



Elli's observation

Actor Elli AvrRam opens up about the stark contrasts between working in Bollywood and the South

LEISURE | P2



Russian onslaught

A civilian was killed and dozens more wounded in overnight Russian attacks across Ukraine

INTERNATIONAL | P10



War's oil toll

The world has lost over \$50 billion worth of crude oil that has not been produced since the Iran war began nearly 50 days ago

BUSINESS | P11



DC outplay RCB

Delhi Capitals beat Royal Challengers by six wickets in a last-over thriller in their Indian Premier League match

SPORTS | P12

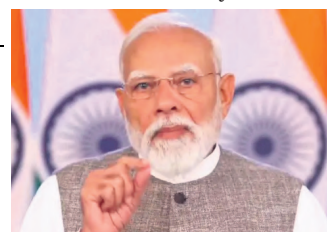
Women will make Oppn pay: PM Modi

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 18: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday warned the Congress and its allies that the women of India will severely punish them for "the sin of foeticide" after they killed a bill on women's reservation in Parliament and state assemblies.

In an address to the nation, Modi apologised to the women, and said the government may have lost the vote but it will never give up its efforts to empower women. "We may not have got the necessary 66 per cent votes for the passage of the bill yesterday, but we have got 100 per cent blessings of 'Nari Shakti,'" Modi said in an address to the nation, a day after a bill to implement 33 per cent women's reservation in legislatures in 2029 was defeated in the Lok Sabha.

He said the Opposition parties have "mercilessly crushed"



the dream of women by not allowing the bill to pass in Parliament despite the government's best efforts. "I seek forgiveness from all women of the country," he said, while asserting that his government will remove all obstacles in the way of implementing women's reservation and for their empowerment.

Modi, in his 30-minute speech, alleged that the "self-serving politics" of parties like the Congress, DMK, TMC and the Samajwadi Party has come at the expense of the nation's women. "Today, every citizen of India is witnessing how the march of India's women has been halted. The dreams of the country's women have been mercilessly crushed, and despite our utmost efforts, we could not succeed," he said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I truly want you to be empowered, dear. But only after I extend the house

TWO CIVILIANS SHOT DEAD BY MILITANTS IN MANIPUR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, April 18: Two persons were shot dead by suspected militants in an ambush in Manipur's Ukhrul district Saturday, officials said.

The incident took place near Kuki-dominated Yaolen village in the afternoon, a day after Chief Minister Y Khemchand Singh visited the Tangkhul Naga-majority hill district and appealed for peace and dialogue during an interaction with both Kuki and Naga residents.

Suspected militants opened fire at an Ukhrul-bound convoy of civilian vehicles coming from Imphal. A man sitting in the front passenger seat of a car was struck by a bullet in the head and he died on the spot, while



LIFE GOES ON: Mohammad Mehdi cuts the hair of his client Ayman Al Zein inside his shop, which was damaged in an Israeli airstrike that also damaged Al Zein's shop, in Dahiyeh, Beirut's southern suburbs, Lebanon, Saturday

2 Indian ships attacked by Iran

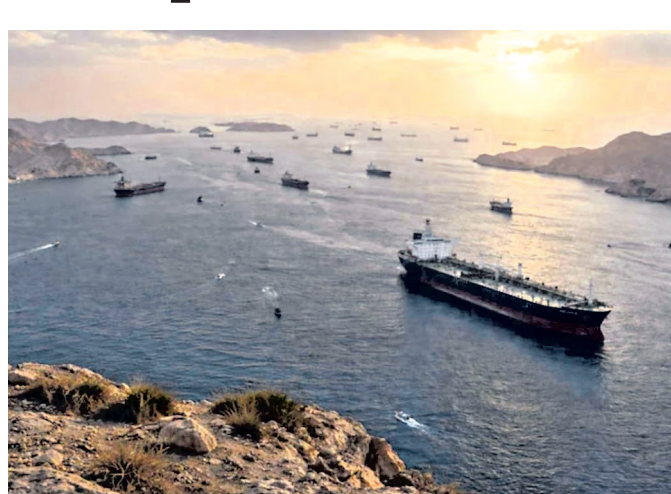
AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 18: A convoy of 14 India-bound ships carrying crude oil and gas were stopped by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) by firing at two of them while they were transiting the Strait of Hormuz, leading to 13 of the vessels returning to different locations in the Persian Gulf, official sources privy to the development said.

An Indian-flag carrying ship, which was hit by bullets fired by the IRGC while crossing the Strait of Hormuz, was carrying crude oil and a window pane was broken, forcing it to stop the journey and return. The extent of damage to the second vessel was not immediately known but it also had returned.

However, another ship, which was Indian flagged and loaded with crude oil for the Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited, sailed through the Strait and is now heading towards India, the sources said.

Two Iranian gunboats approached the vessel and fired at it without warning. Gunboats approached the ves-



sel 37 km northeast of Oman, causing other vessels to return without completing the crossing, the sources said.

The incident was reported in waters between the Qeshm and Larak islands, they said.

Out of the 14 India-bound vessels, seven are carrying the Indian flag, four have the Liberia flag, two are of the Marshall Islands and one of Vietnam.

Six of them are loaded with crude oil, three have LPG and four are loaded with fertilisers. Among the ships, five are bulk carriers. All 14 vessels were

sailing in a row.

Thirteen of them were stopped by the Iranian Navy and were instructed to wait. Out of the 13 stranded vessels, seven vessels are drifting south of Larak Island, waiting for clearance from the Iranian Navy, the sources said.

The Indian government is understood to have been coordinating with the Iranian authorities for the safe voyage of the stranded India-bound ships, they said.

The standoff over the Strait of Hormuz reportedly esca-

lated again Saturday as Iran reversed its reopening of the crucial waterway and fired on ships attempting to pass. This came as the United States pressed ahead with its blockade of Iranian ports.

Confusion over the Strait, through which roughly one-fifth of the world's oil passes, threatened to deepen the energy crisis. The ceasefire between Iran and the US is due to run out by mid-next week.

Iran's joint military command said Saturday that "control of the Strait of Hormuz has returned to its previous state ... under strict management and control of the armed forces."

It warned that it would continue to block transit through the strait as long as the US blockade of Iranian ports remained in effect.

Following Saturday's incident, India summoned Iranian envoy Mohammad Fathali.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri conveyed to Fathali India's "deep concern" at the "shooting incident" involving the two ships in the strategic waterway, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

MORE ON PAGE 9

Odisha to establish policy think tank SITI

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 18: The state government Saturday said it will set up a State Institute for Transformative Initiatives (SITI), which will function as a policy think tank to drive evidence-based governance, innovation and cross-sectoral coordination.

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi had proposed the establishment of SITI Odisha while presenting the annual budget for 2026-27.

"The SITI will serve as a think tank of the state government - an apex policy research and strategic advisory body - to align with the vision of 'Samrudha' Odisha 2036 and 'Viksit' Bharat 2047," an official statement said.

It would function in place of the State Planning Board, which was dissolved July 18, 2024.

"As conventional planning mechanisms have become obsolete now, SITI Odisha will provide a forward-looking framework anchored in stra-

tegic policy thinking, innovation, cooperative federalism, and measurable outcomes. It will ensure strategic direction at the highest level," an official said.

The SITI will guide the state government on six themes such as economy and finance, rural economy and livelihoods, employment and urban development, ideation and innovation, energy transition, environment and forests, mining and natural resources, the statement said.

It will comprise a governing council with the chief minister as the chairperson. In addition, there will be a vice-chairperson, four full-time members, nine ex-officio members and two special invitees.

An attached office under SITI Odisha - State Monitoring & Evaluation Office (SMEO) - will serve as the state's nodal institution for evidence-driven governance, the statement said.

SITI Odisha will function under the administrative control of the Planning and Convergence Department, it added.

Man uses AI chatbot to defend himself in court, wins

A man in Leipzig, Germany successfully defended himself in court using an AI chatbot, despite major errors in his legal arguments.

As reported by the German magazine Der Spiegel, David Hinz faced fraud charges after receiving 242.34 in unemployment benefits he was not entitled to, due to starting a job earlier than reported. He said the discrepancy was a misunderstanding, but authorities pursued the case, leading to court proceedings in Leipzig.

Instead of hiring a lawyer, the 41-year-old turned to an AI chatbot, which he consulted extensively over several months. The tool helped him draft a lengthy request to chal-

lenge the judge's impartiality. Unusual in structure and filled with bullet points, the 40-page submission imitated legal language and raised multiple alleged violations, including breaches of due process and judicial neutrality.

The court ultimately accepted the bias claim, but not because of the strength of the AI-generated arguments. The case was later dropped under the 'Opportunitätsprinzip', meaning prosecutors deemed it not worth pursuing further. As a result, Hinz avoided both a fine and a criminal record.

Experts cited in the report warned that such AI-generated legal texts often contain serious inaccuracies. In Hinz's case, the document included incorrect



legal references and even cited court rulings that do not exist.

Lawyers say they are already seeing more clients bring AI-generated documents, increasing workloads due to the need to verify false information. There are also concerns that increasingly polished AI-written submissions could make it harder for courts to assess whether individuals truly understand their own cases.

Despite this, Hinz considers the experience a personal victory. Hinz stressed that the case was never about the money, but about avoiding a fraud conviction that could harm his chances of finding work, particularly in the security sector where a clean criminal record is essential.



AMANDA OPTIMISTIC ABOUT MAMMA MIA 3!

Hollywood star Amanda Seyfried, who played Sophie Sheridan in the first two *Mamma Mia* movies has revealed that she'd jump at the chance to appear in a third film. *Mamma Mia!* Released in 2008 and is a jukebox musical romantic comedy film directed by Phyllida Lloyd.

LILY ALLEN RETURNS WITH BOLD NEW MESSAGE

Actress-singer Lily Allen has said that her latest album serves as a voice for those "pulled into non-monogamous relationships when they didn't choose to". The 40 year-old spoke ahead of her return to the stage at Mighty Hoopla, which marked her first new music in seven years, reports *Female First UK*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Be careful, you may break a few hearts today! Otherwise, your love life is steady and you may now feel ready to commit to your beloved. If married, your relationship takes on a deeper hue and a strong binding attachment.

TAURUS
Today, you may not find the courage to say no even when you disagree with people, predicts Ganesha. Important decisions may see procrastination due to lack of necessary inputs. A few long-standing deals will end on a happy note by evening, says Ganesha.

GEMINI
It is quite likely that you will pay attention to cultural and social activities today, predicts Ganesha. There may be new business proposals in the afternoon. You will consider investing your money in mutual funds or life insurance policies. You may also open a post office account or fixed deposit.

CANCER
It's time to meet friends, family members, neighbours, acquaintances, and people in general. Now that you are meeting so many people, you will also pay a visit to the Almighty. So a visit to a nearby temple, mosque, church or any other religious place is likely.

LEO
There are rough patches that all families must deal with. Ganesha says there are chances that today, you may disagree with your siblings and other members of the family. Money and property will be your key areas of concern. At work too, you may find yourself besotted with a confrontational attitude towards peers.

VIRGO
Be the crab who wants to get out of the basket, and make bold, brave moves at work, especially in the way you do your work. Also, contribute with brilliant, refreshing ideas. But you shall, in all probability, remain at sea in the afternoon. But don't despair, take a break from work and recharge those batteries, says Ganesha.

LIBRA
Ganesha says today your children will make you happy by imparting good news to you and you will be able to spend a nice and happy time with them. This is a good day for you in money matters as you may get a salary rise or even gain an inheritance from relatives.

SCORPIO
You are all set to put on your trekking shoes as you gear up for an adventure trip. At work, your calibre and intelligence are highly commendable. And that's the reason you are in the limelight, predicts Ganesha. This may boost up your confidence, raising your bar.

SAGITTARIUS
You are bitten by the travel bug as you pack your bags and are off for business or leisure trip. You are over-protective when it comes to family members. This is where you score a point. Spend the evening in the company of people who matter to you.

CAPRICORN
Quite unlike you, but you will not be impulsive in making decisions today. Reason? Shaking off clouds of imagination, you will be more realistic in your approach to everyday dealings, says Ganesha. Your moves will be guided by common sense and practicality, and you will be optimistic about your future.

AQUARIUS
While others may find it confusing to turn their dreams into reality, you can easily put your plans into action. You will learn to see the brighter side of life and accept things as they are. Inner peace and self-satisfaction, unusual feelings for many, but your new found spiritual approach will enable you to experience those emotions.

PISCES
Your time today will be carved between dealing with the diverse challenges that your profession will conjure up, and in caring for your family members. However, you ought to come out of your worries at the end of the day smelling like a rose, says Ganesha.

Goa's Sadhvi Sail crowned Femina Miss India
Raj Nandini Pawar from Maharashtra was declared the first runner-up, while Sree Advaita G from Union Territories secured the position of second runner-up

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 18: Sadhvi Sail from Goa was crowned winner of Femina Miss India 2026 at a glittering grand finale held at KIIT University, Saturday night. With the title win, she will represent India at the prestigious Miss World pageant.

Raj Nandini Pawar from Maharashtra was declared first runner-up, while Sree Advaita G secured the second runner-up position.

The winners were crowned in the presence of reigning titleholders Nikita Porwal, Rekha Pandey and Aayushi Dholakia, who handed over the crowns and sashes to the new titleholders.

The 61st edition of the prestigious pageant was hosted for the first time in Odisha, transforming Bhubaneswar into the centre of glamour, fashion and entertainment. The grand finale at KIIT Campus 13 Cricket Stadium was inaugurated with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by M Beena, representatives of the Ministry of Textiles, Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan, City Mayor Sulochana Das, Times Group's

Vineet Jain and KIIT founder Dr Achyuta Samanta.

The star-studded evening was hosted by Maniesh Paul and Sara Jane Dias, who kept the audience engaged throughout the show.

Speaking



on the occasion, Dr Samanta described the event as a historic day for Odisha, saying Bhubaneswar was proud to host the 61st Femina Miss India for the first time. He said the City had welcomed all contestants over the past week and showcased the rich tradition, culture and hospitality of the

state.

In the first stage of the competition, the top 15 contestants were selected from 30 participants, with Odisha's Ayushi Panda earning a

place among them. Each of the top 15

finalists was then given 45 seconds to introduce herself and share her journey, aspirations and personality before the judges and audience.

Ayushi, however, narrowly missed a place in the top eight. The shortlisted top eight contestants advanced to the next round, where they answered questions from the jury panel.

The jury for the grand finale included Zeenat Aman,

Terrence Lewis, Amaal Mallik, Simran, Celina Jaitly, Madhur Bhandarkar, Neha Dhupia, Dutee Chand and



PICS: BIKASH NAYAK

Vartika Singh. The entertainment quotient soared with performances by Lauren Gottlieb, Ishaan Khattar and Jubin Nautiyal, besides opening performances

by Odia film stars including Bhoomika Dash and Elina Samantaray. The successful hosting of the national finale is expected to further boost Bhubaneswar's standing as a destination for major cultural and entertainment events.



'South film sets more peaceful'

Mumbai: Actor Elli AvrRam, who has worked across Tamil, Kannada, and Hindi cinema, has opened up about the stark contrasts between working in Bollywood and the South. Reflecting on her journey, Elli revealed that while both industries have given her valuable experiences, she found the working environment on South film sets to be far calmer, more organised, and respectful.

In a recent interview with an entertainment portal, Elli clarified that she has had positive experiences in both industries but noted a clear difference in their working styles. She said, "I have had good experiences in both the South and Bollywood. But I have found it more peaceful on sets in the South. In Bollywood, it's more hurried. In the South, they prefer using walkie-talkies instead of shouting and screaming. My experience in Bollywood has been that even if you are eating, you are told your shot is ready. It's like, we don't care if you've eaten or if you faint—the shot is ready."

However, the actor was quick to point out that such experiences can vary depending on the team one is working with.

AGENCIES

Chinta O Chetana's 49th Baisakhi Festival concludes



A Mahari dance performance by Guru Rupashree Mohapatra and troupe on the concluding evening of the event.

PIC: MANORJAN MISHRA, OP

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

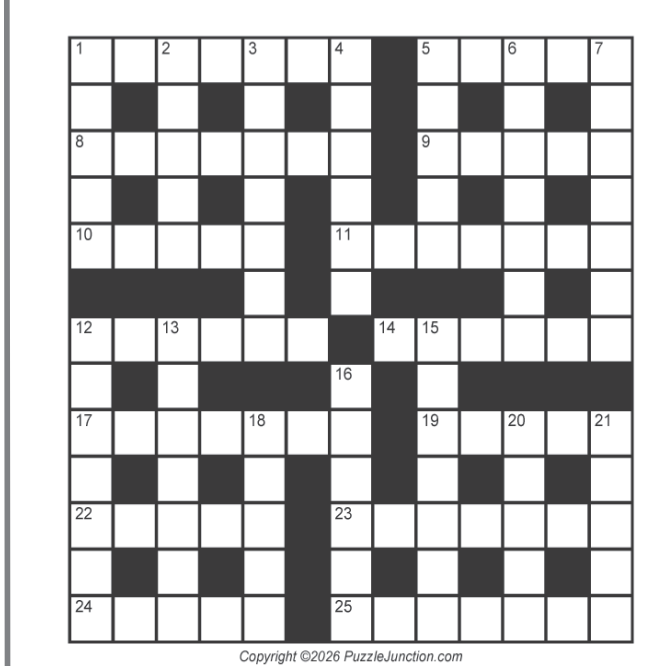


BREVITY



FUN POST

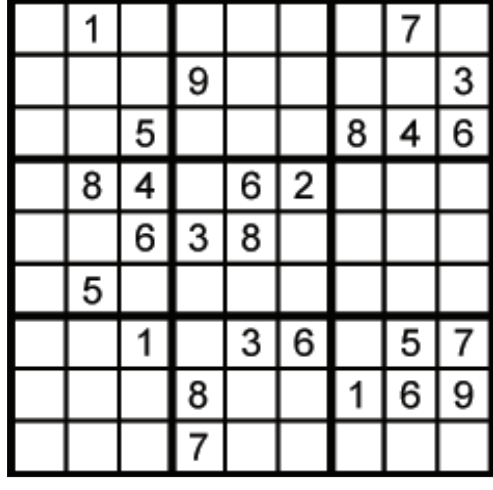
CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2026 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Small in range or scope
 - 5 Practical joker (3-2)
 - 8 Garnish
 - 9 Lay to rest
 - 10 Come from behind
 - 11 Dress material
 - 12 Cane reed
 - 14 Throwing competition
 - 17 Nonanalytic (1,6)
 - 19 Strangely
 - 22 Strong espresso coffee
 - 23 Country house
 - 24 Marsh plant
 - 25 Avoiding detection
 - Down**
 - 1 Once a colony in Hawaii
 - 2 Fable finale
 - 3 Hunt cry (5-2)
 - 4 Plant disease (3-3)
 - 5 Adhere
 - 6 Immense
 - 7 Maybe
 - 12 British rock group
 - 13 Deserved
 - 15 Sequester
 - 16 Big top venue
 - 18 Rotund
 - 20 Inhabit
 - 21 Spring chicken

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



PAHALGAM ANNIV AHEAD: Tourists take mule rides on a foggy afternoon at Doodhpathri, in Budgam district of Jammu and Kashmir, Saturday. Security has been heightened around vulnerable installations including prominent tourist destinations to ensure a safe and secure environment for visitors ahead of the Pahalgam terrorist attack anniversary

Bid to mow down tehsildar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jajpur, April 18: Miscreants allegedly attempted to mow down a tehsildar-cum-executive magistrate with a tractor while he was conducting a raid against illegal soil mining in Jajpur district Saturday, police said. The incident took place near Minabazar Chhak within Korei police limits.

The injured officer has been identified as Vyasanagar tehsildar Prashant Kumar Panda. Acting on a tip-off about unauthorised soil extraction, a team led by Panda conducted a raid during which the miscreants allegedly rammed a tractor into him, a police



officer said. Panda sustained serious injuries and was first admitted to Korei Community Health Centre (CHC) before being shifted to a hospital in Cuttack for advanced treatment, he said. Police reached the spot and launched an investigation. Two tractors and an earthmover used in the

illegal mining activity were seized, officials said. However, the accused are yet to be arrested.

Preliminary findings suggest a group was illegally extracting soil from a pond in Minabazar village when the raid was conducted, and the attack was allegedly an attempt to stop enforcement of the law. Jajpur Collector Ambar Kumar Kar said the condition of the injured officer is stable.

“Police have launched an investigation and seized two tractors and an earthmover used in illegal activities,” Kar said.

The Collector said special teams have been constituted to check illegal mining of minor minerals in the district.

DUAL CITIZENSHIP

Allahabad court restrains FIR order against Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 18: The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court has restrained its order directing an FIR against Congress MP Rahul Gandhi in connection with the alleged dual citizenship controversy.

The court will now hear the parties on whether prior notice to the accused was legally required.

A bench of Justice Subhash Vidyarthi, which had Friday in an oral order observed that prima facie cognisable offences appeared to be made out against Gandhi, and permitted the Uttar Pradesh government to hand over the probe to a Central agency, said it would first examine the legal position on issuance of notice before passing any direction.

The development came after the bench, before signing its dictated order, came across a full court verdict mandating that notice be issued to the proposed accused in such matters.

The court noted that none of the counsels brought this legal requirement to its attention in the earlier hearing. The bench has posted the matter for April 20.

The order was passed on a plea filed by Karnataka-based BJP worker S Vignesh Shishir.

During the Friday proceedings, Deputy Solicitor General of India SB Pandey produced records of the Centre relating to the citizenship controversy, while government advocate VK Singh submitted on behalf of the state that the allegations prima facie disclosed cognisable offences.

Centre's 2% DA hike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 18: The government Saturday increased Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) by 2 per cent, benefiting about 50.46 lakh Central government employees and 68.27 lakh pensioners.

The combined impact on the exchequer on account of an increase in both DA and DR would be ₹6,791.24 crore per annum, said Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw while briefing about decisions taken at the Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

“The approval to release an additional instalment of DA to Central government employees and DR to pensioners with effect from January 1, 2026 represents an increase of 2 per cent over the existing rate of 58 per cent of the Basic Pay/Pension to compensate for the price rise,” officials said.

Mercury crosses 40°C in 15 places

Educational institutions shut in 9 dists

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 18: Heatwave conditions continued to prevail across Odisha Saturday, with mercury crossing the 40-degree Celsius mark at 15 places of the state, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

Titlagarh in Bolangir district remained the hottest at 42.7 degrees Celsius, followed by Jharsuguda at 42.6 degrees Celsius. Bhawanipatna recorded 42 degrees Celsius, while Sambalpur and Nuapada sizzled at 41.6 degrees Celsius each. Hirakud registered 41.4 degrees Celsius, Bolangir and Talcher 41 degrees Celsius, the IMD said.

Rourkela recorded 40.9 degrees Celsius, followed by Boudh (40.8), Sonepur (40.6), Sundargarh (40.2) and

Angul (40.1). Keonjhar and Malkangiri also registered temperatures of over 40 degrees Celsius.

Bhubaneswar and Cuttack recorded comparatively lower temperatures at 36.7 and 36.8 degrees Celsius, respectively.

The weather office said heatwave conditions are expected to prevail in Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Bolangir, Nuapada, Sambalpur, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam and Gajapati districts Sunday.

So far, nine districts have announced holidays for educational institutions.

Meanwhile, the state government has decided to set up heatwave shelters in the districts where required.

Delhi cops establish Odisha youth's link

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 18: The Delhi Police Special Cell Saturday revealed the connection of a youth arrested from Bhubaneswar along with three others from Maharashtra and one from Bihar with the Red Fort blast, which had claimed 11 lives and injured several others.

They were arrested for online radicalising and recruiting others with the aim to establish an Islamic state through 'jihad', officials said. The arrested and military youths have been identified

as Sheikh Imran from Bhubaneswar, Odisha; Mosaib Ahmad, Jalaluddin Siddiqui and Mohammad Hammad from Maharashtra; and Mohammad Sohail from Bihar.

The official statement highlighted that the youths were radicalised into joining terrorism-related activities. Police have also recovered material used for preparation of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) from one of them. Along with this, the mobile phones of the accused were also seized. The investigation revealed that two members of the module were in the process of collecting locally-sourced material for preparing a remote-controlled IED which could be used for a terrorist attack at an opportune time.

Revealing their modus operandi, officials said that one member of the module was exhorting others to collect weapons and explosives for participating in 'Ghazwa-e-Hind'. He shared

his bank account details on his social media channel for crowd funding in support of 'jihad'.

Born in Bhubaneswar, Sheikh Imran worked as a security guard and delivery boy. In year 2024, he began listening to lectures (takreers) of Tareeq Jameel, Israr Ahmed, Zakir Naik etc. and gradually developed radical beliefs. He joined his associates through social media. Investigators found that Imran discussed targeting Ram Mandir, Parliament

and military installations. He was the one who receded the Red Fort, the police said.

Mosaib Ahmad, was a part of multiple online radicalised groups. Police said that he assisted co-accused Mohammad Hammad by opening the circuit of a remote-controlled toy car for IED making and sharing its image within a closed group. Hammad, in turn, shared pictures of ball bearings, nails, remote-controlled toy cars and boxes as material for preparation of IEDs in a closed group. He handed them over to co-accused Mosaib Ahmad, who, being a mechanic by profession, was tasked with assembling the IED.

A plumber by profession, Mohammad Sohail was also influenced by Israr Ahmed. He created multiple social media accounts and exhorted youth in the name of 'jihad'. In March 2026, he incited followers of his channel to collect weapons and explosives for 'Ghazwa-e-Hind' and even shared bank details to collect money.

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BDA reclaims 61 acres in Shampur eviction drive



Reclaimed land to support planned urban development and future infrastructure projects under City master plan

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 18: In a major enforcement drive, Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) Saturday concluded an eviction drive in Shampur mouza under Bharatpur police limits, reclaiming nearly 61.4 acres of government land from illegal encroachment.

The operation, carried out over two days, saw intensified demolition activity on the second day with 12 JCB machines deployed to clear unauthorised structures. A total of 739 houses were demolished on the final day, taking the overall count to 926 demolished houses.

In addition, around 300 un-

der-construction structures were also razed during the drive. Out of the total 68 acres, the remaining seven acres could not be reclaimed due to ongoing legal proceedings.

Officials said the eviction forms part of BDA's sustained efforts to curb illegal land occupation and promote planned urban development in City.

The reclaimed land is expected to be utilised for future infrastructure and development projects aligned with the City's master plan.

Extensive security arrangements were put in place to ensure smooth execution of the drive. Around 10 platoons of police force along with 50 police personnel were deployed at the site. Authorities confirmed that the entire operation was conducted peacefully without any major law and order issues.

Prior to the eviction, BDA had issued multiple notices to residents and made repeated

Two-day eviction drive intensified on final day with deployment of 12 JCB machines

739 houses demolished on Day 2, taking total number of structures cleared to 926

Around 300 under-construction structures also demolished during the drive

public announcements through loudspeakers, urging encroachers to vacate the land voluntarily. Officials emphasised that the drive was undertaken only after following due legal procedures.

Senior officials including BDA Additional Commissioner Manoj Kumar Swain, Joint Commissioner (Enforcement) Ranjan Kumar Jena, land officer Srinivas Behera, allotment officer Sudhir Nayak, OSD, ODA Act Biswajit Dalei, DCP (Law and Order) Prakash Chandra Pal, GA and PG department Deputy Director (Survey & Enforcement) Amiya Kumar Das, and liaison officer Srubanshu Sekhar Mohanty were also present during the eviction drive.

Notably, in December 2023, BDA had filed an FIR with the Economic Offences Wing (EOW), alleging illegal encroachment and sale of parts of the land by organised land mafias, prompting strict enforcement action.

2 AC workers held for theft

Bhubaneswar: Two AC repair workers were arrested for allegedly stealing copper pipes and accessories from Rajiv Bhawan, a restricted government premises here, police said Saturday. The case was registered on the complaint of Niranjana Pradhan (34), who was serving as the guard-in-charge at the premises. According to police, the incident occurred around 2:55 am on April 17, when the complainant spotted two individuals trying to leave the office building with suspicious items after completing AC repair work. On verification, copper pipes were found in their possession.

Groundbreaking ceremony of 3D chip packaging unit today

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Union Minister for Railways, Information & Broadcasting and Electronics & Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw will attend the ground-breaking ceremony of heterogeneous integration packaging solutions (3D glass solutions), India's first advanced glass semiconductor packaging unit here Sunday, an official said. They will unveil the plaque and break ground for the project, according to the programme. "This pioneering project marks the arrival of the world's most advanced chip packaging technology in India, firmly placing Odisha at the forefront of next-generation semiconductor innovation," the official said. On the highlights of the project, the official said that this would be India's first glass substrate-based advanced semiconductor packaging unit in Odisha, where advanced 3D heterogeneous integration modules will be used. The project was approved by the Central government with an outlay of approximately ₹1,943 crore.

Guv meets CP to review Lok Bhavan security after IRS row

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 18: Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati Saturday held a meeting with Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Police Commissioner S Dev Datta Singh to review and strengthen security arrangements at Lok Bhavan. The meeting came a day after two senior Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officers were allegedly forcibly evicted from the premises.

A post on the Governor's official X handle stated, "S Dev Datta Singh, Commissioner of Police, called on Hon'ble Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati at Lok Bhavan today. The discussion focused on existing security and protocol arrangements and the need for necessary upgrades. Ensuring the security of the Lok Bhavan estate requires the use of new-age technology and adequate manpower for seamless management of programmes and



protocol."

The review comes in the wake of a controversy triggered by a complaint from D. Sudhakara Rao, Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax in Odisha. He alleged that April 16, two officers—Manish Kumar (2015 batch) and Satya Prakash Mishra (2023 batch)—were forcibly escorted from

the Governor's residence in a police vehicle by security staff on the direction of the ADC (police) and taken to Capital police station.

Following the incident, the Governor's office has set up a committee to inquire into the alleged misconduct, while the Commissionerate Police has also initiated a separate probe.

MoHUA Secy reviews PMAY-U progress

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 18: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) Housing for All Joint Secretary Kuldeep Narayan, visited Capital city to review the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) and PMAY-U 2.0 in the state Saturday.

During his visit, Narayan inspected three significant project sites in the City, showcasing different verticals and innovative approaches under the flagship housing scheme.

His first visit was to the Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP) project at Buddha Vihar, Chandrasekharapur, where he reviewed the progress of housing units being developed to provide affordable and quality living spaces to urban beneficiaries.

He then visited Hare Krishna Nagar, Saileshree Vihar, where houses are being provided to beneficiaries under



the Beneficiary-Led Construction (BLC) vertical of PMAY-U. Interacting with beneficiaries, Narayan appreciated the efforts made by the state in facilitating individual house construction and ensuring timely delivery.

The third site, Pragati Bihar Slum, stood out as a unique and inclusive housing initiative under the BLC vertical of PMAY-U 2.0. A total of 44 houses have been sanctioned here, of which 34 beneficiaries belong

to the transgender community. The project is being developed as a model inclusive housing cluster with technical support from noted architect Ashok B Lall, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

This pilot initiative aims to demonstrate sustainable, climate-responsive, and energy-efficient housing solutions. Narayan appreciated the state's efforts in promoting inclusive

and environmentally sustainable housing, terming it a progressive step towards equitable urban development.

Later, Narayan held a comprehensive review meeting at Kharvela Bhavan with Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) department Additional Chief Secretary Usha Padhee, along with senior officials from Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA), Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and H&UD department.

The meeting focused on the overall progress of PMAY-U and PMAY-U 2.0 in the state, covering key achievements, challenges, and areas requiring attention. Narayan provided valuable guidance to further strengthen implementation, emphasising timely completion of projects, quality assurance, and enhanced beneficiary satisfaction.

Strategic discussions were also held on policy interventions and reform measures necessary for effective rollout of PMAY-U 2.0.

XIM University holds 12th PG convocation



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 18: XIM University recently held its 12th postgraduate convocation at the auditorium of its new campus, marking a significant academic milestone with 813 students graduating across doctoral and postgraduate programmes.

The university conferred six doctoral and 807 postgraduate degrees across its various schools. The graduating cohort included specialists in Business Management, Human Resource Management, Rural Management, Sustainability, Business Finance, Urban Management, Law and Economics. Top rank holders from each programme were honoured with medals for academic excellence.

The chief guest was Nikhil Sawhney, Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Triveni Turbine Limited. In recognition of his distinguished contributions to business and sustainable energy, the university conferred upon him an honor-

ary doctorate in Business Management. Welcoming students, parents and guests, Pradyumna Kumar Mohanty, Dean of the School of Commerce, opened the formal proceedings. Fr. Jerome Cutinha, S.J., Chairman, declared the convocation open and presided over the conferral of degrees, while Vice Chancellor Fr. K.S. Casimir, S.J. presented the annual report, highlighting the university's achievements and its commitment to nurturing future-ready leaders.

Casimir urged the graduates to uphold compassion, justice and excellence in their professional journeys. "The values you have learned here must guide your decisions. Embrace lifelong learning—stay curious, adapt and innovate as the world changes rapidly," he said.

In his address, Sawhney said, "This institution has produced talent for many years to take the Indian business scenario forward. One needs to build oneself, take risks, stay grounded and be worthy in life."

KIMS introduces CORI system for precise joint replacement

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 18: Reinforcing its leadership in advanced healthcare, the Orthopaedics department of Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS), Bhubaneswar, has introduced the state-of-the-art CORI robotic system for joint replacement surgeries, strengthening its commitment to cutting-edge care and faster recovery.

Developed by global medical technology firm Smith+Nephew, the CORI system is the latest in image-agnostic robotic solutions for hip and knee replacements. The introduction of this advanced technology was enabled under the leadership of KIIT and KIMS founder



Achyuta Samanta, who has consistently championed world-class healthcare infrastructure in Odisha with a focus on care, compassion and innovation.

In an era where precision is crucial, robotic systems are emerging as a major boon for patients with severe arthritic conditions. Traditional concerns—such as post-operative pain, prolonged rehabilitation and patient dissatisfaction—can now be significantly re-

duced through advanced robotic assistance combined with the expertise of skilled surgeons, said Debasish Mishra, HOD, department of Orthopaedics.

The newly introduced CORI system offers several advantages, including image-free, real-time surgical planning that eliminates the need for pre-operative CT scans. Using real-time 3D mapping of a patient's anatomy, it enables more personalised knee replacements tailored to individual needs.

The handheld, portable robotic device features haptic feedback and can distinguish between bone and surrounding soft tissues such as ligaments and blood vessels, enhancing surgical safety.

World Heritage Day observed

Bhubaneswar:

World Heritage Day was observed at the conference hall of the Odisha State Museum here Saturday, with a focus on preserving cultural

heritage and raising awareness among younger generations. Celebrated globally April 18 each year, the day was approved by Unesco during its 22nd session in 1983 to promote the protection and dissemination of heritage worldwide. Inaugurating the programme, Vinod Panigrahi, former Secretary of the Odia Language, Literature and Culture department and former Chief Auditor of the Income Tax department, said art and architecture define the identity of any civilisation, noting that culture forms the foundation of a society's ancient legacy. Chief guest Pramod Kumar Mandal said the celebration serves as an important platform to connect today's youth with Odisha's fading art and cultural traditions. Speaker, Anam Behera, Assistant Professor at Utkal University, highlighted the historical significance of the Konark Sun Temple and the role of the medieval port of Khalkatapatna near Konark in fostering ties with Southeast Asian nations. He also emphasised the development potential of Odisha's Golden Triangle tourism circuit. Dharmendra Mallick, General Manager of Odisha Tourism Development Corporation, spoke on Konark's legacy and its importance in strengthening the state's tourism sector.



CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, Kumari Divyanshi, have changed my name to Divyanshi Chaudhary as per Affidavit No. 2900 dated 06.04.2026 sworn before Notary, Koraput. Henceforth, I shall be known as Divyanshi Chaudhary for all purposes. Divyanshi Chaudhary

I, AKSHAY KUMAR NAYAK, S/o.- Sadasib Nayak, resident of Qtr. No. LCR-501, Chhend, Rourkela, PIN- 769015, ODISHA declare by this affidavit No.A/50, Date 06.04.26 that now onwards I shall be known as AKSHAYA KUMAR NAYAK for all future purposes.

Odisha mangrove cover up 16% in decade

Mangrove cover expands by 9.89 sq. km in four years, reflecting sustained conservation efforts and improved coastal ecosystem management

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara/Bhubaneswar, April 18: Odisha has recorded a 16.6 per cent rise in mangrove cover over the past decade, increasing from 222 sq. km to 259.06 sq. km, according to India State of Forest Report (ISFR) data. Kendrapara district alone has added around 9.43 sq. km of mangroves. Across the state, mangrove cover has expanded by 9.89 sq. km in the last four years, reflecting sustained conservation efforts and improved coastal ecosystem management.

The State's mangroves are spread across five coastal districts, with Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapara alone covering over 212 sq. km,



making it one of India's most significant mangrove ecosystems. Backed by support from the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), Odisha continues to expand and strengthen its coastal conservation efforts.

A key strength of Odisha's approach lies in combining science-based monitoring with on-ground restoration. Data buoys deployed by the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management under the Odisha Forestry Sector Development Project play a vital role in sustaining the ecological balance

required for mangrove growth in Bhitarkanika. They help detect pollution and environmental stress, enabling timely interventions and strengthening long-term conservation efforts.

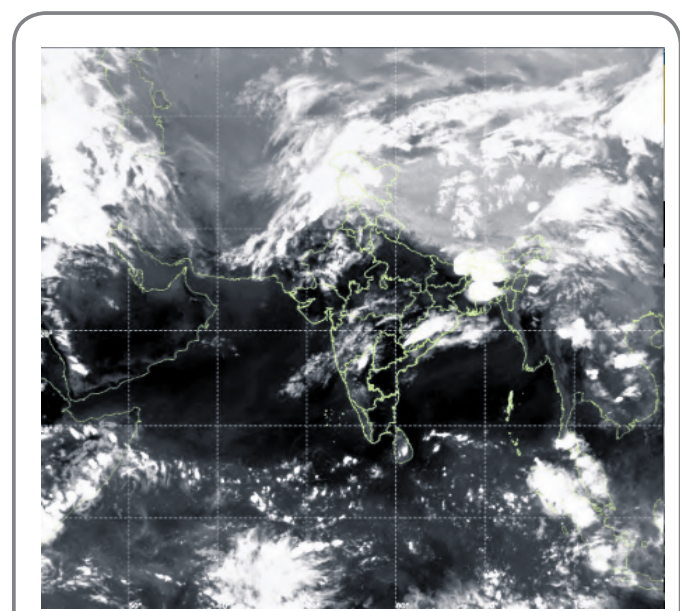
"Beyond plantation, efforts have focused on ecological restoration measures such as creek deepening to restore natural tidal flow, and targeted fencing to reduce anthropogenic pressure," said Varadaraj Gaonkar, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Mangrove Forest Division (Wildlife), Rajnagar.

Odisha is also advancing innovative restoration methods such as the "fishbone channel"

model to revive degraded tidal zones. By restoring natural tidal flow, the technique has enabled regeneration of nearly 100 hectares of mangroves in Bhitarkanika over the past four years, boosting ecosystem resilience.

"Community participation has been central to our success. Local residents actively engage in plantation activities, fostering a strong sense of ownership. Improved ecosystem health has also supported livelihoods indirectly, particularly through fisheries and related activities," affirmed the DFO, Rajnagar.

The impact of these efforts is already visible on the ground. "Earlier, high tides would send floodwaters surging into our village, destroying roads, inundating homes, and even bringing crocodiles along with the currents. Now the situation has improved significantly, bringing new hope and security for the community," shared Uma Rani Giri, a resident of Kanaknagar village under the Rajnagar Forest Division.



WEATHER			
	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	35.7°	35.8°	Dry weather very likely to prevail over all the districts of Odisha
Min Temp	28.0°	25.4°	
Humidity	71%	84%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	



BJD's Mayurbhanj bandh hits normal life

PNN & AGENCIES

Baripada, April 18: Normal life was affected in Mayurbhanj district Saturday due to opposition BJD's 12-hour bandh over the death of a school student allegedly due to food poisoning.

A girl studying in Class V died and more than 146 students fell ill due to alleged food poisoning, after a meal at a government-run Kakabandha Ashram Vidyalyaya under Rasgovindpur block in the district, officials said.

The Congress and CPI (M) also extended support to the bandh that began at 6am.

Vehicular movement was disrupted on National Highways 18, 49 and 220, as BJD, Congress and CPI (M) leaders and supporters blocked roads and burnt tyres in various parts of the district. The BJD had organised a bike rally Friday evening and urged the residents and members of traders' associations to support the bandh call.

Most shops, business establishments and educational institutions remained closed in several places in the north Odisha district, though some offices functioned amid tight security.

Several leaders, including BJD district president and former minister Sudam Marndi, Debashish

SCHOOLGIRL'S DEATH



Marndi, Zilla Parishad chairperson Bharati Hansdah, former speaker Sanand Marndi, former minister Basanti Hembram, former MLA Rajkishore Das, Srinath Soren, Ganeshwar Patra, spokesperson Priyabrata Majhi, Raisen Murmu and Chakradhar Hembram, along with party workers, enforced the shutdown at different places

The bandh was observed across all four sub-divisions and nine Assembly constituencies in the district, with spontaneous public support. Bar associations and bus associations also backed the shutdown call. However, emergency services were exempted. Educational institutions, business

establishments, government offices, courts, banks, post offices and petrol pumps remained closed.

"Adequate police personnel have been deployed in the district in view of the bandh," a senior officer said.

BJD district president and former minister Sudam Marndi told reporters, "We demand a judicial probe under the supervision of a sitting high court judge to unearth the truth behind the incident. Criminal cases should be lodged against all those responsible."

Across the district, Congress leaders, including district president Purna Chandra Biswal and Bhuvan Sahu, along with vice

7 ashram schoolgirls fall ill in another health scare

Baripada: Seven girl students of an ashram school in Chandua under Kuliana block of Mayurbhanj district fell ill Saturday, days after a major health scare at another state-run residential school in the district. According to officials, two of the affected students from Chandua were treated and discharged from the Kuliana Community Health Centre, while five others were shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital in Baripada. All seven students complained of stomach pain, headache and weakness. A medical team visited the residential school and examined the remaining boarders to assess their health condition. Preliminary findings by doctors, supported by statements from the students, suggest that the illness may have been caused by hyperacidity after consuming mangoes in the morning. Doctors at the district hospital said all the admitted students are stable. Two are undergoing treatment in the medicine ward, while the others are being treated in the paediatric ward. The school warden is present at the hospital to assist them.

Alarm over illegal firearms as youth shot dead in Subarnapur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, April 18: A 24-year-old youth was shot dead Friday night in Subarnapur district, intensifying concerns over deteriorating law and order and the growing presence of illegal firearms among youths.

The incident occurred near the Biramaharajpur Sub-Collector's Office Square, barely 100 metres from the local police station. The victim, Bikram Maharana, sustained a bullet injury to the neck, allegedly fired from a pistol by his associate, Shubham Pritam Hota, 27, of Champamal village.

Bikram was first taken to Biramaharajpur hospital and later shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital, where he was declared dead.

Acting on a complaint lodged by the victim's father, Rabi Maharana, the police registered a case and launched an investigation. The accused is absconding. Subarnapur SP Narayan Nayak confirmed that the weapon used was unlicensed and that efforts are underway to apprehend the accused. The incident has sparked criticism of police. Law and order in the district has reportedly been deteriorating, with frequent

incidents of firearm use and rising criminal activity. Youths are reportedly moving around with pistols, live ammunition and other weapons, often under the influence of intoxicants such as cough syrup.

In a related case February 9, police arrested Shubham Pritam Hota along with two others for an attempted robbery. During the operation, officers seized two country-made pistols, ammunition, a magazine, knives and explosives. After securing bail, Hota allegedly resumed carrying firearms, culminating in Friday's fatal shooting.

Suspected sunstroke claims lives of 2 men

Sambalpur/Chhendipada: Two persons, including an elderly man and a middle-aged labourer, died due to suspected sunstroke Saturday amid prevailing heatwave conditions. In Sambalpur district, a 44-year-old labourer identified as Biswajit Sahu of Jhankarpali (Rasiapali) under Jujumura police limits, collapsed while working at a construction site near his village between 9am and 10am. Co-workers rushed him to the District Headquarters Hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival. Family members alleged that Sahu succumbed to sunstroke due to intense heat. Chief District Medical Officer Dr Pradeep Kumar Hota said the exact cause of death would be confirmed after the post-mortem examination. In a separate incident in Angul district, a 75-year-old man, Babaji Behera of Tangiri village under Bagadia police limits, collapsed at around 5pm while doing household work. He was taken to Chhendipada CHC, where he was declared dead. Family members cited extreme heat and humidity over the past few days as the likely cause. Police have registered a case and initiated an investigation.

Woman beaten to death by nephew over property

POST NEWS NETWORK

Patana/Dhenkikote, April 18: A 58-year-old woman was beaten to death allegedly by her nephew over sharing of ancestral property in Keonjhar district, police said.

The incident occurred Friday in Rudhiapada village under Chinamaliposhi panchayat in Patana block. The deceased was identified as Kaushalya Mohanta, wife of Raju Mohanta.

Police arrested the accused nephew, Bidyadhar Mohanta, 56, and launched an investigation, Ghatagaon police station IIC Subharnshu Jena said.

According to sources, a long-standing dispute over sharing of land existed between the families of the accused Bidyadhar and those of his five uncles. Bidyadhar had alleged that his father, Dalu, was not given a fair share of land by his five brothers and was cheated with a smaller portion, leading to frequent quarrels.



an argument broke out between Bidyadhar and his aunt Kaushalya over the issue. In a fit of rage, Bidyadhar allegedly picked up a lathi and thrashed his aunt black and blue. The assault left her critically injured.

Family members rushed a critically injured Kaushalya to the Patana Community Health Centre, where doctors pronounced her dead.

Her son Sanjay and daughter Dalimba lodged a complaint at the police station, demanding strict punishment for the accused.

Police conducted a post-mortem Saturday and handed over the body to the family members. A case (232/26) has been registered at Ghatagaon police station, and further investigation is underway, the IIC said.

33 wedding party members injured as vehicle overturns

Koraput: At least 33 members of a wedding party were injured, including 13 critically, after the vehicle they were travelling in overturned at Boriput Ghat under Laxmipur block in Koraput district. According to sources, the group was returning to Bala village under Narayanpatna police limits Friday night when the accident occurred. The critically injured were rushed to the Koraput District Headquarters Hospital for treatment. While the exact cause of the accident is yet to be ascertained, preliminary reports suggest the driver may have lost control of the vehicle, leading to the mishap. All the injured are residents of Jangidi Balsa village under Bandhugaon block in the district.

Man gets 10-yr RI for raping mentally challenged minor

Bargarh: A court in Bargarh district Saturday found a 38-year-old man guilty of raping a mentally unbalanced minor girl a decade-and-a-half back and sentenced him to undergo 10 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI). The Court of the Civil Judge (Senior Division), Women's Court, Bargarh convicted the accused, Naren Naik, under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and POCSO act. The accused lured the minor victim, who had mental disability, to an isolated house on the pretext of offering chocolate and committed sexual assault. He also threatened the victim against disclosure. The incident came to light after the victim was traced by family members, who later found her sexually assaulted, said prosecution counsel MB Tripathy. Considering the gravity of the offence committed against a minor with mental disability, the court convicted the accused, reiterating the need for deterrence in crimes against women and vulnerable sections of society.

Rare albino snake rescued; likely to be shifted to NZP for treatment



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhadrak, April 18: In a rare wildlife rescue, villagers in the Chhayal Singh area under Bonth block of Bhadrak district rescued an albino snake and safely handed it over to forest officials. The snake, noticed by locals Friday, was carefully captured and later handed over to the Forest department.

Acting on the advice of the Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF), officials shifted the reptile to the Bhadrak Range

Office for further examination.

The snake exhibited a distinctive yellow-and-white coloration, indicating its rare albino nature. During a preliminary check, officials detected an injury near its mouth. A three-member expert team from Snake Helpline, Jajpur, reached Bhadrak to conduct a detailed assessment of the reptile. Based on their recommendation, the snake is likely to be shifted to Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) in Bhubaneswar for specialised treatment and rehabilitation.

Jilted lover attacks girl's father

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, April 18: A youth allegedly launched a violent attack on a girl's father after his one-sided love was rejected in Balasure district Saturday.

The accused, identified as Chiku Mohapatra of Benapura village under Srirampur panchayat in Balasure Sadar block, is said to have been pursuing a girl from the Gunduripada area and wanted to marry her. However, her family had opposed the proposal.

According to reports, the girl's father was returning from Haladipal market when Mohapatra, along with his associates, intercepted him as part of a pre-planned move and attacked him with a sharp weapon. The assailants also allegedly fired blank shots from a gun to intimidate him. The victim, who sustained severe injuries to his head and other parts of the body, was rescued by locals in a critical condition and initially admitted to Basta CHC. He was later shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital after his condition deteriorated. Following a complaint, police registered a case (228/26) at Basta police station and launched an investigation. A police team along with a scientific team and sniffer dogs, has begun a probe at the crime scene. The accused is currently absconding.

Headmaster forces students to apply stinging nettle plants on classmates

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kaliapani, April 18: Tension prevailed at a primary school in Jajpur district after allegations surfaced that some students were instructed by the headmaster to apply stinging nettle plants on their classmates.

Parents and villagers lodged a written complaint at the Kaliapani police station, accusing the headmaster of misconduct. The matter was later resolved following police intervention, with both sides reaching a compromise.

Primary School under Kaliapani police limits in Sukinda block. According to reports, Basudev Dehuri had recently joined the school as headmaster last month. However, villagers alleged that problems began soon after his arrival.

Locals claimed that the headmaster came to school in an inebriated state Friday, verbally abused students and instructed some of them to apply stinging nettle plants on others.

After the matter came to light, agitated parents and villagers reached the school and confronted the ac-

cused. The headmaster reportedly admitted to the charges and later apologised.

Parents alleged that attempts to inform block-level education officials failed. They further claimed that a Cluster Resource Centre Coordinator (CRCC) tried to suppress the issue defending the headmaster.

Dissatisfied, the parents sought police intervention. Kaliapani police station officer-in-charge Prakash Kumar Pradhan visited the spot, defused the situation and warned the headmaster against repeating such behaviour.

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e-mail ID : rw_raygada@yahoo.co.in
GEPNIC e-Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No. : EERWRGD - Online - 01/2026-27 Date : 15.04.2026

Letter No. : 1470 1. Name of the Work : Construction of Building works, 2. Total No. of Works : 55 Nos (Percentage Rate Tender), 3. Estimated Cost : Varies from 20.13 lakh to 47.95 lakh, 4. Class of Contractor : 'B' or 'C' Class, 5. Time of Completion : Specified in DTGN, 6. Mode of submission of tender : Tender should be submitted only in online https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in, 7. Other details : Detailed tender condition specified in DTGN.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	No. of works	Availability of Tender online for Bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender
			From	To		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Raygada	EERWRGD Online - 01/2026-27	55 (Fifty Five) Nos	22.04.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	06.05.2026 up to 5.00 P.M.	05.05.2026 upto 5.00 P.M.	07.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website : www.tendersodisha.gov.in

OIPR-25001/25072/11/26-27/0001 Sd./- Executive Engineer Rural Works Division, Raygada

CHOLAMANDALAM INVESTMENT AND FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED
CORPORATE OFFICE : "CHOLA CREST", C54 & 55, Super B-4, Thiru Vi Ka Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, India

Branch Office : 2nd Floor, Plot No. 394, Bomikhal, Near Santoshi Maa Temple Cuttack Road, Rasulgarh, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, Pin - 751 010

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

Contact No. : B. Harikrishna (Mob. 99374 90975), Pinaki Dutta (Mob. 94374 79421), Suman Kalyan Satapathy (Mob. 97987 44193), Prakash Verma (Mob. 99813 43191)

E-auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Mortgagee(s) that the below-described Immovable Properties mortgaged to the Secured Creditor, the Symbolic Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited the same shall be referred hereinafter as Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited. The Secured Assets will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "What ever there is" basis through E-Auction.

It is hereby informed to the General public that we are going to conduct a public E-Auction through the website <https://bankauctions.in/>.

Account No. and Name of the Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagee	1. Date of Demand Notice : 10.11.2025	Descriptions of the Property / Properties	Reserve Price :
Loan A/c. Nos. : ML01CUC00000028577, ML01CUC000000086696	2. Demand Notice Amount : Rs. 29,44,553.00 as on 07.11.2025	All that Part and Parcel of the Property bearing Khata No. 702/346, Plot No. 922/2775, Area Ac. 0.014 Decimal, and Plot No. 917/2774, Area-ac. 0.780 Decimal, Total 2 Plots, Total Area-ac. 0.922 Decimal, Mouza - Nischintakoli, Tahasilnischintakoli, SRO - Salipur, District - Cuttack, Pin - 754 203.	Rs. 1,75,00,000.00 Earnest Money Deposit : Rs. 17,50,000.00 Bid Increment Amount : Rs. 1,00,000.00
Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagee : S/o. Ramesh Chandra Sahoo Chakrapada, Kendupatana, Salipur, District - Cuttack, Pin - 754 203.	3. Total Loan Outstanding : Rs. 30,59,998.00 (Rupees Thirty Lakhs Fifty Nine Thousands Nine Hundred Ninety Eight only) as on 15.04.2026 together with further interest, penal interest, costs and charges thereon till the date of payment.		E-Auction Date and Time : 26.05.2026 (11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M.) (with unlimited extension of 3 Minutes)
2. Jyoti Ranjan Sahoo (Co-applicant), S/o. Ramesh Chandra Sahoo Barapada, Kendupatana, Salipur, District - Cuttack, Pin - 754 203.	4. Possession Date : 07.02.2026 (Symbolic Possession)		EMD Submission Last Date : 25.05.2026 (up to 5.30 P.M.) Inspection Date : 08.05.2026 & 09.05.2026 (10.00 A.M to 1.00 P.M.)
3. M/s. Sahoo Transport (Co-applicant), Nischintakoli, Basanti Niwas, Mahanga, District - Cuttack, Odisha, Pin - 754 207.			
4. Jasoda Sahoo (Co-applicant), W/o. Nishananda Sahoo, Barapada, Kendupatana, Salipur, District - Cuttack, Pin - 754203.			
5. M/s. Omm Transport And Omm Traders (Co-applicant), Khata No. 702/346, Plot No. 922/2775, Chandabali Road, Nischintakoli, Near Canara Bank, Cuttack, Odisha, Pin - 754 207.			
Loan A/c. No. : HE01URI00000076272	1. Date of Demand Notice : 10.11.2025	All that Part and Parcel of the Property bearing Khata No. 130/14, Plot No. 606/772, Mouza - Chakrapada, Area 0.200 Decimal, Tahasil - Astaranga, P.S. - Astaranga, Tahasil No. 657, P.S. No. 172, KISSAM - Gharabari, District - Puri.	Reserve Price : Rs. 1,40,00,000.00 Earnest Money Deposit : Rs. 14,00,000.00 Bid Increment Amount : Rs. 1,00,000.00
Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagee : 1. Sujana Kumar Bastia (Applicant), S/o. Sri Khetra Mohan Bastia Chakrapada, Astaranga, Namara, Kakatapur, District - Puri, Pin - 752 109.	2. Demand Notice Amount : Rs. 60,99,940.00 as on 10.11.2025		E-Auction Date and Time : 26.05.2026 (11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M.) (with unlimited extension of 3 Minutes)
2. M/s. Maa Narayani Chuda Mill (Co-applicant), Plot No. 606/772, Namara, Chakrapada, Kakatapur, Puri, Odisha, Pin - 752 109.	3. Total Loan Outstanding : Rs. 62,53,061.00 (Rupees Sixty Two Lakhs Fifty Three Thousands and Sixty One only) as on 16.04.2026 together with interest, penal interest, costs and charges thereon till day of actual payment.		EMD Submission Last Date : 25.05.2026 (up to 5.30 P.M.) Inspection Date : 11.05.2026 & 12.05.2026 (10.00 A.M to 1.00 P.M.)
W/o. Sujana Bastia Chakrapada Astaranga, Namara, Kakatapur, District - Puri, Pin - 752 109.	4. Possession Date : 17.02.2026 (Symbolic Possession)		
Loan A/c. No. : ML01BHU00000054286	1. Date of Demand Notice : 10.11.2025	All that Part and Parcel of the Property bearing Khata No. 56/19, Plot No. 15, Area Ac. 0.100 Decimal, Mouza - Chandramdeipur, Tahasil - Ranapur, P.S. - Ranapur, KISSAM - Homestead, District - Nayagarh.	Reserve Price : Rs. 24,00,000.00 Earnest Money Deposit : Rs. 2,40,000.00 Bid Increment Amount : Rs. 50,000.00
Borrower / Co-borrower / Mortgagee : 1. Suresh Mandal (Applicant), Chandrama Deipur, P.O. - Brajarajpur, Ranapur, District - Nayagarh, Pin - 752 026.	2. Demand Notice Amount : Rs. 20,59,047.00 as on 10.11.2025		E-Auction Date and Time : 26.05.2026 (11.00 A.M. to 1.00 P.M.) (with unlimited extension of 3 Minutes)
3. Sairam Verity Store (Co-applicant), Flat 45, Brajarajpur, Ranpur, District - Nayagarh, Odisha, Pin - 752 026.	3. Total Loan Outstanding : Rs. 22,57,393.00 (Rupees Twenty Two Lakhs Fifty Seven Thousands Three Hundred Ninety Three only) as on 15.04.2026 together with interest, penal interest, costs and charges thereon till day of actual payment.		EMD Submission Last Date : 25.05.2026 (up to 5.30 P.M.) Inspection Date : 08.05.2026 & 09.05.2026 (10.00 A.M to 1.00 P.M.)
3. Bebinda Mandal (Co-applicant), W/o. Suresh Mandal Chandrama, Deipur, P.O. - Brajarajpur, P.S. - Ranpur, District - Nayagarh, Odisha, Pin - 752 026.	4. Possession Date : 10.02.2026 (Symbolic Possession)		

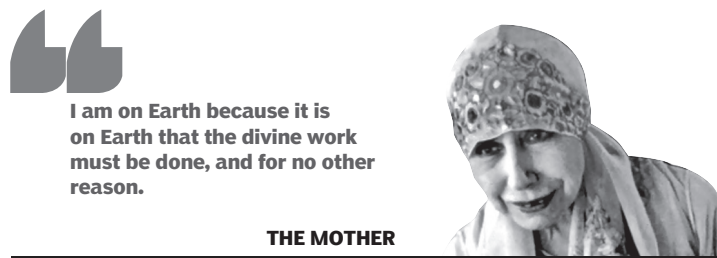
1. All interested participants / bidders are requested to visit the website <https://bankauctions.in> & www.cholamandalam.com/news/auCTION-notices. For details, help, procedure and online training on e-auction, prospective bidders may contact - Mr. Muhammed Rahees - Ph. No. 81240 00030 / 63748 45616, M/s. 4 Closure; Rekha, Ph. No. 81420 00062, E-mail : CholaAuction.LAP@cholamurugappa.com

2. For further details on terms and conditions please visit : <https://bankauctions.in> & www.cholamandalam.com/news/auCTION-notices to take part in e-auction.

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Date : 19.04.2026
Place : Cuttack (Odisha)

Authorised Officer
Cholamandalam Investment And Finance Company Limited



I am on Earth because it is on Earth that the divine work must be done, and for no other reason.

THE MOTHER

Following, Not Leading

What explains our inability or, if we are to be charitable, our reticence, to influence the world around us? Like the rest of the world, India is negatively affected by the American-Israeli war on Iran. Indeed, Indians have suffered and continue to suffer more than any other nation except Iran itself. The reason is, of course, that there are around one crore Indians in the Gulf, a population larger than the combined citizenry of five of the six GCC states.

The lives and livelihoods of these Indians are at risk due to the violence. Uncertainty looms over them, and this is especially hard for those who are not well-off. This is by far the majority, comprising members of the Indian expatriate working class in the Gulf, whether in services or industry.

The long-term future and economic direction of the GCC states are in question after this war, and the futures of these millions of Indians are tied to that outcome. This is why India is more deeply affected by and entangled in this war than most nations, along with facing shared challenges related to fuel and gas. Which brings us to the central question: Why the inability or even the unwillingness to influence the actions of the warring states, America and Israel?

Other than stating that shipping should be allowed to resume, our government has not meaningfully engaged with the problem. Why is shipping halted? We have made no reference to that. How can it be resumed? No wisdom there either: merely a plea, demand, or request (it is unclear which, since the words are empty) that shipping be allowed to resume. It should be noted here that India has, by default, aligned itself with the position of the colonising nations of Europe, which want no part in the war, make no reference to its perpetrators, and only seek the uninterrupted flow of goods.

Let us try to answer the question. It is possible, and perhaps likely, that there is no single reason but rather a set of factors that have made silence more appealing than action. Let us examine them in turn.

There is incoherence in Indian foreign policy, which extends to national security. A basic example: we remain unclear whether China is a friend or an adversary, whether it should be engaged with through trade or disengaged from strategically. This lack of coherence stems from an absence of doctrine. Much of our foreign policy is aimed at domestic audiences, and once, as is the case today with this war, it becomes clear that claims of being a "world leader" are hollow, we retreat in embarrassment.

Abandoning the idea of national interest, we have become besotted with personal diplomacy, which is inextricably linked to personal interest. We assumed that chumminess was a solid foundation upon which to build foreign policy. Fittingly, we have either been betrayed in this endeavour (by Trump) or used (by Netanyahu), while the opposing side remains realistic and hard-headed. Our dilemma is that it is our friends who have caused Indians such misery, yet we seem to believe we lack even the capacity to ask them to stop.

Another reason is that diplomatic efforts elsewhere have alarmed us. It appears that we would rather Indians suffer than see the war end through the efforts of those we detest. This is not only mean-spirited and petty, which it is, but also deeply absurd. It reflects the actions of those who simultaneously lecture us with platitudes about the world being one family.

There is yet another reason, captured by the folk saying: "Mulle ki daud masjid tak." The internet interprets this as "a person who only goes as far as their knowledge, resources, or interests allow," or "someone whose actions always return to the same familiar circle or area of expertise."

"New India" is characterised by a fiercely inward-looking nationalism. Open the newspapers or turn on the television, and this refrain becomes unmistakable. Minorities are blamed for the past, liberals are accused of obstructing the path to a glorious future, and both must first be "fixed" before progress can occur. As long as this remains our primary focus, we will remain absorbed in it. When there is such narrow clarity about the nation, the external world becomes a distraction, something that, if ignored, might resolve itself. This is where we stand today.

At a press conference on Friday, the spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs was asked:

"Trump is praising Asim Munir and may travel to Pakistan. How does India view Pakistan's ceasefire role? Will India be okay with it if Trump visits both India and Pakistan on one trip?"

(Notice the focus of the question, which reveals much about us and our press corps.)

The spokesperson replied:

"I have a simple answer. India is closely following developments in West Asia."

The word "following" has rarely been used so appropriately or so revealingly.

WISDOM CORNER

Be less curious about people and more curious about ideas.

MARIE CURIE

Let us sacrifice our today so that our children can have a better tomorrow.

APJ ABDUL KALAM

Any man whose errors take ten years to correct is quite a man.

J ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1927: Mae West was sentenced to several days in jail, convicted of "corrupting the morals of youth" with her portrayal of a prostitute in the Broadway play Sex, which she also wrote. The incident made her famous across the United States.

1975: Aryabhata, the first uncrewed Earth satellite built by India, was launched from the Soviet Union. It took its name from a 5th-century astronomer and mathematician.

MIGHT MAKES RIGHT

FOCUS INTERNATIONAL LAW



James A Goldston

US PRESIDENT TRUMP MAY NOT NEED INTERNATIONAL LAW, BUT IT MAY TURN OUT THAT INTERNATIONAL LAW NEEDED TRUMP



Aakar Patel

THERE IS INCOHERENCE IN INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY, WHICH EXTENDS TO NATIONAL SECURITY. A BASIC EXAMPLE: WE REMAIN UNCLEAR WHETHER CHINA IS A FRIEND OR AN ADVERSARY, WHETHER IT SHOULD BE ENGAGED WITH THROUGH TRADE OR DISENGAGED FROM STRATEGICALLY. THIS LACK OF COHERENCE STEMS FROM AN ABSENCE OF DOCTRINE

As the tragic consequences of US President Donald Trump's war of choice against Iran continue to accumulate, one hears a cry of desperation: Are we witnessing the "death of international law?" It is a reasonable question. But there is a more important one: Can we use this crisis to re-imagine an international legal regime that works for more people?

Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine and America's acts of aggression against Venezuela and Iran have certainly marked a low point for the "rules-based order"—the web of conventions, treaties, and other legal norms crafted to govern the conduct of states since World War II. Even more telling has been the resigned acquiescence with which long-standing champions of international law have responded. Last month, as illegal US-Israeli military strikes began in Tehran, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz captured the sentiment of many, declaring: "Categorizing the events under international law will have relatively little effect. This is especially true when these classifications remain largely inconsequential."

Such fatalism is well-founded. Today's violations of state sovereignty stand out for their scale and frequency. Political leaders have abandoned even the pretense of respect for what Stephen Miller, one of Trump's top advisers, disdainfully calls "international niceties." Miller's world is one "that is governed by strength, that is governed by force, that is governed by power." Repeatedly breaching previous red lines—threatening fellow NATO members and calling for ethnic cleansing in Gaza—makes possible what was once unthinkable.

Even in the years immediately after the UN Charter outlawed aggressive war in 1945,

international law rarely carried much political weight among those who could ignore it. The mid-20th century was littered with great-power abuses, from the Soviet invasions of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 to US-sponsored coups in Iran in 1953, Guatemala in 1954, and Chile in 1973. These violations reflected the priority given to national security and regional dominance over legal principles. At the height of the Vietnam War, US President Lyndon B. Johnson famously expressed the supremacist sentiment: "We are the number one nation. And we are going to stay the number one nation."

Nor did international norms fare much better after September 11, 2001. As Graham Allison of the Harvard Kennedy School observed nearly a decade ago, "in the first 17 years of this century, the self-proclaimed leader of the liberal order invaded two countries, conducted air strikes and Special Forces raids to kill hundreds of people it unilaterally deemed to be terrorists, and subjected scores of others to 'extraordinary rendition,' often without any international legal authority." That record, he concluded, "speaks for itself."

But this is not to say that international law is meaningless. Many rules—governing trade, fishing, the environment, and

organized crime—are obeyed much of the time, precisely because predictability and peaceful dispute resolution often serve state interests. The Montreal Protocol, adopted in 1987, succeeded in phasing out 98% of ozone-depleting substances in the Earth's atmosphere, saving millions from skin cancer. For the same reasons, most states do not invade one another. Doing so invites others to do the same to you.

What's different today is the open, proud defiance of restraint. In Trump's first term, it was already clear that his foreign policy was "defined by hostility to the overall project of international law," as legal scholar Monica Hakimi put it. But this time around, the president has stated plainly: "I don't need international law."

The Trump administration's contempt for fundamental norms has provoked much hand-wringing. But it should serve as a wake-up call for those concerned about a world without rules. The United Nations has long warned that without international law, "there could be chaos." Now that we know what that looks like, we have a chance to build a broader constituency for what has long been the province of a narrow professional and academic elite.

By enveloping the wider

Middle East in war, tearing down alliances, and sowing economic uncertainty, Trump has unwittingly reminded us why we needed international law in the first place. Concepts like international "aggression," "crimes against humanity," and "genocide" were conceived, not as theoretical constructs, but as practical tools to address genuine atrocities that the world hoped would "never again" occur.

But if international law is to gain more credibility, the lawyers and diplomats who make and use it must do a better job of showing how it helps ordinary people, whether in regulating armed conflict or governing civil aviation. Given America's current assault on the international project that it has led for 80 years, reformers outside the United States may be best placed to lead this effort.

It is not a small challenge. We will need more consistent enforcement of legal rules, an end to double standards that exempt privileged actors, and states' re-commitment to a law for all, not for the few. We also should bring distant international courts closer to the victims and survivors they serve, make the international bar more diverse and globally representative, and improve public outreach, including by conducting on-site international trials with broad participation.

It would be a perverse, though welcome, twist if today's lamentations over the fate of the rules-based order became an impetus for rejuvenation and reinvention. Trump may not need international law, but it may turn out that international law needed Trump.

The writer is a former prosecutor at the International Criminal Court and in federal court in the United States

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SPECTRUM GEOPOLITICS

Hormuz to headlines: Understanding today's world

Somewhere in the middle of all the noise, hashtags, and sharp opinions, we seem to be losing the ability to look at global events with balance. Take this phrase doing the rounds – "TACO," or "Trump Always Chickens Out."

It sounds clever and fits neatly into headlines, but it doesn't really explain much. In serious negotiations—especially those involving conflict, energy routes, and global stability—things are rarely black and white. Leaders threaten, pause, escalate, and step back. That is not weakness; that is how high-stakes negotiations have always worked.

What we have seen recently reflects exactly this pattern. The US, under Donald Trump, raised pressure sharply on Iran, even signaling possible strikes on key infrastructure. Soon after, Tehran agreed to engage. Talks began, and a temporary ceasefire followed. One may debate the intent or the method, but to say that nothing changed—or to dismiss the sequence as failure—misses a basic point: pressure did produce movement.

From an Indian perspective, the conflict is not a distant power game. The Strait of

Hormuz carries nearly a fifth of the world's oil supply. For a country like India, which depends heavily on imported crude, any disruption in this narrow stretch is felt almost immediately. If shipping slows or stops, fuel prices rise, inflation follows, and the cost of everyday life goes up. What happens there does not stay there.

And that is exactly where the concern lies today. Shipping through the Strait has remained uncertain, with security concerns, trust deficits, and reports of Iran attempting to influence transit conditions adding to the tension. Insurance premiums for tankers have risen, freight costs have climbed, and global supply chains are under pressure. At the same time, the United States has hinted at stronger maritime enforcement, including tighter restrictions on Iranian oil movement. This creates a familiar cycle—action and counteraction—where both sides partially escalate and partially step back.

Seen in this light, the situation is not about who is winning or losing. It is about how far each side can push without triggering something larger. That is how most modern conflicts operate—not as clear bat-

ties, but as calibrated pressure.

What is more concerning, however, is how these developments are being presented. In many cases, the focus seems less on what is actually happening and more on how it can be framed. Narratives quickly, one side is portrayed as erratic, and the other as calculated. Sympathy sometimes appears in places where it is not entirely justified. But geopolitics is not a social media argument. It is complex, layered, and often uncomfortable, where outcomes are rarely immediate and success is often invisible.

As Indians, we tend to see these situations differently. Our concerns are practical. Stability matters. Trade routes matter. Energy security matters. When oil prices rise due to tensions in West Asia, it affects transport, food, and household expenses across the country. These are not abstract ideas for us—they are lived realities.

There is also an understanding, perhaps shaped by experience, that power is not always loud. Sometimes it lies in applying pressure and then stepping back at the right moment. Sometimes it lies in keeping negotiations alive, even if they seem slow or inconclusive. And some-

times, it lies in simply buying time—time to avoid escalation, time to allow shifts within systems, time to prevent a larger crisis. In geopolitics, time is often the most valuable currency.

Meanwhile, the world continues to move on multiple fronts. Missions like Artemis II signal renewed ambition in space. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine continues with brief pauses but no lasting resolution. Violence in Sudan is spilling across borders. Economic pressures are rising globally, driven in part by uncertainty in energy markets. Everything is more connected than before, and disruptions in one region now echo across continents.

In such a world, reducing complex global developments to a phrase like "TACO" feels inadequate. It may draw attention and spark reactions, but it does little to deepen understanding. And at a time when events are moving quickly and consequences are far-reaching, understanding matters far more than scoring points.

The writer is a Delhi-based independent contributor to print and online publication



Sayan Chatterjee

AT A TIME WHEN EVENTS ARE MOVING QUICKLY AND CONSEQUENCES ARE FAR-REACHING, UNDERSTANDING MATTERS FAR MORE THAN SCORING POINTS

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Federal faultline

Sir, The Centre has failed to pass a Bill to increase female representation in Parliament after being accused of using the proposal as a guise to redraw the country's electoral map. It marks the first time in 12 years in power that a constitutional amendment proposed by the NDA government has not been passed by Parliament. The failure followed a fierce debate, with the government accused of an "attack on democracy" after it tethered a Bill reserving one-third of parliamentary seats for women to the broader and controversial exercise of delimitation. India's often fragmented Opposition parties showed rare unity in opposing the Bill. Indian National Congress member Priyanka Gandhi Vadra called it an "open attack" on democracy, while another senior leader, Gaurav Gogoi, accused the Modi government of attempting to "bulldoze" delimitation through the backdoor. Delimitation remains one of the most divisive federal issues in India. It is particularly contentious in more prosperous southern states such as Tamil Nadu and Kerala, which have reduced population growth in recent years and fear that their political representation would be penalised.

CK Ramanathan, BHANDUP (MUMBAI)

Unsafe workplace

Sir, The Nashik-based BPO reportedly linked to TCS has recently been exposed in a disturbing case involving allegations of sexual harassment and forced religious conversion. It is deeply regrettable that several women employees were allegedly subjected to mental harassment by senior officials in an office associated with a reputed brand like TCS, a dream company for lakhs of aspiring students. The chief accused, Nida Khan, has been arrested, and an investigation is underway, with initial findings indicating her central role in the case. In a country striving to improve women's workforce participation and promote empowerment, such incidents are deeply alarming. They highlight serious gaps in workplace safety, even within prominent corporate environments. The government must urgently review the implementation of the POSH Act, 2013, relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, and the SHE-Box mechanism across workplaces. This case should serve as a wake-up call to ensure that women employees are truly safe and protected.

Kirti Wadhawan, KANPUR

CAG warns of Hokersar lake's ecological decline

1,511 unauthorised colonies to be regularised

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 18: The SWAGAM portal of Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has undergone demo testing for its integration with the government's main portal and is being readied for public use, as the civic body prepares to roll out the regularisation process for 1,511 unauthorised colonies, officials said Saturday.

More than 50 per cent of drone surveys across the identified colonies have already been completed, forming a base for mapping structures, road networks, and geo-fencing properties.

The survey data will feed into the portal, enabling residents to apply for the regularisation of their properties, they said.

The portal has been redesigned to avoid technical jargon, akin to simplified banking applications, ensuring that applicants are able to navigate it without confusion.

"The portal linkage is currently underway. We conducted a demo on Friday and made a few changes to simplify the

MCD READIES SWAGAM PORTAL



language so that even a layman can easily understand the process, the areas involved, and the implications of their applications," a senior official of MCD said.

The officials said a key provision in the process relates to floor area ratio (FAR).

"Any construction exceeding the permissible FAR under the master plan for Delhi will attract penal charges three times the normal additional FAR charges," the official said.

Clarifying that there is no single uniform charge for the regularisation of properties, the official said, "There are multiple components, including an application fee and a scrutiny fee, which will be levied. For instance, the scrutiny fee is Rs 10 per square metre. So, for a built-up area of 1,000 square metres, the fee will be Rs 10,000."

The regularisation process will be carried out through around 700 empanelled architects, who will prepare and

upload the building plan of the existing structure on the portal after ownership rights are granted, the civic body said.

"The architect will certify the details and upload the plan showing what already exists on the ground, whether it is two floors or three floors. This plan will then become part of the permanent record once the regularisation certificate is issued," the official said.

Another MCD official said that residents who do not yet have ownership rights under the PM-UDAY framework are likely to receive them within a month. Following this, the MCD will process the applications for regularisation, also within a month.

"In the initial phase, around 40,000 residents who have already secured ownership rights will be eligible to apply directly on the SWAGAM portal," he said, adding that once regularisation is complete, the civic body will move towards planning and upgrading infrastructure and basic amenities in these colonies.

Around 2,528.10 kanals of lake area has been encroached upon for construction, plantations and agricultural activities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 18: The CAG has expressed serious concerns about the large-scale encroachment of over 2,500 kanals and ecological degradation of Hokersar Lake, warning that the wetland is facing rapid deterioration, and its 'pristine glory' is at risk of extinction.

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) pulled up authorities for the failure of conservation and management of Hokersar lake, warning that the ecologically significant wetland is facing degradation due to pollution, encroachment and lack of scientific planning.

The CAG report on conservation of lakes in the Union territory for the year 2023-24, said the lack of proper survey and demarcation has led to the encroachment.

"Around 2,528.10 kanals of lake area has been encroached upon for construction, plantations and agricultural activities. Despite issuance of notices, authorities were unable to ensure eviction of encroachers," it said.

The report noted that in the absence of a comprehensive conservation and management programme, significant changes in land use have occurred, resulting in deterioration of the lake's health.

The CAG observed that the failure to identify point and non-point sources of pollution, absence of measures to prevent silt inflow, lack of dredging and construction of a flood spill channel through the lake area



contributed to a decline in open water area. Highlighting land-use changes between 2014 and 2020, the report recorded a seven per cent decrease in open water area, while scrub area (transitional habitat along the shoreline) increased by over 1,100 per cent and aquatic vegetation by 42 per cent, largely attributed to anthropogenic pressures and inflow of untreated sewage.

"Between 2014 and 2020, the open water area decreased by seven per cent, while scrub area increased by 1,157 per cent, siltation by 104 per cent, river area by 103 per cent, built-up area by 102 per cent and aquatic vegetation by 42 per cent", it added, attributing it again to anthropogenic pressure, as well as inadequate conservation efforts.

The CAG observed that no comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan had been prepared for the lake. "Instead, the Wildlife Protection Department relied on annual plans which failed to address core is-

ssues such as changes in hydrological regimes, pollution and loss of biodiversity," it said.

Analysis of satellite imagery and Google Earth Pro data from 2005 to 2022 revealed a substantial increase in built-up areas in the lake's catchments, including Haji Bagh, Soibug and HMT (Zainakot), which lack sewage treatment facilities. "The lake continues to receive inflows from these areas, aggravating pollution levels," the report said.

It also highlighted inefficiencies in flood management infrastructure. "The flood spill channel at Padshahi Bagh, designed to carry 17,000 cusecs of water, has seen its capacity reduced to 6,000 cusecs due to siltation and accumulation of debris."

While Rs 46.29 crore was spent between 2018 and 2022 on channel construction, dredging and slope protection, key components such as hydraulic gates, silt retention basins and sewage treatment plants were not executed, affecting water regulation and quality.

Delhi CM flags off 200 e-buses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 18: Chief Minister Rekha Gupta flagged off 200 electric buses at the East Vinod Nagar Depot and said her government is working in mission mode to fully transition Delhi's public transport to electric vehicles (EVs).

With the addition of these Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) buses, 4,550 of the 6,300 public transport buses in the capital are now electric buses, the chief minister said at the event.

"The objective of every initiative of the Delhi government is to provide better connectivity, a clean environment, and modern transport facilities to

the citizens," CM Gupta said.

A large number of the new buses are 'Devi' buses, which will provide better transport facilities to common citizens by reaching remote and narrow lanes, she added.

Gupta also flagged off the Delhi-Rohtak intercity bus service and inaugurated the Madanpur Khadar bus terminal and a new building at the East Vinod Nagar Depot. "The launch of the Delhi-Rohtak interstate bus service will strengthen regional connectivity. The inauguration of the Madanpur Khadar bus terminal as a crucial facility for passengers, making transport services more organised," the chief minister said. This

building is equipped with a biometric system and health check-up facilities to ensure that drivers operate buses in a safe and healthy condition, thereby reducing the possibility of accidents, Gupta added.

"Delhi's EV policy is the most effective in the country. The national capital has been facing problems due to air pollution for the past several years, but the previous governments did not come up with a proper plan," she said.

"A massive EV Waste Disposal Plant will also be established in the Holambi Kalan area to ensure the scientific disposal of e-vehicle batteries in the future to protect nature," she added.

Delhi sees sharp drop in min temp

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 18: The national capital saw a sharp drop in the minimum temperature Saturday, even as the city woke up to a sunny morning.

This comes a day after the city saw moderate rainfall in several parts.

The Safdarjung observatory, which provides representative data for the city, recorded a minimum temperature of 19.8 degrees Celsius, 1.8 degrees below the normal and 4.2 degrees lower than the day before.

Other weather stations showed equally dramatic drops in the minimum. Palam recorded a minimum temperature of 20.1 degrees Celsius, 4.9 degrees lower than Friday's temperature. Ridge logged a minimum of 20.8 degrees, 3.9 degrees lower than the day before.

According to the data by the India Meteorological department, while several parts of the city recorded rainfall till late hours of Friday, no rain was recorded in the early hours of Saturday.

Safdarjung recorded 12.4 mm of rain till 11.30 pm Friday but no rain after that, while Palam recorded 18.6 mm of rain till 11.30 pm but there was no rainfall after that.

Meanwhile, forecasts by the IMD show that no rain is likely throughout the weekend.

Pahalgam introduces QR code-based identification

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pahalgam, April 18: The authorities in Jammu and Kashmir have introduced a unique QR code-based identification system for all tourism service providers for the safety of tourists in Pahalgam, which was rocked by a deadly attack last year orchestrated by Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists.

The system enables easy identification and verification of genuine and registered service providers, including pony-ride operators, hawkers, business establishments, as well as outside vendors, officials said.

The initiative is seen as a major step by the authorities to restore the confidence of those visiting the popular tourist resort in Anantnag district that was shaken by the brutal terror attack April 22 last year.

The attack in the Baisaran meadow left 25 tourists and a local pony-ride operator dead.

"Each service provider has been properly vetted by police, registered by the authorities and has been provided a unique QR code that contains personal information and other details about that person," an official said.

When tourists scan the code with their mobile phones, they can check complete information about the person concerned, the officials said.

The initiative acts as a proper and registered identification system that would curb fraud and ensure that no unauthorised individuals are working or claiming to be associated with tourism, they said.

"The system helps identify tourism providers and ensure that visitors are dealing with an authorised service provider. Before trusting an individual, the tourists can scan the QR code and check the details

about that person." "This will help them verify the credentials of the service provider, thereby building their trust and also improving the security environment," an official said.

The QR codes contain the service provider's name, parentage, detailed address, mobile number, Aadhaar number, registration number, operational route, and whether he or she is police-verified, the officials said.

The tourism stakeholders have welcomed the initiative, calling it a good step for the authenticity of the service providers and the safety of tourists.

They said the initiative will help in gaining the trust of the visitors. "The overall security has been strengthened after last year's attack. As far as service providers are concerned, we have been given QR codes after document verification; our Aadhaar numbers are linked as well," Ghulam Hassan, a service provider, said.

"All our details, addresses, etc., are there, which are linked to the local police station. Security forces check our QR codes periodically to ensure only genuine, registered, and properly verified service providers are operating," Hassan said.

Another service provider, who did not wish to be named, said all service providers working in Pahalgam, including pony-ride operators, photographers, vendors, and others, have been issued a unique QR code containing their personal information after proper verification. "Tourists will feel safer as they will have complete information about the service provider. This is a good initiative that will strengthen the security and safety of tourists," he said.

LG inaugurates memorial museum & library in Rajouri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 18: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Saturday inaugurated the Raj Kumar Thapa memorial museum and library, dedicated to the legacy of the additional district development commissioner, in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district.

Thapa lost his life May 10 last year when a Pakistani artillery shell hit his residential quarters in the border district during unprovoked shelling linked to Operation Sindoor.

He is survived by his wife, a doctor, and their two children.

Paying tributes, the lieutenant governor recalled Thapa's selfless service and unwavering commitment to public welfare, saying the memorial would serve as a source of inspiration for generations to come, an official spokesperson said.

A documentary highlighting Thapa's life and service was also screened on the occasion, he said. Family members of Thapa, along with senior officials of the security forces, police and civil administration, were



present at the event. A 2001-batch Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) officer, Thapa (54)

was widely respected for his professional dedication and people-friendly approach.

He had been posted as ADCC Rajouri in March last year and played a key role in handling the situation in the Badhaal village, where 17 members of three families, including 13 children, died under mysterious circumstances after falling ill between December 7 and January 19.

Prior to his posting in Rajouri, he served as the officer on special duty to former deputy chief minister Tara Chand from 2009 to 2014.

Tulip garden in Srinagar sees 50% drop in visitors

The garden had recorded its highest ever footfall last year, with 8.55 lakh visitors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, April 18: The Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, Asia's largest and a major tourist attraction here, witnessed a sharp decline in footfall this year, with visitors dropping by more than 50 per cent, officials said Friday.

The garden had recorded its highest ever footfall last year, with 8.55 lakh visitors, they said. This year, however, only 3.90 lakh visitors -- including about 1200 foreigners -- visited the garden, the officials said.

"This year, 3.90 lakh visitors visited the Tulip garden. Among them were 1222 foreign-

The garden, a key tourist attraction during the spring season, was closed to the public Thursday as the bloom came to an end.

Located on the banks of the famous Dal Lake here, the garden was thrown open to the public by Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah March 16 -- a week ahead of schedule due to an early bloom triggered by rising temperatures.

It was added to the tourist spots of Kashmir in 2008 by then chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad to attract tourists to the valley in the lean spring season.

More than 70 varieties of tulips were on display as the floriculture department increased bulb density to enhance the garden's visual appeal.

The garden had closed last year in April -- two days after the Pahalgam attack, which forced most tourists to abandon their tour or cancel their bookings.

According to officials, the garden recorded 4.45 lakh visitors in 2024, 3.75 lakh in 2023, 3.62 lakh in 2022, and 2.25 lakh in 2021.

The garden remained closed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 lockdown. In earlier years, it recorded 2.59 lakh visitors in 2019, 1.9 lakh in 2018, 1.50 lakh in 2017, and 1.75 lakh in 2016, the officials added.



OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, REDHAKHOL DIVISION
Mobile No.: 9437054951, Email ID: dfo.redhakhol@odisha.gov.in
Tender Reference No. F&E/RKL-004(Offline)/2026-27 Dated: 16.04.2026
No. 8001/35/2627

SHORT NOTICE
TENDER DOCUMENT FOR PROCUREMENT OF ENTERPRISE HEAVY-LIFT UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE (Multi-Rotor UAV Platform) with High-Accuracy Area LiDAR Payload System (Dual 100MP RGB + 950m Range LiDAR) and All Associated accessories.

Tender Mode	Offline-Double Cover System (Sealed Bids)
Bid Availability	17.04.2026 (11.00 A.M.) to 04.05.2026 (05.00 P.M.)
Last Date of Receipt	04.05.2026 by 05.00 P.M.
Date of Opening	05.05.2026 at 11.30 A.M.
Issued By	Divisional Forest Officer, Redhakhol Forest Division

Redhakhol Forest Division | Odisha Forest Department
www.redhakholforest.com | sambalpur.odisha.gov.in
Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer
Redhakhol Forest Division
OIPR-8001/8146/1/26-27/0005

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, KHARIAR (R&B) DIVISION, KHARIAR
E-mail: eeroads.khr@rediffmail.com
E-Procurement Notice-01
No. 1825 Date: 15.04.2026
Invitation For Bids
Bid Identification No. SER&BKHR-01/2026-27

- The Superintending Engineer, Khariar (R&B) Division, Khariar on behalf of Government of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in Single Cover system electrical work & Composite work (Civil+PHE) in ONLINE MODE only. The Office Memorandum of Govt. of Works Department No.07764600022025-173/W Bhubaneswar Dt.03.01.2026 of Principal Secretary to Govt. Sub-Amendment of Codal & Contractual Provisions to be followed scrupulously.
- Nature of work: Utility Shifting of HT/LT line/Extension of Existing Control Room with Wash room, Construction of Waiting Shed, Provision of thermoplastic compound painting (Civil+PHE)
- No. of work: 02 Nos. works
- Tender Paper cost: As specified in the notice for the respective Work, to be remits online only
- Class of Contractor: As specified in the notice for the respective Work
- Availability of Bid documents in the website: 10.00 hours of 22.04.2026 to 17.00 hours of 02.05.2026
- Date of opening of Bid: Dt.04.05.2026 at 11:00 hours
- EMD/Bid Security: As specified in the notice to be remitted online only
- The Bidders shall have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Khariar (R&B) Division, Khariar
OIPR-34001/34062/1/26-27/0002

of the day **note**

We have to remove Mamata Banerjee as Bengal CM, else one day Bangladeshi Muslims will take away the state from us

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | CM, ASSAM

Understand the danger. Once the freeze ends, seat redistribution can happen on population basis. States that controlled population, invested in education, and delivered development can be pushed back politically

BANDI SANJAY KUMAR | UNION MINISTER

The people of this country became Hanuman and put their tail in front of Modi ji. He could not lift it. Modi ji's ego lost yesterday

REVANTH REDDY | TELANGANA CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Char Dham Yatra begins today

Dehradun: The annual Char Dham Yatra is all set to commence in Uttarakhand Sunday amid a ban on the entry of non-Hindus into three of the four shrines this year. The doors of Gangotri and Yamunotri shrines will open Sunday on the occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, whereas Kedarnath in Rudraprayag and Badrinath in Chamoli will open April 22 and 23, respectively. This is the first time that the yatra will be conducted with restrictions on "non-Sanatans." However, they can be allowed if certain conditions laid down by temple committees are met. The Badrinath Kedarnath Temple Committee had passed a unanimous resolution in this regard March 10. Committee President Hemant Dwivedi later clarified that non-Hindus can visit the shrines if they submit an affidavit declaring their faith in Sanatan Dharma.

Female wolf dies at Delhi Zoo

New Delhi: A female wolf brought from Patna Zoo under an exchange animal programme has died at Delhi's National Zoological Park, raising questions over the adherence to quarantine protocols, sources said. The wolf that allegedly sustained a hind limb fracture during the transfer was under veterinary observation, and she died Thursday, the source told PTI. According to the guidelines of the Central Zoo Authority, quarantine is an essential part of the animal exchange process, requiring monitoring the health, stress, and adaptation of newly arrived animals, the source said. Questions have been raised about whether standard quarantine protocols were followed in this case. Four wolves were brought from Patna Zoo to Delhi Zoo as part of an exchange programme, he said.

Over 64 kg heroin recovered, 2 held

Chandigarh: Punjab Police Saturday claimed to have busted a cross-border drug smuggling module, arresting two persons and recovering 64.62 kg of heroin from their possession in Amritsar. Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said the Punjab government's anti-drug drive 'Yudh Nashian Virudh' achieved major success with the recovery of 64.62 kg of heroin. The Counter-Intelligence wing of the Punjab Police and the State Special Operations Cell in Amritsar were involved in the operation.

Z security for both deputy CMs along with Nitish son

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, April 18: The Samrat Choudhary government in Bihar Saturday granted Z security cover to Deputy Chief Ministers Vijay Kumar Chaudhary and Bijendra Prasad Yadav, besides Nishant Kumar, a greenhorn whose father Nitish resigned as the CM earlier this week.

The announcement was made by the state home department through a couple of notifications, barely three days after the change of guard, which saw the two veteran JD(U) leaders being sworn into the cabinet and designated as deputy CMs.

According to the notification, which announced Z security for Nishant, who joined the JD(U) a month ago, but is yet to be elected to the legislature, the Z-plus cover enjoyed by senior BJP leader Vijay Sinha, who held the deputy CM's post along with Samrat Choudhary in the Nitish Kumar government, has been downgraded.

Sinha, a fifth term MLA, who is also the first BJP leader to have become the assembly Speaker, in 2020, a post he held till Nitish Kumar's exit from NDA two years later, will now have a Z security cover.

The Home department also announced Y plus security cover for senior JD(U) leader Shrawan Kumar, who was a minister in the Nitish Kumar government. Seven-five-year-old Nitish Kumar, who is now a Rajya Sabha MP, was heading a 26-member cabinet, with ministers drawn from his own party, BJP and three smaller alliance partners.

BSB Board Class 10, 12 results announced

AGENCIES

Haridwar, April 18: In Haridwar, the Bharatiya Shiksha Board (BSB) announced the results of its Class 10 and Class 12 board examinations for the academic session 2025-26, bringing a wave of excitement and pride across its affiliated schools nationwide. This year, students delivered an outstanding performance, reflecting not only their dedication and discipline but also the consistent guidance of their teachers. Soon after the announcement, students began accessing their results through DigiLocker, eager to see the outcome of their hard work.

Among the brightest moments of the declaration was the remarkable achievement of Ashmita Basnet from Acharyakulam in Kumarikata, Assam, who secured the All India first rank in Class 10 with an impressive score of 485 out of 500 (97%). Close behind her were Priyam Chakravarti from Acharyakulam, Chirang, Assam, and Angel from Patanjali Gurukulam, Tehri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, who secured the second and third positions respectively.

The Class 12 results were equally impressive. Mallika Das from Patanjali Gurukulam, Tehri Garhwal, emerged as the All India topper with 481 out of 500 (96.20%), setting a high benchmark. She was followed by Priya and Anshika Chauhan from Patanjali Gurukulam, Haridwar, who secured the second and third positions.



The briefing by IGAR (South) Major General Gaurav Sharma at the secretariat today reaffirmed that the law and order situation in the state is sensitive but under control, with security forces responding to all disturbances with utmost care and restraint

Y KHEMCHAND SINGH | CHIEF MINISTER, MANIPUR

Stormy budget session ends



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 18: Curtains came down Saturday on a stormy budget session of Parliament that witnessed several firsts under the Modi government including the defeat of a crucial Constitution amendment bill that was brought to implement 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures in 2029 by raising the Lok Sabha strength.

With the key bill failing to get through, no business was taken up on the last day of the three-day special sitting during the session to consider the women's quota legislation, and both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were adjourned sine die within minutes of their meeting this morning.

The session, which began January 28, saw the passage of the Union budget for 2026-27 and the demands for grants and supplementary grants for various ministries.

The session also saw the passage of some key legislations including The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Bill, 2026, The Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026 and The Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2026, to make Amaravati as the new capital of Andhra Pradesh.

The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, was not taken up by the government during the session, following strong objections from the opposition. The Corporate Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, was sent to the parliamentary committee for further scrutiny.

While the Lok Sabha clocked 93 per cent productivity, the Rajya Sabha witnessed 110 per cent productivity during the budget session.

Accused concealed marriage, put pressure to convert: Complainant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nashik, April 18: A victim in the alleged sexual harassment case at a TCS unit here has told police that one of the accused established a physical relationship with her against her wishes while concealing his marriage, and also put pressure on her to convert to Islam.

As the police obtained extension of custody of two other accused, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis Saturday held a high-level meeting and directed that there should be a "comprehensive probe."

A Special Investigation Team of Nashik police has arrested eight persons by registering nine FIRs after cases of alleged sexual harassment and pressure to convert at the unit of Tata Consultancy Services in the city came to light.

In a related development, Nida Khan, a woman employee who is among the accused, filed a pre-arrest bail plea.

As per a First Information Report based on a complaint filed by a victim woman, she met one of the accused four years ago, and the two became friends as they had attended the



TCS CASE
The accused promised to help her secure a job at TCS after graduation, she told police.

In July 2022, he attempted to force himself upon her and ex-

pressed a desire to marry her, the complainant said.

The woman joined TCS's Nashik unit where the accused also worked. In August 2024, he established a physical relationship with her against her wishes at a resort, she stated in the complaint. In February 2026, the complainant found out that he was a married man with two children when his wife contacted her. When the complainant confronted him, the accused allegedly admitted that he had no intention of marrying her.

The accused, along with two other colleagues - also named

in the FIR - frequently met her in the company canteen, and the trio often made derogatory remarks about Hindu deities, the complainant said.

They allegedly made objectionable comments about worshipping 'Shivalinga' and said insulting things about Draupadi of the Mahabharat.

Further, they put pressure on her to convert to Islam, claiming it was a superior religion, the complainant told police.

She also allegedly faced sexual harassment and blackmail by some of the co-accused, according to the FIR.

'FRIENDSHIP PIPELINE'

India sends 5K tonnes of diesel to B'desh amid war

The new government in Dhaka has continued to import diesel from India through the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline to ensure the country's energy security



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 18: An additional 5,000 tonnes of diesel started flowing into Bangladesh from India through the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline, reinforcing Dhaka's fuel security amid the maritime uncertainty in West Asia affecting energy imports, reports said.

Quoting the manager of Parbatipur Padma Oil Depot in Bangladesh's Dinajpur, the Bangla Tribune reported that the tranche started arriving from Numaligarh in Assam Thursday. Numaligarh Refinery Limited was established in 1993 and is under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas in India.

Sources told the newspaper that Bangladesh has initiated

steps on "an urgent basis" to maintain oil reserves and ensure an uninterrupted supply. It added that earlier, 8,000 metric tonnes of diesel arrived at the Parbatipur railhead depot Tuesday from Numaligarh Refinery.

Last month, some 22,000 metric tonnes of diesel arrived, and March 11, the first 5,000 metric tonnes reached the depot in Dinajpur through the Bangladesh-India Friendship Pipeline. Altogether, 30,000 metric tonnes of diesel will be brought from India through the pipeline in April this year, sources at the Parbatipur depot told the newspaper.

Authorities at the Dinajpur depot told the Bangla Tribune

Friday that it will take close to 50 hours for 5,000 metric tonnes of diesel to finally reach the destination. Another 7,000 metric tonnes of diesel will also be arriving from Numaligarh Refinery "in the next 4-5 days," added the report.

The new government in Dhaka has continued to import diesel from India through the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline to ensure the country's energy security, it said. This connectivity is portrayed as a critical energy lifeline for Bangladesh. Compared to traditional shipping methods, the pipeline enables faster, more cost-effective, and more reliable transportation of fuel.



An elderly couple walks past boats on a hot summer day at Poonthura beach, in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, Saturday

Mahua, Feni make UK debut as Indian heritage drinks

Maharaja Drinks, a retailer focussed on introducing craft Indian beverages to Britain, has launched three Feni offerings and a Mahua spirit in celebration of indigenous spirits with centuries of distilling history rooted in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, April 18: Traditional tribal spirit Mahua and Goan Feni are making their debut in the UK market as part of a new range of Indian heritage spirits from this week.

Maharaja Drinks, a retailer focussed on introducing craft Indian beverages to Britain, has launched three Feni offerings and a Mahua spirit in

celebration of indigenous spirits with centuries of distilling history rooted in India.

The specialist retailer is geared towards organic certification, sustainable production methods and environmentally aware manufacturing, packaging and transport of Indian spirits.

"India is home to an extraordinary range of heritage spirits, each rooted in centuries of



craftsmanship and storytelling," said Annabel Jamieson, CEO of Maharaja Drinks.

"Today, there's a growing appetite among consumers

and bartenders to explore these authentic native flavours. That's why the time feels right to introduce four exceptional expressions to the UK for the

first time," she said.

The company's new range offers Cashew Feni and Cocunut Feni from Goenchi Feni, a spiced Feni named OURO De Goa from the Goa Heritage Distillery and Desmondji Mahua Spirit from Andhra Pradesh's Desmondji.

"Feni remains a rare and distinctive presence here, and Mahua is an exciting new discovery, a vibrant, characterful spirit just beginning to make its mark," added Jamieson.

Goenchi Feni, a family-run brand from Goa founded by siblings Yash and Tulika Sawardekar, double distill their Feni in small batches using

traditional 100 per cent copper pot stills. They claim to follow a "closely guarded family recipe" that uses a single natural ingredient: either cashew apple or coconut palm sap.

"Feni carries a long and proud heritage from Goa, passed down through generations as a true expression of our land and culture," said Goenchi Feni co-founder Yash Sawardekar.

"Despite this richness, it has often been overlooked on the global stage. By opening international markets like the UK, we aim to change that and reintroduce Feni as a spirit worthy of recognition," he said.



Let's face it, women are by far the better half of the species. They're the improved models: Humans 2.0. They deserve representation in Parliament and in every institution

SHASHI THAROOR | CONGRESS MP

FIRST BATCH OF 431 HAJ PILGRIMS LEAVES FROM J&K

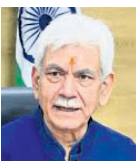
The first batch of 431 Haj pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir left for Saudi Arabia Saturday. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah saw them off at the airport here, officials said. The pilgrims, including 230 males and 201 females, left in three flights, they said



of the day quote

Addiction is not merely a personal failing but a deep wound in our social fabric. Our hostile neighbour uses drug trafficking as a tool to fuel terror and weaken the nation from within

MANOJ SINHA | LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



The Allahabad High Court ordering an FIR to probe into baseless allegations of British citizenship against Rahul Gandhi is surprising and amounts to placing an unnecessary burden on the executive by the judiciary

ASHOK GEHLOT | FORMER CHIEF MINISTER, RAJASTHAN



The Congress party smiled smugly, thumped desks and celebrated the crushing of the political aspirations of ordinary women

SMRITI IRANI | FORMER UNION MINISTER



POST OF THE DAY

Dear Modi and Shah You actually need to urgently convene a 5-days SPECIAL FULL PARLIAMENT SESSION to discuss the real issues (beyond electoral

- 1) Fallout of Iran War on India
- 2) Fallout of AI on Indian jobs and companies
- 3) Equitable distribution of national economic goods
- 4) Mass employment generation in manufacturing
- 5) India's preparation for the turbulence ahead.

This is what India needs. This is what India will love to see and hear, and debate. Given the way the world is changing before our eyes, and where India is going in this whirlwind, the sooner, the better. Please do it. Thank you.

@sandeep_PT

SHORT TAKES

Security agencies detain 25 foreign nationals

Motihari (Bihar): Security agencies have detained 25 foreign nationals, staying illegally in India, from Bihar's East Champaran district in 2025, officials said Saturday. These 25 foreign nationals are citizens of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and United Arab Emirates. Security agencies have informed their counterparts in these countries about the detention of foreign nationals. These facts came to light during a review meeting chaired by Bihar Chief Secretary, Pratyaya Amrit, in Raxaul in East Champaran Saturday. The meeting was also attended by Bihar DGP Vinay Kumar, District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police, Sub-Divisional Officers, District Land Acquisition Officer, and senior officials of the Sashtra Seema Bal (SSB).

Maha CM orders swift land allocation

Mumbai: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis Saturday directed officials to ensure swift allotment of land to data centre companies once agreements are finalised, noting that several firms from Central Asia are keen to invest in the state. Chairing a meeting here, Fadnavis said all critical requirements for setting up data centre projects, especially land acquisition, must be completed within the defined timelines. He also instructed that power supply to such projects be prioritised. The meeting reviewed the state's preparedness to attract investments in the data centre sector, an official release issued here said. Fadnavis said agencies must act with urgency and coordination.

Oppn to move fresh notice for CEC removal

Leaders from several Opposition parties are in talks, and at least five senior MPs from different parties -- including the Congress, the Trinamool Congress, the Samajwadi Party and the DMK -- are working on drafting a new notice to initiate removal proceedings



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 18: Underterred by the rejection of their earlier notices, Opposition parties are planning a fresh move to seek the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, sources said Saturday.

According to highly placed sources, leaders from several Opposition parties are in talks, and at least five senior MPs from different parties -- including the Congress, the Trinamool Congress, the Samajwadi Party and the DMK -- are working on drafting a new notice to initiate removal proceedings.

It has, however, not yet been decided which House the notice would be moved in, or whether it would be introduced in both Houses as was done last time, the source

added.

Buoyed by the defeat of The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 in Lok Sabha Friday, Opposition leaders are aiming to secure more MPs' signatures on the notice and are looking at garnering at least 200, the source said.

"We want to make a statement. We first need to prove that the number last time was underestimated," the source added.

In its earlier notices, the Opposition had accused CEC Kumar of a "failure to maintain independence and constitutional fidelity" and of acting under the "thumb of the executive".

The charges levelled sweeping charges against the CEC, alleging "proved misbehaviour" on grounds including a compromised and executive-influenced appointment, partisan functioning -- such as the alleged "graded response" doctrine targeting opposition leaders -- obstruction of electoral fraud investigations, and erosion of transparency through refusal to share data and materials.

They further accused him of enabling large-scale disenfranchisement via Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercises in Bihar and elsewhere, defying or delaying compliance with Supreme Court directions, and acting in alignment with the political executive, thereby undermining the independence of the Election Commission.

However, in almost similar responses, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Rajya Sabha Chairman CP Radhakrishnan rejected the notices, holding that even if the allegations were assumed to be true, they did not meet the high constitutional threshold of "misbehaviour" required for removal.

They reasoned that appointment-related issues or prior government service do not constitute misconduct; differences in public statements or administrative decisions lack evidence of wilful abuse of authority; and actions like data-sharing or electoral roll revisions fall within the commission's constitutional mandate and are subject to judicial review.

Top court cautions HCs against criticising subordinate judges

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 18: The Supreme Court has cautioned the high courts against the growing tendency to publicly criticise subordinate judicial officers, observing that "the high court is expected to act as the guardian of officers in the district judiciary".

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta made the observation while setting aside a Calcutta High Court order cancelling an accused's bail in a tenancy-related criminal case. The top court said the dispute was largely civil in nature and that the high court was not justified in unsettling a bail order after nearly eight years on technical grounds. "It has become a recent trend to castigate judicial officers and record adverse remarks/strictures against them in judicial orders passed by the high court in the exercise of supervisory, appellate or revisional jurisdiction. The high court, being a court of record in the state, is expected to act as the guardian of the officers in the district judiciary," the bench said.

The apex court also said that while finding infirmities in the order passed by a judicial of-

ficer, the immediate reaction ought not to be to make adverse or disparaging observations against the concerned officer in a judicial dispensation.

"Such disparaging remarks/strictures may ruin the career of the judicial officer in addition to demoralising the district judiciary as a whole. Power of superintendence conferred upon the high courts by Article 227 of the Constitution ought not to be used as a tool of oppression but rather as a mechanism for nurturing and guiding judicial officers in the state," the bench said. The top court said that in some high courts, an in-house mechanism is already in place to take care of a situation whenever any flaw or infirmity is noted in any order passed by the trial judge while exercising the supervisory jurisdiction.

"The observations of the hon'ble judge/bench on the merits or quality of the order or the proceedings of the presiding officer of the trial court can be noted in a remark slip, which, in turn, would be placed before the administrative judge or the chief justice of the high court, as the case may be, for necessary follow-up action," the bench said.

LADAKH VIOLENCE

Former MLA among 2 Cong leaders released

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Leh, April 18: Two Congress leaders, including a former MLA, were released from the Leh district jail Saturday after spending nearly seven months in detention in connection with the September 2025 violence that left four persons dead and scores injured, officials said.

Former J&K Member of Legislative Assembly Deldan Namgyal and LAHDC Leh Councillor Smanla Dorje were accorded a traditional welcome by a large number of locals, led by leaders of the Leh Apex Body (LAB), soon after they walked out of prison following the grant of bail by the high court Friday.

The Leh Apex Body (LAB), along with the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), has been engaged in dialogue with the Central government over demands including statehood for Ladakh and safeguards under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, while consistently pressing for their release following their detention in the aftermath of the September 24 violence in Leh.



Devotees hold earthen pots with fire on their heads while performing rituals during Sheetal Puja, in Kolkata, Saturday

India summons Iran envoy over incident of firing at ships

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 18: Two Indian-flagged vessels carrying crude oil reversed course in the Strait of Hormuz after coming under Iranian military gunfire Saturday, prompting New Delhi to summon the Iranian envoy and lodge a strong protest.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri conveyed to Iranian ambassador Mohammad Fathali India's "deep concern" at the "shooting incident" involving the two ships in the strategic waterway, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

Misri noted the "importance that India attached to the safety of merchant shipping and mariners and recalled that Iran had earlier facilitated the safe passage of several ships bound for India," it said.

After the US and Israel launched an attack on Iran six weeks ago, Tehran largely halted traffic through the Strait of Hormuz that carries one-fifth of global oil supplies. The Iranian action has triggered a significant rise in oil prices.

Following Tehran's announcement Friday that it has opened the waterway for commercial traffic, several commercial vessels tried to cross it. However, Tehran Saturday



Misri noted the importance that India attached to the safety of merchant shipping and mariners and recalled that Iran had earlier facilitated the safe passage of several ships bound for India

said that it has again closed the waterway, alleging that the US violated a certain understanding reached between the two sides. In his meeting with the Iranian envoy, the foreign secretary told him to convey India's views on the incident to the authorities in Iran.

"Reiterating his concern at this serious incident of firing on merchant ships, the foreign secretary urged the ambassador to convey India's views to the authorities in Iran and resume at the earliest the process of facilitating India-bound ships across the Strait," the MEA said in a statement.

It said the Ambassador Fathali "undertook to convey these views to the Iranian authorities." Earlier, government sources said the Iranian ambassador was summoned to the MEA, and a strong protest was lodged with him over the firing incident.

Vessel tracker TankerTrackers.com earlier reported that two Indian vessels had to reverse course in the Strait of Hormuz following the incident of gunfire from Iran's Revolutionary Guards. Earlier this week, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar underlined India's strong commitment to "safe and unimpeded" transit passage of maritime shipping, even as he emphasised that attacks on merchant shipping are "completely unacceptable".

Jaishankar made the remarks while participating in an online meeting convened by Japan to discuss supply chain disruption.

Govt approves Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool

With increased global volatility and geopolitical instability, maritime trade has been impacted with increased risk of losses for cargo and vessels resulting in increased insurance costs and uncertainty in continuous availability of insurance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 18: The Union Cabinet Saturday approved the proposal for the creation of a domestic insurance pool, namely 'Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool' (BMI pool) with a sovereign guarantee of ₹12,980 crore to facilitate continuous maritime insurance coverages, according to an official statement.

The statement said the Domestic Insurance Pool addresses global volatility, geopolitical instability and reduces the external insurance dependency of Indian vessels.

"The pool covers all maritime risks like Hull and Machinery, Cargo, P&I and War risk. It covers vessels carrying cargo

from any international origin to Indian ports and vice-versa, even when transiting volatile maritime corridors," it added.

The statement said the pool will ensure that Indian trade continues to have access to affordable insurance for vessels carrying cargo from any international origin to Indian ports and vice-versa, even when transiting volatile maritime corridors.

Addressing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Information and Broadcasting Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said, "Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool will cover India-flagged vessels, India-controlled vessels ... it will cover 10 years period." "Our dependency on foreign insurance companies will reduce, and we will also save for-



With increased global volatility and geopolitical instability, maritime trade has been impacted with increased risk of losses for cargo and vessels resulting in increased insurance

costs and uncertainty in continuous availability of insurance. Further, there is high dependence of Indian vessels on International Group of Protection and Indemnity (IGP&I) Club for P&I insurance cover-

ing third-party liabilities like Oil pollution liability, Wreck removal, Cargo damage, Crew injury and repatriation, Collision liabilities and so on.

Accordingly, the statement said there was a need for a domestic maritime risk covering pool to maintain sovereignty and continuity of trade in face of withdrawal of coverage due to sanctions or due to geopolitical tensions.

"In the above backdrop, the government has approved formation of 'Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool' (BMI pool) for Indian flagged or controlled vessels or vessels destined to or starting from India, backed by a sovereign guarantee," it said. The policies will be issued by insurers that are Pool

members, using the combined underwriting capacity of the Pool, which would be around ₹950 crore.

The statement said that the Pool will help to manage liability insurance locally, tailored to Indian Shipping conditions and regulatory requirements, develop specialised Marine underwriting, claims management and legal expertise within India. Further, it said a Governing Body Constituted for this pool would oversee the formation and functioning of the pool.

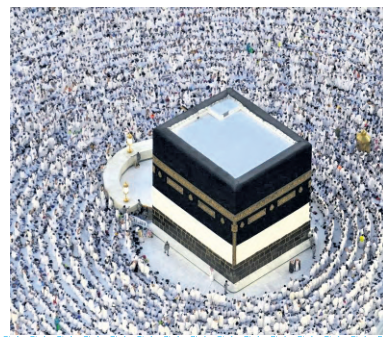
The rationale for providing a sovereign guarantee to the proposed domestic insurance entity is rooted in the objectives of strengthening self-reliance, sanctions resilience and ensuring greater sovereign control.



We cannot wake up every morning and go to bed every night with a tweet from a president threatening the world and declaring wars
LUIZ INACIO LULA DA SILVA | PRESIDENT, BRAZIL

INDIAN HAJ PILGRIMS LAND IN SAUDI

The first batch of Indian pilgrims arrived in Saudi Arabia Saturday for the annual Haj pilgrimage, the Indian mission in Riyadh said. A total of 1,75,025 pilgrims are expected to visit Saudi Arabia for Haj this year, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Minority Affairs



of the day quote

We all see the attacks against the multilateral system, the repeated attempts to undermine international law and the dangerous normalization of the use of force,
PEDRO SANCHEZ | PM, SPAIN

For this reason, every community has the obligation to create and sustain structures of solidarity and mutual aid in which, when faced with crises - be they social, political, medical or economic - everyone can give and receive assistance according to their own capacity and needs
POPE LEO XIV | CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADER

The time has come for a conversation with the US about how Washington sees future economic ties with Russia
SERGEI LAVROV | FOREIGN MINISTER, RUSSIA

Hormuz standoff remains uncertain

Iran reimposes restrictions on Strait of Hormuz, accusing US of violating deal to reopen it

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cairo, April 18: The standoff over the Strait of Hormuz quickly escalated again Saturday as Iran reversed its reopening of the crucial waterway and fired on ships attempting to pass, in retaliation after the United States pressed ahead with its blockade choking off Iranian ports.

Iran's navy stands ready to inflict bitter defeats on its enemies
AYATOLLAH MOJTABA KHAMENEI | SUPREME LEADER, IRAN



WAR TOLL: The war, which began with US and Israeli strikes February 28, has killed at least 3,000 people in Iran, more than 2,290 in Lebanon, 23 in Israel and more than a dozen in Gulf Arab states

Confusion over the strait, through which roughly one-fifth of the world's oil passes, threatened to deepen the energy crisis roiling the global economy and push the two countries toward renewed conflict. The ceasefire between them is due to run out by mid-next week, and Pakistani mediators were working to put together a new round of direct negotiations to keep the truce going.

Iran's joint military command said Saturday that "control of the Strait of Hormuz has returned to its previous state ... under strict management and control of the armed forces." It warned that it would continue to block transit through the strait as long as the US blockade of Iranian ports remained in effect.

Revolutionary Guard gunboats Saturday opened fire on a tanker transiting the strait and an unknown projectile

hit a container vessel, damaging some of the containers, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said without identifying the vessels.

The renewed escalation resulted from attempts by both sides to maintain leverage amid negotiations over an ultimate deal to end the war and address Iran's nuclear program.

For the United States, the blockade is a key tool to keep up pressure on Iran, short of resuming bombardment. By cutting off much of Iran's

exports and imports, it could strangle an already crippled economy.

For Iran, closure of the strait - imposed after the US and Israel launched their surprise war on the country Feb 28 - has proven to be perhaps its most powerful weapon in the confrontation, causing oil prices to spike, threatening the world economy and inflicting political pain on Trump.

Progress threatens to unravel
On Friday, Iran announced the reopening of the strait to commercial vessels after a 10-

Iran reviewing new proposals by US

Iran said that it is reviewing new proposals put forward by the US Saturday. Iran's Supreme National Security Council said in a statement that Pakistan's army chief Asim Munir, serving as an intermediary, presented the proposals to Iran when he recently visited Tehran, and they were still under review. It was not revealed what was in the proposals. The council said Iran has yet to respond, but further talks would require the US to abandon "excessive demands and adjust its requests to the realities on the ground." It also said that Iran will maintain full control over traffic through the Strait of Hormuz until "the war fully ends and lasting peace is achieved in the region," adding that it would collect detailed information on passing vessels, issue transit certificates and impose tolls. The council added that it considered the US naval blockade a violation of the ceasefire, and there would be no reopening of the Strait of Hormuz until that was lifted.

day truce was sealed between Israel and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon. The reopening triggered a fall in oil prices. Iran's closure of the strait since has triggered an energy crisis that has roiled the global economy.

US President Donald Trump, however, said that even with the reopening, the American blockade "will remain in full force" until Tehran reaches a deal with the US Trump imposed the blockade, halting all shipping to and from Iranian ports as the ceasefire between Iran and the US was announced last week to keep pressure on Iran to make a deal in Pakistan-brokered talks to end almost seven weeks of war.

His comments triggered immediate outcry from Iranian officials, calling the blockade

a violation that would prompt a re-closure of the strait.

"Americans are risking the international community, risking the global economy through these, I can say, miscalculations," referring to the blockade, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh told the Associated Press Saturday.

"Everybody must understand to what extent American side is risking the whole ceasefire package," he said, speaking after a diplomatic forum in Antalya, Turkey.

A data firm, Kpler, said movement through the strait remained confined to corridors requiring Iran's approval.

On Friday, Trump said the US will go into Iran and "get all the nuclear dust," referring to the enriched uranium, which is believed to be buried under nuclear sites badly damaged by US military strikes last year.

23 ships turned back since Iran blockade started: US
British military says a cargo vessel was attacked

Ukraine bombs Russian industrial areas

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kyiv, April 18: A civilian was killed and dozens more wounded in overnight Russian attacks across Ukraine, local officials said Saturday.

One person was killed in a strike on Mykolaivka in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, local leader Vadym Filashkin said in a post on social media. Other officials reported at least 26 people had been hurt in attacks across northern and eastern Ukraine, including a strike on port infrastructure in the city of Odesa.

Elsewhere, a Ukrainian drone strike targeted industrial areas in Novokuibyshevsk and Syzran in Russia's Samara region, Governor Vyacheslav Fedorishchev said Saturday.

He did not give further details, but the General Staff of Ukraine's Armed Forces said in a statement that it had hit major oil refineries in both cities. It also said that its attacks had sparked fires at the Vystok oil terminal in Russia's northwestern Leningrad region and an oil refinery in the southern Krasnodar region, with the blazes later confirmed by Russian officials.



Russia's Ministry of Defence said that its forces destroyed 258 Ukrainian drones overnight over 16 Russian regions

Russia's Ministry of Defence said that its forces destroyed 258 Ukrainian drones overnight over 16 Russian regions, as well as over the annexed Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea and the Black and Azov seas.

Ukraine has repeatedly targeted Russian oil facilities in the past, but the strategy has gained more attention since

the Trump administration gave Russian oil a temporary waiver from sanctions to ease supply constraints.

The US Treasury Department extended its pause on sanctions on Russian oil shipments on Friday, despite complaints from Kyiv officials that Russia will use the additional revenue on new weapons to hit Ukraine harder.

The so-called general license means US sanctions will not apply for 30 days on deliveries of Russian oil that has been loaded on tankers as of Friday. It extended a similar 30-day license issued in March for Russian oil that had been loaded by March 11.

Alleged Irish crime boss Daniel arrested

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, April 18: Daniel Kinahan, the alleged leader of one of Ireland's biggest criminal networks, has been arrested in Dubai, Irish media reported Friday.

Ireland's national police force, the Garda Siochana, said an Irish man in his late 40s was arrested Wednesday under a warrant from Irish courts over alleged serious organised crime offences.

The force said it was "steadfast in our determination that we would pursue those allegedly involved in serious organised criminal activity, wherever they go."

Dubai Police said they had arrested an "Irish fugitive for his alleged role in an international organised crime network."

Police did not identify Kinahan, who is in his late 40s, by name. Ireland's national broadcaster, RTE, confirmed he was the arrested man.

In 2022 the US offered a \$5 million reward for information leading to the "financial destruction" of the Kinahan crime gang or the arrest and conviction of its leaders.



SHORT TAKES

Australia, Japan seal \$6.5bn warship deal

Melbourne: Australia and Japan signed contracts Saturday to deliver the first three of a 10 billion Australian dollar (\$6.5 billion) fleet of Japanese-designed warships, with the first due for delivery in three years. Mitsubishi Heavy Industries will build the first three Mogami-class frigates in Japan. Australia plans to build another eight in a shipyard in Western Australia. Japanese Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi and his Australian counterpart Richard Marles attended a signing ceremony aboard the Mogami-class frigate JS Kumano, which is part of the Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force, docked off the Australian city of Melbourne. The Kumano had taken part in the recent Exercise Kakadu, biennial multinational maritime drills hosted by Australia.

Six die in shooting, hostage situation

Kyiv: Ukrainian police killed a man alleged to have opened fire Saturday at passersby in a Kyiv district before barricading himself into a supermarket with hostages and refusing to negotiate in an incident that killed six people. Ukraine's Security Service said the shooting was being investigated as a terrorist act. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, speaking in his nightly video address, said the shooting happened in the leafy Holosivskiy district, injuring 14 people, including a 12-year-old boy. Shootings of this nature are extremely rare in Ukraine. Unofficial Telegram channels quoted witnesses as saying the suspect had moved down a street and shot and killed people at point-blank range without warning before entering the supermarket. "The shooter in Kyiv was liquidated during the arrest," Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said on Telegram.

French soldier killed in Lebanon

Paris: French President Emmanuel Macron said a French soldier was killed and three others injured Saturday morning during an attack on UN peacekeepers in southern Lebanon. Macron identified the soldier as Staff Sergeant Florian Montorio of the 17th Parachute Engineer Regiment from Montauban. "Everything suggests that responsibility for this attack lies with Hezbollah," Macron wrote on social media. "France demands that the Lebanese authorities immediately arrest those responsible and assume their responsibilities alongside UNIFIL," the UN mission in southern Lebanon.

Even dead must make way as construction transforms Kabul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kabul, April 18: The door that once led to a family room now faces nothing but the void. Most of the floor is gone, as are the walls and roof.

This used to be Syed Murtaza Sadar's home in Kabul, on top of the barber shop and public bath that was his family's business. Those, too, are nearly all gone, reduced to bricks and rubble. Sadar and his family were forced to tear down most of the building themselves.

"This was our house, and now I am destroying it with my own hands," the 25-year-old said, taking a brief break from pulling down a brick wall. "It will be very difficult for us."

Two months ago, municipal authorities came to this street and told home and business owners their properties were being expropriated to make way for a wider road, part of efforts to modernise the Afghan capital's heavily

congested streets.

At first, nobody believed them, Sadar said. But then the demolition crews arrived.

Taliban revive a plan to modernise the streets

Homes, businesses, and even a graveyard are being razed across Kabul to make way for road construction. Widened roads, flyovers and underpasses are rapidly replacing narrow and often deeply pot-holed streets.

Much of the plan was drawn up years ago, when Afghanistan had a US-backed government. But most work never got off the ground, mired in red tape, corruption, and security risks due to the Taliban insurgency.

Shortly after the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in 2021, in the wake of the chaotic withdrawal of US-led troops, Kabul's new municipal authorities set about reviving the projects.

In the past four and a half



years, roughly 450 kilometres (280 miles) of roads have been built in the capital, Naimatullah Barakzai, Kabul municipality's representative for cultural affairs, said during a recent news conference. During that time, 11,278 properties were expropriated. Another 233 projects are planned for this year, with over 1.9 billion afghanis (\$29 million) allocated, said Mohammad Qasim Afghan, the municipality's head of planning.

Even the dead must move

In Kabul's Qala-e-Khater neighbourhood, part of a graveyard that has held the bodies of residents for about 200 years, also must make way for a new road that will slice through the community.

Graves lie empty, with large rectangular holes where the dead have been exhumed. Their remains have been moved across the street to another section of the graveyard.



Pope Leo XIV celebrates Mass at Yaounde Ville Airport, Cameroon, Saturday

Mexico mends ties with Spain in first presidential visit in eight years

REUTERS

Barcelona, April 18: Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum and Spain's Pedro Sanchez met in Barcelona Saturday after a summit of progressive leaders, signaling a rapprochement during the first presidential visit to the Mediterranean country in eight years.

The meeting took place during Sheinbaum's visit to Barcelona to attend the fourth "In defense of democracy" summit, a gathering of global leftist leaders to mobilize advocates of these movements against the far right.



Sheinbaum's trip marks a softening of previously strained ties and was the first visit by a Mexican president to Spain since the ruling Morena party came to power in 2018.

Relations deteriorated under her predecessor and mentor, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who in 2019 demanded an apology for abuses committed during Spain's colonial rule in Mexico, a request that was not met at the time.

"There has already been a rapprochement from both the Spanish president and the king himself, which we acknowledge," Sheinbaum told reporters as she left the event.



There is a need for each state to develop a world-class destination and promote longer tourist stays, especially in domestic and religious tourism

SUMAN BERY | VICE CHAIRMAN, NITI AAYOG

OLA ELECTRIC ANNOUNCES AKSHAYA TRITIYA OFFERS

Ola Electric Saturday announced Ola Sona Weekend to celebrate the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, offering customers benefits worth up to ₹50,000 across its electric vehicle portfolio.



of the day note

Rising energy costs amid ongoing geopolitical tensions in the Middle East are further straining household budgets, pushing consumers to prioritise essentials over discretionary purchases like smartphones

Although long-term fundamentals of India's industrial & warehousing market remain intact, developers are likely to adopt a measured approach with respect to supply additions in the near term amid prevailing geopolitical crisis and supply chain disruptions

MSMEs typically have limited financial muscle to absorb higher input costs, supply-chain disruptions and working capital elongation resulting from the ongoing West Asia conflict

Q4 RESULTS

HDFC Bank net rises

Mumbai: HDFC Bank Saturday reported an 8.04 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to ₹20,350.76 crore for the March quarter.

ICICI Bank profit up

Mumbai: ICICI Bank's consolidated net profit increased by 9.28 per cent to ₹14,755 crore in the March quarter, according to an exchange filing Saturday.

50 days of war erase \$50bn worth crude oil

500 million barrels of oil is enough to run the world's international shipping industry for around four months

REUTERS

London, April 18: The world has lost over \$50 billion worth of crude oil that has not been produced since the Iran war began nearly 50 days ago and the aftershock of the crisis will be felt for months and even years to come, according to analysts and Reuters calculations.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said Friday the Strait of Hormuz was open following a ceasefire accord agreed in Lebanon, while US President Donald Trump said he believed a deal to end the Iran war would come "soon", though the timing remains unclear.

Since the crisis began at the end of February, more than 500 million barrels of crude and condensate have been knocked out of the global market, according to Kpler data - the largest energy supply disruption in modern history.

Put differently, 500 million barrels of oil lost to the market is equivalent to curtailing aviation demand globally for 10 weeks, no road travel by any vehicle globally for 11 days, or no oil for the global economy for five days, said Iain Mowat, principal analyst at Wood Mackenzie.

KEY DISTURBANCES

Gulf Arab countries lost about 8 million barrels per day of crude production in March, nearly equivalent to the combined production of Exxon Mobil and Chevron, two of the biggest oil companies in the world.

Jet fuel exports from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman fell from about 19.6 million barrels in February, to just 4.1 million barrels for March and



- Gulf Arab producers lost 40% of crude output in March, impacting global supply
Jet fuel exports from Gulf states plummeted, affecting international aviation
Full restoration of output and infrastructure could take years, analysts warn

April so far combined, according to Kpler data. The loss in exports would have been enough for around 20,000 round-trip flights between New York's JFK airport and London Heathrow, according to Reuters estimates.

With crude prices averaging around \$100 a barrel since the conflict began, those missing volumes represent roughly \$50 billion in lost revenues, said Johannes Rauball, a senior crude analyst at Kpler.

FULL RESTORATION COULD TAKE YEARS

Even as Iranian Foreign Minister Araqchi said the Strait of Hormuz was open, recovery of output and flows is expected to be slow.

Global onshore crude inventories have fallen by about 45 million barrels so far in April, according to Kpler. Since late March, production outages have reached roughly 12 million bpd.

Heavier crude fields in Kuwait and Iraq could take four to five months to return to normal operating levels, extending stock draws through the summer, Rauball said. Damage to refining capacity and Qatar's Ras Laffan LNG complex means full restoration of regional energy infrastructure could take years.

FIRST WAVE OF LAYOFFS

Meta set to slash 10% of workforce

REUTERS

New York, April 18: Meta intends to conduct a first wave of sweeping layoffs planned for this year May 20, with more coming later, three sources familiar with the plans told Reuters.

The Facebook and Instagram owner will lay off about 10% of its global workforce, or close to 8,000 employees, in that initial round, one of the sources said.

The company is planning further layoffs in the second half of the year, the three sources said, although details of those cuts, including date and size, were not yet settled. Executives may adjust their plans as they observe developments in artificial intelligence capabilities, the sources added.

Reuters reported last month that the company was planning to lay off 20% or more of its global workforce.

Meta declined to comment on the timing or scope of planned cuts. CEO Mark Zuckerberg is pumping hundreds of billions of dollars into AI as he seeks to dramatically reshape his company's inner workings around the technology, reflecting a broader pattern among major



U.S. companies this year, particularly in the tech sector.

Amazon.com similarly has trimmed 30,000 corporate employees in recent months, representing nearly 10% of its white-collar workers, while in February the fintech company Block chopped nearly half of its staff.

In both of those cases, executives tied the cuts to efficiency gains from artificial intelligence.

Layoffs.fyi, a website tracking tech job cuts around the world, reported that 73,212 employees have lost their jobs so far this year. For all of 2024, the figure was 153,000.

Meta's layoffs this year will be the social media giant's most significant since a restructuring in late 2022 and early 2023 that it dubbed the "year of efficiency," when it eliminated about 21,000 jobs. At that time, Meta's stock was in freefall and the company was struggling to correct for Covid-era growth assumptions that ultimately proved unsustainable.

Build with purpose, deliver with credibility: Sashikant

Sashikant Barik, Co-founder of AcreRise, has been instrumental in transforming Odisha's residential real estate landscape over the past 16 years, building the brand on a strong foundation of quality, professionalism and customer-first development.



SASHIKANT BARIK CO-FOUNDER, ACRERISE

How is AcreRise contributing to the transformation of Bhubaneswar's real estate market?

At AcreRise, we are redefining Bhubaneswar's real estate with a future-forward vision where scale, lifestyle and sustainability converge. Our projects reflect this—One World offers global-standard living, Azure redefines riverfront luxury, Aura blends nature with sustainability, and Amantran delivers smart, well-connected homes.

What strategies has AcreRise used to build a strong reputation in the real estate sector over the past decade?

Over the past decade, we at AcreRise have built a strong reputation by going beyond conventional real estate, anchoring our growth in trust, foresight and a customer-first approach. We prioritise legal transparency and compliance, reflected in our zero RERA-complaint record, strengthening stakeholder confidence.

Our expansion focuses on high-potential micro-markets, supported by over 30 lakh sq. ft. under construction and 35 lakh sq. ft. in the pipeline.

What challenges and opportunities exist in the rapidly growing real estate market of Bhubaneswar?

Bhubaneswar's real estate is entering a dynamic growth phase, driven by infrastructure upgrades and expanding economic corridors that are unlocking new micro-markets. The City is emerging as a strong Tier-2 hub, supported by growth in IT, education and healthcare.

However, challenges persist, including land and regulatory complexities, delayed approvals and rising construction costs. Addressing these issues will be crucial to sustaining balanced, long-term urban development.

How does a forward-looking vision and reliability help real estate companies gain trust among buyers and investors?

A forward-looking vision combined with reliability is key to building trust among today's homebuyers and investors. A customer-first approach—focused on evolving lifestyles, future-ready planning, functional design and inclusive amenities—ensures long-term value. Equally important is consistent execution, with timely delivery and uncompromised quality strengthening credibility.

tion and dependable delivery helps build lasting trust and long-term relationships.

Are there plans to expand beyond Bhubaneswar or diversify into commercial or mixed-use developments?

At AcreRise, we have clear plans to expand both geographically and across asset classes. In Bhubaneswar, we are set to launch a landmark township 'Codename City Centre' envisioned as a future-ready urban community, while also exploring commercial developments in emerging corridors.

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

The inspiration to enter real estate came from recognising a gap where trust, transparency and long-term thinking were often missing. The vision was to go beyond building structures and create developments that deliver lasting value and align with evolving lifestyles.

For aspiring entrepreneurs, the key is to build with purpose and credibility. Focus on legal clarity, quality and customer experience, think long-term, choose locations wisely and ensure timely delivery. Equally important is the ability to adapt, embrace technology and stay ahead of market shifts—because lasting success comes from consistently delivering on your promises.

SBI YONO Aviation Cup held at Bhubaneswar Airport Ground

Bhubaneswar: State Bank of India LHO Bhubaneswar organised SBI YONO Aviation Cup 2026 at Bhubaneswar Airport ground from April 10 to 18 and total eight teams participated. The final match was played between AAI and CISF Saturday.



Prashant Kumar, DGM SBI Bhubaneswar handed over the winning trophy to CISF. Other officials present during the final match were CASO Rakesh Choudhary, AGM Kola Balaji, CM Umakant Dixit, CM Jangyaseni Baral, Deputy Manager Santosh Kumar Prusty, inspector Pramod Kumar Sahoo, sub inspector Parth Pal. At the end, Prashant elaborately presented the use of SBI YONO.

Tata Motors kick-starts 'Coast to Hill Drive Challenge' with Intra EV

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 18: Tata Motors kick-started the 'Coast to Hill Drive Challenge' with Tata Intra EV at Trupti Automotives, Nakhara Saturday. The initiative is a step towards the company's accelerating electric mobility in the commercial vehicle segment in India.

Through this drive challenge, the Tata Intra EV's real-world performance across diverse terrains will be showcased. The drive will cover a route from Balasore to Malkangiri to Rourkela and then back to Balasore. In doing so, the vehicle will showcase its capability across coastal plains to challenging hilly regions.



malendu Mohanty, Managing Director, Trupti Automotives, said, "Through the Coast to Hill Drive Challenge, we aim to demonstrate that electric vehicles are not limited by terrain or distance. This initiative will help dispel long-standing myths around range, durability, and charging infrastructure, while showcasing the vehicle's capability in real operating conditions. We believe this will play a key role in accelerating EV adoption among commercial users."

Adding to this, Ankit Mohanty, Director, Trupti Automotives noted, "This initiative goes beyond showcasing a product; it is about building confidence and awareness among users. The Intra EV is designed to be efficient, cost-effective, and future-ready, catering to evolving business needs across urban and rural markets, while promoting a more sustainable future."

IRAN OIL SHOCK

US renews Russian oil waiver after pressure

REUTERS

Washington, April 18: The Trump administration Friday renewed a waiver allowing countries to buy sanctioned Russian oil at sea for about a month, even as lawmakers accused the government of going easy on Moscow as its war on Ukraine grinds on.

The Treasury Department's waiver lets countries purchase Russian oil and petroleum products loaded on vessels as of Friday through May 16. It replaces a 30-day waiver that expired on April 11 and excludes transactions involving Iran, Cuba and North Korea.

The move is part of the administration's effort to control global energy prices that have shot higher during the US-Israeli war with Iran. It came after countries in Asia, suffering from the global energy shock, pressed Washington to allow alternative supplies to reach markets.

Global oil prices tumbled 9% Friday to about \$90 a barrel after Iran temporarily reopened the Strait of Hormuz, an oil choke point in the Gulf. But the war has already created the worst global energy supply disruption in history, the International Energy Agency has said.

CHHATTISGARH BOILER BLAST

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 18: In a strong and unequivocal statement, Lok Sabha MP and Chairman Jindal Steel, Naveen Jindal has come out in support of Vedanta Group Chairman Anil Agarwal, raising serious concerns over due process and the manner in which the recent boiler blast accident in Singhitari in Chhattisgarh is being handled.

Referring to the tragedy, Jindal stated, "The tragedy in Chhattisgarh is deeply painful. 20 families have lost everything. Proper compensation, livelihood support for the families, and a thorough investigation are non-negotiable."

Naveen slams FIR against Agarwal



ly questioned the decision to name Agarwal in the FIR before the facts have been established. "But naming Shri @AnilAgarwal_Ved Ji in the FIR before any investigation raises serious concerns. He is a self-made man from a humble and backward community background who built a global enterprise from scratch. He had no role in that



plant's operations," he said. Highlighting the inconsistency in standards applied across sectors, Jindal pointed out, "When accidents happen in PSU plants or Railways, do we name the Chairman? We do not. The same standard must apply to the private sector too." He further underscored the importance of due process.

"Investigate first. Establish responsibility based on evidence. Then act," he added.

Rallying support for Agarwal on the injustice meted out to him, Jindal appealed to leading industry bodies, "Industry chambers @FollowCII, @ASSOCHAM4India, @ficci_india, @phdchamber and @ICC_Chamber, you have a responsibility beyond conferences and policy papers."

Jindal's remarks have added a significant voice to the ongoing debate around accountability, fairness, and the need to uphold due process, especially in matters that have far-reaching implications for India's investment climate and institutional credibility.

DC spoil RCB's party

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE



Miller takes Delhi home with last-over exploits after Stubbs, Rahul set up chase

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, April 18: David Miller sort of redeemed himself with two last-over sixes after KL Rahul made a 57 rooted in classicism and Tristan Stubbs produced an equally chic 60 as Delhi Capitals edged Royal Challengers Bengaluru by six wickets in their IPL match here Saturday.

Considering the slow nature of this particular Chinnaswamy strip and the quality in RCB bowling ranks, the chase of 176 was never going to be

straightforward. Miller (22 not out 10b) could not take Delhi home in the outing against Gujarat Titans when they needed two off 2 balls, inviting sharp criticism.

However, he did not make any mistake today, hammered Romario Shepherd for two huge sixes as DC, who needed 15 runs off the last over, scampered home and RCB crashed to their second defeat of the season.

DC found saviours at various times in Rahul (57, 34b), Stubbs (60 not out, 47b) and Axar Patel (24 retired hurt) by six wickets in their IPL match here Saturday.

Rahul played an innings of rare quality, a bit un-T20 if you may, to rescue DC from a disastrous start and set the chase in order. He took a par-

ticular liking for Josh Hazlewood, carving him for a total of two sixes and three fours.

In fact, both his sixes were of amazing quality - the first one an inside out lofted shot over covers and the second a flick, which he executed through a last minute snap of wrist.

Rahul fetched his fifty in 30 balls but fell to Krunal Pandya, hitting the spinner into the hands of a diving Virat Kohli at long-on.

By then Rahul and Stubbs added 69 runs for the fourth wicket as DC walked back from a precarious 18 for three in 2.5 overs. Stubbs and Axar added 47 for the fifth wicket before the latter had to hobble off the field with a niggle.

At that time DC were 134 for four in 15.5 overs, needing to score 45 off 25 balls.

But Stubbs found an able ally in Miller as they knocked off those runs with a ball to spare.

It would have been hugely satisfying for them as Bhuvneshwar Kumar (3/26) had plucked the wickets of Pathum Nissanka, Karun Nair and Sameer Rizvi in his opening burst, showing virtues of old school swing bowling.

Earlier, despite Phil Salt producing a well-crafted 63, Capitals muffed the big guns in RCB's batting unit to restrict the defending champions to a sub-par 175 for eight.

After being asked to bat first, RCB's start was anything but smooth as the Capitals bowlers stuck to a good line in the first four overs.

IPL STANDINGS					
TEAMS	P	W	L	NRR	PTS
PBKS	5	4	0	1.067	9
RCB	6	4	2	1.171	8
RR	5	4	1	0.889	8
SRH	6	3	3	0.566	6
DC	5	3	2	0.310	6
GT	5	3	2	0.018	6
CSK	6	2	4	-0.780	4
LSG	5	2	3	-0.804	4
MI	5	1	4	-1.076	2
KKR	6	0	5	-1.149	1

Virat Kohli (19), who added 52 runs for the first wicket with Salt whose fifty came off 38 balls, played a couple of delectable shots off pacer Mukesh Kumar and his partner from England too unfurled a cracking four off Aaquib Nabi.

BRIEF SCORES

Royal Challengers Bengaluru: 175/8 in 20 overs (Phil Salt 63; Axar Patel 2/18, Kuldeep Yadav 2/32, Lungi Ngidi 2/39) lost to **Delhi Capitals:** 179/4 in 19.5 overs (KL Rahul 57, Tristan Stubbs 60 not out; Bhuvneshwar Kumar 3/26) by six wickets

Bowlers star in Sunrisers' hard-earned win over CSK



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, April 18: Sri Lankan pacer Eshan Malinga's pinpoint yorkers found perfect support in unheralded left-arm wrist spinner Shivang Kumar as Sunrisers Hyderabad edged past Chennai Super Kings by 10 runs in a gripping IPL thriller here Saturday.

Chasing a victory target of 195, CSK finished at 184 for 8 largely due to Malinga (3/29 in 4 overs) and Shivang's (1/18 in 3 overs) superb execution in the post Powerplay overs.

CSK needed only 84 runs in the last 10 overs, perfectly gettable in this day and age of T20s but Malinga's blend of yorkers, hard lengths and short balls really kept them quite while Shivang also got appreciable turn and bounce to make life difficult for the Yellow Brigade.

The defeat kept CSK in seventh place while SRH moved to fourth place in the 10-team table. CSK have not chased a 190-plus target in the last eight years now.

CSK needed 18 off the last over bowled by Praful Hinge,

TODAY'S MATCHES

KKR vs RR
TIME: 3:30 PM

PBKS vs LSG
TIME: 7:30 PM

Star Sports channels & JioHotstar

who had gone for 50 plus in his first three overs, and the Vidarbha pacer kept his cool giving away only seven runs while snuffing out the dangerous Jamie Overton.

Sanju Samson started with a first ball six but Nitish Reddy, having added a few yards of pace, hit the hard length to get rid of him quickly.

Ayush Mhatre (30 off 13 balls) started from where he left with a flurry of fours and a six but a hamstring injury did affect his concentration.

It took a brilliant catch from Heinrich Klaasen to send him back and an out of sorts Ruturaj Gaikwad (19 off 12 balls) got a heavy ball from Malinga

to glove it to Salil Arora behind stumps.

At 66 for 3, Sarfaraz Khan (25 off 19 balls) and Matthew Short (34 off 30 balls) added 46 before the Mumbai right-hander lost control off a flick off Malinga to be caught at deep mid-wicket.

Dewald Brevis (0) played the most irresponsible shot off Shivang Kumar to be caught in the deep before Short and Shivam Dube (21 off 16 balls) added another 35 but certainly not at a quick clip.

Earlier, Sunrisers Hyderabad batting unit imploded despite Abhishek Sharma's rollicking half-century as Chennai Super Kings pacers Overton and Kamboj headlined a fine bowling show to restrict the hosts to 194 for 9.

BRIEF SCORES

Sunrisers Hyderabad: 194 for 9 in 20 overs (Abhishek Sharma 59, Heinrich Klaasen 59; Jamie Overton 3/37, Anshul Kamboj 3/22) beat **Chennai Super Kings:** 184 for 8 in 20 overs. (Ayush Mhatre 30, Matthew Short 34; E Malinga 3/29, N Reddy 2/31) by 10 runs

PCI terminates services of coach Naval after athletes' complaint

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 18: Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) has terminated the services of coach Naval Singh with immediate effect after Paralympic gold-medallist Sumit Antil accused the Dronacharya awardee of mental harassment and verbal abuse in a complaint to the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

In a letter dated Friday but not addressed to any particular individual, PCI president Devendra Jhajharia said Naval has been removed from all Paralympic Committee activities.

"On receiving complaints from Paralympic medallist Mr Sumit Antil and several others regarding alleged misconduct, inappropriate behaviour, and harassment by coach Mr Naval Singh, the matter was carefully reviewed. The complaints were duly examined, and the athletes were given a fair opportunity to present their concerns," the letter said.

"Because the allegations were serious and there was initial evidence of misconduct, the Paralympic Committee of India held an emergency meeting... After reviewing the oral hearings and written complaints, and considering the seriousness of the concerns and the need to protect athletes' interests and maintain proper standards, the Committee found that the alleged conduct did not meet expected standards. Therefore, the Committee unanimously decided to terminate the services of coach Naval Singh with immediate effect and remove him from all Paralympic Committee activities," Jhajharia wrote in the letter.

Strangely, some PCI officials said that Naval Singh has not been a para athletics coach since 2025 and he has been associated only with able-bodied javelin thrower Sachin Yadav who had finished fourth at the World Championships in Tokyo last year.

"Since 2025, Naval Singh is not designated as the coach of Para Athletics by the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI). This, we have clarified to the ministry," a PCI official told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Odisha cueist Subrat continues dominant run

POST NEWS NETWORK

Carlow (Ireland), April 18: Odisha cueist Subrat Das has made a strong start at the Irish Open Billiards Championship 2026, showcasing impressive form on the international stage. He opened his campaign with a convincing 217-174 win over England's Terry Azor in a one-hour clash, compiling solid breaks and crossing the 200 mark with ease.

Continuing his dominant run, Subrat defeated Scotland's Peter Staney 230-116 in his second league match. The veteran cueist's consistent performances underline his experience and intent to make a deep run in the tournament. He is scheduled to meet multiple-time world champion Mike Russell in his last league match.

Following the Irish Open, he will compete in the Macau World Matchplay Billiards Championship from April 20 to 24, featuring the fast-paced 100-up point format. These back-to-back events will serve as vital preparation ahead of the



marquee IBSF World Billiards Championship, scheduled from April 24 to 29, where matches will be contested in the traditional time format.

With consistent performances in domestic and international circuits, Subrat Das carries the hopes of Odisha and the nation as he embarks on this challenging European tour, aiming to make a significant mark at the IBSF World Billiards Championship.

WOMEN'S T20 SERIES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Durban, Apr 18: South Africa captain Laura Wolvaardt punished a wayward Indian bowling attack to script a clinical six-wicket win in the Women's T20 series opener here Friday.

With the bat too, India never got the momentum they needed to end up with 157 for seven.

The visitors were disciplined with the ball, conceding 14 runs in wides as South Africa coasted to the target in 19.1 overs. Wolvaardt (51 off 39 balls) laid the platform for a convincing win.

Annerie Dercksen (44 not out off 34) completed the job for the home team with a power-packed effort.

The second game of the five-match series will be played here Sunday.

The series serves as a warm-up for both teams ahead of the T20 World Cup in the UK in a couple of months.

India, who have won their last four series, clearly have work to do going into the next game.

Spinners Shreyanka Patil and Shree Charani were effective but the pacers let the

Eves lose series opener to SA



The second game of the five-match series will be played Sunday

team down. Arundhati Reddy was all over the place and given due treatment by the South

Africa batters.

The Indian lower-order too failed to deliver in the last five overs, resulting in India putting up a below-par total.

Shreyanka got the early breakthrough of Sune Luus but the pressure was released from the other end. Wolvaardt did not look back after dispatch-

ing Deepti Sharma for three boundaries in the fourth over. Shreyanka returned to the attack and instantly sent back Wolvaardt but the damage was already done. Chloe Tryon ended the game with a six off Deepti.

Earlier, India got off to a flier with Shafali Verma (34 off 20) leading the their charge.

Shafali struck five fours and a straight six off spinner Sune Luus in her cameo after being dropped at mid-off in the second over of the innings.

Her more accomplished opening partner Smriti Mandhana (13 off 14), did not last long and was caught after cover after failing to get the aerial distance on her drive off South Africa's lead pacer Ayabonga Khaka.

BRIEF SCORES

India 157 for 7 in 20 overs (Jemimah Rodrigues 36, Harmanpreet Kaur 47 not out; Ayabonga Khaka 3/16) lost to **South Africa** 158 for 4 in 19.1 overs (Laura Wolvaardt 51, Annerie Dercksen 44 not out; Shreyanka Patil 2/26) by six wickets

AFI flags 90% substandard synthetic tracks nationwide

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 18: Ninety per cent of the synthetic tracks currently used in the country are substandard "material-wise, laying-wise, marking-wise", said Athletics Federation of India (AFI) spokesperson Adille Sumariwalla in a shocking revelation Saturday.

Sumariwalla said the AFI has been told by World Athletics to get involved into the matter and clean up the mess. He, however, said there is no danger of results or performances of athletes being annulled due to the substandard tracks.

"I'm not going to name the tracks, but I can tell you 90% plus tracks in India are substandard material-wise, laying-wise, marking-wise. We had a meeting with World Athletics in Tokyo (last year

during World Championships), they showed us some data, which was quite shocking," Sumariwalla said during a virtual press conference.

"We have seen tracks where they put rubber of tyres below and only put red paint on top. It's that bad. Now what will happen? That will get finished over a period of time. In a few months, it will be finished. Nobody will be able to run on it."

He said the AFI, during its Annual General Meeting in Kohima April 14 and 15, has decided to get involved in track certification.

"They (World Athletics) were not happy with the quality that was being certified. So AFI will now help in certifying and ensuring that all standards of measurement and quality are met," said the former AFI president and currently World Ath-



letics vice president.

"We are working out on how we are going to go about. What is happening is that a lot of people are fly-by-night

They're not even proper vendors. So we need to look at the quality of the vendors. We will probably come out with a list of vendors who are genuine

The material used is substandard, the process is substandard, the granules used are substandard, the laying methodology is substandard. The thickness is substandard, instead of polyurethane, only rubber or tyre rubber is being used in some

ADILLE SUMARIWALLA | SPOKESPERSON, AFI

vendors worldwide and whose substances are to be used.

"We actually conducted a course with foreign experts coming to India to make our officials understand how a track is to be measured, how a track is to be tested what needs to be done during the time when the laying happens. So we had some foreign experts who had come down to explain to us how that is to be done. Sumariwalla said the AFI

was never involved in track certification earlier.

"We stayed away from this for a very long time, because the way the tracks have been awarded etc. is not something that we want to get into.

"We've never certified any track earlier. However, from now on we'll have to get involved because World Athletics has called us and said you need to get involved, we have no option.

Asked if the recently-laid Mondo track at New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium was under the scanner, Sumariwalla said, "No, I don't know. I'm not going to get into details on which track and where.

He, however, made it clear that India has World Athletics certified tracks and those need not be re-certified again.