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**SANDRA BULLOCK ON EMBRACING AI**

Sandra Bullock is embracing artificial intelligence in entertainment, urging creatives to use it constructively and make it "our friend." The Oscar winner believes the industry must lean into AI, reacting positively to fan-made AI trailers for *Practical Magic 2* circulating online

**JAKE GYLLENHAAL SHARES FASHION SHOOT WOE**

Jake Gyllenhaal says fashion shoots aren't his comfort zone, admitting he has "never felt totally comfortable" posing. *The Day After Tomorrow* star enjoys collaborating with luxury brands but finds advertising campaigns awkward, despite being the face of several high-end designers in recent years



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**ARIES**  
If you are aiming to marry soon, you can start making preparations today. However, before you take the final decision, it would be better to look at both sides of the coin, advises Ganesha. Activities related to such an alliance will dominate today, and by the end of the day you may feel very elated.

**TAURUS**  
This is one of those dreadful days when you could be unduly touchy and short tempered, fears Ganesha. Don't go around getting into fights and quarrels with anyone who seems unfriendly or ill mannered. You will only end up in spoiling some healthy relationships. Your moods are likely change from moment to moment. An ugly row with your spouse cannot be ruled out.

**GEMINI**  
It will not be hard for you to complete your tasks successfully and without any delays or obstacles in your path, only if you first seek to fully understand and acquire the learning required to perform it. The fruits of your labour will keep you happy and satisfied, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
You are known for your ability to set the ball rolling. Once you set your mind to do something, it is generally considered done by your peers. Today, you are eyeing a few accomplishments on the monetary front. Most part of your day will go in dealing with financial transactions, and importing and exporting goods.

**LEO**  
Today there is a chance that you will meet that special someone that you have been waiting for all your life. You may possibly give your partner a beautiful gift. You will be more inclined towards the arts and will be able to exhibit this new-found appreciation to the max, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
A fear of the unknown will keep lurking in your mind today. The shadow will only grow larger as the day progresses. You may find yourself spending too much on your foreign friends. Ganesha advises you to be cautious in this regard today.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says your children will gain achievements that will have you feel proud of them. You will get monetary benefit either by increment in salary or by inheritance. You will be able to gain substantial gains by investing in real estate or buying insurance policies.

**SCORPIO**  
Yet another mundane day in your life, as nothing exciting is on the cards. However, be cheerful and keep trying hard to bring in some spice in life. You never know when the planets change their mood and make an exciting future. Keep the hope alive, says Ganesha.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Your leadership qualities are likely to bag compliments today. As you follow law and order and also make others follow it. You leave no stone unturned to get the work done, and that too systematically. However, make sure you also give them space and freedom to express themselves. It would earn you brownie points, says Ganesha.

**CAPRICORN**  
You are in hot water, but do not lose hope during these turbulent times. Maintain a calm head over your shoulders and deal with the problems, guides Ganesha. Also, do not jump to conclusions or be argumentative with the people around you, as you may end up being at the losing end.

**AQUARIUS**  
You are in for a challenging day today. But, luck is by your side and you will be able to come out of the storm hale and hearty, assures Ganesha. If you are a businessman, you may enter into some major business venture, sign important contracts and take up new projects. It will be an exhausting day, but it will keep you charged up.

**PISCES**  
A day of mixed fortunes awaits you, where taking risks could prove to be your undoing, or provide you with handsome returns, says Ganesha. This is because you could come out on top by treading cautiously, but uncalculated risks will probably throw your calculations out of gear.

**ODIA CINEMA SHINES NATIONALLY**

**Bou Buttua Bhuta wins big at INCAs**

Organised by the Producers Guild of India, the awards celebrated excellence across 12 Indian film industries, bringing together some of the finest talents from the country



Bou Buttua Bhuta producer Trupti Satpathy, actress Archita Sahu and actor Babu Shaan Mohanty with their trophies

**MUMBAI/BHUBANESWAR:** Odia cinema has scripted a proud moment on the national stage, with *Bou Buttua Bhuta* and *Ananta* emerging as major winners at the prestigious inaugural Indian National Cine Academy (INCA) Awards 2026, held in Mumbai, Thursday.

*Bou Buttua Bhuta*, which turned out to be one of the standout films of the evening. The film clinched the Best Film award in the Odia category, marking

**OTHER NOTABLE ACTING HONOURS**

- Ranveer Singh - *Dhurandhar* (Hindi)
- Yami Gautam - *Haq* (Hindi)
- Naga Chaitanya - *Thandel* (Telugu)
- Rashmika Mandanna - *The Girlfriend* (Telugu)
- Rishab Shetty - *Kantara* (Kannada)
- Dulquer Salmaan - *Kaantha* (Tamil)
- Kalyani Priyadarshan - *Lokah* (Malayalam)

Organised by the Producers Guild of India, the awards celebrated excellence across 12 Indian film industries, bringing together some of the finest talents from across the country. Leading the charge was *Bou*

a significant achievement for its makers. Actor Babushaan Mohanty was honoured in the Best Actor category, while

Archita Sahu took home the Best Actress award for her performance. Produced under Babushaan Films, the movie's success reflects both its popularity and critical acclaim.

Receiving the award Archita said "This is not just an award for me—I am representing my industry here at INCA. I want to thank my fans—please continue to give your love and

support to Odisha and the Odia industry," while Babushaan said "I want to thank my wife and producer, Trupti, and my people of Odisha for believing in me and pushing me to take on meaningful roles that have helped me grow as an actor."

INCA also honoured legends like Kamal Haasan and Javed Akhtar with Lifetime Achievement Awards. **ARINDAM GANGULY, OP**

**Sabyasachi, Kumar C Dev adjudged best directors**

While *Bou Buttua Bhuta* won in three categories, the year's another *Ananta* was not behind with its directors Sabyasachi Mohapatra and Kumar C. Dev winning the Best Director award. Based on the timeless story *Randi Pua Ananta* by legendary writer Fakir Mohan Senapati, *Ananta* tells a moving tale of redemption and sacrifice. The powerful narrative, rooted in Odia culture, struck a chord with audiences and critics alike. Produced by Naveen Bhandari, Suraj Mahnot and Archita Sahu, the film features Sabyasachi Mishra in the titular role, alongside Suryamayee Mahapatra, Kuna Tripathy, Tapas Sargharia and Jyotirmayee Panda. Sabyasachi, in his reaction, said "I feel truly honoured to receive this award. Sharing this moment with my son makes it even more special. I want to thank INCA for recognising my work, and I am deeply grateful to my entire team. I would also like to thank actor Sabyasachi Mishra, who gave his all to this film, even transforming himself physically for the role."



**Femina Miss India Grand Finale today**



**BHUBANESWAR:** The 61st edition of the prestigious Femina Miss India 2026 Grand Finale will be held at KIIT University Saturday, marking a landmark moment for Odisha as the state hosts one of the country's biggest beauty pageants for the first time.

The grand finale is scheduled to begin at 5.30 PM on the KIIT Campus 13 Cricket Stadium, where celebrities from the entertainment and fashion world are expected to remain present. Among the prominent guests likely to be in attendance are Zeenat Aman, Madhur Bhandarkar, Terrance Lewis, Amaal Mallik, Celina Jaitley, Dutee Chand and Vartika Singh.

Thirty state winners from across the country, who qualified for the national finale, have been staying at the KIIT campus since their arrival earlier this week. They were accorded a warm welcome and felicitated in the presence of Dr Achyuta Samanta, who has extended active support for hosting the event in collaboration with the Odisha Tourism Department. Hosting the pageant at a university campus is being seen as a historic milestone, with KIIT becoming the first university in eastern India to stage the event. During their stay in Odisha, the contestants have been introduced to the state's rich heritage, cuisine and traditions. They celebrated the Odia New Year at the KIIT campus wearing traditional patta silk sarees and enjoyed authentic Odia dishes along with the iconic Chhena Poda. The contestants also visited Puri, Konark Sun Temple, Chandrabhaga Beach and Mukteswar Temple as part of a special cultural outreach programme aimed at showcasing Odisha's tourism potential before a national audience. The event is expected to draw significant attention to Bhubaneswar and further strengthen the city's emergence as a major destination for national-scale cultural and entertainment events. **PNN**

**CHINTA O CHETANA'S 49TH BAISHAKHI FESTIVAL**



A soulful performance by the students of Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya on the third evening of the event at Rabindra Mandap, Friday.

PIC: MANORANJAN MISHRA

**MUMBAI:** Actress-producer Patralekhaa has slammed social media pages for body shaming her, saying that she has recently given birth while simultaneously working on two films. She also urged them to show empathy and kindness instead of passing judgment.

The actress took to her Instagram stories section to call out the harsh scrutiny. She stressed that her body's changes are a natural part of pregnancy.

The actress wrote: "Pap pages! What's happened to me?! is that I have just given

**Patralekhaa slams body-shaming**

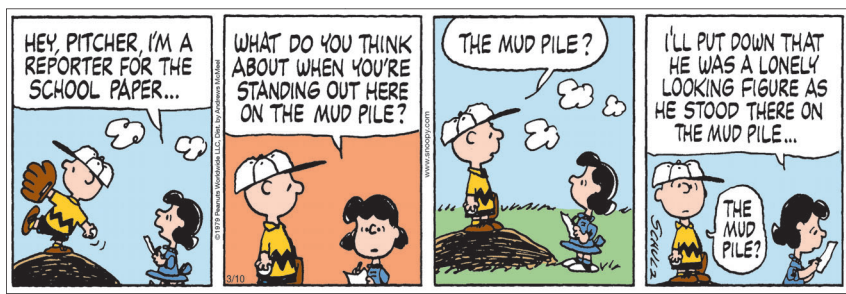


birth!" Giving a sharp answer, she added that she has not "sat and eaten a mountain".

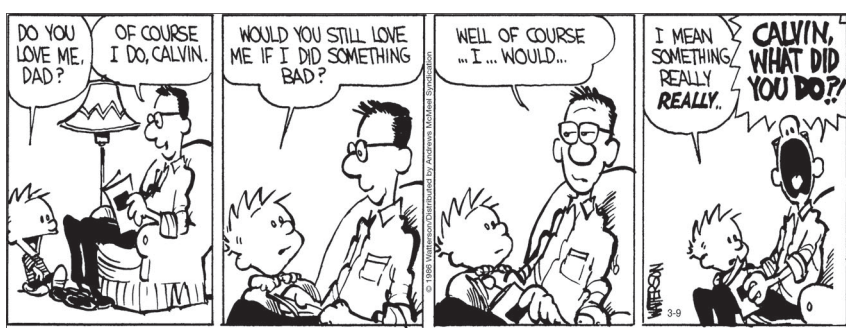
"Yes, I have gained the weight, which seems like an unnatural phenomenon to you all. I have not sat and eaten a mountain, I just delivered a baby and produced two films simultaneously which are not easy jobs," said Patralekhaa, who is married to actor Rajkumar Rao.

The actress, whose maiden production is *Toaster*, concluded: "If I could I would not be this way. But that's how my body has reacted to pregnancy. For God's sake please learn to be a little kind." **IAN5**

**PEANUTS**



**CALVIN AND HOBBS**

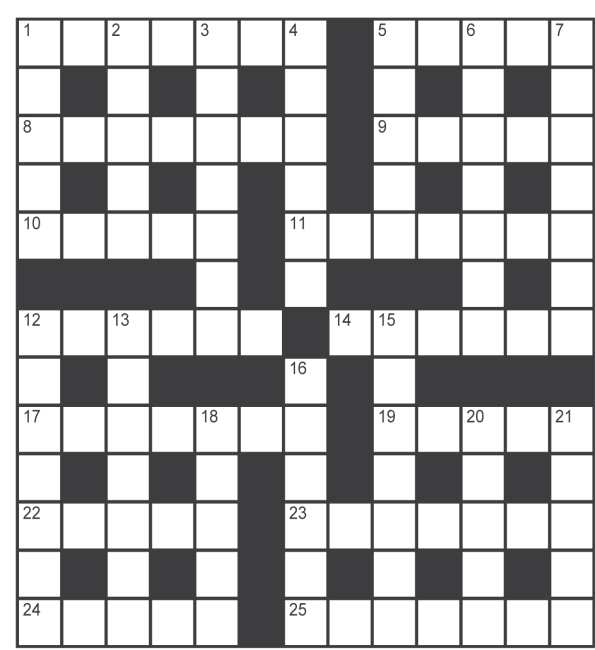


**BREVITY**



**FUN POST**

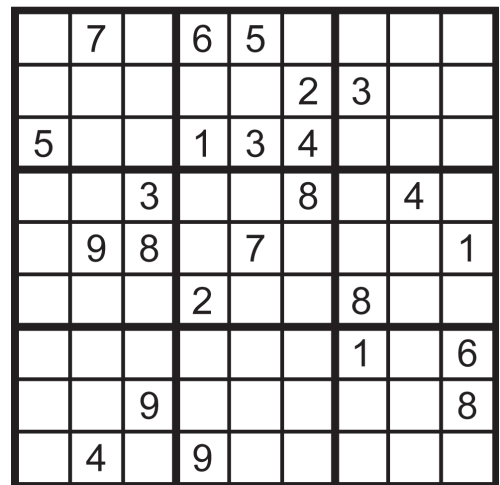
**CROSSWORD**



- Across**
- 1 Firings
  - 5 Summit
  - 8 Small brownish European songbird
  - 9 Blossom
  - 10 Egyptian peninsula
  - 11 Beginning
  - 12 \_\_\_ d'affaires
  - 14 Play types
  - 17 Warm-water fatty fish
  - 19 Colourful
  - 22 Parasite
  - 23 Ship footbridge
  - 24 Stun gun
  - 25 Feared
  - Down**
  - 1 Shopping aids
  - 2 Long for
  - 3 Creating, as a relationship
  - 4 Waste material
  - 5 Stateroom
  - 6 Pouched mammal
  - 7 Bane
  - 12 Airline crew member
  - 13 Drifting
  - 15 Box office gate
  - 16 Sidestepped
  - 18 Loathe
  - 20 Swore
  - 21 Wood nymph

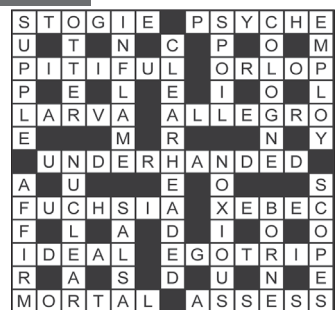
**SUDOKU**

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.

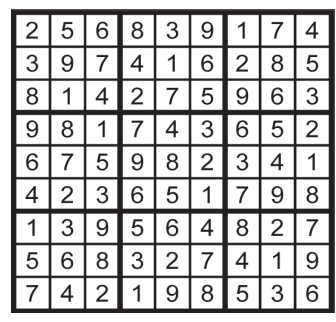


**SOLUTIONS**

**CROSSWORD**



**SUDOKU**



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



**Unfair scrutiny**  
Patralekha slams body shaming, highlights postpartum struggles while juggling work on two films simultaneously

LEISURE



**Weapons delivery**  
US to delay weapons deliveries to some European countries due to the Iran war

INTERNATIONAL | P8



**Adani pips Ambani**  
Tycoon Gautam Adani has overtaken fellow Gujarat business czar Mukesh Ambani to become Asia's richest person

BUSINESS | P9



**Historic final**  
Atletico Madrid and Real Sociedad to meet in Copa del Rey final. This will be the first Cup final attended by their supporters since 1987

SPORTS | BACK PAGE



**POLL FERVOUR:** A vendor displays kites with various political party symbols for sale ahead of the West Bengal Assembly elections, in Kolkata, Friday PVI PHOTO

## Lacking numbers, govt loses women's quota Bill

**AGENCIES**  
New Delhi, April 17: In a major setback to the government, a Constitution Amendment Bill to implement 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures in 2029 and increase the number of Lok Sabha seats to 816 was defeated Friday, with the ruling dispensation asserting that the struggle to give the rights to women will continue. While 298 members voted in support of the Bill in Lok Sabha, 230 MPs voted against it. Out of 528 members who voted, the Bill required 352 votes for a two-third majority. According to the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, Lok Sabha seats were to be increased to 816 from the current 543 to "operationalise" the women's reservation law before the 2029 parliamentary polls, following a delimitation exercise based on the 2011 Census. Seats were also to be increased in state and Union territory assemblies to accommodate 33 per cent reservation for women. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, senior ministers Rajnath Singh and Amit Shah, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi were among those present during the voting. This was for the first time a bill under the Modi government was defeated in Parliament. After the legislation was defeated during the voting, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla adjourned the House for the day



and announced that it would meet again Saturday. The three-day special sitting was convened from April 16 to 18 for getting the Parliament's approval to the bill. When the Constitution Amendment Bill was defeated, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju conveyed to the Speaker that the government has no intention to move ahead with the two other bills - the Delimitation Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill - as both the legislations were interlinked with the Constitution Amendment Bill. Rijiju said the Opposition lost a historic opportunity to honour the country's women but the Modi government's struggle to give rights to women will continue. "We will not take rest till we ensure that the country's women get reservation in legislatures," he said.

Later, Rijiju told reporters that Congress is an "anti-women" party and the country's women will never forgive them. "The Congress celebrated after the bill was defeated which clearly shows that it is an anti-women party," he said. After the bill was defeated, Union Home Minister Amit Shah blamed Congress, TMC, DMK, and Samajwadi Party for not allowing its passage. "Now, the women of the country will not get the 33 per cent reservation in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, which was their right. The Congress and its allies have done this not for the first time, but repeatedly. Their mindset is neither in the interest of women nor of the country," he said in a post on X in Hindi. Shah said this "insult to the women of the country will not stop here but will travel far and wide."

### HM SUSPENDED AFTER 2 GIRLS DIE

**Mohana:** The headmaster of a government school in Gajapati district has been suspended following the death of two schoolgirls in a gate collapse, officials said Friday. **MORE P5**

## Iran reopens Hormuz

**AGENCIES**  
Teheran/Washington, April 17: Iran Friday said the Strait of Hormuz is "completely open" for all commercial vessels, a move welcomed by US President Donald Trump. "In line with the ceasefire in Lebanon, the passage for all commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz is declared completely open for the remaining period of the ceasefire," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a post on X. The announcement of the re-opening of the vital waterway by Araghchi comes a day after President Trump announced a 10-day ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel. Araghchi, however, said the ships must sail "on the coordinated route as already announced" by the Ports and Maritime Organisation of Iran.



Minutes later, President Trump also shared the announcement in a post on Truth Social. "Iran has just announced that the Strait of Iran is fully open and ready for full passage. Thank you!" Trump said, referring to the Strait of Hormuz. Iran effectively blocked the Strait of Hormuz following its conflict with the US and Israel, crippling global energy supplies. Trump, however, said the naval blockade against Iran will remain in "full force" until Tehran reaches an agreement with the US to end the war. He said the Strait of Hormuz "is completely open and ready

for business and full passage, but the naval blockade will remain in full force and effect as it pertains to Iran, only, until such time as our transaction with Iran is 100% complete. This process should go very quickly in that most of the points are already negotiated." The development comes a day after Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir held talks with top Iranian leadership in Tehran as part of Islamabad's efforts to resolve the conflict between the US and Iran. Meanwhile, Pakistan has started preparing to host the second round of high-stakes talks between the US and Iran during the next week. The US and Iran held rare direct talks in Pakistan over the weekend aimed at ending their conflict, but the talks ended early Sunday without any agreement.

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



### Heatwave: Schools, colleges shut in 3 dists

**PNN & AGENCIES**  
Bhubaneswar, April 17: Amid an intense heatwave sweeping Odisha, the authorities in three western districts Friday ordered closure of all schools, colleges and educational institutions from April

18 to April 21, officials said. Separate notifications issued by the administrations of Bolangir, Subarnapur and Kalahandi cited prevailing hot and humid conditions for the decision. "In view of the prevailing heatwave condition and Red

Warning issued for Kalahandi district by the IMD, and keeping in mind the health of students, teachers and staff, all schools and Anganwadi centres will remain closed from April 18 to April 21," a notification issued by Kalahandi Collector Sachin Pawar said.

## Russia building army of pro-war teen influencers

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
Moscow, April 17: Russia is trying to produce more pro-war influencers through content creation camps, training teenagers to spread the Kremlin's hardline, anti-West narrative to the next generation. Since invading Ukraine in 2022, Moscow has ramped up control of the domestic information space, outlawing criticism of the offensive through strict military censorship laws, throttling foreign media outlets and pushing its agenda across society. Schools and young people have been targeted - curricula and textbooks changed to include Russia's justification for its invasion and soldiers dispatched to whip up pro-war enthusiasm in the classroom. At one content creation camp in early April, more than 120 teenagers, clad in green sweaters and red berets, gathered in Moscow for lectures from soldiers and state media reporters on how to produce videos, use artificial intelligence and build audiences. "We have created a huge team of kids, who understand how to broadcast government values and our organisation's values," Vladislav Golovin, a former soldier and chief of the general staff of Russia's Young Army cadets movement, said in a statement released by the group. In a promotional video from the event, children were shown cheering a cadet racing against Golovin to see who could reload a sniper rifle the fastest. Another organisation, the Movement of the First, runs competitions offering rewards for teenagers with the best blogs and biggest followings. The training camps are part of what Keir Giles, director of the UK-based Conflict Studies Research Centre, calls a "concentrated campaign to restore the prestige of the Russian military."

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BIJU PATNAIK DEATH ANNIVERSARY

# CM reaffirms 'Samruddha Odisha' vision

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 17:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday paid tributes to former Chief Minister and legendary leader Biju Patnaik on his death anniversary, saying that his government is committed to working on Biju Babu's dream to make the state prosperous and developed.

Addressing the media persons after paying floral tributes at Patnaik's statue on state Assembly premises, Majhi said Biju Babu was an industrialist, a veteran pilot, and a great political leader who deeply loved Odisha and its people. He also added that throughout his life, he stood firmly for his self-respect, the honour of Odisha, and the dignity of the nation.

The CM noted that no matter the circumstances, he never compromised on Odisha's pride and self-esteem. It is for this reason that the people of Odisha fondly called him 'Biju Babu' and took immense pride in him. "He had envisioned trans-



**Biju Babu was an industrialist, a veteran pilot, and a great political leader who deeply loved Odisha and its people. Throughout his life, he stood firmly for his self-respect, the honour of Odisha, and the dignity of the nation**

MOHAN CHARAN MAJHI | CM, ODISHA

forming Odisha into a developed state. This visionary leader not only dreamed of a prosperous Odisha but also worked tirelessly and with unwavering commitment to achieve that goal. Our government, too, has begun the work to build a 'Samruddha Odisha' to fulfil his dreams," stated Majhi.

He further noted that his government has resolved to fulfil all his unfulfilled dreams, aiming to transform Odisha into a

developed state and take it to the global stage by reawakening its self-identity.

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) President Naveen Patnaik, remembering the legendary leader and his father, described Biju Patnaik as a towering personality and a symbol of courage, patriotism, and self-respect.

Patnaik further added that Biju Babu was the embodiment of Odia pride, and the greatest tribute to him would be a unit-

ed fight to protect the interests and identity of Odisha. Highlighting his contributions, Patnaik noted that Biju Babu had played a pioneering role in women's empowerment in the country as early as the 1990s.

"It's a matter of coincidence that the Parliament is taking up the Women Reservation Bill during the death anniversary of Biju Babu. In fact, he had played a pioneering role in the country for women's empowerment long back in the 90s. BJD strongly believes in the empowerment of women. Thus, we extend our support to the Women's Reservation Bill," said Patnaik.

## 187 houses razed during BDA's eviction drive

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 17:** Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) carried out a large-scale eviction drive in Shampur mouza under Bharatpur police limits here Friday, reclaiming significant stretches of encroached government land. The operation was conducted under the direction of BDA Vice-Chairman Chanchal Rana and led by Joint Commissioner Ranjan Kumar Jena.

A total of six JCB machines were pressed into service to demolish unauthorised structures. On the first day alone, 187 houses, including 31 under-construction buildings, were razed, clearing nearly 8 acres of land. The eviction drive is part of BDA's ongoing efforts to remove illegal encroachments and facilitate planned urban development in the City.

To maintain law and order during the operation, around 10 platoons of police force along with 50 police officers were deployed at the site. Officials stated that the eviction process remained peaceful throughout, with no major untoward incidents reported.



Prior to the drive, BDA had issued multiple notices to residents and made public announcements through loudspeakers, urging encroachers to vacate the land voluntarily. Authorities reiterated that the action was taken only after due process.

Rana emphasised that the eviction drive will continue until all encroachments are cleared. He also appealed residents occupying government land illegally to vacate on their own to support the City's development initiatives.

During the eviction drive, officials recovered a total of 72 LPG cylinders, including 21 small cylinders, from an encroached house. BDA subsequently handed over the seized cylinders to the Civil Supplies department for further action.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Sashanka Das / Sasanka Kr Das, S/o. Late Panchu Charan Das, resident of Dakshin Kanyanagar, P.O.: Kanyanagar, P.S.: Bishnupur, Dist.: South 24 Parganas, PIN - 743398 (743503), West Bengal, India declare by this Affidavit No. 461, dated 07.04.2026, that now onwards I shall be known as Sasanka Kumar Das for all future purposes.

# Ensure uninterrupted power supply: Dy CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 17:** Deputy Chief Minister and Energy Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo Friday directed department officials to maintain uninterrupted power supply across the state and take swift action to prevent any disruption amid rising demand in this summer.

Singh Deo reviewed the preparedness of the Energy department in order to ensure stable electricity supply during the upcoming peak summer season.

Officials informed that the department has put in place extensive arrangements to meet the anticipated summer load. While the peak power demand in April has already reached 6,087 MW, it is projected to rise further to around 6,200 MW in May and 6,100 MW in June. Compared to last year, April demand has recorded a 2 per cent increase.

To meet the expected surge,



the department has strengthened coordination with various power sources. Discussions have been held with Odisha Hydro Power Corporation (OHPC) to maximise hydroelectric generation during peak demand hours. Similarly, coordination has been maintained with thermal power plants, while power banking arrangements have also been put in place.

The state is also exploring additional procurement options, including discussions with Rourkela Steel Plant for 50 to

100 MW of power. In addition, electricity will be procured from the power exchange as per real-time requirement to ensure demand-supply balance.

On the consumer service front, the department has strengthened its grievance redressal and communication systems. The call centre capacity has been expanded from 100 to 150 logins per day. New features such as missed-call alerts and single-click services have been introduced to provide instant updates on power outages.

## UU organises FINCON 2026

**Bhubaneswar:** The annual flagship event— FINCON 2026, organised by MBA (FM) programme, PG department of Commerce, Utkal University (UU) was formally inaugurated here Friday. The event kicked off with welcome address by MBA (FM) Coordinator and PG department of Commerce Head Rabintra Kumar Swain. Former professor of the department Prabodha Kumar Hota joined as guest of honour, whereas SBI's AGM (Learning & Development) Kishore Chandra Dash joined as chief guest. The presidential address was delivered by university's CPGC Mitali Chinara and Brahmputra Biswal proposed vote of thanks. Guests emphasised uncertainties in today's dynamic and rapidly evolving economic environment and highlighted challenges, disruptions, and unexpected changes that are an integral part of growth and success. Speakers encouraged students to develop resilience, adaptability, and a positive mindset to effectively navigate such situations. They also stressed the importance of continuous learning, skill enhancement, and maintaining confidence during difficult times, as these qualities enable individuals to turn challenges into opportunities and emerge stronger. Following the inaugural session, a 'B-School Meet' was organised, where students from various higher education institutions participated B-Quiz, AD-MAD Show, Show Your Talent, Trade War, Fincon Royale, and Escape Room. The winners of these competitions will be awarded with trophies and certificates during the annual meet today.



## HANDLOOMS GO GLOBAL

# 'Vishwa Sutra' to shine at Miss India finale



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 17:** In a landmark initiative celebrating India's rich textile heritage, the office of the Development Commissioner (Handlooms) under Ministry of Textiles, for the first time, partnered with Miss India platform to present 'Vishwa Sutra - Weaves of India for the World'.

The exclusive handloom showcase will be unveiled at Miss India grand finale in Bhubaneswar April 18, taking India's traditional weaves to a global fashion stage.

The initiative highlights the diversity, sustainability, and cultural depth of Indian hand-

looms. In a unique concept, contestants representing different states and Union Territories will don curated handloom ensembles inspired by their regional weaving traditions, creatively fused with design elements, reflecting global cultures.

This symbolic blend aims to connect India's textile legacy with international fashion narratives.

The showcased collection draws from some of India's most iconic weaving traditions, including Odisha's Ikat, Tamil Nadu's Kanjivaram, UP's Banarasi, Assam's Muga Silk, Gujarat's Patola, Bengal's Jamdani, Maharashtra's Paithani, Leh's Pashmina and several

others, representing country's vast and vibrant handloom heritage.

Development Commissioner (Handlooms) M Beena said the collaboration is designed to enhance the visibility of Indian handlooms among younger audiences, fashion stakeholders, and global consumers. She emphasised that the initiative reinforces the vision of 'Handloom as Heritage, Handloom as Future', while promoting India's cultural industries and creative economy.

India's handloom sector, one of the largest in the world, provides sustainable livelihoods to over 35 lakh weavers and allied workers, making it the second-largest source of employment after agriculture. With increasing global demand for eco-friendly and sustainable textiles, Indian handlooms are witnessing renewed interest in both domestic and international markets.

The 'Vishwa Sutra' initiative aligns with Central government's broader vision of 'Vocal for Local to Global' and Prime Minister's 5F framework — Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign — aimed at positioning traditional industries as globally competitive sectors.

# Republish Odia syllabus in proper script: Govt to JAC

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 17:** The state government has raised strong objection to the publication of Odia language syllabus for Jharkhand Teacher Eligibility Test (JTET) 2026 examination in Devanagari script by Jharkhand Academic Council (JAC) and urged it to republish the syllabus in proper Odia script at the earliest.

In a letter addressed to JAC, Odia Language, Literature and Culture department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Rashmita Panda stated that while the Bengali syllabus had been published in Bengali script, issuing the Odia syllabus in Devanagari was regrettable and inappropriate.

The letter noted that Odia is one of the 22 languages listed in the 'Eighth Schedule' of the Constitution and is one of the recognised classical languages.

The state government also highlighted broader concerns



over inadequate arrangements for Odia language education in parts of Jharkhand, including shortage of textbooks and teachers in Odia-speaking areas. Referring to the National Education Policy 2020 and NCTE provisions, the state government said that regional language-based evaluation systems should be ensured in parts where Odia speaking communities can be found. Some of the key demands

placed before the council includes, inclusion of prose and poetry passages carrying 20 marks in Odia, issuance of model question papers in Odia script, and ensuring parity for Odia with other scheduled languages.

The move is being seen as a significant step by the state government to safeguard the linguistic and educational rights of Odia-speaking minority communities living in neighbouring states.

## STRENGTHENING AGRI EDUCATION

# OUAT hosts ICAR nodal officers' meet



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 17:** A two-day interactive meet of ICAR nodal officers concluded at Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) here Friday, bringing together experts from across the country to deliberate on enhancing the quality of agricultural education.

The programme served as a key platform to discuss reforms in academic frameworks, quality assurance, and implementation of evolving national education policies in agricultural universities.

Delivering the welcome address, ICAR Deputy Director General (Agricultural Education) JK Jena outlined the objectives of the meet and stressed the need to align existing curricula with the New Education Policy. He also urged the participants to develop actionable recommendations during the deliberations to strengthen academic structures.

Delivering the inaugural address, OUAT VC Pravat

Kumar Roul highlighted the importance of such interactive forums in improving institutional performance. He noted that the participation of nodal officers from across India would significantly contribute to enhancing educational quality and student outcomes.

Speaking on the occasion, ICAR Assistant Director General (EQAR) AS Yadav emphasised the importance of effective coordination and collaboration among agricultural universities for successful programme implementation.

Over 80 ICAR nodal officers from various states attended the meet. The event featured a series of technical sessions covering research, extension services, academic environment, and student welfare, along with interactive discussions and experience-sharing sessions. A cultural programme was also organised as part of the event.

The meet is expected to play a crucial role in strengthening institutional mechanisms and advancing the overall quality of agricultural education in India.

## Non-factor haemophilia therapy soon: Officials

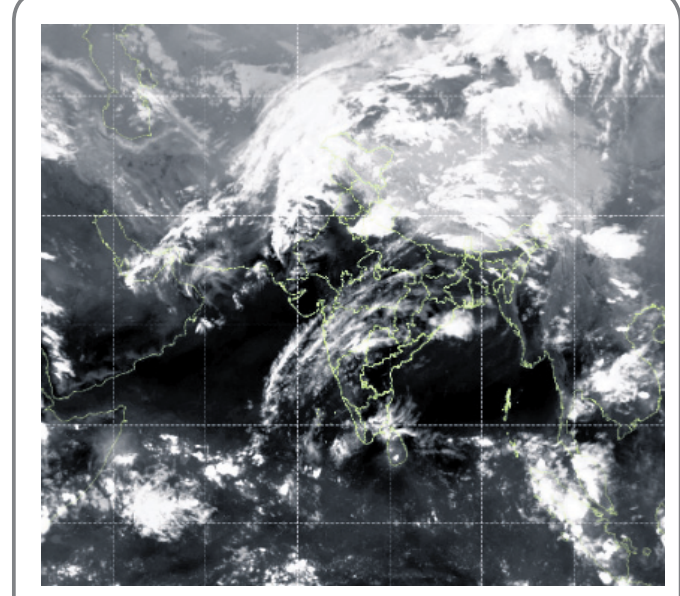
POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 17:** Non-factor therapy for haemophilia will be introduced soon in the near future, officials announced during World Haemophilia Day observation at Haemophilia Day-care Centre in Capital Hospital and PGIMER Bhubaneswar here Friday.

This modern treatment approach is expected to be more effective and reduce the frequency of bleeding episodes, allowing patients to lead healthier and more normal lives, officials added.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling attended the programme as chief guest and stated that the state government has consistently supported haemophilia patients by providing free treatment, ensuring availability of clotting factors, and expanding awareness programmes across the state. On this occasion, improved treatment facilities and new medications were launched. For the first time in state, facilities for 'Extended Half-Life Factor VIII' and 'Von Willebrand Factor' therapy have also been made available. "These advanced treatments will reduce the number of injections required and improve patients' quality of life," the minister said.

MARKET WATCH					
CURRENCY		BOURSES		COMMODITIES	
INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION	INDEX	VARIATION
DOLLAR	92.97 ↓ 0.32	SENSEX	78493.54 ↑ 504.86	GOLD	₹155,024 ↑ ₹1872
EURO	109.77 ↓ 0.28	NIFTY	24353.55 ↑ 156.80	SILVER	₹259,490 ↑ ₹10,862



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	35.7°	35.8°	Dry weather very likely to prevail over all the districts
Min Temp	26.6°	25.2°	
Humidity	83%	83%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	

## Ensure last-mile delivery of fertilisers: CM to Collectors

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 17:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday asked district Collectors to focus on the last-mile delivery of fertilisers.

Reviewing the availability and equitable distribution of fertilisers for the Kharif season amid the West Asia crisis at a high-level meeting at Lok Seva Bhavan here, the CM directed Collectors to ensure that farmers receive fertilisers as per their requirements during the season.

Deputy Chief Minister and Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo said the Centre has been issuing advisories to state governments on fertiliser management from time to time and urged department officials to follow them. Co-operation Minister Pradeep Bal Samanta also advised Collectors and officials to streamline the fertiliser distribution system.

Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Sachin Ramchandra Jadhav said the Centre will provide 11,42,950 metric tonnes of fertilisers this year. He added that while 79,630 metric tonnes are required for April, 3,61,490 metric tonnes were available as of April 15.

Odisha has 1,029 fertiliser wholesalers and 12,093 retailers, he said, adding that the supply of fertilisers from various



companies is also regular. Discussing the fertiliser supply situation with district Collectors, who joined through videoconferencing, Majhi said the state currently has 1.77 lakh metric tonnes of urea and over 60,000 metric tonnes of DAP. However, he directed Collectors to focus on last-mile delivery rather than just statistics. He said they should ensure that every farmer, whether small or marginal, receives fertiliser as per requirement.

Ordering strict action against black marketers, Majhi said warehouses of wholesalers and retailers should be inspected regularly. Collectors should also conduct surprise inspections.

He directed that FIRs be lodged against illegal fertiliser dealers and that their licences be cancelled.

The CM also directed the police and Agriculture department to jointly monitor border

checkposts to prevent fertiliser smuggling out of Odisha. He further asked district-level task forces to take action.

Majhi asked officials to ensure the formation of panchayat-level monitoring committees within two to three days to regulate fertiliser availability and supply. He also emphasised the distribution of digital farmer IDs.

He advised conducting awareness programmes to encourage farmers to use balanced fertilisers instead of excessive chemical fertilisers such as urea.

Majhi directed that data on fertiliser stock and prices be displayed at all fertiliser sales centres.

Chief Secretary Anu Garg, Cooperation department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Rajesh Prabhakar Patil, and senior officials of the Agriculture and Cooperation departments were also present at the meeting.

## INDIA PAYS FOR IRAN OIL IN YUAN

*India's yuan-based payment for Iranian oil exposes a subtle contradiction in its global economic posture. Even as New Delhi has firmly distanced itself from any BRICS common currency proposal, despite backing from members like Iran, it is embracing non-dollar transactions when compelled by geopolitical realities. The use of the yuan for sanctioned oil trade reveals a quiet accommodation of the very financial shifts it publicly resists. Ultimately, this episode underscores a broader reality: geopolitics, not markets alone, is increasingly dictating the terms of global oil trade.*

REUTERS

**New Delhi/ Mumbai, April 17:** Indian refiners are settling payments for rare cargoes of Iranian oil purchased under a temporary

US sanctions waiver using Chinese yuan through Mumbai-based ICICI Bank, four sources with knowledge of the matter said.

Last month, Washington unveiled 30-day waivers on US sanctions for the purchase of Russian and Iranian oil at sea in an attempt to ease prices that were driven up by the US-Israeli war on Iran. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent Wednesday said the US would not renew the waivers, with the exemption on Iranian oil set to lapse Sunday.

Difficulties over arranging payment for such cargoes given longstanding sanctions on Tehran have deterred some would-be buyers of Iranian crude under the waiver, traders have said.

Earlier this month, state-run Indian Oil Corp (IOC), the country's largest refiner, bought 2



million barrels of Iranian oil on-board the very large crude carrier Jaya in the country's first purchase of Iranian crude in seven years, Reuters reported, a cargo worth roughly \$200 million.

India has also allowed four vessels carrying Iranian oil to berth for privately-run refiner Reliance Industries, sources said last week. A vessel, the MT Felicity, has discharged thus far, according to LSEG data and a shipping source.

Both refiners are settling the trade through ICICI, which is

routing funds in Chinese yuan via its Shanghai branch to seller accounts in yuan. The identity of the sellers could not be determined.

ICICI, IOC, Reliance and India's foreign ministry did not respond to emails seeking comment. Details on how the cargoes are being paid for have not been previously reported.

IOC paid about 95% of the cargo's value against the supplier's notice of readiness, which indicates that the loaded tanker had entered Indian waters, two of the sources said. One of them said this was an unusual arrangement.

Typically, Indian state-owned refiners settle payments upon delivery or discharge for oil from countries that are sanctioned by Western nations, the two sources said.

## No plan to preinstall Aadhaar app: Govt

REUTERS

**New Delhi, April 17:** The government has decided not to go ahead with a proposal to encourage farmers to use balanced fertilisers instead of excessive chemical fertilisers such as urea.

Majhi directed that data on fertiliser stock and prices be displayed at all fertiliser sales centres. Chief Secretary Anu Garg, Cooperation department Commissioner-cum-Secretary Rajesh Prabhakar Patil, and senior officials of the Agriculture and Cooperation departments were also present at the meeting.

MORE P6

## Allahabad HC orders FIR against Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, April 17:** The Lucknow bench of Allahabad High Court Friday directed registration of an FIR against Congress MP Rahul Gandhi in connection with an alleged dual citizenship controversy.

The court also observed that after the registration of FIR, the state government may seek the assistance of a central agency to investigate the matter.

The order was passed by a bench of Justice Subhash Vidyarthi on a petition filed



by S Vignesh Shishir, who had challenged a January 28, 2026 order of a special MP/MLA court rejecting his plea for an FIR against Gandhi, who is also the leader of opposition

in the Lok Sabha. The special court had earlier held that it is not competent to adjudicate on issues related to citizenship.

The complaint was initially filed before the special MP/MLA court in Rae Bareilly. However, on the petitioner's

## DUAL CITIZENSHIP ROW

The petitioner, a BJP worker from Karnataka, had sought registration of an FIR and a detailed probe into the matter, levelling allegations against Gandhi under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), the Official Secrets Act, the Foreigners Act and the Passport Act.

request, the HC transferred the case to Lucknow December 17, 2025.

The MP/MLA court in Lucknow subsequently dismissed the plea January 28, 2026, prompting the petitioner to approach the high court, which has now ordered registration of an FIR.

## Murder: Cong MLA gets life term

**Bengaluru:** A Bengaluru court Friday sentenced Congress MLA Vinay Kulkarni to life imprisonment in the BJP Leader Yogeshgouda Goudar murder case. The court also sentenced 15 others convicted in connection with the case to life imprisonment. The case pertains to the killing of Goudar, a BJP zilla panchayat member, in Dharwad June 15, 2016. Kulkarni was a minister at that time. Hired assailants attacked and hacked Goudar to death in his gym at Saptapur. Following demands, the then government transferred the case to the CBI in 2019.

P7

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

ଚିତ୍ରା ଓ ଚେତନା ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରୀୟ ସମ୍ମାନ ବିଜିନ୍ ସ୍ତରରେ କୃତବିଦମାନଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରଦାନ କରାଯିବ (ବିଗତ ଦୁଇ ବର୍ଷର) ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଅସ୍ପୃତାକୁ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦିତ କରିବାର ଚିତ୍ରା ଓ ଚେତନା ଓଡ଼ିଆ ନବବର୍ଷ ମହୋତ୍ସବ ଚଳ ଚଳ ବୈଶାଖୀ ଏକ ସ୍ୱତନ୍ତ୍ର ମହତ୍ତ୍ୱପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ଆୟୋଜନକୁ ଭିକାରଦେବ । ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ଦେଶ ଓ ରାଜ୍ୟର ବିଭିନ୍ନ ସ୍ତରର ଖ୍ୟାତନାମା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତିବିଶେଷ ଅତିଥି ଭାବେ ଯୋଗ ଦେଉଛନ୍ତି ।

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

ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ସନ୍ଧ୍ୟାରେ ସତ୍ତ୍ୱ ଆକର୍ଷଣ ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ଶ୍ରୀକରନାଥଙ୍କ ଦିବ୍ୟ ପହୁଣ୍ଡି ଓ ଆରତି ନବବର୍ଷର ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ସହ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କୁ ସାଦର ନିମନ୍ତ୍ରଣ

ଅପେକ୍ଷାରେ

ଚିତ୍ରା ଓ ଚେତନା ବୈଶାଖୀ ପରିବାର

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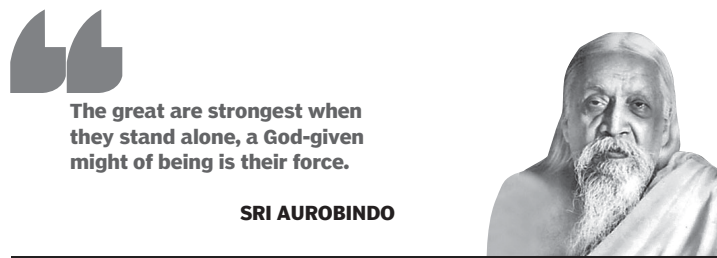
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SRI AUROBINDO

# Command Confusion

If you thought turf wars in Delhi were messy, Tamil Nadu has just offered a tighter, sharper version: two authorities, one post, and zero clarity. In the middle of election-season churn triggered by the Election Commission of India, a new DGP took charge and promptly assigned additional charge of the DVAC to an IPS officer. Hours later, the Home Secretary stepped in and named someone else for the same role. Same day, same government, two orders.

In theory, hierarchy should settle this. The DGP runs the police; the Home Secretary runs the administration. Files are supposed to move in a straight line. Here, they seem to have looped back on themselves. Of course, the Election Commission's earlier reshuffle had already scrambled the script—assigning and then effectively withdrawing the same charge. The DGP appears to have read the first memo; the Home Secretary has read the fine print. Less a clash of egos, more a duel of interpretations.

But this isn't about clerical confusion. The DVAC isn't just another department; it is the state's anti-corruption nerve centre. Control over it is less about procedure and more about leverage.

We've seen this pattern before, especially around elections. Authority becomes elastic, procedure creative, and ambiguity... useful. Call it a turf war, a procedural glitch, or just administrative theatre. Either way, it's a reminder: in the Indian state, ambiguity isn't a bug. It's often the feature.

## The IAS exit dilemma

Quitting the IAS, we're often told, is an act of courage. The popular imagination treats resignation like flipping a switch, but in some instances, it's closer to filing a petition with a system that isn't in a hurry to let you go.

Under the rules governing the All India Services, an IAS officer's resignation is merely a "proposal" until the government accepts it. There is no fixed timeline for that acceptance. Which means you can resign and still technically remain in service for months, even years.

Before the Centre even looks at your request, the state cadre runs its own checks: pending dues, vigilance status, and disciplinary cases. If anything is hanging fire, the resignation can be rejected outright.

Even otherwise, the file travels a long arc, with the Prime Minister as the final authority in IAS cases.

If the government believes your departure is inconvenient or awkward, it can simply sit on the resignation or delay acceptance to ensure "administrative continuity".

Kannan Gopinathan, whose resignation reportedly remained unaccepted for years, is in a strange limbo. He's neither fully inside nor outside the system. Or Shah Faesal, who managed to return to service because his resignation hadn't been formally accepted, turning bureaucratic delay into a legal loophole. There's also a financial sting. Unlike voluntary retirement, resignation means forfeiting pension benefits altogether.

This raises an uncomfortable question: if the state can indefinitely delay your exit, is resignation really a right—or a permission slip? In a service designed to ensure continuity and neutrality, this asymmetry of power may be intentional. Governments don't like uncertainty, and they like exits even less, especially from people who know where the files are buried.

So yes, getting into the IAS is famously difficult. Getting out, it turns out, can be even harder.

## The real economy we don't count

Every time a new corruption case breaks, the usual reaction is as if we've stumbled upon an exception. A bad apple. A rogue network. A system briefly derailed. Then the numbers arrive.

In the Subodh Agarwal case linked to the Jal Jeevan Mission, the figure hovers around Rs 900 crore and is climbing. That's the headline number, but anyone who has watched how these things work knows the real economy of a scam is never fully itemised. Only what can be proven is counted. What moves is often much larger.

Because this isn't smash-and-grab corruption. It's engineered. Tenders tweaked, qualifications tailored, and approvals aligned. The money doesn't vanish but often travels efficiently through a chain that looks suspiciously like governance, just with different beneficiaries.

And that's where the discomfort lies. We keep calling these "scams," as if they're episodic disruptions. But stack them up across sectors, states, years, and a different picture emerges. Something systematic. Continuous. Almost predictable. At some point, we stop asking how a Rs 900 crore fraud happened and start asking how many such flows never make it to the headlines.

The irony is hard to miss. A scheme meant to deliver water ends up demonstrating liquidity of another kind. Funds move faster than pipes, and far more reliably. Villages wait for supply; the system doesn't.

Which raises an awkward thought. Clearly, corruption isn't a parallel economy lurking in the shadows but is deeply intertwined with the main one. Because if you take a step back, the pattern is hard to ignore. The numbers, when aggregated, begin to look less like losses and more like an alternate GDP—unofficial, unaccounted, but very real.

And perhaps far larger than we'd like to admit.

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## WISDOM CORNER

Love, friendship and respect do not unite people as much as a common hatred for something.

ANTON CHEKHOV

Depth of friendship does not depend on length of acquaintance.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1506: Pope Julius II laid the first stone of the new St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.

1906: San Francisco was rocked by a major earthquake caused by slippage along the San Andreas Fault. More than 3,000 people are thought to have died, and about 250,000 were left homeless.

1980: Zimbabwe achieved independence from the United Kingdom.

## FOCUS GENDER BIAS

# POWER OF REPRESENTATION

“Did Women Ruin the Workplace?” The backlash triggered by that November 2025 podcast headline impelled The New York Times to replace “women” with “liberal feminism.” But the semantic change did little to calm the furor. More importantly, it did not address the underlying issue: the unease that still surrounds women's growing presence in professional life, especially in fields historically dominated by men.

Women are all too aware of that unease. In a viral trend on TikTok and Instagram last year, women began using the caption “woman in a male-dominated field” alongside videos depicting them manspreading on public transportation, manipulating their dates, speaking condescendingly to their male colleagues, or offering unsolicited advice to men at the gym.

The joke landed because it required no explanation; women knew exactly what each other meant. But it also resonated because it offered a tongue-in-cheek outlet for women's frustration with their continued exclusion from some of the most influential—and, often, highest-paid—fields.

The question of what happens to workplaces, and to women, when more women enter male-dominated fields warrants deeper consideration than a provocative podcast episode or a relatable punchline. That is why economists, including us, have been seeking answers.

At the University of São Paulo, students are assigned to course sections largely according to administrative rules, rather than personal choice, meaning that the gender composition of any given section is, in practice, close to random. This presented an opportunity for us to assess the impact of different gender combinations on outcomes.

We tracked students into the formal labor market for up to five years after graduation,



Having more female peers seems to bolster women's occupational ambition. Women with more female classmates were more likely to end up in higher-paying, male-dominated occupations after graduation

using detailed administrative data on employment, experience, and wages.

The results were unambiguous. In course sections that included larger shares of women, female students were roughly nine percentage points more likely to be working in the formal labor market two and five years after graduation. For every ten percentage points the female share increased, the likelihood of this outcome rose by 11–14%, relative to the average. Women with more female classmates also accumulated more labor-market experience: nearly six additional months over the first five years after graduation.

Women professors had a similarly powerful impact. A one-percentage-point increase in the share of female instructors was associated with a six-percentage-point rise in female graduates' labor-force participation five years out, as well as with gains in top-end earnings. These effects were strongest in the sections where male students accounted for a larger share of the total. In other words, the presence of even a few women in male-dominated environments improves outcomes for the women who come after them.

These outcomes partly reflect increased early labor-market engagement. Female stu-

dents in less male-dominated course sections were more likely to secure internships and formal jobs during their undergraduate years. These effects persist well into early career, suggesting that the impact of small early advantages compounds over time.

This indicates that having female peers helps—or at least encourages—women to pursue a foothold in their field early, and research consistently shows that this progress tends to be self-reinforcing. Getting in sooner makes it easier to stay.

Similarly, having more female peers seems to bolster women's occupational ambition. Women with more female classmates were more likely to end up in higher-paying, male-dominated occupations after graduation. This matters because the gender wage gap may have less to do with unequal pay for similar work than with who ends up in which jobs. If having more women around shifts what feels possible—through information-sharing, normalization of ambition, or simply not being the only woman in the room—the effects on careers and earnings can be substantial.

Female professors, for their part, serve as role models, offering visible proof that women do have a place in that field. In some of the most competitive occupations, such

as consulting, the effects are especially pronounced.

But what about the anxiety reflected in that New York Times headline? The idea that workplaces are zero-sum—that every gain for women implies a loss for men—strengthens resistance to gender diversity. But our findings indicate that it is wrong.

Male students' labor-market outcomes were essentially unaffected by the gender composition of their sections. Having more female peers did not lower standards or dilute ambition among men. On the contrary, men did better when more women were alongside them—outcomes apparently driven not by favoritism or referral networks, but by shifts in expectation, information, and opportunity.

This is no trivial finding. It implies that improving women's representation in higher education—such as by hiring more female faculty, adjusting class composition, and reducing extreme gender imbalances—offers profound cross-the-board benefits, which compound over time and show up in labor-force participation rates, months of work experience, and wages.

Discussions about gender and work often morph into cultural clashes, driven by fear, ideology, or frustration. While those feelings will not simply go away, our research offers empirical evidence that should guide debate and inform policy-making. When you change the gender composition of a classroom, follow graduates into the labor market, and see how their careers unfold, the story shifts. You find that women who have more women around them do better. And the men around them do just fine, too.

Fernanda Estevan is Associate Professor of Economics at the São Paulo School of Economics. Bruna Borges is an economist and researcher at the Institute for Health Policy Studies. © PROJECT SYNDICATE



Fernanda Estevan & Bruna Borges

DISCUSSIONS ABOUT GENDER AND WORK OFTEN MORPH INTO CULTURAL CLASHES, DRIVEN BY FEAR, IDEOLOGY, OR FRUSTRATION

## SPECTRUM AI

# Adaptability is the new seniority

One evening on a busy urban road, I noticed a cow sitting calmly in the middle of fast traffic. Vehicles slowed, drivers swerved, horns grew impatient, yet the animal remained undisturbed. Why this happen? Actually, this is normal behaviour for animals. For centuries, open land signalled safety. Roads and speeding engines are recent inventions in evolutionary terms. We expect animals to adapt quickly; which is not possible. Biological memory moves slowly; technology does not wait.

Many species reveal fascinating models of adaptability. Mosquitoes develop resistance to chemicals within a few generations because of rapid reproduction and strong environmental pressure. Cockroaches survive across climates because they can digest diverse substances and reproduce quickly. Pigeons thrive in cities because high-rise buildings resemble cliffs, their natural nesting habitat. Monkeys convert cables and balconies into substitutes for trees. Each example demonstrates behavioural adjustment to changing surroundings. Dogs present a different case.

They evolved alongside humans, developing social intelligence, emotional bonding, and cooperative behaviour. Their survival strategy centred on partnership rather than independence. For thousands of years, this co-evolution worked effectively. However, when urban waste management improves, traffic speeds increase, and tolerance decreases, the ecological equation changes. The challenge does not arise from lack of evolution but from sudden environmental transformation.

Long-established survival patterns meet a world that no longer functions by the same rules. Environments change faster than habits. Those who interpret signals early reposition themselves. Those who assume continuity often struggle.

Artificial Intelligence represents a comparable environmental shift.

Workplaces are redesigning roles, automating repetitive processes, and accelerating decision cycles. Information flows at machine speed. Learning curves shorten. Professional comfort zones narrow. The question is not whether AI is beneficial or threatening; the more practical question concerns preparedness.

The Human Adaptability: Adaptability in the AI era requires cognitive flexibility. It demands willingness to unlearn outdated methods and experiment with new tools. It involves curiosity rather than resistance, structured learning rather than passive observation. Individuals who engage with emerging technologies gradually build confidence and competence. They integrate digital tools into their workflow, expand efficiency, and strengthen relevance.

Those who ignore technological signals often experience stress when change becomes unavoidable. Seniority, past success, or established reputation offer limited protection in a rapidly evolving system.

Markets respond to current utility. Organizations reward updated capability. The landscape adjusts continuously.

Darwin's principle of fitness referred to alignment with environment.

In today's context, alignment means digital literacy, critical thinking, and openness to innovation. Adaptability does not require abandoning human values or emotional intelligence. Instead, it calls for integrating these strengths

with technological awareness.

The image of animals navigating highways reminds us that environments rarely pause for reflection. Systems evolve according to new pressures. The adaptable survive and contribute; the unprepared expend energy resisting reality. AI literacy therefore becomes less about technical mastery and more about mindset. It is an investment in continuity. On digital highways, speed is structural. Preparation is strategic. Adaptability remains the enduring survival key.

The final lesson is practical. Learning can no longer be an occasional activity reserved for workshops or crises. It must become a continuous habit. Reading emerging trends, testing new platforms, upgrading skills, and collaborating across generations are forms of modern adaptation. Change is already shaping the terrain beneath our feet. Those who move with it will find direction and opportunity. Those who delay will find the road moving without them. Adaptability remains the quiet discipline that secures tomorrow.

The writer is a senior journalist and author.



Narvijay Yadav

ON TODAY'S DIGITAL HIGHWAYS, SPEED DEFINES SURVIVAL. SPECIES THAT READ CHANGE EARLY ADJUST THEIR BEHAVIOUR AND ENDURE

## Think about farmers

Sir, As India reels under intense summer heat, one cannot help but think about our farmers, who toil in their fields, enduring punishing weather. It is highly unfortunate that Indian farmers, particularly women—who make up over 40% of the workforce—face severe health hazards, including dehydration and heat exhaustion, while manually drying paddy and wheat under extreme conditions. Harsh heat and drought not only reduce the quality and yield of crops, but the back-breaking labour, exacerbated by climate change, often brings minimal returns. It is therefore essential to develop adaptive strategies such as improving irrigation infrastructure, investing in climate-resilient crop varieties, and enhancing weather forecasting systems. Without proactive measures, the livelihoods of millions of farmers, particularly those in vulnerable regions, will remain at risk. Addressing the climate crisis is not just an environmental issue—it is a pressing socio-economic concern that demands immediate and sustained attention.

Ranganathan Sivakumar, CHENNAI

## TCS under scrutiny

Sir, The controversy at Tata Consultancy Services' Nashik unit reveals deeply troubling allegations that call into question workplace governance and oversight. Employees reportedly faced coercion to follow religious practices such as 'namaz' and 'roza', alongside serious sexual harassment claims. This suggests a toxic environment built on fear, intimidation, and abuse of authority. If proven, such acts violate personal liberty, dignity, and basic professional ethics. More alarming is the alleged collapse of internal complaint systems. Grievances were reportedly ignored, delayed, or suppressed for months, indicating failure beyond individual misconduct. It points to systemic gaps in institutional safeguards meant to protect staff. A reputed firm with global standards should not allow such breaches, especially when vulnerable recruits are targeted. The episode demands transparent investigation, strict accountability, and swift action against those responsible. The IT sector employs more women than any other sector and must set the benchmark for safety. Stronger enforcement, independent oversight, and zero tolerance are urgently needed to restore trust and ensure workplaces remain safe, inclusive, and respectful for every employee.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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

# NGT moved over 'illegal' tree felling in Baripada

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, April 17:** A petition has been filed before the National Green Tribunal's (NGT) eastern bench in Kolkata alleging large-scale illegal tree felling in Baripada's Jubilee Park and Jhinjiri pond area under a Rs 28-crore beautification project, raising serious environmental concerns and triggering public outcry.



The plea, filed by Kendrapara-based RTI activist Pratap Chandra Mohanty, names the Odisha government, Baripada Municipality, the Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Baripada, and contractor, National Federation of Farmers' Procurement, Processing and Retailing Cooperatives of India Ltd (NACOF) as respondents. The case has been registered as Original Application No. 97 of 2026.

**OP IMPACT**

According to the petition, hundreds of trees have been felled on forest-classified land under Khata No. 74 (Plot Nos. 213 and 230) and KKhata No. 71 (Plot No. 203) without mandatory approvals. The site, locally known as 'Pakshi Vihar', has long served as a habitat for thousands of birds.

using chainsaws and heavy machinery, including excavators, without obtaining prior clearance from the Forest department or the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Such approvals are mandatory under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, and the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 2023.

Baripada DFO Gobinda Chandra Biswal has reportedly stated that no permission was granted by the Forest department for the felling of trees at the site.

# 70-YR-OLD WOMAN AXED TO DEATH; HUSBAND HELD

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Boinda, April 17:** An elderly woman was allegedly hacked to death by her husband following a domestic dispute in Angul district, police said Friday.

The accused, identified as 76-year-old Chakradhar Dehuri of Gadeimunda village under Handapa police limits in Kishorenagar block, was arrested and produced before a court.

The victim, Raibari Dehuri, 70, was attacked with an axe at their residence late Thursday night. According to police, the incident stemmed from a quarrel between

the couple over a minor issue. Based on a complaint lodged by the deceased's son, Suresh Dehuri, police registered a case (139/26) and initiated an investigation. Preliminary inquiries revealed that Chakradhar had returned home in the evening after work and got into an argument with his wife. He later left the house and returned after consuming alcohol. In a fit of rage, he allegedly attacked Raibari with an axe, killing her on the spot.

Handapa police reached the scene, seized the body and sent it for post-mortem examination.

tends that both forest and non-forest land parcels are involved, and that even work on non-forest land cannot proceed without due clearance, citing directives of the MoEFCC and orders of the Supreme Court. It also alleges violations of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.

Seeking urgent intervention, the petitioner has urged the tribunal to immediately halt all tree felling and construction activities, restore the land to its original condition, and seek a status report on the constitution of the Biodiversity Management Committee and preparation of the People's Biodiversity Register for Baripada Municipality.

Additionally, the plea calls for directions to the Odisha State Biodiversity Board to notify the area as a Biodiversity Heritage Site under the Biological Diversity Act.

Filed April 7, the application also seeks interim relief. The case has been moved under Sections 14, 15 and 20 of the NGT Act, with advocates Shankar Prasad Pani and Ashutosh Padhi representing the petitioner.

With the matter now before the tribunal, residents and environmental groups exuded hope that judicial scrutiny will bring accountability and ensure protection of the ecologically sensitive site.

# Sex racket busted; 5 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhanjanagar:** Police have busted a sex racket in Bhanjanagar town and arrested five persons, including a middleman, as part of intensified enforcement ahead of the upcoming Thakurani Jatra. The crackdown came as authorities stepped up surveillance and action against illegal activities to ensure smooth and peaceful conduct of the festival, scheduled to begin April 26. Acting on a tip-off, a police team led by Sub-Inspector Sameer Sethi conducted a late-night raid April 15 at a house in Shankhasahi area. The operation was carried out under the direction of Inspector-In-Charge Jibananda Jena. During the raid, police apprehended one alleged middleman, identified as Amar alias Geeta Nayak, along with four customers. All five were produced in court Friday. An executive magistrate, Bhanjanagar Additional Tehsiladar Abinash Mahar, was present during the raid. A case (326/26) has been registered at Bhanjanagar police station, police said.

# Prez to launch key projects during Rourkela visit

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar/Rourkela, April 17:** President Droupadi Murmu is scheduled to visit Rourkela April 21, where she will inaugurate several major development projects and address a public gathering.

Official sources said that during her visit, the President will inaugurate the Integrated Command and Control Centre building, a Science Park and Planetarium, and a recreational park at Koel Nagar. These projects are expected to enhance urban infrastructure

# In preparation for the high-profile visit, a state-level review meeting was chaired Friday by CS Anu Garg

POST NEWS NETWORK

and provide improved public amenities in the city. After addressing the public meeting, the President will also visit the Tribal Museum and the Command and Control Centre in Rourkela. Upon completion of her engagements, she will return via Jharsuguda and

depart for New Delhi at around 4:50pm.

In preparation for the high-profile visit, a state-level review meeting was chaired Friday by Chief Secretary Anu Garg. The meeting focused on ensuring smooth and seamless arrangements for the President's programme.

The Chief Secretary issued instructions to departmental secretaries and officials, emphasising effective coordination and close monitoring. Senior officials, including Development Commissioner and

Additional Chief Secretary Deo Ranjan Kumar Singh and Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Hemant Sharma, were present at the meeting.

According to Special Secretary of the Home Department RK Sharma, the President will depart from New Delhi by an Air Force aircraft and arrive at Jharsuguda airport at 10:25am April 21. She will then travel by helicopter to Rourkela, reaching around 11:10am, and proceed by road to Sector-13 to attend the public meeting and inaugurate the projects.

# HM suspended after 2 girls die in gate collapse

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Mohana, April 17:** The headmaster of a government school in Gajapati district has been suspended following the death of two schoolgirls in a gate collapse, officials said Friday.

The action comes after Wednesday's incident at Rumbising Government Upper Primary School under Nua-gada block in the R Udayagiri police limits, where the girls were crushed to death when the school gate and a supporting pillar suddenly gave way.

The district administration placed headmaster Seto Raika under suspension pending an inquiry into the circumstances leading to the collapse.

In a related development, the district education department has lodged a case against the contractor at R Udayagiri police station, alleging negligence in construction and maintenance of the school infrastructure. Meanwhile, the chairperson of the Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) visited the site Friday and termed the incident deeply unfortunate. She said stringent action would be taken against those found responsible.

# Man gets life term for killing recovery agent

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, April 17:** Keonjhar district court Friday sentenced a man to life imprisonment in connection with a murder case arising out of a finance recovery dispute in 2025.

District and Sessions Judge Gopal Chandra Behera convicted Ramsingh Munda and awarded him life imprisonment along with a fine of Rs 10,000. The court also directed that failure to pay the fine would result in an additional one-year jail term.

According to court sources, the incident occurred January 7, 2025, under Nayakote police limits. Manoj Kumar Mahanta (28) of Raikala and Tarini Prasad Mahanta, alias Babu, of Baneikala had gone to Luhakala village to recover outstanding finance dues from Ramsingh Munda.

During the interaction, an argument broke out as the accused allegedly refused to pay the dues and threatened the two. He later asked them to ride ahead on their motorcycle, saying he would withdraw money from a nearby service centre and pay them.

While Manoj and Tarini were travelling ahead on



their motorcycle, the accused allegedly followed them in a Bolero vehicle. Near Shukramunda Sahi, he rammed the vehicle into them at high speed along an isolated stretch.

Tarini Prasad Mahanta died on the spot, while Manoj Kumar Mahanta sustained critical injuries and was admitted to hospital.

Based on Manoj's complaint, Nayakote police registered a case (4/2025) under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and later filed a chargesheet against the accused.

During the trial, the court examined 11 witnesses before delivering the verdict. Public Prosecutor Pradeep Kumar Das represented the state in the case.

# Amazon expands network, speeds up delivery up to 5X

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar:** Amazon India has reported significant improvements in delivery speed following the expansion of its operations network in Odisha, including the launch of its first fulfilment centre in 2025. Located in Giringapat, the fulfilment centre offers 0.25 million cubic feet of storage capacity. The company's network in the state now includes one fulfilment centre and one sort centre in Bhubaneswar, along with 52 delivery stations across cities such as Bolangir, Cuttack, Jharsuguda and Puri. This expanded infrastructure has improved same-day and next-day delivery speeds by up to five times, according to the company. Since the Bhubaneswar fulfilment centre opened, Amazon has onboarded more than 1,000 local sellers, helping businesses across Odisha reach customers more efficiently. Karan Chugh, Director of operations at Amazon India, said the expansion strengthens both customer experience and seller reach. "With our expanded fulfilment and delivery network in the state, we are able to bring a wider selection closer to customers while helping local businesses reach customers across India more efficiently," Chugh said. "We will continue investing to strengthen this network further in Odisha and across India."

**Bank of India**  
Zonal Office: Bhubaneswar Zone, 1/1D, Star House, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015, Mob.: 7008973027

## E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

E-Auction Sale Notice Under Rule 8(6)/9(1) of security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

**(E-Auction) Sale of secured movable / immovable Assets under SARFAESI Act, 2002**

**E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE / IMMOVABLE ASSETS UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH PROVISIO TO RULE 8(6) / 9(1) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.**

Whereas, the Authorised Officer of **Bank of India** had taken possession of the following property/ies pursuant to the notice issued under Sec 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in the following loan accounts with right to sell the same on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS", "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WITHOUT ANY RECOURSE BASIS" for realization of Bank's dues plus interest as detailed hereunder and whereas consequent upon failure to repay the dues, the undersigned in exercise of power conferred under section 13(4) of the said Act proposes to realize the Bank's dues by sale of the said property/ies. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website <https://baanknet.com>

Sl. No.	BRANCH / Name & Address of Borrowers/Co-Borrower/ Co-Applicant/Guarantor/Mortgagor / Total Dues	Description of the Properties	Reserve Price / EMD / Bid Increment Amount
1.	<b>BHUBANESWAR SME BRANCH, PH.: 9937640878 / 7008973027 /</b> <b>Borrower: Mr. Amulya Baral, S/o.: Karunakar Baral / Co-Applicant: Mr. Milu Baral, S/o.: Karunakar Baral, Both are At: Machhia Diandi, PO.: Brahmagiri, Dist.: Puri, PIN-752011 / Total Dues: ₹20,70,000/- + interest, costs and expenses, less any part amount repaid.</b>	Equitable Mortgage of Land and Building situated over Khata No.: 97/26, Plot No.: 113, Area: Ac.0.060 Dec. i.e. 2614 Sqft, KISSAM: Gharabari, Mouza: Machhia Diandi, SRO/Tahasil: Brahmagiri, P.S.: Brahmagiri, Dist.: Puri, Odisha, Standing in the name of <b>Mr. Amulya Baral, S/o.: Karunakar Baral and Mr. Milu Baral, S/o.: Karunakar Baral, Bounded by North: Laxmidhar Baral, South: Bhagirathi Baral, East: Village Road, West: Bhagirathi Baral</b>	<b>₹10,36,000/- (excluding GST &amp; other statutory dues)</b> <b>₹1,03,600/-</b> <b>₹ 50,000/-</b>
2.	<b>BHUBANESWAR SME BRANCH, PH.: 9937640878 / 7008973027 /</b> <b>Borrowers: 1) Mr. Pandab Baral, S/o.: Mr. Jalandhar Baral, 2) Mrs. Binata Baral, W/o.: Mr. Pandab Baral, Both are at Vill: Badapadar, P.O.: Nachuni, Dist.: Khurda, Odisha-752027 / Total Dues: ₹25,57,000/- + interest, costs and expenses, less any part amount repaid.</b>	Equitable Mortgage of G+1 Storied RCC framed Residential Building over Khata No.: 320/187, Plot No.: 173/952, Plot Area: Ac.0.067 Dec. i.e. 2919 Sqft, Standing in the name of <b>Mr. Pandab Baral, S/o.: Mr. Jalandhar Baral, KISSAM: Gharabari, Mouza: Badapadar, PS: Banapur (359), Tahasil: Banapur (359), Dist: Khurda, Odisha, Bounded by East: Road, West: Hill (Pahad), North: Bibhuti Bhusan Baral, South: Paramananda Baral (N.B.: The Borrower has availed Housing Loan and one covid personal Loan from our Bhubaneswar SME Branch and two business Loans from our Haripur Branch).</b>	<b>₹41,57,000/- (excluding GST &amp; other statutory dues)</b> <b>₹4,15,700/-</b> <b>₹ 50,000/-</b>
3.	<b>BHUBANESWAR SME BRANCH, PH.: 9937640878 / 7008973027 /</b> <b>Borrower: Mr. Prakash Chandra Pradhan, S/o.: Basudev Pradhan / Co-Borrower: Mrs. Kunilata Pradhan, W/o.: Mr. Prakash Chandra Pradhan, Both are At: Baghamara, PO.: Pahanga, Niali, Cuttack-754004 / Total Dues: ₹33,04,220.23 + interest, costs and expenses, less any part amount repaid.</b>	Equitable Mortgage of G+1 Storied RCC Residential Building situated over Khata No.: 219/53, Plot No.: 410/678, Land Area: Ac. 0.150 Dec. i.e. 6534 sqft, having KISSAM: Gharabari at Mouza: Baghamara, PS: Gobindpur, Tahasil: Niali, Dist.: Cuttack, Odisha in the name of <b>Mrs. Kunilata Pradhan, W/o: Mr. Prakash Chandra Pradhan, Bounded by East: KISSAM: Gharabari, South: Maa Barunei Land</b>	<b>₹ 34,44,000/- (excluding GST &amp; other statutory dues)</b> <b>₹3,44,400/-</b> <b>₹ 50,000/-</b>

**Date & Time of E-Auction: 08.05.2026 From 11.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M.** with unlimited extension of 10 (Ten) minutes each.

**Last Date and Time for submission of EMD and Documents by 08.05.2026 i.e. Before E-Auction Date & Time in the Portal.**

**Inspection will be provided to the prospective bidders on any working day before 07.05.2026 with prior appointment of the authorised officer**

**\*Successful Bidder to deposit 25% of the bid amount by next working day which includes EMD money. The balance amount to be paid on or before 15th Day of confirmation of sale.**

**TERMS & CONDITIONS: 1)** For detailed terms and conditions of the sale please refer to the link: <https://baanknet.com>. Prospective bidders may also contact the Authorised Officers / Branch as mentioned in above list. **2)** This is a statutory 15 days sale notice to the above mentioned borrower/guarantor/mortgagor under Rule 9(1) of the SARFAESI Act, 2002. **3)** This is a 15 days notice to the borrower / guarantor / mortgagor of the above said loan about holding of this sale on the above mentioned date. **4)** All expenses relating the stamp duty and registration of Sale Certificate/conveyance, if any, shall be borne by the successful bidder. **5)** The Authorized Officer will not be held responsible for any charge, lien, encumbrance, property tax or any other dues to the Government or anybody in respect of the property under sale. **6)** The Authorized Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any bid or adjourn/postpone/cancel the sale without assigning any reason thereof. It may be noted that nothing in this notice constitute or deemed to constitute any commitment or representation on the part of the bank to sell the property.

**STATUTORY 15 DAYS SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 9(1) OF THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002.**

Borrowers/Mortgagors are hereby notified to pay the total dues along with up to date interest and ancillary expenses before the date of E-Auction, failing which the property will be auctioned/ sold and balance dues, if any, will be recovered with interest & cost.

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 18.04.2026Authorised Officer, Bank of India

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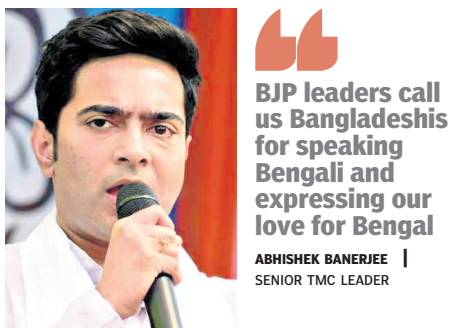
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 ABHISHEK BANERJEE | SENIOR TMC LEADER

## MAOIST WITH ₹15L BOUNTY AMONG 4 KILLED IN GUNFIGHT

Four Maoists, including one carrying a reward of ₹15 lakh on his head, were killed in a gunfight with security forces in Jharkhand's Hazaribag district Friday, police officials said. The encounter took place in the Khapia forest area within the Keredari police station limits, following a tip-off



### of the day quote

The state was building a system where merit is respected, hard work is rewarded, and honesty is non-negotiable

PEMA KHANDU | ARUNACHAL CM

People may blame me; I am not concerned. Everyone must function in accordance with party discipline

D K SHIVAKUMAR | K'TAKA DY CM

No deputy speaker has been appointed in Lok Sabha in seven years. What was the need to rush this election in the special three day sitting when West Bengal and Tamil Nadu Assembly polls are on

DEREK O'BRIEN | TRINAMOL CONG RAJYA SABHA MP

### SHORT TAKES

#### 8 tourists die in accident

**Valparai:** Eight tourists were killed and five critically injured when a van from Kerala rolled down multiple hairpin bends on the ghat road here, police said Friday. The vehicle lost control while proceeding along Valparai-Pollachi ghat road and rolled down from 13th bend to the ninth bend, said a police official. The vehicle was mangled in the impact. "There were 13 people on the van, they all came from Malappuram, but we are yet to establish if they all belong to a family or friends or acquaintances," he added. The injured were taken to the nearby hospital and are still in critical condition, a police source said.

#### Farmer unions defer 'rail roko' protest

**Chandigarh:** Farmer unions have deferred their three-hour 'rail roko' (rail blockade) protest in Punjab, which was scheduled for Friday, following official assurance over streamlining wheat procurement. Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) leader Sarwan Singh Pandher said the decision to defer the protest was taken during an online meeting with Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) and Azad Kisan Morcha (AKM) leaders. The agitation was announced in protest of alleged tardy procurement of wheat owing to damage to grains caused by the recent untimely rainfall.

#### AI pilot sent back for marijuana possession

**New Delhi:** An Air India pilot, travelling as a passenger on a flight from the national capital to San Francisco, was allegedly found in possession of marijuana and was sent back by the US authorities this week, according to sources. The pilot has been derostered, one of the sources told PTI. "One of our crew members travelling from Delhi to San Francisco 14 April, for positioning to operate a subsequent flight, was found to be inadmissible as per local laws and has been sent back to India," an airline spokesperson said.

#### Atishi's father passes away

**New Delhi:** Delhi's former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Atishi's father, Vijay Kumar, passed away Friday, party leaders said. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor Arvind Kejriwal expressed his condolences and prayed for peace for the departed soul. Senior AAP leader Manish Sisodia also condoled the death, describing the news as "extremely heartbreaking" in a post on X.

# Govt drops preinstall Aadhaar app plan for new smartphones

REUTERS

**New Delhi, April 17:** India's government has decided not to go ahead with a proposal to require Apple (AAPL.O), opens new tab, Samsung (005930.KS), opens new tab and others to pre-install the country's biometric identification app Aadhaar on phones, a state body said Friday, a move that had been opposed by the smartphone giants.

Reuters reported last month that UIDAI, the state body that operates Aadhaar, had asked the IT ministry in January to engage with Apple, Google (GOOGL.O), opens new tab and other leading smartphone makers to consider mandatory pre-installation of the Aadhaar app. A unique 12-digit identity number tied to an individual's fingerprints and iris scans, Aadhaar is held by nearly 1.34 billion residents and is widely used for verification purposes in banking and telecom services, as well as for faster airport entry.

India's IT ministry reviewed the proposal and "is not in favour of mandating the pre-installation of the Aadhaar App on smartphones," UIDAI said in a statement to Reuters Friday.

It gave no reason for the decision in the statement. India's IT ministry did not respond to Reuters queries.

The IT ministry held a "consultation with stakeholders from the electronics industry" before reaching its decision to drop the Aadhaar preloading proposal, UIDAI said in its statement.



- Smartphone firms raised security and cost concerns over proposal
- Privacy advocates have criticised Aadhaar over past data leaks
- Government previously dropped pre-install mandate on telecom app

The Aadhaar request was the sixth time in two years the government has sought pre-installation of state apps on phones, according to industry communications reviewed by Reuters earlier this year. All six attempts were opposed by the industry. Smartphone makers flagged concerns about device security and compatibility when they received the Aadhaar preload proposal, and also flagged higher production costs as they would have been required to run separate manufacturing lines for India and export markets, according to documents reviewed by Reuters.

Apple and Samsung in particular both had concerns with the proposal due to questions over safety and security, sources told Reuters in March.

The government's decision not to proceed with the proposal

shows the constraints on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's digital push as India courts firms like Apple to expand its role as a global smartphone hub. In December, India faced criticism over an order mandating smartphone firms to pre-install a telecom security app, forcing a rollback within days.

A senior Indian official said Friday, on condition of anonymity, that the IT ministry is not supportive of any preloading of apps, "unless it is considered very essential."

**SAFETY CONCERNS**  
 While the government maintains Aadhaar is safe and secure, the app has faced persistent criticism from privacy advocates, including for data leaks where personal details of millions of holders surfaced on the dark web.

Apar Gupta, founder of the Internet Freedom Foundation, a New Delhi-based digital advocacy group, welcomed the government's decision to drop the Aadhaar pre-installation proposal, and said other such proposals should also be spiked as they lack legislative foundation and have no public policy goal.

### SNIPPETS

#### Tipra Motha storms back to power in Tripura tribal council

**Agartala:** The Pradyot Debbarma-led Tipra Motha Party (TMP) Friday registered a landslide victory in the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) polls, winning 24 of the 28 seats, according to the State Election Commission (SEC). The BJP bagged the rest of the four seats, while the CPI(M) and Congress failed to win a single seat for a second straight time. The BJP and the TMP are allies and run the state government together, but the two parties separately fought the elections to the council, which administers around 70 per cent of Tripura's geographical area and is home to nearly 15 lakh people.

#### 'Godman' Kharat's close aide, wife die in car crash

**Mumbai:** Jailed self-styled godman Ashok Kharat's close associate and his wife died when their car rammed into a stationary container truck on Samruddhi Expressway in Maharashtra's Ahilyanagar district Friday, prompting some Opposition leaders to raise suspicion over the incident. Police identified the deceased as Jitendra Shelke (55) and his wife Anuradha (50). Their 14-year-old son sustained serious injuries in the accident, an official informed. Shelke was a close associate of Nashik-based godman Kharat, who has been arrested on rape and fraud charges, among others. Shelke was Kharat's business partner and also vice-president of Shivaniika Trust set up by the 'godman', according to the official.

#### ED conducts fresh raids in PMLA case against Kolkata realty group

**Kolkata:** The Enforcement Directorate Friday conducted fresh searches against some entities being probed in connection with the money laundering case against Kolkata-based real estate company Merlin Group and some others, officials said. The action in the poll-bound state is the follow-up of the raids conducted by the agency April 8 against the Group (Merlin Projects Limited) and its promoters, Sushil Mohta and Saket Mohta.



A flock of geese swims in the Jorpukhuri pond on a hot summer day, in Guwahati, Assam

*The brutal attack carried out by Lashkar-e-Toiba cadres led to an exodus of tourists from Jammu and Kashmir, prompting the authorities to shut nearly 50 tourist spots before reopening some of those in a phased manner after a security audit*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, April 17:** The world was shocked April 22 when a dastardly terrorist attack ripped through the quaint Baisaran meadow in J&K's Pahalgam, snuffing out 26 innocent lives, mostly tourists.

# Pahalgam emerges stronger year after brutal attack

to an exodus of tourists from Jammu and Kashmir, prompting the authorities to shut nearly 50 tourist spots before reopening some of those in a phased manner after a security audit.

Now, about a year down the line, the famed meadows of Pahalgam are once again buzzing with tourist activity, with none ruing their decision to visit the 'Mini Switzerland' in Anantnag district that is overcoming the shadow of last year's terror attack.

"It feels really good to be here. I never imagined such vast plains at this altitude. We've been to Manali, Gangtok, and the Northeast, but we didn't expect such open grounds here. The security arrangements are excellent," Ashutosh Kosaria from Chhattisgarh told PTI Videos.



Coming from a state hounded by Left-Wing Extremism not so long ago, Kosaria understands the heavy presence of security forces in Pahalgam. "We're from Chhattisgarh. We have seen the Army in Bastar. It's the same here. We faced no problems at all," he said.

those willing to visit Pahalgam. "I think this is a part of India that everyone should see. It's so beautiful. If you are planning a trip, keep at least 10-15 days to explore the region." Tanushree Dutta from Kolkata was all praise for the security arrangements in Kashmir. "Maybe it was risky back then, but not now. The Army and police are everywhere à "they helped us a lot. We also saw snowfall in Gulmarg, and I can't describe the feeling. There's nothing to worry about," she said. Pradeep Malik from Panipat in Haryana echoed similar sentiments. "The security is tight everywhere. The logistics are very good. It seems there is no impact of last year's terror attack. In fact, the security is tighter

now," Malik said. "I think everyone should visit Kashmir once. It doesn't feel like we're in our own country. There are checkpoints everywhere, with a heavy presence of Army personnel. Earlier, we were apprehensive about visiting Kashmir, but not anymore. There's no fear," Malik said. Amaan Imran from Rajasthan said the Pahalgam incident did not make much of a difference when he decided to visit the Valley. Tourists have started returning to the Valley after an improvement in the security situation, reopening of many tourist sites, inauguration of the Vande Bharat train from Katra to Srinagar and successful completion of the Amarnath Yatra last year.

# national

## of the day quote

Teachings and philosophy of Saint Kabir remain profoundly relevant even in the contemporary world

Women in Saurashtra walked several kilometres to fetch water due to the misrule of Congress. It was Narendra Modi who (as chief minister) worked to provide water at home in villages

The Central government has embarked on an attempt to ensure its perpetual hold on power through measures such as the delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies and the women's reservation Bill

## POST OF THE DAY

India can fix most of its bureaucratic problems if the government implements just three laws: 1. No guaranteed salary or lifetime job security for government employees until their assigned work is completed. 2. Immediate termination of any government employee if they are caught engaging in corruption. 3. Time-bound public services, if a government employee fails to complete a citizen's work within the fixed deadline, a penalty should be deducted from their salary.

@RajeshwariRW

## SHORT TAKES

### Ch'garh power plant blast: Toll rises to 21

**Raipur:** The death toll in the April 14 blast at Vedanta's power plant in Chhattisgarh's Sakti district has gone up to 21 after a worker succumbed to injuries, officials said Friday. The explosion occurred in a steel tube carrying high-pressure steam from the boiler to the turbine at the power plant located in Singhitarai village.

### Ex-UP MLA, brother sentenced to jail

**Sant Kabir Nagar:** An MP-MLA court in Uttar Pradesh's Sant Kabir Nagar Friday sentenced former MLA Mohammad Tabish Khan and his brother, Eftekhar, to three years' imprisonment and slapped a fine of ₹4,000 each on the convicts in a 2016 assault case, prosecution officials said. The verdict was delivered by Chief Judicial Magistrate and Special Judge Chetna Tyagi. Government counsel Vishal Srivastava said the case dates back to November 26, 2016, when police constable Kamal Khan lodged an FIR at the Dhamsinhwa police station, alleging that Tabish Khan, along with his brother and supporters, had entered the police station, abused him, tore his uniform and threatened him.

### Two drown

**Palakkad (Kerala):** Two persons from Tamil Nadu drowned in the Bhavani river near Attappady here Friday, police said. The deceased were identified as Sathyam (18) and Nitheesh (19), both natives of Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. According to police, the duo had visited Chavadiyur, a tourist destination on the Kerala-Tamil Nadu border near Attappady in the district. Police said the two entered the river and ventured into a deeper section.

## AMRAVATI SEX EXPLOITATION CASE

### Police detain 10, delete 41 social media accounts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 17:** Police probing the sexual exploitation case in Maharashtra's Amravati district have detained 10 persons for questioning and deleted 41 social media accounts used for the circulation of obscene photos and videos of female victims, officials said Friday.

In a related development, a police official and two constables, who were seen celebrating the birthday of the prime accused in the case, have been suspended, they said.

The probe into the case was launched after videos were noticed on some sites April 11. The Amravati police have earlier arrested eight persons, including prime accused Ayan Ahmed Tanveer Ahmed (19), who has been remanded in police custody till April 21.



Considering the seriousness of the incident, the National Commission for Women (NCW) collected information regarding the case via video conferencing, a senior police official said, adding that the Amravati Rural police shared key updates on the ongoing probe.

Ayan Ahmed allegedly used a rented flat owned by Manav Sugandhe on Kathora Road to exploit the female victims, he said. The Special Investigation Team (SIT), constituted to probe the case, searched that flat, conducted a 'panchnama' (spot inspection) and summoned the owner for questioning, he added.

Ayan Ahmed had met victims at three cafes located on Kathora Road, Achalpur and in Paratwada (now closed) and at a garden near Wazzar dam, he said, adding that panchnamas were carried out at all spots.

"We have detained 10 persons for questioning in connection with the probe," the official said.

Amaravati rural police's cyber cell has deleted 41 accounts on various social media platforms that were used for the circulation of victims' photos and videos, he said.

# Rajasthan drops 4 textbooks, sparks 'history rewrite' row

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, April 17:** The Rajasthan government's decision to discontinue four school textbooks for the 2026-27 academic session has triggered a political row, with Education Minister Madan Dilwar defending the move Friday and the Congress calling it an attempt to "erase history".

According to an order issued by the Directorate of Secondary Education, following recommendations of the Board of Secondary Education, Ajmer, four books for Classes IX to XII have been discontinued, and will not be taught in schools. The books include "Rajasthan's Freedom Movement and Valour Tradition" for Class IX, "Rajasthan's History and Culture" for Class X, and "Golden India After Independence" (Parts 1 and 2) for Classes XI and XII, respectively.

Speaking to reporters Friday, the minister said the books were not part of the examination system and were meant only for general knowledge.

## WOMEN'S RESERVATION ACT

# Govt wants to change electoral map: Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 17:** Lacing his speech in the Lok Sabha with analogies and jibes at the government, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi Friday said the constitution amendment Bill has nothing to do with women's reservation and is instead an attempt to change the country's electoral map to retain power -- a "shameful act".

Participating in a debate on three Bills related to amendments to the women's quota law and the setting up of a delimitation commission, the Congress leader said the proposal does not address women's empowerment.

"This (Bill) is an attempt to change the country's electoral map, using and hiding behind India's women," he said, calling it a "shameful act".

Rahul said the government should bring back the 2023 Women's Reservation Act for implementation, assuring the Opposition's full support for its immediate passage.

He said a "central truth" in India's history has been the "brutal, cruel, and unforgiving treatment"



of the OBCs, Dalits, minorities, and women.

"What is being attempted here is a bypass of the caste census. They are trying to avoid giving power, representation to my OBC brothers and sisters, and instead take power away from them," Rahul said, adding that the real agenda is "Manuvaad over Samvidhan".

Calling the government's move to bring the Bill a "very dangerous thing", Rahul said, "You (government) are scared of what is happening in the politics of this country, you are scared of the erosion of your strength, and you are trying to rejig the Indian political map.

"You have done it in Jammu and Kashmir, you have done it in Assam, and now you are

# Congress MLA gets life term in BJP leader murder case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, April 17:** A Bangalore court Friday sentenced Congress MLA Vinay Kulkarni to life imprisonment in the BJP leader Yogeshgouda Goudar murder case.

The court also sentenced 15 others convicted in connection with the case to life imprisonment.

On Wednesday, Santhosh Gajanan Bhat, the Judge of the Special Court for cases involving elected representatives, convicted Kulkarni and others under IPC sections, including criminal conspiracy and murder. The case pertains to the killing of Goudar, a BJP zilla panchayat member, in Dharwad on June 15, 2016. Kulkarni was a minister at that time.

Hired assailants attacked and hacked Goudar to death in his gym at Saptapur in Dharwad. Following demands from Goudar's family and others, the then BJP government transferred the case to the CBI in 2019.

CBI advocate Hema stated that the central agency filed a chargesheet against 21 people in

connection with the case. The court, after conducting the trial convicted 17 accused persons for murder, conspiracy, destroying evidence, and screening the offenders.

Speaking to reporters, she said the court passed sentence today, giving the 16 accused persons "double life imprisonment" for both murder and conspiracy. "The accused persons will remain in jail until their death," she added.

Another accused, who was the circle inspector of police, was charged with destroying evidence and screening the offender, the advocate added. "He was given 7 years of rigorous imprisonment."

Hema said the court imposed a total fine of about ₹12.50 lakh and awarded ₹16 lakh in compensation to the victims' children and brother Gurunath Goudar.

She said the main challenge in this case was that many witnesses were threatened "not to tell the truth."

Kulkarni faces disqualification as an MLA following this sentencing, official sources said.



correct history was being taught earlier," the minister said.

Rejecting allegations of tampering with history, Dilwar said, "History should present the complete reality." These textbooks highlighted selective facts while ignoring other important parts, and several eminent leaders, such as Lal Bahadur Shastri and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, were not adequately mentioned.

Personalities like B R Ambedkar were also not properly represented in the textbooks, he said, adding that "Dr Ambedkar was not an ordinary person, but was reduced to a single-line mention. Such national figures should be properly taught"

The minister further said that important developments such as the abrogation of Article 370 and

contributions of leaders across political lines, including Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Morarji Desai and Narendra Modi, should also be included in the curriculum.

Reacting to the decision, Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee chief Govind Singh Dotasra on Thursday termed the move an "attack on history".

Questioning the rationale for dropping the textbooks, Dotasra alleged that the move was to sideline the contributions of Congress leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Manmohan Singh. The Congress leader also alleged that key aspects such as the freedom movement, constitutional values and the development of national institutions were also being excluded.

## DELHI GETS RESPITE FROM HEAT

Delhi saw an unusual spell of rain Friday evening, as a blanket of clouds rained light to moderate showers, bringing down temperatures by 7-10 degrees in several places. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has upgraded its yellow alert to orange, expecting moderate rainfall, thunderstorms and lightning, along with winds of up to 40-60 kmph, during the night



# Several injured after mob vandalises Assam forest office

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kokrajhar/ Guwahati, April 17:** A mob went on a rampage at a forest range office in Assam's Chirang district Friday, leaving several people, including forest personnel, injured following the detention of some locals over alleged encroachment of protected land, officials said.

As a precautionary measure, mobile internet services were suspended in Chirang and adjoining Kokrajhar districts with immediate effect to prevent the spread of inflammatory messages or rumours that could aggravate the situation, they said.

The protestors, mostly from the Adivasi community, alleged that the detained persons, including women, were assaulted by forest personnel, and demanded immediate action against those responsible.

Besides ransacking the Runikhata forest range office, the protestors torched government vehicles inside the premises, located close to the Bhutan border, and barely a few metres away from the local police station, the officials said.



The situation was brought under control after senior police officers went to the spot and additional security forces were deployed, with police resorting to lathi-charge and firing in the air to disperse the mob.

"Some people were detained by the forest personnel yesterday, and after an inquiry, they were allowed to go. However, an agitated crowd gathered this morning and threw stones at the personnel and the forest office. They also torched some vehicles," a senior police official said.

"Additional security forces were called in. The situation is under control now," he said.

**दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**  
 Advt. No. R&P/316/2026 Dated: 17.03.2026  
 Online applications are invited in the prescribed application form from eligible candidates for appointment to the post of Assistant Professor in the Academic Pay Level-10 of the 7th Central Pay Commission Pay Matrix, in the Departments of **Computer Science, Economics and Psychology**, University of Delhi. The last date for receipt of application is two weeks from the date of publication of the advertisement in the Employment News. For details, please visit the University website [www.du.ac.in](http://www.du.ac.in) and click "Advertisement - Departments" under the Head "Work with DU".  
**Any addendum/corrigendum shall be posted only on the University website.**  
 cbc 21231/12/0002/2627 Registrar

**दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**  
 Advt. No. R&P/319/2026 Dated: 17.03.2026  
 Online applications are invited in the prescribed application form from the eligible candidates for appointment to the post of Assistant Professor, in the Academic Pay Level-10 as per 7th Central Pay Commission Pay Matrix, in Department of **Computer Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Electronics and Communication Engineering, Faculty of Technology**, University of Delhi. The last date for receipt of application is two weeks from the date of publication of the advertisement in the Employment News. For details, please visit the University website [www.du.ac.in](http://www.du.ac.in) and click "Advertisement - Departments" under the Head "Work with DU".  
**Any addendum/corrigendum shall be posted only on the University website.**  
 cbc 21231/12/0008/2627 Registrar

**दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय UNIVERSITY OF DELHI**  
 Advt. No. R&P/314/2026 Dated: 12.03.2026  
 Online applications are invited in the prescribed application form from eligible candidates for appointment to the post of Assistant Professor in the Academic Pay Level-10 of the 7th Central Pay Commission Pay Matrix, in the **Centre for Hindu Studies**, University of Delhi. The last date for receipt of application is two weeks from the date of publication of the advertisement in the Employment News. For details, please visit the University website [www.du.ac.in](http://www.du.ac.in) and click "Advertisement - Departments" under the Head "Work with DU".  
**Any addendum/corrigendum shall be posted only on the University website.**  
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**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER KENDRAPARA (R&B) DIVISION-I, KENDRAPARA**  
 No. 34001/74/2627 E-Mail ID: [ernbkdp@gmail.com](mailto:ernbkdp@gmail.com)  
 Tel.: (06727) 220268, Fax No.: (06727) 220862  
**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e" Procurement Notice (Short Notice)**  
**e-Procurement Notice for Road Works**  
 Bid Identification No. S.E., R&B KDP-01/2026-27  
 1. No. of Work : 3 Nos. of Electrical Works  
 2. Estimated Cost : Rs.16.00 lakhs to Rs.39.00 lakhs (Approximately)  
 3. Period of Completion : 30 days to 45 days  
 4. Date and time of sale and receipt of bid document : From 11.00 A.M. of 21.04.2026 to 5.30 P.M. of 02.05.2026  
 5. Last date/time of receipt of bids : 5.30 P.M. of 02.05.2026  
 6. Date and time of Opening of bids : 11.00 A.M. of 04.05.2026  
 7. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Superintending Engineer, Kendrapara (R&B) Division-I, Kendrapara  
 Further details with any addendum, corrigendum, cancellation can be seen from the State Govt. portal <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>.  
 Sd./ Superintending Engineer Kendrapara (R&B) Division-I  
 OIPR-34001/34097/11/26-27/0001

**BAJAJ LIFE INSURANCE LIMITED**  
 Regd. Office : Bajaj Insurance House, Airport Road, Yerwada, Pune - 411006 Tel.: 020 66026777  
**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
 In furtherance to our notice dated 10 Feb 26, we hereby inform that the office of Bajaj Life Insurance Limited located at Bada Bazar, Near Jagannath Temple Sahar Sahi Unit-8, District Mayurbhanj, Baripada, Odisha - 757001 will be shifted to its new address at Bajaj Life Insurance Limited, Ward No. 10, Golapbag, Back side of Medipoint, Mayurbhanj, Baripada, Odisha - 757001 with effect from 18-05-2026

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
 E-Tender Notice No.: ST-SBP-TENDER-2026-10 Dt. 12.04.2026  
 E-Tender No.: ST-SBP-TENDER-2026-10  
**Name of Work:** INTERLOCKING OF 06 NOS. OF LEVEL CROSSING GATES (JT-27, RV-21, RV-47, RV-59, RV-90 & RV-169) WITH TVU ABOVE 20K OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION.  
**Tender Value:** ₹ 7,96,72,205.40, Bid Security: ₹ 15,93,500/-.  
**Tender closing date & time:** at 1100 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.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)  
**Note:** The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigendum issued for this tender.  
 Divisional Railway Manager (S&T), Sambalpur PR-51/R/26-27

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
 Tender No.: CAOCRSPBBS-13-2026  
**Name of the Work:** I) CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD OVER BRIDGE (1 x 60.0M) CAMEL BACK OPEN WEB GIRDER + (2 x 24.0M) COMPOSITE GIRDER (BRIDGE PROPER) FOR RAILWAY PORTION IN LIEU OF LEVEL CROSSING NO. 212 AND PROPOSED SPAN OF 7 x 25.04M RCC GIRDER ON MALIPADA SIDE & 8 x 25.04M RCC GIRDER ON NARANGARH SIDE (STATE PORTION), AT RAILWAY KM. 472/27-472/29 IN BETWEEN STATIONS TAPANG & DHANULI MOHAN ON HOWRAH-VISAKHAPATNAM MAIN LINE UNDER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION. II) CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD OVER BRIDGE (1 x 60.0M) CAMEL BACK TYPE TRUSS GIRDER FOR RAILWAY PORTION IN LIEU OF LEVEL CROSSING NO. 231 AND PROPOSED SPAN OF 8 x 25.04M RCC GIRDER ON TARIMI & 7 x 25.04M RCC GIRDER ON BALINASI SIDE FOR APPROACH PORTION AT RAILWAY KM. 497/8-10 IN BETWEEN STATIONS KALUPADAGHAT & MUKTESWAR ON HOWRAH-VISAKHAPATNAM MAIN LINE UNDER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION. III) CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD OVER BRIDGE (1 x 60.0M) CAMEL BACK TYPE TRUSS GIRDER FOR RAILWAY PORTION IN LIEU OF LC NO. 227 AND PROPOSED SPAN OF 6 x 25.04M RCC GIRDER ON RASULPUR & 9 x 25.04M RCC GIRDER ON BHUSANDPUR FOR APPROACH PORTION AT RAILWAY KM. 490/19-21 IN BETWEEN STATIONS BHUSANDPUR & MUKTESWAR PH ON HOWRAH-VISAKHAPATNAM MAIN LINE UNDER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.  
**Advised Value:** ₹ 1,66,48,18,284.96, **EMD:** ₹ 3,32,96,400/-, **Period of Completion:** 24 Months.  
**Bidding start date:** 24.04.2026, **Tender closing date & time:** at 1200 hrs. of 08.05.2026.  
 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.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)  
 Chief Administrative Officer/Con/RSP/ Bhubaneswar PR-22/CJ/26-27

# international



I think that all our counterparts here in the United States understand it perfectly well: that to prevent the circumvention of the sanctions, and also to strengthen the sanctions is an extremely important measure that should be taken to make Russia weaker

## FIRST DEPORTEES FROM US ARRIVE IN CONGO CAPITAL

The first migrants deported from the United States under a recent bilateral agreement arrived in Democratic Republic of Congo early Friday, according to one of the migrants, a lawyer in contact with the group and two airport sources. The plane carrying the deportees — from Colombia, Peru and Ecuador — landed in Kinshasa at around 1 am, flight tracking data showed



### of the day note

A cryptocurrency firm built with 'Russian money' had sponsored Polish politicians from the former national-conservative government as well as a CPAC event in Poland last year

The unconditional and immediate reopening of the Strait is a global responsibility, and we need to act to get global energy and trade flowing freely again

Our doors are open to all (Venezuelan) opposition leaders

### SHORT TAKES

**Myanmar frees 4,500 prisoners**  
**Bangkok:** More than 4,500 prisoners in Myanmar have been granted amnesty, and others have had their sentences reduced under a pardon order by President Min Aung Hlaing to mark the traditional New Year, state-run media reported Friday. The identities of those being released were not immediately available. There was no sign that former leader Aung San Suu Kyi would be freed or if the pardon would include the thousands of political detainees imprisoned for opposing military rule. The amnesty comes a week after Min Aung Hlaing was sworn into office following an election that critics say was neither free nor fair and was orchestrated to keep the military's iron grip on power.

**Malaysia stops 25 migrants at sea**  
**Kuala Lumpur:** Malaysian coast guard said Friday they foiled an attempt by 25 undocumented Myanmar migrants to enter the country illegally. Maritime authorities deployed a patrol boat after receiving information about a fiberglass boat speeding toward a small town in northern Penang state early Friday, said Penang's maritime chief Muhammad Suffi Mohamad Ramli. "The patrol boat gave chase, but the vessel escaped after dropping off all 25 individuals" along the coastline, he said in a statement.

**Kosovo approves troops to Gaza**  
**Pristina (Kosovo):** Small Balkan nation Kosovo says it wants to commit dozens of its security troops to an international force for Gaza because it appreciates what NATO-led peacekeepers have done for its own security since its 1998-99 conflict with Serbia. Kosovo's Parliament Friday overwhelmingly approved in a 89-0 vote an earlier government decision to send the troops to the International Stabilization Force under a US-backed initiative following the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas last year.

**Nepal tightens checks on Indian vehicles**  
**Kathmandu:** Authorities in southern Nepal have tightened checks on the entry of Indian-registered vehicles in border towns amid a rise in violations of customs rules by foreign vehicles. Officials said stricter monitoring has become necessary due to a recent surge in unauthorised entry of Indian vehicles, raising concerns over security, tax evasion and other illegal activities.

## US delays weapons export to European countries

Washington, April 17: US officials have informed some European counterparts that some previously contracted weapons deliveries are likely to be delayed as the Iran war continues to draw on weapons stocks, five sources familiar with the matter said.



DELAYS AFFECT BALTIC AND SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES, SOURCES SAY  
EUROPEAN OFFICIALS SAY DELAYS UNDERMINE THEIR DEFENSE READINESS  
US HAS CITED NEED FOR WEAPONS IN MIDDLE EAST

The delays underline the degree to which the war against Iran, which began with US-Israeli air strikes February 28, has begun to stretch US supplies of some critical weaponry and ammunition.

The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity as the communications were not public, said several European countries will be affected, including in the Baltic region and in Scandinavia.

Some of the weapons in question were purchased by European countries under the Foreign Military Sales program, or FMS, but have not yet been delivered, the sources added. Those deliveries will likely be delayed, US officials told European officials in bilateral messages in recent days, the sources said.

The defence ministries of Estonia and Lithuania told Reuters Friday, the US has informed their countries of possible delays in the delivery of US military equipment because of the Iran war.

The White House and the State Department referred queries to the Pentagon. "America's military is the most powerful in the world, and we will ensure that US forces and those of our allies and partners have what they need to fight and win," a Pentagon spokesperson said. "For operational security reasons, we will not comment on any specific

allied or partner requirements or ongoing efforts to support them." European officials complain the delays are putting them in a difficult position.

Under the FMS program, foreign countries purchase US-made weapons with the logistical assistance and consent of the US government. Washington has pushed European NATO partners to purchase more US-made materiel under President Donald Trump, including through the FMS program, as part of a bid to shift the responsibility for Europe's conventional defense away from the US and onto European partners.

But such weapons deliveries are often delayed, causing frustration in European capitals, where some officials are increasingly looking at weapons systems made within Europe. US officials say the weapons

are needed for the war in the Middle East, and they fault European nations for not helping the US and Israel open the Strait of Hormuz.

Even before the Iran war, the US had already drawn down billions of dollars' worth of weapons stockpiles, including artillery systems, ammunition and anti-tank missiles since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022 and Israel began military operations in Gaza in late 2023.

Since the start of the Iran campaign, Tehran has fired hundreds of ballistic missiles and drones at Gulf countries. Most have been intercepted, including with the PAC-3 Patriot missile interceptors that, for example, Ukraine relies on to defend its energy and military infrastructure from ballistic missiles.

The sources spoke on the condition that the names of some of the countries affected be withheld. Some share a border with Russia and, as such, the cadence of weapons deliveries can be considered sensitive defense information.

The delayed weaponry includes various kinds of ammunition, including munitions that can be used for both offensive and defensive purposes, the sources said.

## Sri Lanka's energy minister resigns on coal import issue

Colombo, April 17: Sri Lanka's Minister for Power and Energy Kumara Jayakodi resigned Friday soon after a high-powered Presidential Commission was announced to probe a state-owned entity's coal imports for power generation.

The government, however, stressed that no loss had been caused to the state by the sub-standard coal imports as alleged by the opposition. Jayakodi, who survived a 'No Trust' vote last week, is the first resignation of the National People's Power (NPP) government since it was elected in late 2024 on an anti-corruption platform.

Along with Jayakodi, Ministry's Secretary Udayanga Hemapala too resigned from the post, President Anura Kumara Dissanayake's office said.

According to the President's Media Division (PMD), the move is to facilitate an independent investigation by the Special Presidential Commission appointed to probe matters related to coal imports, it said. "They resigned to make way for an impartial investigation. The two resignations are meant to facilitate a fair inquiry as they will not be able to interfere," Foreign minister Vijitha Herath told reporters.

The Commission report would be submitted to the president in six months, Herath said. Defending Jayakodi, senior minister Bimal Rathnayaka told reporters here, "There is no loss to the state, the company may have lost. But the cost of the loss would not be transferred to electricity consumers."



## Starmer refuses to quit amid resignation calls



REUTERS

London, April 17: Prime Minister Keir Starmer, under renewed pressure to resign, expressed anger Friday over not being informed that his former ambassador to the United States, Peter Mandelson, had failed security vetting before being handed the job.

Starmer, who won the largest majority in modern history for Labour at a national election in 2024, is facing fresh calls to step down over the Mandelson affair, just three weeks before his party is expected to suffer big losses in local elections in England and regional votes in Scotland and Wales.

Following the sacking of Labour veteran Mandelson as ambassador last year over his ties to the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, Starmer had won a brief reprieve from his critics after limiting Britain's role in the Iran war.

However, Thursday it emerged that Mandelson had failed the security vetting conducted before his appointment as envoy, a fact that Starmer's team said the prime minister

RENEWED CALLS FOR STARMER TO RESIGN OVER MANDELSON

PM HAD WON A REPRIEVE OVER HIS HANDLING OF IRAN CRISIS

KEY QUESTION IS WHETHER HE MISLED PARLIAMENT ABOUT MANDELSON

STARMER'S PARTY IS FACING HEAVY LOSSES IN MAY 7 LOCAL ELECTIONS

LABOUR NOT EXPECTED TO MOVE AGAINST STARMER FOR NOW

had been unaware of. Starmer's political foes have questioned how a prime minister could not know and have demanded his resignation.

**STARMER SAYS IT WAS UNFORGIVABLE HE WAS NOT INFORMED**

Starmer, who was in France Friday for talks on the Iran crisis, told reporters it was unforgivable that he had not been told about Mandelson having failed security vetting "when I was telling parliament that due process had been followed".

Starmer said he would "set out the relevant facts" Monday to parliament.

A spokesperson for Starmer told reporters the prime minister had no plans to resign.

### SNIPPETS

#### Pak, Saudi Arabia sign pact to extend \$3bn deposit

**KARACHI:** Saudi Arabia has reached an agreement with the State Bank of Pakistan which allows for an extension in the maturity of a \$3 billion deposit with the central bank, it was announced Friday. The announcement comes a day after the SaudiA Fund for Development deposited \$2 billion of the \$3 billion Thursday with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), bringing a major boost to the country's skewed foreign reserves. "The agreement, signed between the SaudiA Fund for Development (SFD) and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), provides for the extension in the maturity of a \$3 billion deposit placed by SFD with the State Bank of Pakistan," said a post on X by the Ministry of Finance. The Finance Ministry said that the agreement was signed between SBP Governor Jameel Ahmed and Chief Executive Officer of the SFD Sultan bin Abdulrahman Al-Marshad. Minister for Finance and Muhammad Aurangzeb witnessed the signing of an important financial agreement in Washington, DC, in the presence of Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States.

#### Ex-Prez Win Myint freed in broad Myanmar prisoner amnesty

**BANGKOK:** Myanmar has reduced the sentence of imprisoned ex-leader Aung San Suu Kyi, her lawyer told Reuters Friday, as part of an amnesty by a new president who ousted her government in a coup five years ago. Suu Kyi, 80, was serving a 27-year sentence for a litany of offences her allies said were politically motivated to keep her at bay, ranging from incitement and corruption to election fraud and violating a state secrets law. The sentence has been cut by one-sixth, but it remains unclear whether the Nobel Peace Prize winner will be allowed to serve the rest of her sentence under house arrest, the lawyer said. The wildly popular Suu Kyi, who had dismissed the charges against her as "absurd", has not been seen in public since the end of her marathon trials, and her whereabouts have been unknown. Earlier, state media reported that President Min Aung Hlaing approved an amnesty for 4,335 prisoners, the third such move in the past six months. Amnesties typically take place in Myanmar each year to mark Independence Day in January and New Year in April.



Girls hold the Hezbollah flags as they return to their homes, after a 10-day ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel went into effect, in the southern suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon, April 17

## China turns Taiwan's own voices against it in information war

REUTERS

Taipei, April 17: As Chinese warships and fighter jets staged massive drills around Taiwan in December, a parallel action was unfolding on smartphone screens.

On Douyin, China's version of TikTok, a news outlet run by the Chinese Communist Party posted a 51-second video of Taiwan Opposition leader Cheng Li-wun accusing President Lai Ching-te of inviting Chinese aggression. Lai, Cheng said, was "dragging all 23 million of us" in Taiwan into a "dead end, a road to death" by pursuing independence. The clip quickly surfaced on Facebook, YouTube and other platforms popular in Taiwan.

Chinese state media outlets are increasingly amplifying Taiwanese critics of the island's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), including influencers and politicians linked to the opposition Kuomint-

ang (KMT), according to five Taiwanese security officials and data from Taipei-based research group IORG that was shared with Reuters.

China imports the public statements of leading KMT and other opposition figures that are critical of the Taiwan government and pumps them out in a torrent of anti-DPP messaging in Chinese state media and on social media platforms in China, according to the data and sources. Those clips are then reshared and often repackaged for consumption on platforms popular in Taiwan, including Facebook, TikTok and YouTube, as well as on Douyin, sometimes embellished or presented in ways that obscure China's hand.

While China has in the past employed Taiwanese figures in its propaganda, it has turbocharged this information-warfare tactic, the Taiwan security officials said: Familiar voices and accents can sound more



credible. The goal is to discredit a government Beijing accuses of seeking independence, the officials said. And, with the DPP seeking \$40 billion in extra defense outlays, the campaign also appears aimed at convincing Taiwanese that China's military power is so overwhelming that it is futile for Taiwan to spend heavily on more American weapons, according to IORG and three of the security officials.

CHINESE STATE MEDIA AMPLIFY TAIWAN OPPOSITION VOICES TO UNDERMINE DPP GOVERNMENT, IORG DATA SHOW  
CAMPAIGN AIMS IN PART TO UNDERCUT TAIWAN'S PUSH TO LIFT DEFENSE SPENDING, TAIWAN OFFICIALS SAY  
TAIWAN COUNTERS WITH MEDIA-LITERACY EFFORTS, DPP STRESSES STRENGTH OVER CONCESSIONS TO CHINA  
CHINA'S TAIWAN AFFAIRS OFFICE DIDN'T RESPOND TO QUESTIONS ABOUT INFORMATION WARFARE

Taiwan's defense ministry told Reuters it is countering a massive increase in Chinese "cognitive warfare" by strengthening the armed forces' media-literacy skills and psychological resilience. President Lai's office added that cross-strait peace must be "built on strength, not on concessions to authoritarian pressure."

in China, didn't respond to questions about Chinese information warfare. Douyin also didn't respond to a request for comment.

China considers Taiwan part of its territory and hasn't ruled out using military force to seize it. Taiwan's government rejects China's sovereignty claim, saying it is already an independent country called the Republic of China, its formal name. Beijing refuses to speak with the DPP administration, and calls Lai a "separatist."

While Chinese preparations for military action against Taiwan continue, the information warfare is part of Beijing's strategy of wearing down Taiwan without resorting to force. In this regard, Taiwan's opposition KMT provides a valuable opening for China: The party has moved to seek closer ties with Beijing in a bid to head off what it says is a crisis made worse by the DPP government's provocation of China.

# business



Indian digital ad market is currently at \$11 billion in 2025. It is projected to grow at 10-15 per cent compound annual growth rate in the range of \$19 billion to \$22 billion by 2030

**MADHAV GULATI** | SENIOR CONSULTANT, REDSEER CONSULTING

## SMARTPHONE SHIPMENTS DROP

India's smartphone shipments fell 3% year-on-year in the first quarter of 2026, marking their weakest quarterly performance in six years as cost pressures, price hikes and soft demand weighed on sales, Counterpoint Research said Friday. Over 80 smartphone models saw average price hikes of 15%, with a further 15%-20% expected in the second quarter



## of the day quote

India must now transition from a volume-driven approach to a value-driven ecosystem, leveraging food processing, innovation, and global market integration

**HIRAG PASWAN** | UNION FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES MINISTER

This combination of softer currency and improving geopolitical outlook has provided gold with a steady upward push, reinforcing its role as a safe-haven asset in uncertain times

**HAREESH V** | HEAD OF COMMODITY RESEARCH, GEOJIT INVESTMENTS

Teams today are making faster decisions when it comes to office spaces. The expectation is clear—move in quickly, begin operations immediately, and scale without disruption

**YOGESH ARORA** | CO-FOUNDER, ALT-F COWORKING

## SHORT TAKES

### Bullion prices crash

**New Delhi:** Silver price declined by ₹5,700 to ₹2.53 lakh per kilogram in the national capital Friday while gold fell to ₹1.56 lakh per 10 grams amid subdued demand in the domestic market. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal plunged ₹5,700, or 2.2 per cent, to ₹2,53,000 per kg (inclusive of all taxes). Gold of 99.9 per cent purity also decreased ₹1,600, or 1.01 per cent, to ₹1,56,200 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). "Gold remained range-bound with subdued price action as markets stayed cautious ahead of key updates expected over the weekend on post-ceasefire developments," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst - Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said. He added that the lack of fresh triggers kept gold in a sideways consolidation phase, despite underlying uncertainty. Overall, gold is likely to remain range-bound with a volatile bias, reacting sharply to any weekend developments. In the overseas markets, spot gold was trading marginally lower at \$4,786.90 per ounce, while silver gained 1.12 per cent to \$79.28 per ounce.

### ₹ rises 23 paise

**Mumbai:** The rupee appreciated by 23 paise to settle at 92.91 against the US dollar Friday, buoyed by a weakening American currency and retreating crude oil prices amid increasing hopes of easing geopolitical tensions. Renewed buying in domestic equity markets and fresh inflow of foreign funds also supported the local currency, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 92.93 and touched an intra-day high of 92.65 against the greenback. The unit also touched the day's low of 92.98 before ending the session at 92.91 against the American currency, up 23 paise from the previous closing level. On Thursday, the rupee gained 19 paise to settle at 93.14 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.12 per cent to 97.90. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, was trading 3.23 per cent down at \$96.18 per barrel in futures trade. Foreign Institutional Investors bought equities worth ₹683.20 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

# Delay in clearance: Banks halt gold, silver imports

India's gold demand in 2025 fell to 710.9 metric tons, the lowest level in five years

REUTERS

**Mumbai, April 17:** Indian banks have halted gold and silver import orders from overseas suppliers, with tons of the metals stuck at customs as a formal government order has not been issued authorising bullion imports, trade sources said.

Without fresh imports, India could face supply shortages, as the world's second-largest gold consumer and biggest silver buyer relies on overseas purchases to meet nearly all its demand.

Weak Indian demand could weigh on global gold and silver prices, while narrowing the country's trade deficit and supporting the rupee, which has been among the worst-performing Asian currencies so far this year.

Authorities have carried out various measures designed to reduce pressure on the currency, including most recently urging refineries to curb their spot dollar purchases.

The halting by Indian banks of gold and silver import orders from overseas suppliers and the tons of the metals stuck at customs due to the absence of a formal government order authorising bullion imports have not been previously reported. The Directorate General of



- Banks await clearance for imported bullion as DGFT order delayed
- About 5 tons of gold, 8 tons of silver stuck without clearance
- A halt in bullion imports could create a shortage in India

There is a need to bring clarity and ensure imports resume. Without imports, supply shortages will emerge and premiums will rise after Akshaya Tritiya

**SURENDRA MEHTA** | SECRETARY, INDIA BULLION AND JEWELLERS ASSOCIATION

Foreign Trade (DGFT), under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, typically issues an order at the start of each financial year listing banks authorised by the Reserve Bank of India to import gold and silver.

The previous order, issued in April 2025, was valid until the end of the last financial year March 31 and banks are now awaiting a fresh DGFT directive.

The DGFT did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

Banks expected the DGFT to issue the order in early April, as it does every year, but with no update so far, more than 5 tons of gold are stuck without customs clearance, said a Mumbai-based bullion dealer at a private bank.

Uncertainty over the timing of the DGFT order has led banks to halt new import orders from overseas suppliers, said the dealer, who did not want to be named as he was not authorised to speak to the media.

Around 8 tons of imported silver is also stuck without customs clearance, the sources said.

There is no point in placing new orders when earlier consignments cannot be cleared, another bullion dealer said.

India's gold demand in 2025 fell to 710.9 metric tons, the lowest level in five years, according to the World Gold Council.

# Easing geopolitical tensions boost D-St

Investors' wealth surged by ₹ 4.84L-cr to ₹4,65,64,461.51 crore (\$5.02 trillion) on BSE

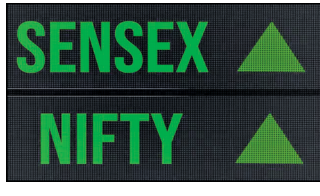
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 17:** Stock market benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rallied nearly 1 per cent Friday, driven by optimism surrounding easing geopolitical tensions, falling crude prices, and fresh foreign fund inflows.

Renewed hopes of a diplomatic resolution between the US and Iran, along with a 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon, have materially improved global risk appetite, a market analyst said.

**Oil tumbles 10%, Dow soars 1K pts**

Oil prices fell by 10%, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average soared 1,020 points after Iran said the Strait of Hormuz is fully open, which would allow oil tankers to exit the Persian Gulf again and carry crude to customers worldwide. The S&P 500 jumped 1.3% in morning trading Friday as US stocks race toward the finish of a third straight week of big gains. The Nasdaq composite climbed 1.5%. Stocks have rallied 12% since late March on hopes that the United States and Iran can avoid a worst-case scenario for the global economy.



**On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark jumped 943.29 points or 1.21%, and the Nifty climbed 302.95 points or 1.25%**

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 504.86 points, or 0.65 per cent, to settle at 78,493.54. During the day, it surged 564.77 points, or 0.72 per cent, to 78,553.45. A total of 3,043 stocks advanced while 1,284 declined and 166 remained unchanged on the BSE.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 156.80 points, or 0.65 per cent, to end at 24,353.55.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Hindustan Unilever, Power Grid, Reliance Industries, Bharat Electronics, Tech Mahindra and Titan were among the major winners.

In contrast, Sun Pharma, Mahindra & Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro and HCL Tech were among the laggards.

## Forex kitty reclaims \$700 billion mark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 17:** India's forex reserves jumped \$3.825 billion to \$700.946 billion during the week ended April 10, says RBI.

In the previous reporting week ended April 3, the overall reserves had jumped \$9.063 billion to \$697.121 billion.

The kitty had expanded to an all-time high of \$728.494 billion during the week ended February 27 this year, before the onset of the Middle East conflict which led to several weeks of a drop as the rupee came under pressure and the RBI had to intervene in the forex market through dollar sales.

For the week ended April 10, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by \$3.127 billion to \$555.983 billion, the central bank's data showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include effects of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units, such as the euro, pound, and yen, held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Value of gold reserves increased by \$601 million to \$121.343 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up \$56 million to \$18.763 billion, the apex bank said. India's reserve position with the IMF was up \$41 million to \$4.857 billion at the end of the reporting week, according to the apex bank's data.

# Adani overtakes Ambani to become Asia's richest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 17:** Tycoon Gautam Adani has overtaken fellow Gujarat business czar Mukesh Ambani to become Asia's richest person, as a sustained rally in shares of his ports-to-energy conglomerate lifted his net worth.

With a net worth of \$92.6 billion, Adani surpassed Ambani, whose fortune stands at \$90.8 billion, to become the richest person in India and Asia, according to the latest billionaire rankings.

Adani, founder of his eponymous group, oversees India's largest private seaport network, is the country's biggest renewable energy producer and private airport operator, and ranks

among the world's largest coal traders. He is currently ranked No 19 on the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, which tracks the world's 500 richest individuals and is updated daily.

Adani's wealth is largely derived from his shareholdings across the group's 10 listed companies. A recent surge in Adani Group stocks has added billions of dollars in market value, underscoring strong investor appetite for assets linked to India's economic expansion and energy transition.

By contrast, Ambani's wealth, anchored by his flagship conglomerate Reliance Industries that spans energy, telecom and retail, has seen comparatively modest gains, reshuffling the region's billionaire rankings.



Topping the billionaire ranking is Elon Musk, the chief executive of Tesla - the world's most valuable carmaker - and rocket manufacturer SpaceX. His net worth of \$656 billion is more than double of his closest rival,

Larry Page. Page, co-founder of Alphabet, the holding company for Google, is worth \$286 billion.

Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon, is ranked at No3 with a net worth of \$269 billion.

Adani and Ambani are the

only Indians in the top 50.

Ambani had consistently been India's richest for over a decade before Adani's eye popping gains in company stock prices catapulted him to the top spot in February 2022.

However, his group's stock tumbled in the aftermath of a damning report by a US short seller Hindenburg that led to Adani group losing \$100 billion in market value at lowest point. This led to Ambani making a comeback at the top.

In mid-2024, Adani again overtook Ambani. This is largely because of Adani stocks surging due to infrastructure expansion and the energy transition narrative. Ambani again overtook the top slot in mid-2025 before losing it again this month.

# TURN PASSION INTO PROFESSION: HARSHIT

Harshit Lodha is a well-known entrepreneur and the Managing Partner of Jaibaba Automobiles, a prominent dealership of Royal Enfield (a unit of Eicher Motors) located on Lewis Road in Bhubaneswar. Since co-founding the firm in 2022, he has played a pivotal role in its growth, transforming it into a high-performing dealership with a reported revenue of ₹70 crore in FY2025. Under his leadership, Jaibaba Automobiles has emerged as a significant player in the motorcycle segment, particularly as a leading Royal Enfield dealership recognized for its strong delivery performance and customer-focused service. He also co-founded the "Jaibaba Tribe," a Royal Enfield riding group known for organizing engaging rides and activities. Harshit Lodha is widely regarded for his reliability and deep industry insight. Recently, Jaibaba Automobiles expanded its footprint by opening a new showroom and workshop in Pipili. Excerpts...



**HARSHIT LODHA**  
Managing Partner, Jaibaba Automobiles

■ Royal Enfield achieved a historic milestone in 2025, with domestic sales in India crossing 1 million units, representing a 25% year-on-year growth over 2024. Are you also witnessing this boom in Odisha market?

■ Yes, that is absolutely true. We are witnessing a strong growth trend in the Odisha market as well. Our retail sales have grown by around 51%, reflecting the increasing popularity of Royal Enfield motorcycles. The brand's market share in the Power Sport (PST) segment in Bhubaneswar has risen from 30% to 32%, while across Odisha it has increased by over 3.9% to 29.9%. Customers have responded very positively, appreciating the brand's de-

sign, performance and riding experience, which continues to strengthen their trust and enthusiasm for Royal Enfield motorcycles.

■ Being one of the prominent motorcycle dealers in Bhubaneswar, what are the leading challenges that the industry is facing?

■ The industry is seeing a strong demand surge after the GST 2.0 revision, which reduced taxes on 350cc motorcycles from 28% to 18%. Meeting this sudden rise in demand remains a challenge due to supply pressures. However, we are managing to fulfill around 75-80% of the demand and have recorded over 50% growth in retail sales, with customers responding positively to the improved affordability.

■ US-India trade deal could make Harley Davidson bikes cheaper — is Royal Enfield at risk?

■ I don't believe Royal Enfield is at risk. In India, motorcycles succeed not through discounts or freebies but through value for money, quality, and strong brand appeal. The brand's consistently rising sales clearly reflect the trust and preference of Indian customers.

■ How has been your journey so far? What is your Unique Selling Point?

■ My journey with Jaibaba over the past three years has been extremely rewarding. Our focus has always been delivering the best customer experience and promoting a unique riding culture. The Jaibaba Tribe riding group continues to grow, and our Net Promoter Score of over 50 reflects strong customer satisfaction, exceeding industry benchmarks.

■ As an entrepreneur, why did you choose to enter this line of business? What advice will you give to the new entrants?

■ Biking has always been my passion and a source of mental wellness. I chose this business because it allows me to stay connected with something I truly enjoy. Becoming a Royal Enfield dealer was a great opportunity. My advice to new entrepreneurs is to pursue businesses they are passionate about and stay committed to quality and customer experience. For youngsters, my advice is simple—follow what you truly love and are passionate about. When you build a career or business around your interests, it naturally motivates you to perform better and bring out your best potential.

## TPWODL's new alternative underground power line to cut outages in Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Burla, April 17:** TP Western Odisha Distribution Limited (TPWODL) has successfully commissioned a new alternative 33kV underground line connecting Jail Chowk Power Sub-Station (PSS) to Badabazar PSS in Sambalpur city.

Earlier, Badabazar PSS—one of the primary power supply sources for Sambalpur was dependent on a single 33kV Cheruapada feeder from Ganeshnagar Grid Sub-Station (GSS). This feeder also supplied electricity to other substations such as Cheruapada PSS, Kainsir PSS, and several extra high-tension (EHT) consumers. As a result, any maintenance

work or fault in this line often caused widespread power disruptions across Sambalpur town, including Badabazar, the Samaleswari Temple area, and major commercial zones.

To address this challenge, TPWODL has developed an alternative (N-1) power supply system by laying a 3.2 km underground (UG) cable between Jail Chowk PSS and Badabazar PSS. In simple terms, this ensures that if one power line fails, electricity can be supplied through another route, significantly reducing interruptions and improving supply reliability.

The project has been implemented with an investment of ₹3.37 crore and will benefit around 15,000 consumers.

## JSW Steel, POSCO partner for Odisha steel project

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 17:** JSW Steel board Friday approved a proposal to sign agreements with South Korea-based POSCO Group to enter into a joint venture to set up a 6 million tonne steel project in India.

In an exchange filing, JSW Steel said the joint venture project is proposed to be set up in Odisha.

"Board of Directors has approved entering into a Share Subscription and Joint Venture Agreement, with POSCO Co., Ltd and POSCO-India Private Limited (together referred to as "POSCO Group") through which Saffron Resources Private Limited ("Saffron"), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Company would become a 50:50 Joint Venture between the Company and POSCO Group," JSW Steel said. The proposed joint venture would set up a greenfield 6 MTPA integrated steel plant in Odisha, the company said.

Saffron possesses 887 acres of land in the state that may be used to set up the proposed plant.

JSW Steel said further to share subscription and joint venture agreement, the POSCO Group will subscribe to shares of Saffron, for a consideration of ₹508.8 crore, subject to closing adjustments. On the rationale, the filing said, "The parties propose to enter into a joint venture to set up a greenfield 6 MTPA integrated steel plant in Odisha, India."

The JV will deepen strategic ties between the two steel producers. An association with POSCO Co. Ltd will enable the company to form a strategic partnership for access to technology and manufacturing of high-grade steel products for automotive and other applications.

# Neeraj, Antil among elite athletes complain against coach Naval

Naval, who was bestowed the Dronacharya in 2015, is currently guiding Sachin Yadav, who had bested two-time Olympic medallist Neeraj at the World Championships last year by finishing fourth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: Paralympic gold-medallist Sumit Antil, endorsed by Olympic superstar Neeraj Chopra, has accused Dronacharya awardee coach Naval Singh of mental harassment and verbal abuse

in a complaint to the Sports Authority of India (SAI). SAI acknowledged receiving the complaint but stated that Naval is not its employee and had been engaged by the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) to train "another leading athlete as part of National Coaching Camp". Antil, gold-medallist at Tokyo 2020 and Paris 2024 Games, also alleged that Naval is "probably mentally unstable" and attempting to disturb top athletes like him and Neeraj Chopra. Naval has also extensively worked with para-athletes. "He (Naval Singh) mentally harassed us and abused our, as in mine and Neeraj's, families. He seems mentally unstable," Antil told PTI

## HARASSMENT, ABUSIVE LANGUAGE



One of India's strongest gold medal hopes in the F64 category (leg amputated) at the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympics, Antil said, "He (Naval) would deliberately share recordings of his abusive rants with our (team) managers, so that they reach us." In response, a SAI source

"A complaint has been received from Sumit Antil, Paralympic Gold Medalist, alleging verbal abuse by Coach Mr Naval Singh. The complaint has also been supported by other athletes, including Neeraj Chopra," the source said. The three-time world champion from 2023 to 2025, added that he sent his complaint to SAI and it was endorsed by Neeraj Chopra and fellow para-javelin throwers Navdeep Singh and Sandeep Chaudhary. "It has been a week since we complained to DG SAI (Hari Ranjan Rao) and CEO TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme). TOPS CEO (NS Johal) wanted us to (make a) compromise in the first hearing.

"We ignored this matter for a long time but decided to complain after it became too much. I filed the complaint and Neeraj bhai, Navdeep Singh and Sandeep Chaudhary endorsed it," he added. He questioned the silence SAI's silence after the filing of the complaint. "Point is if athletes of our stature are not heard then what can others expect. The complaint has not even got an acknowledgement till now," he said. "And, I am unable to understand why this coach is doing what he is doing. Maybe he wants Sachin Yadav to beat Neeraj bhai because Sachin trains with him," he alleged.

## SHORT TAKES

### Phone use: BCCI fines RR manager ₹1 lakh

New Delhi: BCCI has fined Rajasthan Royals team manager Romi Bhinder Rs one lakh for an anti-corruption breach of using his phone in the dugout besides issuing a warning following an unsatisfactory response to the board's showcause notice, its secretary Devajit Saikia told PTI Friday. The breach occurred during the IPL match between Rajasthan Royals and Royal Challengers Bengaluru in Guwahati April 10. The BCCI anti-corruption unit led by Shradh Kumar subsequently showcaused Bhinder asking for an explanation. Saikia said the ACU found Bhinder guilty after not being satisfied with his response. As per the IPL Players and Match Officials Area protocol, use of phone is barred in the dugout but allowed in the dressing room. Bhinder was found scrolling his smart phone with teen sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi by his side in the dugout during the game against RCB. Sources close to Bhinder said that he has been battling health issues and has difficulty in walking long distance and climbing the stairs.

### Treesa-Gayatri pull out of Uber Cup Finals

New Delhi: Indian women's doubles pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand has withdrawn from the upcoming Uber Cup Finals after the former sustained an ankle injury, dealing a blow to India's campaign in Denmark. India will compete in the Thomas and Uber Cup Finals to be held in Horsens, Denmark, from April 24 to May 3. "Treesa sadly twisted her ankle just 2-3 days before leaving for the Badminton Asia Championships. It was an accident during training -- she stepped on her partner's foot," India's doubles coach B Sumeeth Reddy told PTI. The Indian pair had also withdrawn from the Swiss Open last month due to Treesa's shoulder issue. They were trailing Chinese Taipei's Hu Ling Fang and Jheng Yu Chieh in the opening game when they retired from their first-round match in Basel.

### Madrid Open: Alcaraz, Djokovic withdraw

Madrid: The Madrid Open is losing some star power with Carlos Alcaraz joining Novak Djokovic in pulling out of the upcoming clay-court tournament Friday. Alcaraz, ranked No 2, withdrew from the Barcelona Open in midweek after undergoing a test on his right wrist, and the fourth-ranked Djokovic is nursing a shoulder injury. On Friday, Alcaraz said it "hurts" to announce that he'll miss the Madrid Open for a second straight year. The tournament starts Monday. Djokovic is a three-time champion in Madrid. Alcaraz and Djokovic's next tournaments are the Italian Open and the French Open.

### ODI series: Australia to tour Pakistan

Karachi: The Australian cricket team is set to tour Pakistan in late May to play a three-match ODI series in Lahore and Rawalpindi, PCB sources said Friday. The series is a part of the agreement between the two Cricket Australia (CA) and Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) under which the Australian T20 side visited the country before the T20 World Cup and played three matches in Lahore.

## MATCH-FIXING

### Canada's T20 WC match vs NZ under ICC ACU scrutiny

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 17: The ICC is investigating Cricket Canada for alleged breach of its anti-corruption code, including the national team's loss to New Zealand in a T20 World Cup match held February 17 in Chennai, a media report has stated.

The game at Chepauk, which Canada lost by eight wickets, has come under scrutiny from the ICC's Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) following allegations of corruption highlighted in a recently-aired documentary.

Electing to bat, Canada had posted 173/4, before New Zealand chased it down in just 15.1 overs. Glenn Phillips (59 not out off 39 balls) and Rachin Ravindra (76 not out off 36) sealed the win to confirm the Black Caps' Super Eight berth.

According to ESPNcricinfo, the ACU is probing multiple allegations linked to Cricket Canada and "two active investigations that span elements of Cricket Canada and allegations of breaches of the ICC's anti-corruption code at international and domestic level as well".

The allegations came into light in a 43-minute documentary, Corruption, Crime and Cricket, produced by Canadian investigative programme 'the fifth estate' and aired by CBC Friday.

# Gill, Rabada keep KKR winless

## Skipper's 86, Rabada-Siraj burst set up Gujarat Titans's comfortable win over Kolkata Knight Riders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, April 17: Shubman Gill's elegant 86 complemented a probing new-ball spell from Kagiso Rabada and Mohammed Siraj as Gujarat Titans registered a commanding five-wicket win over laggards Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League here Friday.

Gill was in complete command, firing on all cylinders as he steered the Titans to their third win of the season.

**TODAY'S MATCHES**

**RCB VS DC**  
TIME: 3:30 PM

**SRH VS CSK**  
TIME: 7:30 PM

Star Sports channels & JioHotstar



out for 180. KKR's total was largely propped up by Cameron Green's fighting 79 off 55 balls, his first significant contribution with the bat this season. The former champions continue to remain winless in the ongoing edition. The two powerplays told the tale of the match. While KKR limped to 37 for 3, Gill powered GT to a commanding 71 for 1, seizing early control of the chase. Chasing a below par total,

Gill set the tone from the outset, striking three boundaries, including a pristine straight drive, and a six in the first three overs. He then anchored the innings with poise, pacing his knock to perfection. His innings was peppered with eight fours and four sixes. While KKR managed to pick up a few wickets, they were never able to stem the flow of runs or apply sustained pressure.

When Sai Sudharsan departed, Jos Buttler ensured there was no let-up, announcing his arrival by cracking a boundary off his first ball before following it up with a six and another four in quick succession. Earlier, KKR were rocked early, losing three wickets in the first four overs. Rabada and Siraj bowled with precision, while Ashok Sharma (2/45) and Prasad Krishna (1/32) provided

able support. Green, who found it hard to get going in the beginning, weathered the early storm before breaking free in the middle overs, smashing seven fours and four sixes in his 55-ball stay. He stitched together a 55-run stand with Rovman Powell and followed it up with a 60-run partnership with Anukul Roy. To add to KKR's woes, Green was starved of strike towards the fag end of the innings, watching wickets tumble at the non-striker's end.

**Brief scores:**  
Kolkata Knight Riders: 180 all out in 20 overs (Cameron Green 79; Kagiso Rabada 3/29, Mohammed Siraj 2/23) lost to Gujarat Titans: 181 for 5 in 19.4 overs (Shubman Gill 86; Varun Chakravarty 2/34) by 5 wickets

IPL STANDINGS					
TEAMS	P	W	L	NRR	PTS
PBKS	5	4	0	1.067	9
RCB	5	4	1	1.503	8
RR	5	4	1	0.889	8
GT	5	3	2	0.018	6
SRH	5	2	3	0.576	4
DC	4	2	2	0.322	4
LSG	5	2	3	-0.804	4
CSK	5	2	3	-0.846	4
MI	5	1	4	-1.076	2
KKR	6	0	5	-1.149	1

## INDIAN SUPER LEAGUE

### OFC, Mohammedan Sporting share points



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, April 17: Mohammedan Sporting Club secured their first point of the Indian Super League (ISL) 2025-26 with a hard-fought 1-1 draw against Odisha FC at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar Friday. Suhair VP gave the hosts the lead just before half-time, but Adison Singh's close-range finish early in the second half ensured the points were shared. Mohammedan remain at the bottom of the table with one point from eight matches, while Odisha FC moved to 12th with six points from seven outings. Lalthathanga Khawhlring was adjudged the Player of the Match. The opening exchanges were cautious, with both sides looking to find rhythm in midfield. Odisha enjoyed spells of possession, while Mohammedan looked to threaten on the break, but clear-cut chances were few in the first quarter of the game. Odisha responded with a series of promising attacks of their own. Left-back Subham Bhattacharya came close after a scramble inside the box, while Isak Vanlalratfela and Lal-

rinfela Khiantge both threatened with runs in behind. The Juggernauts' defensive pairing of Carlos Delgado and Thoiba Singh also impressed, contributing both at the back and in build-up play. The breakthrough finally arrived five minutes before the breakthrough through a swift counter-attacking move. Isak initiated the move from deep before linking up with midfielder Lalrinfela, whose perfectly weighted through ball released Suhair VP down the left. The forward surged into the box and unleashed a powerful left-footed strike past Padam Chettri to give Odisha a 1-0 lead. The visitors' persistence paid off in the 56th minute. Hira Mondal made an overlapping run down the right and delivered a low cross into the box, where Adison Singh arrived at the perfect moment to guide the ball into the top corner, leveling the scores at 1-1. The final whistle confirmed a 1-1 draw, with Mohammedan SC earning their first point of the campaign, while Odisha FC were left to settle for a share of the spoils after a competitive encounter.

## Odisha women national rugby champions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rajgir (Bihar), April 17: Odisha women scored a commanding 27-0 victory over defending champions Bihar to emerge champions in the 13th Senior National Rugby 7s Championship here Friday. Odisha's charge was led by Nirmalya Rout, who scored 15 points through three tries, while Tarulata Naik added 10 points with two tries. Parbati Hansdah also got on the scoresheet, sealing a comprehensive win and a third national title in six years for Odisha women. West Bengal secured the bronze medal with a 26-0 win



over Delhi in the third place playoff. The scoring effort was shared by Riya Oraon (7 points), Rima

Oraon (5 points), Namista Oraon (5 points), and Sandhya Rai (9 points). In the semifinals, Odisha de-

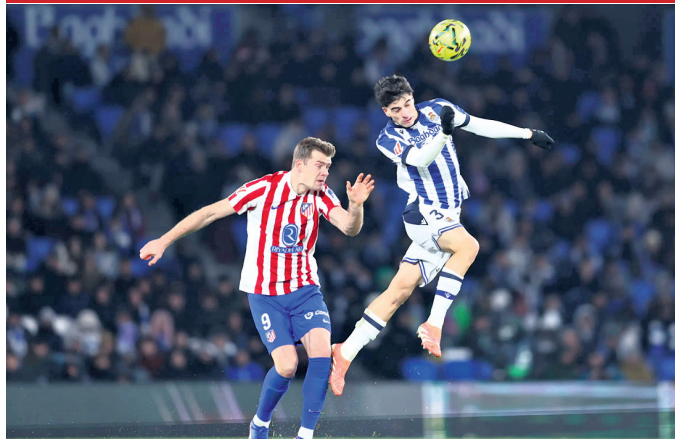
feated West Bengal 31-7, while Bihar overcame Delhi 33-7. The men's competition will take place April 20-21.

## Atletico, Real Sociedad ready for 1987 repeat

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Madrid, April 17: Atletico Madrid and Real Sociedad meet in the Copa del Rey final Saturday, with the trophy becoming the second major title to be decided in Spain this season after the Super Cup. Atletico travels to the Estadio de la Cartuja after qualifying for the semifinal of the UEFA Champions League, while Real Sociedad has had a week to prepare for the match following its 3-3 home draw with Deportivo Alaves last weekend. Real Sociedad won the 2020 Copa del Rey final 1-0 against Athletic Bilbao. This will be the first Cup final attended by its supporters since 1987, when it beat Atletico Madrid on penalties after the match ended 2-2 following extra time. Atletico's last Copa del Rey triumph came in 2013, when it beat Real Madrid 2-1 at the Santiago Bernabeu. Atletico reached the final

## COPA DEL REY FINAL



win over FC Barcelona, while Real Sociedad knocked out local rival Athletic Bilbao with 1-0 wins in both legs. A win for Real Sociedad would secure a place in next season's Europa League. While Atletico is close to assuring that through its position in La Liga,

keep alive its hopes of a domestic and European cup double. For Atletico de Madrid, this final represents the chance to lift an official trophy five years after their 11th La Liga title (2021) and thirteen years after their 10th Copa del Rey (2013). To expand their trophy

Atletico's last Copa del Rey triumph came in 2013, when it beat Real Madrid. Real Sociedad won the 2020 Copa del Rey final 1-0 against Athletic Bilbao.

cabinet, the Argentine manager will almost certainly be without Hancko and Gimenez in defense; Pablo Barrios and Johnny Cardoso in midfield; and Oblak between the posts. The Slovenian has been sidelined for several weeks, but his absence has been covered with full confidence by Musso. Consequently, the Rojiblanco starting eleven at La Cartuja could consist of Musso in goal, with Nahuel Molina, Pubill, Le Normand, and Ruggeri in defense. The double pivot will once again feature Koke (the sole survivor of the 2013 Cup win) and Marcos Llorente, with Lookman and Giuliano on the wings. Griezmann would act as the playmaker behind the main attacking

reference, Julian Alvarez. As for Real Sociedad, Odriozola and Yangel Herrera are confirmed absentees, while Gorrotxategi remains a major doubt. Additionally, Goncalo Guedes and Oyarzabal are nursing discomfort—though their presence seems likely—and Take Kubo arrives at the match with very few minutes of recent playing time. Zubeldia is also dealing with various physical issues. Thus, the defense appears destined to be formed by Aramburu and Sergio Gómez as full-backs, with Jon Martin and Caleta-Car as the center-back pairing. The double pivot would be occupied by Carlos Soler and Turrientes, with Guedes on one wing and Oyarzabal as the striker. This leaves two spots to be filled in the attacking midfield line: Brais Méndez, Barrenexea, and Susic are competing for them, with the Croatian being a strong candidate due to his versatility and recent form.