services. Authorities strengthened arrangements in government hospitals in view of the strike.

In several hospitals, notices were put up informing patients about the suspension of OPD services for the day. Some patients who reached hospitals were seen making enquiries before leaving for government hospitals.

“The protest is part of a sym-



boldic strike, and doctors have indicated that further agitation may follow,” Dr Vijay Kapoor, the president of Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes Association, said.

The IMA along with the association Monday held an emergency meeting and decided to suspend medical services for 24 hours in protest against the arrest of Dr Sondev Bansal. Dr Bansal was arrested in Jaipur in connection with an alleged fraud case.

The hospitals have also suspended the Rajasthan Government Health Scheme (RGHS) for an indefinite period. The striking doctors have demanded the state government clear payments under the scheme. There are nearly 3,000 private hospitals and nursing homes in the state, Dr Kapoor said.

Rajasthan govt starts drive to change derogatory student names

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 14: Names like “Sheru”, “Shaitan” and other unusual or derogatory monikers often finding their way into school registers could soon be a thing of the past in Rajasthan, with the state government launching a “Sarthak Naam Abhiyan” to replace them with more meaningful alternatives.

The initiative seeks to address concerns that students with awkward or inappropriate names often face ridicule and loss of self-esteem, particularly as they grow older.

“As children grow older, such names sometimes lead to embarrassment and may even affect their self-esteem,” School Education Minister Madan Dilawar told reporters Tuesday, adding that names play an important role in shaping a child's identity and personality.



He said that in many cases, names are assigned without considering their long-term impact. “Sometimes parents choose names without being aware of their meanings or for social reasons, but later children may develop a sense of inferiority because of them,” the minister said.

Under the campaign, the education department has identified around 2,000-3,000 such names across government and private schools and prepared a list of nearly 3,000 meaningful

Under the campaign, the education department has identified around 2,000-3,000 such names across government and private schools and prepared a list of nearly 3,000 meaningful alternatives

The list includes 1,541 names for girls and 1,409 for boys, along with their meanings, which will be shared with parents

alternatives. The list includes 1,541 names for girls and 1,409 for boys, along with their meanings, which will be shared with parents.

Officials said the department believes that a person's name reflects his or her social identity and values, and negative or flawed names can adversely impact a child's mental development and confidence.

Schools have been directed to sensitively identify students with such names and engage with parents through parent-teacher meetings and School Management Committees to encourage opting for positive names.

The minister also stressed the need to eliminate caste-based or derogatory terms from official records. “Words that have historically been used in a derogatory manner should not be recorded. Respectful alternatives must be adopted,” he said.

According to officials, parents of newly admitted students will be given the option to select names from the suggested list at the time of admission, while existing students can apply for name changes as per prescribed rules. Senior officials will monitor the implementation of the campaign and review its progress periodically, they added.



Those who created the caste system are no longer there. We must move forward together and strengthen social harmony. In a way, there are now only two castes - the haves and the have-nots

DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT

GE AEROSPACE, HAL INCHING CLOSER TO SEAL JET ENGINE DEAL

US defence major GE Aerospace Tuesday said it and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) have made significant progress in sealing a collaboration to co-produce F414 jet engines to power India's future combat jets. Nearly three years ago, GE Aerospace had signed an agreement with HAL to co-produce F-414 fighter jet engines in India



2 MBA students die after concert; drug overdose suspected

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 14: Two MBA students died due to suspected drug overdose after attending a concert in Goregaon area, police said Tuesday, prompting the Opposition to ask how authorities allowed an event where drugs were 'openly consumed' to take place.

Police Monday arrested six persons including event organisers and a suspected drug supplier.

The victims -- a young man and a woman -- studied at a city-based management institute and were part of a group of 15 students who attended the concert at the Goregaon Exhibition Centre Saturday, a police official said.

As per the preliminary investigation, some members of the group consumed ecstasy -- a banned substance -- before entering the venue, and went on to have alcohol during the concert. Several of them complained of uneasiness and were rushed to hospital. Two students died while undergoing treatment Sunday, while another student was still in hospital but in a stable condition.

Vanrai Police registered a case under section 105 (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and other relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and arrested two students, a suspected drug supplier, and three individuals associated with the organisers, the official said. The accused have been remanded in police custody till Thursday.

Opposition Congress slammed the BJP-led government in the state over the deaths. The "inept and shameless" functioning of the government has pushed the state's youth into the grip of drugs, said Maharashtra Congress president Harshvardhan Sapkal Tuesday.

In a statement, Sapkal asked how police and other law enforcement agencies failed to notice a gathering of thousands of people where drugs and alcohol were allegedly consumed openly.



Tourists at Kovalam Beach, in Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala

PTI PHOTO

Mamata slams EC process, calls for resistance at polls

Addressing public rallies at Pingla in Paschim Medinipur, Tamluk in Purba Medinipur and Domjur in Howrah, Banerjee urged women to "stand firm" against security forces if attempts are made to prevent people from voting, while asserting that she was not asking anyone to indulge in violence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 14: TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee Tuesday alleged that "logical discrepancy" under the SIR exercise is not an officially recognised term under the Election Commission framework and was selectively applied in West Bengal, unlike Bihar, to benefit the BJP.

Addressing public rallies at Pingla in Paschim Medinipur, Tamluk in Purba Medinipur and Domjur in Howrah, Banerjee urged women to "stand firm" against security forces if attempts are made to prevent people from voting, while asserting that she was not asking anyone to indulge in violence.

The chief minister said, "There is no officially recognised term like 'logical discrepancy' under the framework of the Election Commission. It is being selectively applied in West Bengal, unlike in Bihar, to benefit the BJP." Banerjee added that she has not seen a "dirty party" like the BJP.

"The job of the central forces is to maintain peace. We have no objection to that. But what if they prevent people from voting? I will request women to keep brooms in their hands and stand firm against those wearing boots and carrying arms. I am not asking you to assault



anyone or incite a riot, but you must do everything to safeguard your rights," Banerjee said.

"I even moved the Supreme Court to protect your rights, and only after that, the names of 32 lakh voters were enlisted," she added. Banerjee questioned why such a large number of central forces were brought to West Bengal. "They have brought in officers who are close to the BJP and replaced the ICs... If your sole aim was to keep peace here, you could have used the West Bengal Police. Why, instead of doing that, did you take away all their powers and bring in central forces from outside? People don't see central forces during any natural calamity or riot," she alleged.

The CM asked people to lodge complaints against any police officer if they were "tortured". The TMC supremo, urging people to vote against the BJP, said, "The BJP has snatched everything from you... Voting against it would be your only way to take revenge."

The BJP is holding rallies at places that have direct railway connectivity with Uttar Pradesh and Bihar so that they can bring in people from those states to fill up the venues, she alleged. She alleged that ahead of the elections, "instructions have been given to arrest booth agents".

Banerjee said the TMC would defeat the BJP in the elections through what she called "a strong political fight". Reacting

to a controversy over the use of words 'Burnol' and 'Boroline' reportedly by the South Kolkata District Election Officer while urging voters not to fear anti-social elements and exercise their franchise fearlessly, Banerjee said, "Not 'Burnol', we will provide ice creams. What is there to be so afraid of? Those who are saying they will burn others with 'Burnol' should be told that ice cream will help them remain cool."

The controversy erupted after the South Kolkata District Election Officer, in a social media post, urged people to cast their votes fearlessly and warned anti-social elements, stating that "some people may burn from this", and advised "goons and criminals" to keep an adequate stock of 'Burnol' and 'Boroline', warning that otherwise the "heat will be so intense that they will burn".

The Election Commission also indicated of strict action in case of any attempt to disrupt the electoral process.

Explaining her remark later, Banerjee said, "It is very hot now, have ice cream, keep yourself cool. That is the difference between them and us; we do not believe in revenge."

Raising concerns over the voting process, she alleged that outsiders could be brought in to create disruptions during counting, including power cuts or tampering with EVMs, terming such acts as "undemocratic".

Cong: Misuse of Bills harms democracy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: As the government circulated Bills related to women's quota law and delimitation, the Congress Tuesday said when the intent behind a Bill is "mischievous" and the content of it is "devious", the extent of damage to parliamentary democracy is enormous.

Lok Sabha seats will be increased to up to 850 from the current 543 to "operationalise" the women's reservation law before the 2029 parliamentary polls, following a delimitation exercise to be carried out based on the last published census.

According to the draft Constitution amendment Bill, which will be introduced in the upcoming special sitting of Parliament, seats would also be increased in state and Union territory assemblies to accommodate 33 per cent reservation for women.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said, "When the intent behind



a Bill is mischievous, and the content of it is devious, the extent of damage to parliamentary democracy is enormous."

The seats reserved for women in Lok Sabha and legislative assemblies "shall be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a state or Union territory," the bill circulated among Lok Sabha members said.

Besides other provisions, the bill seeks to amend Article 81 of the Constitution.

It states that "The House of the People (Lok Sabha) shall consist of not more than 815 members chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in the states; and not more than 35 members to represent the Union territories, chosen in such manner as Parliament may by law provide."

DELHI-DEHRADUN EXPRESSWAY

PM inaugurates 213 km economic corridor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun/Lucknow, April 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday inaugurated the Delhi-Dehradun economic corridor, which will cut travel time between the two cities to nearly half.

The 213 km-long six-lane access-controlled Delhi-Dehradun economic corridor has been built at a cost of over Rs 12,000 crore. The corridor traverses through the states of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, and will reduce travel time between Delhi and Dehradun from over six hours at present to around two and a half hours, according to an official statement. The Delhi-Dehradun eco-



economic corridor will play a pivotal role in strengthening regional economic growth by enhancing connectivity between major tourism and economic centres as well as opening new avenues for trade and development across the region. "The project reflects the vision of the prime minister to develop next-generation infrastructure that combines high-speed connectivity with

environmental sustainability and improved quality of life for citizens," the statement said.

Implementation of the project also involves the construction of 10 interchanges, three Railway Over Bridges (ROBs), four major bridges and 12 way side amenities to enable seamless high-speed connectivity.

The corridor is equipped with an Advanced Traffic Management System (ATMS) to provide a safer and more efficient travel experience for commuters. Keeping in view the ecological sensitivity, rich biodiversity and wildlife in the region, the corridor has been designed with several features aimed at significantly reducing human-wildlife conflict.

Delink women's reservation from delimitation: Activists

The government plans to bring a Constitution amendment Bill, a Bill on the delimitation law and an enabling Bill for Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir and Pondicherry -- three Union territories with legislature -- in the Lok Sabha Thursday to fast-track the implementation of the women's reservation law of 2023

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: A group of activists Tuesday questioned why delimitation is required to implement reservation for women in legislative bodies and demanded that it should be implemented on the basis of the current strength of the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

At a press conference here, activist Anjali Bhardwaj, Annie Raja of the National Federation

of Indian Women (NFIW), advocate Prashant Bhusan, economist Santosh Mehrotra, social activist Bhanwar Meghwanshi, along with former Planning Commission member Syeda Hameed, urged the government to hold wider consultations on women reservation and delimitation, including taking the opinion of women's movements.

Addressing the press conference, Bhardwaj questioned the



delay in sharing the draft legislations with the MPs, as she also pointed out that those are still not in the public domain.

A bill to "operationalise" 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies by increasing the strength of the Lower House of Parliament to up to 850 from the present 543 is set for introduc-

tion in Parliament Thursday.

"The laws will fundamentally re-shape India's electoral democracy and impact every voter in the country. Information about the proposed laws is reaching people only through media reports based on sources. This is a flagrant violation of people's fundamental right to information and the principles

laid out in the Pre-legislative Consultation Policy," Bhardwaj said. She said the 2023 Women's Reservation Act -- Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam -- needs a single amendment to delink it from the census and delimitation and make it operational with immediate effect at the current strength of the legislatures.

Raja said women's movements have been demanding reservation for women for decades. She recounted that in 2010, a Bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha but was not brought to the Lok Sabha.

Mehrotra said if four Opposition parties -- Congress, Trinamool Congress (TMC), Samajwadi Party (SP) and DMK -- come together, the bills can be defeated in the Lok Sabha.

Noting that the number of seats in the Lok Sabha will in-

crease to 850 once the amendments are implemented, he said India's Lower House would become the biggest globally.

Mehrotra added that there is very little robust debate or deliberation on laws at present and increasing the size of Parliament will make it even more chaotic. Meghwanshi pointed out that there is no information on whether the reservation will have quotas within the quota for the Other Backward Classes (OBC) and other marginalised communities.

The government plans to bring a Constitution amendment Bill, a Bill on the delimitation law and an enabling bill for Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir and Pondicherry -- three Union territories with legislature -- in the Lok Sabha Thursday to fast-track the implementation of the women's reservation law of 2023.

of the day quote

It is extremely unfortunate that Congress women leaders insulted Vande Mataram Mata as well as Bharat Mata. However, state Congress president Jitu Patwari defended them. I won't forgive Patwari

MOHAN YADAV | MP CM

Today, Delhi and the country are moving together. I was noticing that former Delhi chief minister Kejriwal has become a lawyer. He goes to court to present his defences

REKHA GUPTA | DELHI CM

However, if one turns to AI before grasping the essence of medical concepts, there is a risk of missing the basic learning process essential for becoming a competent clinician, who could be capable of serving society even in the absence of any instruments, gadgets, investigations or even drugs

JITENDRA SINGH | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

BJP, TMC workers clash during poll campaign

Kolkata: Workers of the BJP and TMC clashed in the Dhapa area of east Kolkata Tuesday, police said. The incident happened when BJP's Entally candidate Priyanka Tibrewal was campaigning in ward 58 of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, they said. An altercation, which started over playing songs on high-bass loudspeakers, soon escalated, leading to scuffles, they added.

3 killed in separate assaults in 48 hours

Mumbai: Three persons, including a senior citizen, were killed in separate incidents of fatal assaults reported in different parts of the city in the last 48 hours, police said Tuesday. The incidents, which occurred in Dadar, Matunga, and Kherwadi, include a brutal assault on a 28-year-old man, a parking dispute involving a senior citizen, and a stabbing. In Dadar, Ankush Ambekar was beaten to death by a group of assailants in the Nako Sayaji Wadi area on Sunday, an official said. In a similar incident, Naresh Vaghela, a senior citizen, died following an assault stemming from a parking dispute near Dadar Tata Bridge Monday. The third victim, Abhinav Chaudhary, was stabbed to death by unidentified persons in the Kherwadi area over an old dispute.

Dentist raped at friend's b'day party

Ranchi: A dentist from Jamshepur was allegedly raped by a man after being intoxicated at a birthday party in Jharkhand's Ranchi district, police said Tuesday. The incident happened April 9 when the 25-year-old woman went to a birthday celebration of a male friend. She was allegedly sexually assaulted by one of the host's friends, they added.

3 juveniles held in robbery case

New Delhi: Three juveniles have been apprehended in connection with a robbery in southwest Delhi's Dwarka area, police said Tuesday. The incident took place on the intervening night of April 5-6 in Bindapur when three to four boys accosted Manoj, near his house, while he was returning home from work, they said.



Modi sold off India in the trade deal with the US. He is not 'desh bhakt' (patriot), he is 'deshdrohi' (traitor) RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

MP: ABOUT 6,000 CHICKENS PERISH IN POULTRY FARM FIRE Some 6,000 chickens were killed in a fire at a poultry farm in Madhya Pradesh's Betul district Tuesday afternoon, police said. The fire started in a field near Etawa village under Multai police station jurisdiction, about 70 km from here, and spread to the nearby poultry farm. Probe is underway, said Masod police outpost in-charge Amit Panwar



of the day quote

National security is a vast, complex, and multifaceted phenomenon. It comprises numerous components: a nation's military might, technological prowess, natural resources, diplomatic strength, and human capital



AMIT SHAH | NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

I want to tell my Gorkha brothers of Darjeeling that, once in power, the BJP will not only develop an eco-adventure hub in the hills, but also resolve the Gorkha issue in a constitutional manner without dividing the state



AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

Piyush Goyal, you are in charge only for Tamil Nadu BJP. Forgetting that you are talking inappropriately with arrogance. You will get respect only if you give respect. The BJP has made a wrong assessment of Tamil Nadu



M K STALIN | TN CM

XPOST OF THE DAY



Biggest problem with Indian courts isn't delay or backlog. It's the mindset. Why are we still saying "My Lord". This isn't the British era. Nobody is your lord. You're not royalty. You're a public servant doing a job like everyone else in this country. In India, we've confused respect with submission. Go to courts in the US, Singapore, Australia. Nobody is calling judges "My Lord". It's Your Honor or Justice Name and work moves on. Respect without worship. Somewhere, the Indian judiciary is still stuck in a colonial hangover we refuse to drop. And the worst part, nobody questions it. Lawyers keep repeating it. Juniors copy seniors. The system just continues. Respect is earned through decisions. Millions of cases are pending. Justice takes decades.

@jasveer10

SHORT TAKES

Delhi: Two arrested for assaulting brigadier, son

New Delhi: The director of an aviation firm and a dhaba owner were arrested in connection with the assault on an Army brigadier and his son after the officer objected to the duo drinking alcohol in a car parked outside his residence in Delhi's Vasant Enclave, police said Tuesday. The arrested accused were Satender alias Sonu (49) and Sanjay Sharma (56), both residents of Mehram Nagar in Vasant Enclave. Satender is the director of Chaudhary Aviation Pvt Ltd, a firm that offers charter and cargo flight services and deals in the purchase and sale of aircraft and aircraft parts. Sharma runs a local eatery, Pandit Ji Dhaba, in Mehram Nagar, according to a police statement.

Officials rescue 2 girls from child marriage

Kota: The Bundi district administration took swift action Tuesday following a report of child marriage, rescuing two minor girls who were to be married April 20. The parents of one of the would-be grooms, who was also underage, were prevented from proceeding with the wedding until he reached the legal age for marriage. The Bundi district administration is currently on high alert ahead of Akshaya Tritiya April 19, a day when a significant number of child marriages are believed to take place among the Gurjar, Saini, Meena, Bairwa, and Kahar communities in the rural belt of the district.

Trump dials Modi; briefs him on West Asia crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump reviewed the "substantial progress" in bilateral ties during a phone call Tuesday, with US envoy Sergio Gor saying the two sides are expected to seal certain "big-ticket" deals soon, including in the energy sector.

Modi said he received a call from President Trump and they discussed the situation in West Asia and stressed the importance of keeping the Strait of Hormuz "open and secure".

In the over 40-minute conversation, the US president updated the prime minister on the West Asia situation, Gor told a select group of journalists.

"Received a call from my friend President Donald Trump. We reviewed the substantial progress achieved in our bilateral cooperation in various sectors," Modi said on social media.

"We are committed to further strengthening our Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership in all areas. We also discussed the situation in West Asia and stressed the importance of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open and secure," he said. It was the third phone call between the two leaders this year and the first after the recent peace talks between Iran and the US. The call ended with Trump telling PM Modi that: "I just want you to know we all love you", according to Ambassador Gor. The envoy said some big-ticket deals, including on energy, are expected to be sealed between India and the US in the next "few days and weeks". However, he refused to elaborate on the deals. The call between the two leaders came two days after Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri wrapped up a three-day visit to Washington DC. The two countries have been working to stabilise their ties after a spell of uncertainty and strain. The relations witnessed a major downturn after Washington imposed punitive tariffs on India and President Trump made controversial assertions regarding his role in de-escalating the India-Pakistan military clashes last May.



Modi said he received a call from President Trump and they discussed the situation in West Asia and stressed the importance of keeping the Strait of Hormuz "open and secure"

In the over 40-minute conversation, the US president updated the prime minister on the West Asia situation, Gor told a select group of journalists

However, both sides made efforts in the last few months to repair ties. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio will visit India next month to hold wide-ranging talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and other functionaries of the government. Asked if President Trump has any plan to visit India soon, Gor said the focus now is on Secretary Rubio's trip. "The secretary (Rubio) is coming here next month, which we're very excited by... He doesn't just show up. We actually have some incredible deals that we're hoping to finalise in time for his visit at the end of May," he said.

NOIDA LABOUR UNREST

UP govt orders interim hike in minimum wages

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Noida, April 14: The Uttar Pradesh government has directed an interim hike in minimum wages across worker categories following unrest in Noida, with revised rates coming into effect from April 1 retrospectively, officials here said Tuesday.

The wage hike translates into an increase of up to ₹3,000 across categories, with workers in Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad witnessing a rise of up to 21 per cent in their monthly earnings, they said.

The process for final wage fixation would be taken up through a wage board to be constituted soon, and the government is also considering additional welfare measures related to workers' health, pension and education of their children, Industrial Development Commissioner Deepak Kumar said.

The wage increase has been done by the high-powered committee, formed to look into the labour issues after large-scale protests by factory workers in Noida Monday, to provide immediate financial relief to the workers, the officials said.

"The decision was approved by the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh late last night," Gautam Buddha Nagar District Magistrate Medha Roopam said.

According to a statement, the committee is working towards resolving industrial discord through dialogue and coordination, while also considering further measures to address workers' concerns. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath appealed



FILE PHOTO

to employers to ensure timely payment of wages, proper overtime compensation, weekly offs, bonuses and social security benefits, while maintaining safe working conditions, particularly for female workers, the statement said.

In Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad, unskilled workers will now get ₹13,690 per month, up from ₹11,313, while semi-skilled workers will receive ₹15,059, and skilled workers ₹16,868, according to an official statement.

For other municipal corporation areas, the revised monthly wages have been fixed at ₹13,006 for unskilled workers, ₹14,306 for semi-skilled workers, and ₹16,025 for skilled workers.

In the remaining districts, unskilled workers will get ₹12,356 per month, semi-skilled workers ₹13,591, and skilled workers ₹15,224. The decision follows consultations with employers' bodies and labour organisations. The government said suggestions and objections were examined to ensure a "balanced and practical" outcome.

CBI searches in eight states after 22 new FIRs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: The CBI Tuesday conducted searches at 77 locations across eight states after registering 22 new cases in connection with builders-financial institutions nexus case officials said.

The searches were spread across Delhi, Chennai, Pondicherry, Bangalore among other locations, they said.

"The cases relate to an alleged nexus between certain builders and officials of financial institutions, leading to the cheating and defrauding of innocent homebuyers," a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) spokesperson said in a statement.

These coordinated search operations conducted across different states are part of a nationwide crackdown, the statement said, adding that the operation resulted in the seizure of incriminating documents, digital devices and other materials, which are being examined.

The action is aimed at gathering crucial evidence to unravel the larger conspiracy involving alleged diversion of funds, financial irregularities and fraudulent practices in the housing real estate sector, the statement said. The case was handed over to the CBI by the Supreme Court, which April 29, 2025 had directed the agency to register seven preliminary enquiries against builders in NCR, including Supertech Limited.

Later in the year, the court directed it to register 22 cases in which homebuyers were duped in the NCR by using the subvention scheme.

SNIPPETS

WB govt orders visits to vulnerable poll areas

Kolkata: The West Bengal government Tuesday directed district administrations and police to jointly visit vulnerable areas within the next three days as part of confidence-building measures ahead of the assembly elections, an official said. In a letter, Chief Secretary Dushyant Nariala asks District Magistrates (DMs), Commissioners of Police (CPs) and Superintendents of Police (SPs) to identify localities that witnessed incidents of violence or intimidation during previous elections. "Such places should be visited within the next 2-3 days by DMs/DEOs along with CPs/SPs and District Force Coordinators," the letter said, adding that the visits should be covered by the press to enhance public confidence. An official said the objective is to reassure voters and ensure a peaceful atmosphere in identified pockets. All district authorities have been instructed to submit a compliance report on the joint visits by 5 pm April 16. The communication also asked district officials to prepare a comprehensive communication plan to ensure connectivity at every polling station through mobile, satellite, wireless and other appropriate means.

Protesters clash with security forces in Manipur

Imphal: Protesters clashed with security forces in Manipur's Bishnupur district Tuesday, prompting authorities to impose prohibitory orders in the district, officials said. The violence erupted in the Thingungei area as locals protested the recent bomb blast in Tronglaobi that killed two children. Tension escalated after unverified reports spread about the movement of "suspicious persons" allegedly carrying arms, they said. Clashes broke out in Thingungei and nearby Ningthoukhong, with security forces firing tear gas shells to disperse the crowd. More than 10 people sustained minor injuries during the clashes, while at least one four-wheeler was set ablaze by protesters, officials said. In a statement, police said a security team was obstructed by locals around 1.30 pm near Thingungei following the spread of "mischievous and unverified rumours" regarding the identity and purpose of the personnel.

Court sends I-PAC director to 10 days ED custody

New Delhi: A Delhi court sent I-PAC co-founder and director Vinesh Chandel to ten days of ED custody following his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case, officials said Tuesday. In a major action weeks ahead of the West Bengal Assembly Polls, the federal probe agency late Monday evening arrested Chandel after questioning. He is a law graduate from NLIU Bhopal and a 33 per cent shareholder of I-PAC. ED officials said Chandel was arrested in a fresh case filed after taking cognisance of a Delhi Police FIR that involves the Indian PAC Consulting Pvt Ltd (I-PAC). This case is "linked" to the coal scam probe, they said. I-PAC has been providing political consultancy to the TMC and the West Bengal government since 2021. It has many other political parties as clients.



Participants during a wrestling match at the Tawi Mahotsav as part of the 'Baisakhi' celebrations, near Tawi riverfront in Jammu

Hormonal imbalance, fertility issues rising in women in 20s: Experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: A growing number of young women are experiencing hormonal imbalance and fertility-related issues much earlier than previously seen, with experts attributing the trend to a combination of biological shifts and modern lifestyle factors.

Doctors say there is a noticeable change in clinical patterns, with conditions once common in women in their late 30s now increasingly being diagnosed in those in their 20s.

"There is a clear and concerning shift in women's health today, where issues related to hormonal imbalance and fertility are appearing much earlier than we traditionally observed," Priti Arora Dhamija, senior consultant and lead IVF, gynaecology at the Sitaram Bhatta Institute

of Science and Research, said. She noted that one contributing factor is the earlier onset of puberty. "One of the key reasons is the earlier onset of puberty with many girls now attain menarche as early as 8-9 years, which can lead to a relatively earlier decline in ovarian reserve," she said. Studies published in journals such as The Lancet Child and Adolescent Health have documented a steady decline in the age of puberty onset over the past few decades, linked to improved nutrition but also rising obesity and environmental exposures.

However, experts emphasised that biology alone does not explain the trend, with lifestyle factors playing a significant role. "Today, young women are growing up in a high-stress, high-performance environ-



ment, often marked by erratic sleep cycles, excessive screen time, poor dietary habits, and limited physical activity. These factors contribute to rising rates of obesity, PCOS, and metabolic disturbances in the early 20s," Dhamija said.

Chronic stress, she added, disrupts the hypothalamic-pituitary ovarian axis, leading to

hormonal imbalance and irregular ovulation. "In addition, behavioural factors such as early sexual activity, multiple partners, and lack of medical supervision in contraceptive use are contributing to higher incidences of sexually transmitted infections and uterine health issues, which can further impact fertility. Environmental exposure to hormone-like substances through food and pollution is an emerging concern as well," she said.

Juhi Bharti, Additional Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at AIIMS, Delhi, said clinicians are increasingly observing diminished ovarian reserve in younger women.

Supporting this trend, data from the Indian Society of Assisted Reproduction (ISAR) and international fertility studies indicate a rise in cases of diminished ovarian reserve and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) among women under 30. PCOS alone is estimated to affect nearly one in five women of reproductive age in India, according to various epidemiological studies.

Experts stressed that fertility should be viewed as a reflection of overall health rather than just age. Echoing similar concerns, Bhawani Shekhar, Associate Consultant at the Centre of IVF and Human Reproduction at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, said, "We gynaecologists are increasingly observing a shift in women's health with signs of hormonal imbalance and fertility issues appearing in the 20s," she said.



We should strengthen communication, consolidate mutual trust, cooperate closely, oppose the world's retrogression to the law of the jungle, and jointly safeguard genuine multilateralism

XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

SPAIN'S MIGRANT AMNESTY MOVE

Spain's government Tuesday finalized a migrant amnesty measure it announced earlier this year, paving the way for hundreds of thousands of immigrants living and working without authorization in the southern European nation to apply for legal status



of the day quote

For now, we can note with satisfaction, as far as we understand, his (Magyar's) willingness to engage in pragmatic dialogue

DMITRY PESKOV | SPOKESMAN, KREMLIN

Britain's national security and safety is in peril. We are under-prepared. We are under-insured. We are under attack. We are not safe

GEORGE ROBERTSON | FORMER NATO CHIEF

We need to remember that some 20,000 seafarers have been caught up in this conflict and are currently stranded on ships, facing increasing hardships daily

ANTONIO GUTERRES | CHIEF, UN

Lebanon, Israel break ice

Engaged in intense military operations, the countries hold first direct diplomatic talks in decades in Washington

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beirut, April 14: Lebanon and Israel opened their first direct diplomatic talks in decades Tuesday in Washington following more than a month of war between Israel and the Hezbollah militant group.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio called it a "historic opportunity" and made it clear no breakthrough agreement was immediately expected.

Rubio said the Trump administration is "very happy" to be facilitating the discussions, while noting that "we understand we're working against decades of history and complexities" that will not be quickly resolved.

"But we can begin to move forward with a framework where something can happen, something very positive, something very permanent, so that the people of Lebanon can have the kind of future they deserve, and so that the people



As for the outcomes of this negotiation between Lebanon and the Israeli enemy, we are not interested in or concerned with them at all. We are not bound by what they agree to

WAFIQ SAFA | HIGH-RANKING MEMBER, HEZBOLLAH'S POLITICAL COUNCIL

The problem is Hezbollah. Hezbollah also has its financial roots; there are a lot of dimensions holding this organisation, practically keeping Lebanon under Iranian occupation

GIDEON SAAR | FOREIGN MINISTER, ISRAEL

of Israel can live without fear," Rubio said.

Rubio and US Ambassador to the United Nations Mike Waltz attended the opening of the session at the State Department that is being led by US Ambassador to Lebanon Michel Issa, Israeli Ambassador to the US Yechiel Leiter and Lebanese Ambassador to the US Nada Hamadeh Moawad.

Hezbollah pushes back as Lebanese government hopes for end to war

The Lebanese government hopes the talks will pave the

way to an end to the war. While Iran has set ending the wars in Lebanon and the region as a condition for talks with the United States, Lebanon insists on representing itself.

Iran-backed Hezbollah and other critics maintain that Lebanon's government lacks leverage and that it should instead back the position of Iran, Hezbollah's key ally and patron. Wafiq Safa, a high-ranking member of the militant group's political council, told The Associated Press that it will not abide by any agree-

At least 2,124 people have been killed in Israeli strikes in Lebanon, the Health Ministry said, including hundreds of women and children. More than 1 million people are displaced

The deadliest day of the war took place last week, when Israel launched 100 airstrikes across Lebanon in 10 minutes, including in the heart of the capital, killing over 350 people

ments made in the talks.

Hezbollah enjoys wide influence in Beirut's southern suburbs, as well as large swaths of the country's southern and eastern provinces.

First Israel-Lebanon talks in more than 30 years

The talks are the first between Israel and Lebanon since 1993.

Lebanon's top political authorities, critical of Hezbollah's decision to fire rockets towards Israel March 2 in solidarity with Iran, quickly proposed direct talks in a bid to stop the escalation, hoping that Israel would not launch its ground invasion. Israel did not respond positively until last week, after it launched 100 strikes across the country, including in the heart of the Lebanese capital.

Beirut wants a truce as a prerequisite to talks, similar to Pakistan-brokered negotiations between the US and Iran.

AMID TERRITORIAL DISPUTE

Policy to improve relations with India unchanged: China



The remark comes as China repeatedly claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, April 14: China Tuesday said its policy to improve relations with India has not changed as it defended its move to publish new names for various regions in Arunachal Pradesh.

India Sunday categorically rejected China's efforts to assign "fictitious names" to Indian territory, asserting that such attempts to create "baseless narratives" cannot alter "undeniable reality" and could derail efforts to normalise bilateral ties.

New Delhi's sharp reaction came against the backdrop of Beijing establishing a third new administrative county in Aksai Chin, a region India maintains as its sovereign territory.

"India categorically rejects any mischievous attempts by the Chinese side to assign fictitious names to places which form part of the territory of India," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said.

Reacting to Jaiswal's remarks, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a media briefing here that the "Zangnan region is China's territory. China does not recognise the so-called 'Arunachal Pradesh' illegally set up by India."

Zangnan is the Chinese

name for Arunachal Pradesh. China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of southern Tibet.

"It is fully within China's sovereign rights for the Chinese government to issue standard names for some of the places in Zangnan," he said.

"China-India relations are generally stable at the moment. China's commitment to improving and growing China-India relations has not changed," Guo said.

"We hope the two sides will work in the same direction and act more in ways conducive to bilateral relations," he added. On March 26, China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region announced the creation of Cenling county, a strategic region located near the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and Afghanistan. It is also reportedly close to the western sector of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with India.

Cenling, located near the Karakoram mountain range, is the third new county established by China in Xinjiang, a predominantly Muslim Uygur region.

India last year lodged a protest with China over the creation of Hean and Hekang counties, stating that parts of their jurisdiction fall within its Union territory of Ladakh.

China has been publishing its names for various regions in Arunachal Pradesh since 2017 for which India has been consistently objecting, saying that fictitious names "to Indian territory cannot alter the 'undeniable reality'."

SHORT TAKES

Carney bags majority government in Canada

Ottawa: Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney secured a parliamentary majority for his Liberal government Monday, a win that he has said will help him deal more effectively with the trade war started by US President Donald Trump. It will also likely mean Carney, who took office with no political experience and has earned global praise for his efforts to band middle-power nations together, won't have to worry about an election for years. Capping off an extraordinary few months in Canada when several opposition members joined Carney's Liberals, his party said on X that it had secured two districts - known as ridings - in Ontario in special elections. The win takes Carney's Liberals to 173 seats in the 343-seat House of Commons.

Ex-student leaves 16 wounded in school

Ankara: A former student opened fire at a high school in southeastern Turkey Tuesday, wounding at least 16 people, before killing himself, an official said. The 18-year-old attacker, armed with a shotgun, fired randomly inside a vocational high school in Siverek, Sanliurfa province. He later killed himself with the same shotgun after being "cornered by police," Governor Hasan Sildak said. The attack left 10 students, four teachers, a canteen employee and a police officer hurt, Sildak said. While most of them were being treated in Siverek, five of the teachers and students were transferred to a hospital in the provincial capital because their conditions were more serious, the governor said. The motive for the attack remains unclear. School shootings are rare in Turkey. NTV television and other media reports said the assailant had threatened an attack on the school on social media prior to the shooting.

Pak channel in soup over Asha's reporting

Lahore: Pakistan's media watchdog has issued a show-cause notice to a leading news channel for running "Indian content" while broadcasting the news about the death of legendary singer Asha Bhosle. A ban on Indian content in Pakistan has been in place since 2018. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) issued the show-cause notice to GeoNews Monday seeking an explanation as to why it aired Indian content along with the news of Bhosle's death. The leading news channel is considered close to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government and the military establishment. Bhosle passed away Sunday due to multi-organ failure. She was 92.

Brazil's president calls for former spy head return after US detention

REUTERS

Brasilia, April 14: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva Tuesday called on former intelligence chief Alexandre Ramagem, who was detained by ICE in the United States the previous day, to return to Brazil to serve a coup-plotting prison sentence.

"I believe Ramagem will come back to Brazil, he has to come back to serve his sentence," Lula said in an interview with a local outlet.

A Brazilian senator said Monday that the country's former intelligence agency chief was arrested by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement and is pleading for him to get political asylum in the United States.

Ramagem, also a former lawmaker, was sentenced in September to 16 years in prison for his role in the coup attempt by supporters of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro in 2023. Brazil's federal police said he fled the South American nation before he would have started serving his sentence.



A man loads jerrycans onto a donkey after collecting water from a well at a mosque in Deh Mazang after severe water crisis gripped Kabul in Afghanistan

UKRAINE, GERMANY APPROVE DEFENCE DEAL AGAINST RUSSIA

POWER PLAY

Berlin: Ukraine and Germany are starting work on plans for the joint production of advanced drones and other battle-tested defence systems, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday, as Kyiv looks to scale up its more than four-year fight against Russia's all-out invasion. "We have proposed to Germany a bilateral drone deal covering various types of drones, missiles, software and modern defence systems. Our teams are starting concrete work," Zelenskyy said at a joint news conference with Chancellor Friedrich Merz during a visit to Berlin. Merz said that Germany's commitment to supporting Kyiv's war effort is "a very clear signal" to Russia. "We will not waver in our efforts to defend Ukraine," he said. US-led diplomatic efforts to end Russia's war on its neighbour have recently petered out as the Iran war grips the Trump administration's attention, although Tammy Bruce, the deputy US ambassador to the United Nations, told the UN Security Council Monday that Washington "will continue to push for a negotiated and durable end" to the war. Russia has occupied about 20 per cent of Ukraine so far. That includes the Crimean Peninsula, which Russia seized in 2014.



AMID IRAN WAR, ITALY SUSPENDS DEFENCE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL

ROME

Italy has suspended its defence agreement with Israel, which involves the exchange of military equipment and technology research, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and diplomatic sources said Tuesday. "In view of the current situation, the government has decided to suspend the automatic renewal of the defence agreement with Israel," Meloni said on the sidelines of an event in Verona, according to Italian news agencies ANSA and AGI. An Italian diplomatic source confirmed to AFP that the agreement had been suspended, saying: "It would have been politically difficult to keep it going." Approved by Israel in 2006, the agreement is reviewed every five years. It calls for cooperation across defence industries, education and training of military personnel, research and development and information technology, among others. Tensions between the two countries have risen over the past week after the Italian government accused Israeli forces of firing warning shots at a convoy of Italian UN peacekeepers in Lebanon.



CLIMATE CATASTROPHE

Greenpeace warns of radioactivity risk at Chernobyl

Kyiv has accused Russia of repeatedly targeting the site since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion in 2022, including of a strike last year that pierced the outer shell

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Moscow, April 14: An uncontrolled collapse of the internal radiation shell at the defunct Chernobyl nuclear power station in Ukraine could increase the risk of radioactivity release in the environment, Greenpeace warned Tuesday.

In 1986, while Ukraine was part of the Soviet Union, a reactor at Chernobyl exploded, sending clouds of radiation across much of Europe and forcing tens of thousands of people to evacuate.

The remnants of the plant are covered by an inner steel-and-concrete radiation shell - known as the sarcophagus and built hastily after the disaster

-- and a modern, high-tech outer shell, called the New Safe Confinement (NSC) structure.

Kyiv has accused Russia of repeatedly targeting the site since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion in 2022, including of a strike last year that pierced the outer shell.

In a report released Tuesday, days before the 40th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, Greenpeace warned that despite some repair works, the confinement function of the NSC "could not be fully restored".

"This increases the risk of radioactivity release in the environment especially in the case of a collapse" of the internal shelter, Greenpeace said.

"That would be catastrophic



because... there's four tons of dust, highly radioactive dust, fuel pellets, enormous amounts of radioactivity inside the sarcophagus," Shaun Burnie, a

senior nuclear specialist for Greenpeace Ukraine, told AFP earlier this month.

"And because the New Safe Confinement cannot be re-

That would be catastrophic because... there's four tons of dust, highly radioactive dust, fuel pellets, enormous amounts of radioactivity inside the sarcophagus

SHAUN BURNIE | SENIOR NUCLEAR SPECIALIST, GREENPEACE UKRAINE

paired at the moment, it cannot function as it was designed, there's a possibility of radioactive releases," Burnie added.

Greenpeace said deconstruction of unstable elements of the internal shell was necessary to prevent their uncontrolled collapse.

But any works at the site were impeded by the war raging on as "there's missiles from the Russians still being fired across Chernobyl," Burnie said.

"Here we are 40 years on and Russia is still conducting effectively a nuclear war against the people of Ukraine and Europe."

Plant director Sergiy Tarakanov said the situation around the site was "very dangerous".

"If a rocket will drop, not directly into the safe confinement, but just in 200 metres, it will create an external impact like an earthquake," increasing the risk of the inner shell collapsing.

"And what actually 1986 accident showed to us... that the radioactive particles, they do not recognise borders," Tarakanov added. Last month, France said that the Chernobyl protective dome would require almost 500 million euros of repairs after the Russian strike in 2025.



India's expanding quality control regime is imposing such high testing and certification costs that many MSME importers may be pushed out of business, leaving the market increasingly dominated by large importers
AJAY SRIVASTAVA | FOUNDER, GTRI

PAYTM NOW MAJORITY INDIAN-OWNED

One 97 Communications Ltd, which operates the Paytm brand, has become a majority Indian-owned and controlled company after domestic investors increased their stake to 50.3 per cent as of March-end 2026. The shift marks a structural change in ownership for the fintech firm, with domestic shareholding rising steadily in recent quarters, reflecting growing investor confidence. Domestic institutional investors raised their stake to a record 23.1 per cent in the March quarter, up 2.8 percentage points sequentially and 9.1 percentage points from a year earlier, according to regulatory filings



of the day **note**

Workflows and AI agents are being asked to do more than route work. They are being asked to interpret business conditions and act with better judgment
JAMES FISHER | CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER, QLIK

Recent uncertainties arising from the West Asia conflict need to be closely monitored. The evolving geopolitical situation may have adverse implications for automotive production, input and commodity prices, fuel prices and freight rates, which could pose near-term challenges for the industry and may also indirectly impact the demand requirement
SHAILESH CHANDRA | PRESIDENT, SIAM

The 2026-27 hiring reflects a shift to cautious, data-driven strategies, with focus on mid-level talent, digital capabilities and evolving business needs. Rising attrition highlights the need for stronger planning and retention
RP YADAV | CHAIRMAN AND MD, GENIUS HRTECH

IRAN WAR FALLOUT

IMF RINGS ALARM FOR GLOBAL GROWTH

The IMF downgraded its forecast for global growth to 3.1% in 2026 from the 3.3% it had forecast back in January. The expected growth would mark a deceleration from a 3.4% expansion in 2025

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, April 14: The Iran war has stalled the world's economic momentum this year, likely pushing growth lower compared to 2025, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned Tuesday.

The IMF downgraded its forecast for global growth to 3.1% in 2026 from the 3.3% it had forecast back in January. The expected growth would mark a deceleration from a 3.4% expansion in 2025.

US and Israeli strikes on Iran - and Tehran's closing of the Strait of Hormuz and retaliatory strikes on oil refineries and other energy infrastructure in neighboring countries - have driven oil and gas prices sharply higher around the world.

As a result, the IMF marked up its expectation for global inflation this year to 4.4% from 4.1% in 2025 and from the 3.8% it had forecast for this year in January.

Until the war, the world economy had shown surprising resilience in the face of President Donald Trump's protectionist policies, which built a wall of import taxes around the United States, the world's biggest economy and once a market practically wide open to imports. The damage was less than feared partly because Trump's tariffs last year ended up being lower than what he'd originally announced.

A tech boom, marked by massive investment in data centers and artificial intelligence, and rising productivity also combined to strengthen the world economy.

"War in the Middle East has



halted this momentum," IMF chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas wrote in a blog post accompanying the fund's latest World Economic Outlook.

The IMF's forecast assumes that conflict in the Persian Gulf is short-lived and that energy prices rise "a moderate 19%" this year.

Things could be much worse. In a "severe scenario" in which the energy shocks spill into next year and central banks are forced to raise interest rates to combat inflation, global growth could drop to 2% in 2026 and 2027.

The fund slightly downgraded its forecast for US growth this year to 2.3%. The 21 European countries that share the euro currency, hard hit by soaring natural gas prices, will collectively grow 1.1% this year, down from 1.4% in 2025, the IMF forecast.

Hardest hit are likely to be deeply indebted poorer countries that import energy and can't afford to buffer their economies with stepped-up government spending and tax relief. The IMF sharply lowered the outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, to 4.3% this year from the 4.6% it had expected in January.

One winner that's emerging from the conflict is Russia, an

Despite the recent news of a temporary ceasefire, some damage is already done, and the downside risks remain elevated
PIERRE-OLIVIER GOURINCHAS | CHIEF ECONOMIST, IMF

SHORT TAKES

Gems, jewellery exports dip 35%

Mumbai: India's gems and jewellery exports declined 35.23 per cent to \$27,717.40 million (Rs 2,44,827.26 crore) in March this year, mainly impacted by the West Asia conflict, apex industry body GJEPC said Tuesday. The total gems and jewellery exports in March 2025 were \$28,669.53 million (Rs 2,42,559.39 crores), according to the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) data. The Middle East conflict impacted gems and jewellery exports in March as logistics were affected. Even the diamond export parcels couldn't get through. Due to a high-risk situation, the insurance premiums skyrocketed, further impacting the shipments, GJEPC chairman Kirit Bhansali told PTI. Since 2020, the United Arab Emirates has become a rough diamond trading hub due to its accessibility to India. Meanwhile, the overall exports of gems and jewellery in 2025-26 dipped marginally by 3.32 per cent to USD 27,717.40 million (Rs 2,44,827.26 crore) compared to USD 28,669.53 million (Rs 2,42,559.39 crore) in FY25.

Overnight money mkt rates ease 0.6%

Mumbai: Rates in the overnight money market instruments have eased by around 0.6 per cent over the past two weeks after liquidity conditions in the banking system improved. Data compiled from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed that overnight market rates stood at 4.73 per cent as of April 10, down from 5.34 per cent April 2. Within the overnight segment, call money and Triparty Repo Dealing and Settlement (TREPS) rates softened by 0.03-0.05 per cent during the period, reflecting improved liquidity conditions in the system. The liquidity in the banking system turned into a sizeable surplus primarily due to the maturity of government securities (G-Secs). G-Secs worth Rs 31,329 crore and Rs 86,403 crore matured April 8 and April 12, respectively, with further maturities of Rs 34,791 crore scheduled for April 17.

Renault Bhubaneswar unveils all-new Duster



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Renault Bhubaneswar unveiled the all new Duster SUV at its Nayapalli showroom here Tuesday. The first few buyers of the SUV were handed keys to their vehicle in the event.

Speaking on the occasion, Siddharth Garg, Director, Gargson Automobile said, "Renault Duster, originally launched in India in 2012, has been re-launched in India in 2026 and the new version brings new ray of hope for the brand. It will also help compete with other brands in the segment."

The chief guest was Sujeet Kumar, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha while Satish Garg, chairperson, Gargson Group was also present during the event.

The all new Renault Duster was launched in India March 17 with prices starting at Rs 10.49 lakh (ex-showroom). The SUV is available with three engine options- turbo TcE 160, turbo TcE 100, strong hybrid E-tech 160. The turbo TcE 100 offers 100 ps of maximum power and 160 Nm of peak torque while the turbo TcE160 offers 163 ps of maximum power and 280 Nm of peak torque. Meanwhile, strong hybrid E-tech 160 comes with 1.8L petrol engine with 1.4 kWh with 2 motors.

The new Duster is available in five trims: Authentic, Evolution, Techno, Techno+ and Iconic. The automobile giant will be launching the strong hybrid variant during the festive season of Diwali this year.

Volkswagen unveils new Taigun

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Volkswagen India has unveiled the new Taigun, a premium SUV designed for customers who prioritize driving dynamics, safety, and purposeful design. The latest iteration blends expressive styling, intuitive technology, and enhanced comfort with the brand's hallmark safety standards, offering a driving experience that is both engaging and practical for everyday use.

Commenting on the launch, Nitin Kohli, Brand Director, Volkswagen Passenger Cars India, said, "The Taigun has been a key pillar of our India portfolio. Since its introduction, it has played a significant role in our SUV-VW journey, contributing to the brand's growth with its



POST NEWS NETWORK

robust build quality, strong safety credentials, and fun-to-drive performance. The new Taigun builds on this strong foundation with a sharper design and meaningful enhancements across key pillars. With this introduction, we are reinforcing our commitment to bringing aspirational, well-engineered products

that strengthen our SUVW portfolio and make German engineering more accessible to Indian customers."

The new Taigun features a bold front fascia, first-in-segment illuminated logos, and refreshed interiors, reflecting Volkswagen's global design language while delivering a sense of accessible premiumness.

Senco Gold & Diamonds celebrates empowerment with Bangle Utsav

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 14: Senco Gold & Diamonds has launched its signature "Bangle Utsav" here to celebrate the auspicious occasions of Poila Boishakh and Akshaya Tritiya.

With a legacy of over 85 years, the jewellery major is showcasing a wide collection of more than 10,000 designs, including 500 new seasonal pieces across gold, diamond, and platinum.

Blending traditional styles such as chur, bala, and shakha with contemporary designs, the collection starts at 30,000, catering to evolving consumer preferences.

The campaign, themed "Meri Zindagi Mere Haathon Mein", highlights the confidence and individuality of modern Indian youth. Joita Sen, Director and Head of Marketing and Design, said the collection celebrates self-expression and empowerment, adding that each piece is designed to inspire confidence. Suvankar Sen, MD and CEO, emphasised the brand's commitment to blending traditional craftsmanship with modern luxury, describing each creation as a legacy in the making.

To mark the festive period from April 5 to 19, the company is offering special benefits across its outlets, including discounts on gold, diamond, and platinum jewellery, along with exchange offers and additional savings for select cardholders, making the festive shopping experience more rewarding for customers.



₹18/L LOSS ON PETROL, ₹35 ON DIESEL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 14: Losses on petrol have widened to Rs 18 per litre and to Rs 35 on diesel as state-owned fuel retailers continue to keep pump prices frozen despite a sharp rise in input costs, sources said.

Despite prices being deregulated more than a decade back, state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum

FUEL PRICE FREEZE

Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) have not changed the retail petrol and diesel price since April 2022.

The three firms were incurring losses of about Rs 2,400 crore per day at the peak last month, which have since narrowed to around Rs 1,600 crore daily after

the government cut excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 10 per litre each - a reduction that was not passed on to consumers but used to partly offset losses, industry sources said. Macquarie Group, in a report on "India Fuel Retail", said, "At spot petrol-diesel pricing of USD 135-165 per barrel, we estimate India's oil marketing companies lose Rs 18 and Rs 35 per litre on petrol and diesel sales (respectively)."

JOYALUKKAS CELEBRATES HISTORIC ENTRY INTO AUSTRALIA



Bollywood actor and brand ambassador Kajol Devgan inaugurated the Joyalukkas showroom in Sydney, marking the brand's official entry into Australia. She was joined by Dr Andrew Charlton MP (Cabinet Secretary Assistant Minister for Science, Technology and the Digital Economy), Sameer Pandey- Councillor, John Paul Alukkas, CEO of Joyalukkas Jewellery, Sonia Alukkas, Director - International Operations.

Bowlers power CSK to win

KKR's winless run continues, slump to 32-run loss against CSK

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, April 14: A clinical bowling display led by Noor Ahmad and Anshul Kamboj complemented a strong batting performance as Chennai Super Kings defeated Kolkata Knight Riders by 32 runs in their IPL 2026 clash at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, here Tuesday.

Defending a competitive 192/5, CSK struck early and maintained control throughout, restricting KKR to 160/7 in 20 overs despite late resistance from Ramandeep Singh and Rovman Powell.

KKR's chase began on an experimental note, with Sunil Narine opening alongside Finn Allen. While Narine showed early intent with a couple of sixes, Allen fell cheaply as Kamboj struck in the second over to provide CSK an early breakthrough.

Narine failed to build on his start and was dismissed by Khaleel Ahmed during the powerplay, leaving KKR struggling at 36/2 after six overs — their lowest powerplay score since 2024. Ajinkya Rahane and Angkrish Raghuvanshi attempted to rebuild, briefly lifting the scoring rate with a mix of boundaries and sixes.

TODAY'S MATCH

RCB VS LSG

TIME: 7:30 PM

Star Sports channels & JioHotstar



succession, removing Cameron Green for a golden duck and later Rinku Singh, derailing KKR's chase.

Noor finished with impressive figures of 3/21, consistently troubling batters with his variations and exploiting the Chepauk surface. His spell reduced KKR from a position of recovery to deep trouble at 91/6.

With the required rate

climbing, Ramandeep (35 off 23) and Powell (31 not out off 22) stitched together a fighting partnership, keeping KKR's hopes alive with occasional boundaries. However, disciplined bowling from CSK ensured the target remained out of reach.

Kamboj returned at the death to seal the contest, finishing with 2/32. He removed Raman-

deep in the penultimate over and conceded just 12 runs in the final over to close out the game.

Earlier, CSK posted a strong 192/5 after electing to bat. Sanju Samson led the charge with a fluent 48, while young Ayush Mhatre provided a blistering start with a 17-ball 38. Dewald Brevis added impetus in the middle overs with a well-compiled 41, helping CSK recover after a brief slowdown.

Despite efforts from KKR's bowlers, particularly Narine and Varun Chakaravathy, to pull things back in the middle overs, CSK's aggressive start ultimately proved decisive.

The win marks CSK's second successive victory, while KKR continue to struggle for consistency in their batting and remain winless.

Brief scores:

Chennai Super Kings 192/5 in 20 overs (Sanju Samson 48, Dewald Brevis 41, Ayush Mhatre 38; Kartik Tyagi 2/35) beat **Kolkata Knight Riders** 160/7 in 20 overs (Ramandeep Singh 35, Rovman Powell 31*; Noor Ahmad 3/21, Anshul Kamboj 2/32) by 32 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
CSK	5	2	3	-0.846	4
MI	4	1	3	-0.772	2
KKR	5	0	4	-1.383	1

CANDIDATES CHESS

Unbeaten Sindarov sets up World C'ship clash with Gukesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Paphos (Cyprus), April 14: Uzbekistan's Javokhir Sindarov won the 2026 Candidates Chess Tournament here Tuesday, earning the right to challenge India's D Gukesh for the World Chess Championship title later this year.

Sindarov, 20, secured the win with a round to spare after a draw with Anish Giri in the 13th round. He finished the tournament unbeaten.

R Praggnanandhaa was the lone Indian representative in the 2026 Candidates men's Open section, having qualified for the tournament by winning the 2025 FIDE Circuit.

At 18, Indian Grandmaster Gukesh became the youngest-ever world chess champion in December 2024. He secured the title by defeating Ding Liren of China 7.5-6.5 in Singapore, breaking a 39-year-old record held by Garry Kasparov, who was 22 when he won in 1985.

The title match between Gukesh and Sindarov is expected to be the youngest ever



world championship match in history.

While the host city and exact dates are yet to be finalised, the event is scheduled for later in 2026.

In the most recent game between the two at the Tata Steel Chess 2026, Gukesh reached a winning position with a brilliant queen sacrifice, but Sindarov defended resolutely to secure a 78-move draw.

Sindarov's lone classical victory against Gukesh came in May 2022.

While Sindarov is on an unbeaten 50-match unbeaten streak in classical chess, Gukesh has had a difficult start to the year, including a career-low ninth place finish in Prague and a fourth place finish in Menorca where he lost both games to compatriot Nihal Sarin.

Vaishali stays in contention



Indian Grandmaster R Vaishali stayed in contention for the top prize by drawing with China's Zhongyi Tan, even as Bibisara Assaubayeva blew the title race wide open with a splendid victory over Ukraine's Anna Muzychuk in the penultimate round of women's Candidates Chess here Tuesday. Uzbekistan's 20-year-old Javokhir Sindarov won the open section with a round to spare as Anish Giri of Holland could not dent his confidence in what has perhaps been the greatest performance in the history of Candidates. Sindarov, on 9.5 points, is already crowned the champion, earning the right to challenge India's D Gukesh for the World Chess Championship title later this year. Sindarov still enjoys a healthy two-point lead over nearest rival Giri. On a day that featured four draws, R Praggnanandhaa also made a truce with Fabiano Caruana of the United States and the Indian remained on the seventh spot in the eight-player tournament. Caruana is a distant third on 6.5 points and he is trailed by Matthias Bluebaum of Germany, compatriot Hikaru Nakamura and Wei Yi of China who all have six points apiece. Praggnanandhaa comes next on 5.5 followed by Espenken in the team that is waiting to see the tournament get over. The women's section is hugely crowded at the top with Vaishali leading on 7.5 points with Assaubayeva. The Kazakh girl has been in great form in the last couple of games and it remains to be seen if she can replicate in the last remaining round. Vaishali will take on Kateryna Lagno in her 14th and final round game Wednesday while Bibisara has to tackle Divya Deshmukh.

SHORT TAKES

Maradona death trial resumes

Buenos Aires: The trial of seven health care professionals accused of negligence in the death of soccer great Diego Maradona resumed on Tuesday, nearly a year after the original proceedings collapsed when a presiding judge stepped down after appearing in a documentary about the case. The negligence case centers on seven medical professionals accused of failing to provide adequate care in the weeks leading up to Maradona's death five years ago at a home outside Buenos Aires. Maradona, widely regarded as one of the greatest soccer players of all time, died at age 60 from cardiac arrest while recovering from a procedure to treat a blood clot on his brain. The seven defendants are charged with culpable homicide, a crime similar to involuntary manslaughter that alleges that the accused were aware that their reckless conduct posed a risk and failed to prevent it. If convicted, they face prison sentences ranging from eight to 25 years. Defense attorneys argue that the captain of Argentina's 1986 World Cup-winning team suffered from multiple serious medical conditions and that no crime was committed.

PCB imposes two-year ban on Muzarabani

Lahore: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has taken strict action on Zimbabwe pacer Blessing Muzarabani, imposing a two-year ban, after he ditched Pakistan Super League (PSL) at the last stage to play Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 for Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR). The 29-year-old had initially gone unsold at both the IPL and PSL auctions before being signed as a replacement player by Islamabad United, but he ditched the team and opted to play in the IPL, where he was announced as a replacement for Mustafizur Rahman, who had been released by KKR on BCCI instructions amid external developments. KKR confirmed the signing, and Muzarabani joined their squad, arriving ahead of the IPL season that started shortly after the PSL. PCB, which had earlier imposed a one-year ban on Corbin Bosch last year, believes that the sanction was necessary to safeguard the professional environment of the PSL.

Wisden awards: Seven Indians bag honours

Deepti named Women's Cricketer, Abhishek T20 Cricketer of the Year at the Wisden Almanack 2026

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Apr 14: Indian cricketers dominated the Wisden Almanack 2026 honours, securing seven of the nine awards, with Deepti Sharma and Abhishek Sharma leading the way after being named Women's Cricketer of the Year and T20 Cricketer of the Year respectively.

Shubman Gill, Mohammed Siraj, Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja were named among Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Year, following their exploits in last year's Test series in England.

The only non-Indian winners



were premier Australian pacer Mitchell Starc, who was named Men's Cricketer in the World, and England batter Haseeb Hameed, who was also included among the Five Cricketers of the Year.

Deepti earned the honour after emerging as the top-wicket taker in last year's ICC Women's ODI World Cup with 22 wickets. The all-rounder's effort

helped India land their maiden global title, beating South Africa in the final in Mumbai. She also made 215 runs from nine matches with three fifties.

Abhishek had a breakout 2025 season, scoring 859 runs from 21 matches at an awe-some strike-rate of 193 with a hundred and five fifties.

India's Test skipper Gill was in prolific form during the En-

Shubman Gill, Mohammed Siraj, Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja were named among Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Year

glish summer, scoring 754 runs, which played a crucial role in India securing a 2-2 draw in the five-match series. Notably, he amassed 430 runs in the Edgbaston Test alone.

Pacer Siraj was the top wicket-taker in the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy series, taking 23 scalps. While Pant made 479 runs before an injury that he suffered in the fourth Test forced him to sit out of the fifth match. He braved a toe fracture to score a 54 in the second innings at Manchester.

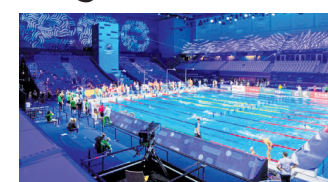
Russia, Belarus swimmers cleared to compete with flags, anthems

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Moscow, April 14: World Aquatics has announced that it had lifted sanctions on Russian and Belarusian athletes and would allow them to compete with their national flags and anthems.

"Following a decision of the World Aquatics Bureau, and in consultation with the Aquatics Integrity Unit (AIQU) and the World Aquatics Athletes' Committee, the Guidelines for Athlete Participation in Aquatics Events During a Period of Political Conflict will no longer apply to senior athletes with Belarusian or Russian sporting nationality," the sport's governing body said in a statement published on its official website.

It also said that athletes of Belarusian or Russian sport nationality will only be permitted to compete once they have successfully passed at least four



successive anti-doping controls carried out in partnership with the International Testing Agency (ITA) and completed background checks with the AIQU.

The World Aquatics Bureau had previously amended the Guidelines, which are implemented by the AIQU, to enable junior athletes with Belarusian or Russian sport nationality to participate on the same basis as their fellow junior athletes.

Russian Sports Minister and President of the Russian Olympic Committee Mikhail Degtyarev welcomed World Aquatics' decision on the same day.

Under Article 6 of the World Aquatics Constitution, Russia and Belarus have also fully resumed their membership rights.

ICONIC SPANISH BATTLE

Barca travel to the Atletico's Metropolitano ahead of their second leg of the Champions League with a 2-0 deficit, in hopes of turning tables

REUTERS

Madrid, April 14: Lamine Yamal insisted Monday that Barcelona must not treat a Champions League fightback at Atletico Madrid as something that is insurmountable.

Barca travel to the Metropolitan Tuesday trailing 2-0 from the first leg of their quarter-final, a deficit that leaves them staring at an exit from the competition unless they can conjure something extraordinary away from home.

"We mustn't think of a comeback as a miracle," Yamal told a press conference.

"I've been lucky enough that, ever since I was a child, I've had to take on more responsibility than I should have. I'm used to it.

"I just focus on enjoying it, on not seeing it as a problem, but as a strength. I'm grateful for everything that's happening to me."

More than half of the side set to step out in Madrid emerged from La Masia, Barcelona's youth academy, with 18-year-old Yamal widely viewed as the most dazzling product since Lionel Messi.

He burst onto the international stage by helping Spain win the 2024 European Championship and finished second in the 2025 Ballon d'Or vote.

"It's very important to have lots of La Masia players on the pitch for matches like tomorrow's. We're all home-grown, we all love Barca. We know what a moment like this means. We'll give it our all right to the end," he said.

History offers slim comfort. Only once in the Champions League has a team overturned a 2-0 first-leg home defeat, when Manchester United beat Paris St Germain 3-1 in Paris in 2019. Barcelona themselves have

La Masia fuels 'Remontada' at fortress Wanda



We promise that, if we're knocked out, we'll fight right to the end. We'll give our all for this badge. It'll be a match lasting 90 minutes or more; this isn't over yet. A comeback is very much possible, which is why we're here

LAMINE YAMAL

managed just one greater escape in knockout competition, erasing a 4-0 loss to PSG with a

6-1 victory at Camp Nou in the 2016-17 last 16.

The task looks even steep-

Anfield awaits another miracle

Liverpool have endured a torrid domestic season, but the reigning Premier League champions believe they can overturn a 2-0 Champions League quarter-final first-leg deficit against Paris St Germain at Anfield, manager Arne Slot said Monday. Liverpool have already crashed out of the League Cup and FA Cup and are fifth in the English top flight, leaving the Champions League as their last realistic shot at silverware this campaign. PSG were left ruing missed chances that kept Liverpool in contention despite a convincing 2-0 home win in Wednesday's first leg. When asked how he had convinced his players a comeback was still possible, Slot struck an optimistic but realistic tone. Anfield has long been a stage for European drama. In the 2019 semi-final, Liverpool famously overturned a 3-0 first-leg defeat against Barcelona with a stunning 4-0 victory at home. The atmosphere, Slot said, could again prove decisive.



er given recent history. Last month Barca were knocked out of the Copa del Rey semi-finals by Atletico after losing 4-0 in the first leg at the Metropolitan.

A 3-0 win in the return

proved insufficient, sending Atletico into Saturday's final against Real Sociedad.

Yamal, however, is adamant Barcelona will not give up without a fight.