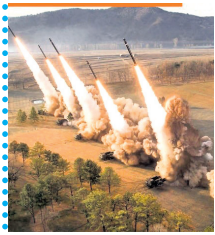




Janhvi's confession

Janhvi Kapoor calls her past alcohol addiction a deeply challenging phase of her life

LEISURE | P2



NK fires missiles

North Korea fires multiple short-range ballistic missiles into sea amid warnings over its nuclear weapons progress

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Penny stocks plunge

At least 7 penny stocks emerge as major losers in 2026 calendar year, plunging between 40 per cent and 70 per cent

BUSINESS | P11



KKR finally wins

Former champions Kolkata Knight Riders register first win of the season as they defeat Rajasthan Royals by four wickets in the IPL

SPORTS | P12



BOAT RIDE FEST: Two boats - 'Nanda' and 'Bhadra' - being readied for the 21-day long 'Chandan Yatra' of Lord Jagannath and His Siblings at Narendra Pond in Puri, Sunday

OP PHOTO

At least 23 killed in TN cracker unit blast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Virudhunagar (Tamil Nadu), April 19: At least 23 people were charred to death, and six others sustained grievous injuries following a massive explosion at a private firecracker manufacturing unit near here, police said Sunday.

According to police and fire services officials, four of the six injured are in critical condition and are undergoing treatment at Virudhunagar Government Medical College Hospital.

The explosion occurred at 'Vanaja' fireworks factory owned by one Muthumanickam, in Kattannarpatti near here. The place is located within the Vachakara-patti police station limits.

Preliminary investigations suggest that the unit reportedly holds a licence from Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO), Nagpur. Over 100 labourers were reportedly engaged in work in the complex.

The blast is believed to have



originated in the front veranda area, where workers were allegedly handling raw materials and engaged in the final stages of manufacturing firecrackers. "We have recovered 23 bodies so far, many of which were charred beyond recognition," a police official told PTI.

The officials are yet to ascertain the sex of the bodies recovered.

In a post on X, Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin said, "The tragic news of the deaths of several people in the firecracker unit explosion that occurred in Kattannarpatti, Virudhunagar district, causes immense sorrow. My deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives."

ITI principal rapes Deogarh minor girl

Deogarh: A minor girl studying in a government-run Industrial Training Institute (ITI) under Barkote police limits in this district was allegedly raped by the principal of the institute for over one month. The 17-year-old girl, in her complaint lodged at the police station, accused the principal, Ratikant Parida, of sexually assaulting her and coercing her to perform domestic chores for over a month. Parida used to ask her for massage too, the survivor alleged. The matter came to light after the victim, a resident of a local childcare home 'Support', returned to the facility for a scheduled break. Police registered a case under Sections 64(2) (F) and 64(2) (M) of BNS, along with Section 6 of the POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences) Act and began a probe. P5

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Boss wants the copy of Model Code of Conduct NOW

INDIA'S FIRST

Stone laid for 3D glass chip packaging unit

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw laid the foundation stone for an advanced 3D Glass Solution semiconductor project at Info Valley here. The unit's components are expected to be used in emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence, high-performance computing, and defence electronics.

The project, being set up with an investment of ₹1,943 crore, is expected to generate nearly 2,500 jobs in the state. It will have an annual production capacity of 70,000 glass panels, 50 million assembled units, and 13,200 advanced 3DHI modules.

The project, featuring a state-of-the-art glass substrate packaging unit, is expected to significantly strengthen the state's position in India's growing semiconductor ecosystem.

Speaking at the event, Union Railways, Information and Broadcasting, and Electronics & Informa-



tion Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw praised the Chief Minister's commitment to industrial growth and employment generation in the state. He said Odisha has entered a new era of development and described the project as a landmark initiative for the future of the semiconductor industry.

He noted that glass substrate packaging technology is set to become a key driver of next-generation semiconductor manufacturing, adding that the product to be made at the Odisha unit would be the first of its kind in India.

Majhi said the day is memorable not only for Odisha but also for India's journey toward technological leadership. He stated that the proj-

ect would establish the country's first advanced 3D glass substrate packaging facility.

The CM said global giants such as Intel, Lockheed Martin and Applied Materials associating with 3D Glass Solution reflected growing international confidence in Odisha.

He said Odisha has now become a preferred destination for investors due to its abundant natural resources, world-class infrastructure, skilled youth workforce, strong connectivity, and responsive governance. Majhi further said Odisha has attracted investments of more than ₹10,000 crore in the semiconductor sector. Companies such as RIR Power Electronics and SiCsem have already established units in the state.

Calling upon the youth, the CM said this is a golden opportunity for Odisha's students and engineers to build careers in advanced technology sectors. "With resources, talent, infrastructure and determination, Odisha is ready. If you want to build the technology of tomorrow — Odisha is your destination," he added.

8 kids dead in US mass shootings

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Shreveport (US), April 19: A gunman in Louisiana killed eight children in shootings at two different homes early Sunday in the nation's deadliest mass shootings in more than two years, police in Shreveport said.

The victims ranged in age from one to about 14 years old, said Shreveport police spokesperson Chris Bordelon. A total of 10 were shot and some of the chil-

dren were related to the suspect, Bordelon said.

The gunman later died after a chase with officers who fired at the suspect, Bordelon said. The suspect stole a car while leaving the scene of the shootings and was followed by police, according to Bordelon.

Police did not release the name of the suspect but did say he was an adult male. The shootings were the result of a "domestic disturbance", Bordelon said.

Officials said they were

still gathering details at the crime scenes south of downtown Shreveport - the two homes and a third location.

"This is an extensive scene unlike anything most of us have ever seen," he said.

It was the deadliest mass shooting in the US since eight people were killed in a Chicago suburb in January 2024, according to a database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in partnership with Northeastern University.

Humanoid robot beats world record

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beijing, April 19: A humanoid robot that won a half-marathon race for robots in Beijing Sunday ran faster than the human world record in a show of China's technological leaps.

The winner from Honor, a Chinese smartphone maker, completed the 21-km (13-mile) race in 50 minutes and 26 seconds, according to a WeChat post by the Beijing Economic-Technological Development Area, also known as Beijing E-Town, where the race kicked off.

That was faster than the human world record holder, Uganda's Jacob Kiplimo, who finished the same distance in about 57 minutes in March at the Lisbon road race.

The performance by the robot marked a significant step forward from last year's inaugural race, during which the winning robot finished in 2 hours, 40 min-



utes and 42 seconds. But the competition, which was held alongside a race for humans, wasn't without hiccups — one robot fell flat at the start line, another bumped into a barrier.

Du Xiaodi, Honor's test development engineer, said his team was happy with the results. Du said its robot design was modeled on outstanding human athletes, with long legs of about 95 cm (around 37 inches), and was equipped with what he called a powerful liquid-cooling system, which was largely developed in-

house. "Looking ahead, some of these technologies might be transferred to other areas. For example, structural reliability and liquid-cooling technology could be applied in future industrial scenarios," he said.

While it will still take time to achieve widespread commercialisation of humanoid robots, spectators were already impressed by the robots. Sun Zhigang, who had been in the audience last year, watched Sunday's race with his son.

"I feel enormous changes this year," Sun said. "It's the first time robots have surpassed humans, and that's something I never imagined." Wang Wen, who came with his family, said robots seemed to have stolen much of the spotlight from human runners in the event.

"The robots' speed far exceeds that of humans," he said. "This may signal the arrival of sort of a new era."

Schools in 3 dists shut for four days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: In view of the severe heatwave conditions in the state, district administrations of Khurda, Nayagarh and Deogarh have announced temporary closure of all schools and Anganwadi centres from April 20 to 23, while Angul has shut the schools from April 20 to 22.

Collectors of the four districts have instructed the education officials to enforce the orders immediately, prioritising the well-being of students, teachers, and staff amid rising temperatures.

In cases where examinations are already scheduled, authorities have directed to conduct them only during morning hours to minimise exposure to extreme heat.

Earlier, the state govt had announced holidays for schools and colleges in eight districts — Sambalpur, Nuapada, Jharsuguda, Subarnaur, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Boudh and Mayurbhanj.

Meanwhile, mercury soared above 40 degrees Celsius in 13 districts, with Jharsuguda recording the highest at 43.3 degrees Celsius.

ପରିଚ୍ଛା | OrissaPOST

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WITHERSPOON URGES WOMEN TO LEARN AI

Amid Hollywood's growing AI conversation, Reese Witherspoon is urging women to stay ahead. The Oscar winner revealed she's learning AI, citing that women's jobs face higher automation risk while adoption remains lower. Through Instagram, she invited others to join her journey to understand and embrace the fast-evolving technology

FRENCH ACTRESS NADIA FARES PASSES AWAY

Nadia Fares, known for her work in both French and international cinema, has passed away at the age of 57. The actor died days after being found unconscious in a swimming pool in Paris April 11. She was rushed to hospital and remained in a coma before passing away April 17



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
 So, busy bee, you finally realise you've been ignoring your near and dear. And now, it's going to cost you a lot of effort to make it up to them. Dinner at the finest restaurant, a trip to the theatre, shopping at a posh boutique... be ready to splurge, says Ganesh!

TAURUS
 Your think tank will be running on overdrive today. Your possessiveness might kick in to cause a conflict. Keep your anger under the carpet to avoid any unnecessary complications. Introspection will also play upon your thoughts, leading you to explore your problems and pry for solutions, predicts Ganesh.

GEMINI
 The day promises sensitivity and compassion for you, predicts Ganesh. You may plan a trip with your family members. You may also invest your money in various financial companies, as securing the future of your family will be foremost on your mind. Moreover, you will also save some hefty amount to meet future needs.

CANCER
 A day to indulge in fantasy. Your ideas will be fantastic. Your status and prestige go up. People will praise your efforts. (Your efforts will be appreciated). A day of creativity and success, with Ganesh's blessings in tow.

LEO
 Chess is a good start, but it is nothing compared to the strategic intrigues of your day today. Arguments will lead to further arguments, and nowhere else, reminds Ganesh. So, it only makes sense to counter a disagreement with an agreement. But then again, total agreement is doubly secretive. At the end of the day, all that matters is to get people to agree with you, even if it means having to eat humble pie in the beginning. Confused? Well, don't be. Just remember that you shall have the last laugh, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
 Children will be a source of a lot of appreciation today, in and out of the classroom. Your logical abilities will become stronger. Ganesh advises you to stay peaceful, flow with the tide and enjoy yourself, regardless of what happens in the day.

LIBRA
 Ganesh says today is a fortunate day for starting new work. You will win the hearts of everyone with your amazing charm. Your house and its arty interior decoration will impress people.

SCORPIO
 Do your deeds and don't expect returns is what Indian mythology has taught us since time immemorial. Now, it's time to implement it, especially at work. You may have to wait a little longer in terms of your business and joint venture. However, don't lose hope as the fruits of patience are sweet.

SAGITTARIUS
 Good Samaritans around you may give unsolicited, but valuable advice. Take it as a hint, and consider it for your betterment. Take your decision after following the advice, and this may definitely yield benefits, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
 Not everyday is the same day. And, today is one of those days when you feel extremely confused, feels Ganesh. While you won't be able to get rid of negative emotions, your hard work will be paid off and lay a strong foundation for future. You'll not understand whether to feel good about your achievements or experience sadness of confusion.

AQUARIUS
 You always see the larger picture, and desire to channelise all your energies towards making things better. Such positive approach makes you an excellent team player, and enables you to bring novel ideas and effective solutions to the table, says Ganesh.

PISCES
 This day promises to be filled with much romance, laughter, and fine dining, says Ganesh. You will seem irresistible to the opposite sex. You might also find yourself falling for someone. A breathe of fresh air could wait into old relationships, or new ones could be formed. However, this is likely to be a drawn out process. You could find yourself dining out with friends, later on in the evening.

JANHVI'S HONEST CONFESSION

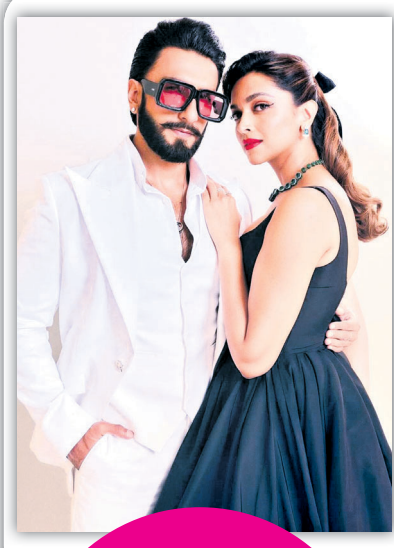
MUMBAI: Janhvi Kapoor recently opened up about her past struggle with alcohol addiction, offering a candid account of a phase she describes as deeply challenging and transformative. Speaking at an awareness event, she addressed the issue without hesitation, emphasising that addiction should be understood as a mental health concern rather than judged as a moral failure.

Janhvi revealed that what began as occasional drinking gradually turned into dependency, creeping into her life almost unnoticed. She described alcohol as a "villain" that quietly took control, affecting her emotional well-being and daily routine. The reality of her situation struck when frequent hangovers and a growing aversion to alcohol forced her to confront the damage it had caused.

She shared that addiction can feel like living with an

unfamiliar presence, one that alters behaviour and distances individuals from loved ones. In her case, it led to withdrawal from friends and family, making the journey even more isolating. Recognising the need for change, she took deliberate steps to regain control, underlining that recovery requires both self-awareness and sustained effort.

Through her experience, Janhvi stressed the importance of empathy and support, urging society to approach addiction with compassion rather than stigma.



DeepVeer embrace parenthood again

MUMBAI: Beloved Bollywood couple Deepika Padukone and Ranveer Singh are all set to embrace parenthood for the second time. Sunday, Deepika made her pregnancy announcement with an adorable social media post.

She took to her official Instagram handle and published a cute pic of her daughter Dua holding a positive pregnancy test.

The *Cocktail* actress simply captioned the post with two evil eye emojis. As soon as the post reached the netizens, they started congratulating the mommy-to-be in the comment section.

Actress Bhumi Pednekar wrote, "Congratulations", followed by a red heart emoji. Samantha Ruth Pramedha commented with a few red

heart emojis. Parineeti Chopra wrote, "Congratsssssss", along with kissy emojis. For those who do not know, Deepika and Ranveer's romantic saga blossomed on the set of Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Goliyon Ki Raasteela Ram-Leela*.

In 2015, during a romantic Maldives getaway, Ranveer proposed to Deepika. However, the couple kept their engagement under wraps for three years.

After keeping their admirers guessing for a long time, the couple tied the knot November 14 and 15, 2018, in a stunning ceremony at Italy's Lake Como.

Deepika and Ranveer welcomed their first child, daughter Dua September 8, 2024.

Others, how-

MUMBAI: Kalki Koechlin has spoken candidly about one of the most emotionally exhausting phases of her life, revealing how heartbreak led to months of severe insomnia and disrupted her overall well-being. During a podcast conversation with Soha Ali Khan, she reflected on how deeply emotional pain can manifest physically.

Kalki shared that the distress of heartbreak extended far beyond her thoughts, affecting her body in ways she hadn't anticipated. She endured prolonged sleeplessness, often waking up in

the early hours of the morning and struggling to return to sleep. The experience made her realise the powerful connection between mental health and physical

functioning, as unresolved emotions began to interfere with her daily life. To cope with the long, restless nights, she turned to simple activities like playing the guitar or keeping herself occupied. However, the lack of rest gradually blurred her sense of reality. She recalled feeling disoriented on working days, unsure whether she was fully awake or still caught in a

SHRUTI loses cool

MUMBAI: Shruti Haasan recently found herself at the centre of attention after an uncomfortable exchange with a paparazzo during a public outing. The incident occurred as she was leaving a restaurant, where photographers had gathered to capture her. Known for usually maintaining a calm rapport with the media, Shruti appeared visibly irritated when a remark crossed a line.

As cameras flashed, a paparazzo addressed her as "mumma," prompting an immediate and sharp response from the actor. Clearly displeased, she snapped back, questioning the remark and calling out the inappropriate familiarity. The moment, caught on camera, quickly went viral on social media, sparking widespread debate.

Online reactions were divided. Many users supported Shruti, criticising paparazzi culture for often becoming overly intrusive and disrespectful. Several pointed out that such remarks blur personal boundaries and reflect a lack of professionalism. Others, how-

ever, questioned whether her reaction was too strong for the situation.

The incident has reignited conversations around celebrity-paparazzi dynamics and the importance of respectful communication in public spaces. Similar confrontations have occurred in the past highlighting an ongoing tension between public figures and the media.

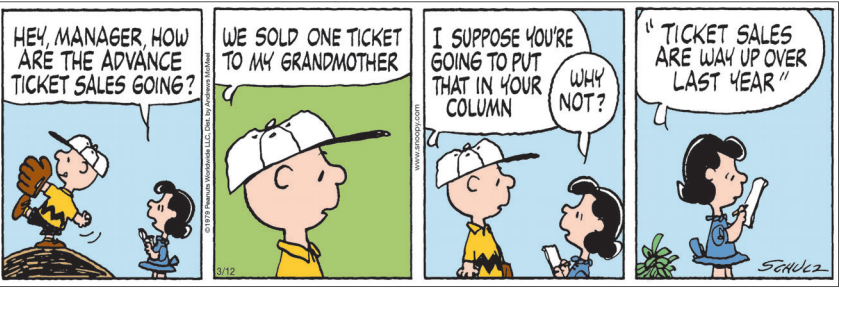
On the work front, Shruti will next be seen in *Aakasamlo Oka Tara* and *Salaar: Part 2*.



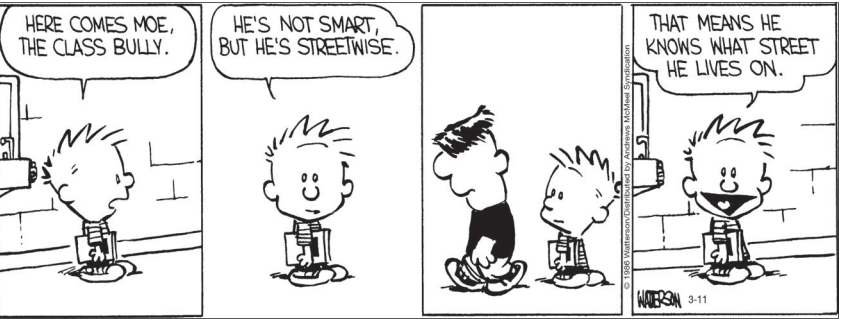
KALKI talks about heartbreak

dreamlike state. Kalki revealed that this phase lasted nearly four months, leaving her mentally and physically drained. Her experience underscores how emotional upheaval can significantly impact one's health and highlights the importance of acknowledging and addressing inner struggles.

PEANUTS



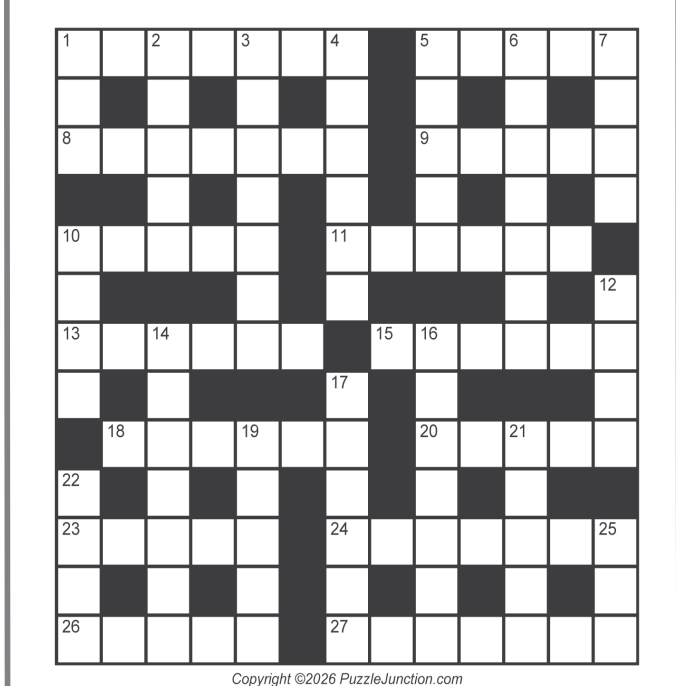
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN POST CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 The best policy?
 - 5 Like prices in a fancy restaurant
 - 8 Gruesome
 - 9 Poker ploy
 - 10 Wait for the door to open
 - 11 Road sign
 - 13 Conforms
 - 15 Machination
 - 18 Golf lesson topic
 - 20 Sweetener
 - 23 Nettle
 - 24 Embodiment
 - 26 Aegean vacation locale
 - 27 Asian river
 - 5 Pompous walk
 - 6 Gastronomist
 - 7 Yeats or Keats
 - 10 Wharf
 - 12 Low dam
 - 14 Type of shoppe
 - 16 Buffer
 - 17 Green vegetable
 - 19 Family girl
 - 21 Hamlet's father, e.g.
 - 22 Oil cartel
 - 25 Storm centre
- Down**
- 1 Skirt's edge
 - 2 Mother-of-pearl
 - 3 Corrupt
 - 4 Concedes

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.

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

SOLUTIONS

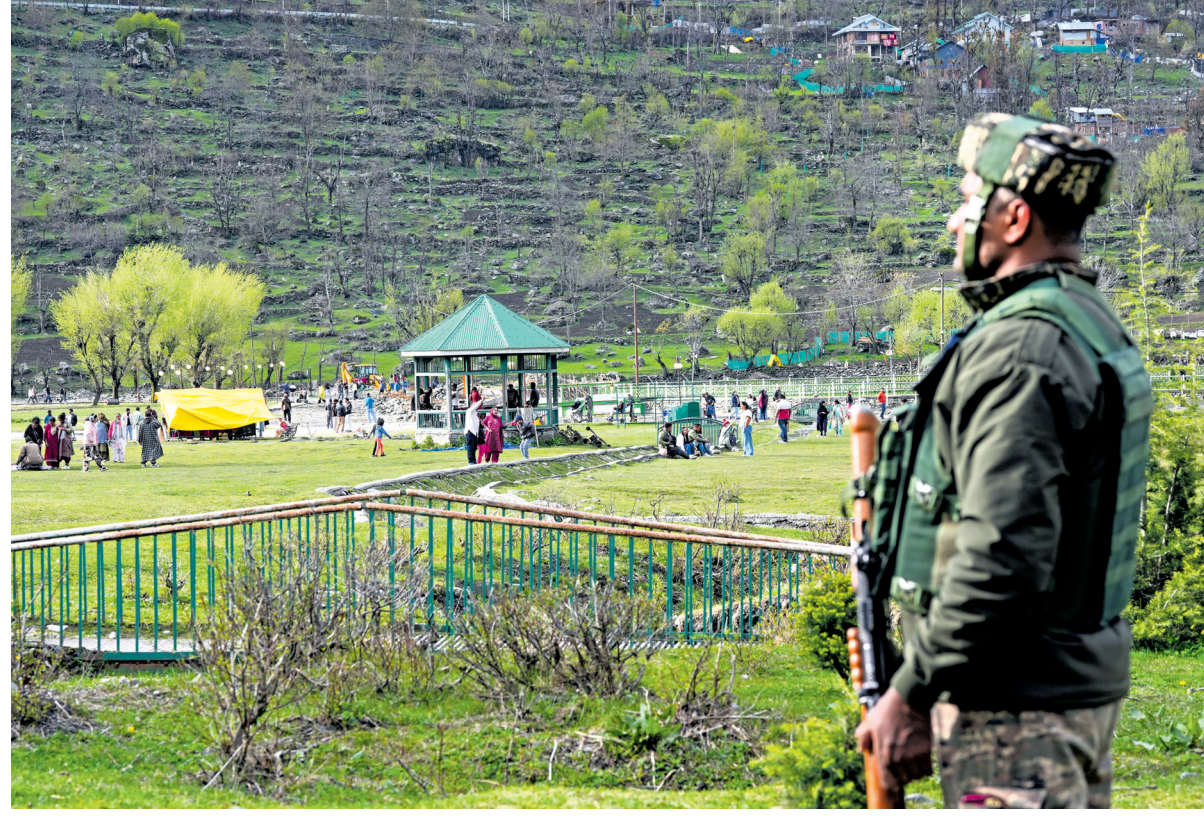
CROSSWORD

L	I	M	I	T	E	D	C	U	T	U	P
E	O	A	R	L	I	E					
P	A	R	S	L	E	Y	I	N	T	E	R
E	A	L	R	N	A	H					
R	A	L	L	I	O	R	G	A	N	I	Z
H	T										
B	A	M	B	O	O	D	I	S	C	U	S
E	E										
A	P	R	I	O	R	I	O	D	D	L	Y
T	I	B	R	L	W	E	O				
L	A	T	T	E	C	H	A	T	E	A	U
E	E	S	U	T	L	T					
S	E	D	G	E		S	T	E	A	L	T

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



SILENT REMEMBRANCE: A security personnel keeps vigil ahead of the first anniversary of the Pahalgam terror attack in Pahalgam, Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir, Sunday

Trump threatens new attacks on Iran

REUTERS

Washington, April 19: US President Donald Trump accused Iran Sunday of a "total violation" of the ceasefire by two countries for firing on ships near the Strait of Hormuz, and renewed a threat to wipe out Iran's bridges and power plants unless it accepts his terms.

"We're offering a very fair and reasonable DEAL, and I hope they take it because, if they don't, the United States is going to knock out every single Power Plant, and every single Bridge, in Iran," he posted on social media.

"NO MORE MR NICE GUY!"

Iran, which has blocked off the strait to ships apart from its own since the United States and Israel attacked February 28, announced Friday it would reopen the strait.



movements after midnight. Friday's announcement that the strait would reopen caused one of the sharpest one-day drops in oil prices in history, and stock markets hit fresh all-time highs on the expectation that the disruption would soon end. That the reopening has yet to take place as anticipated could bring new volatility when markets reopen today.

Talks in Islamabad ended with no agreement last week but security measures were being taken in the Pakistani capital in preparation for potential further meetings.

Earlier, Iran's deputy foreign minister, Saeed Khatibzadeh, said a framework of understanding would have to be agreed for further talks.

Pressure for a way out of the war has mounted on Trump as his fellow Republicans prepare to defend narrow majorities in Congress in the November midterm elections, with U.S. gasoline prices high, inflation rising and his own approval ratings down.

Iran's chief negotiator, Qalibaf, told state media that the talks in Islamabad

2nd round of talks in Pak today: Trump

Trump Sunday said his representatives will be in Pakistan Monday for the second round of talks. "My Representatives are going to Islamabad, Pakistan - They will be there tomorrow evening, for Negotiations," Trump said in a post on Truth Social. Iran, however, rejected renewed second round of peace talks claimed by the US, its state news agency reported Sunday.

Vedanta plant blast: Toll mounts to 24

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, April 19: The death toll in a blast at the Vedanta power plant in Chhatisgarh's Sakti district has gone up to 24 with one more worker succumbing to injuries Sunday, officials said.

Eleven other persons were undergoing treatment in different hospitals. Two of them were reported to be in critical condition, they said.

A worker, identified as Manish Kumar, a native of Sonbhadra in Uttar Pradesh, died during treatment at Raigarh medical college in the wee hours, a government official said. With this, the death toll has gone up to 24 in the incident that occurred April 14. The explosion occurred in a steel tube carrying high-pressure steam from the boiler to the turbine at the Vedanta Ltd power plant located in Singhitara village.

10 held for attack on tehsildar in Jajpur

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jajpur, April 19: Police Sunday arrested 10 people for their alleged involvement in the attempt to mow down a tehsildar-cum-executive magistrate with a tractor while he was conducting a raid against illegal soil mining in Jajpur district.

The incident took place in Korei area of the district Saturday and the injured officer has been identified as Vyasanagar tehsildar Prashant Kumar Panda. Police have arrested 10 accused and also seized seven tractors and two JCB machines used in the illegal operation, said an officer.

"We have arrested 10 persons, including eight



drivers, for their alleged involvement in the murderous attack on Vyasa Nagar tehsildar on duty after conducting raids at different locations of their hideout. Besides, we have seized seven tractors and two JCB machines used in the illegal mining of minor minerals," said Jajpur SP Yashpratap Shrimal.

The arrested persons were forwarded to the local court Sunday and later remanded to judicial custody after their bail applications were rejected, the police said.

2 Indians shot dead in Italy Gurdwara

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rome, April 19: Two Indian men have been shot dead in Italy's Co-vo in Bergamo province just as they were leaving a warehouse used as a place of worship during a gathering for Vaisakhi festival, local media reported Sunday.

The attack occurred Friday, a few minutes before midnight in the square in front of the Gurdwara Mata Sahib Kaur Ji in the industrial area of the town, according to La Sicilia newspaper.

The deceased were identified as Raginder Singh, 48, a resident of Co-vo, and Gurmit Singh, 48, from Agnadello.

Approximately 10 shell casings were recovered from the scene as authorities investigate the hypothesis of a "coldly planned execution".

A witness was quoted as telling reporters that the shooter was "an Indian" who also frequented the gurdwara.

CBI arrests dy DGCA, sr exec for bribery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19: Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested a deputy director general of civil aviation and the senior vice president of a major corporate group in a Rs 2.5 lakh bribery case to facilitate the import of drones for another private company, officials said Sunday.

In an operation, the CBI arrested M Devula, Deputy Director General at the Airworthiness Directorate, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and Bharat Mathur, who is also associated with an aerospace company involved in drone technology- Asteria Aerospace Ltd.

The CBI has booked Mathur, Devula and Asteria Aerospace Ltd under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

The major corporate group where Mathur was working is not listed as accused in the FIR and is the "ultimate parent company" of Asteria Aerospace, according to Asteria Aerospace's financial statements for 2024-25.

No immediate reaction was available from Asteria Aerospace or the corporate group.

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

ସତର୍କତା

- ଦିନ ୧୧ଟା ରୁ ୩ଟା ମଧ୍ୟରେ ଖରା ତାତି ଅଧିକ ଥାଏ। ଏହି ସମୟ ମଧ୍ୟରେ ବାହାରେକୁ ଯାଆନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ। କରୁଣା କାମ ଥିଲେ ବାହାରେକୁ ଯିବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ଯଥେଷ୍ଟ ପାଣି ପିଅନ୍ତୁ ଓ ସାଥରେ ଛତା, ଚପଲ ଓ ପିଲିବା ପାଣି ନିଅନ୍ତୁ
- ଧଳା ରଙ୍ଗର ଢିଲା ପୋଷାକ, ଛତା ଓ ଜୋତା ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତୁ
- ମଝିରେ ମଝିରେ ଛାଇରେ ବିଶ୍ରାମ ନିଅନ୍ତୁ
- ଖରାରେ କଠିନ ପରିଶ୍ରମ କରନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ। ଅଧିକ ଦୂର ଚାଲନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ
- କୌଣସି ପ୍ରକାର ମାଦକ ଦ୍ରବ୍ୟ ସେବନ କରନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ

ପ୍ରତିକାର

- ଅଶୁଭାତ ଆକ୍ରାନ୍ତକୁ ଖୋଲା ଓ ଥଣ୍ଡା ଯାଗାକୁ ନେଇଯାଆନ୍ତୁ, ଓ.ଆର.ଏସ୍./ ଚିନି ଲୁଣ ସର୍ବତ୍ର ସାଦାପାଣି ପିଆନ୍ତୁ
- ପୋଷାକ ଯଥାସମ୍ଭବ ଖୋଲି ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ
- ମୁଣ୍ଡ ଧୋଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ, ଓଦା କପଡ଼ାରେ ପୋଛନ୍ତୁ
- ରୋଗୀକୁ ପଙ୍ଖା/ କୁଲର/ ଏସି ପବନରେ ଶୁଖାଇ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ ଓ ପାଣି ସିଞ୍ଚନ କରନ୍ତୁ
- ଅବସ୍ଥାରେ ଉନ୍ନତି ନହେଲେ ତୁରନ୍ତ ଡାକ୍ତରଖାନା ନେଇ ଚିକିତ୍ସା କରାନ୍ତୁ

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Coastal Odisha to get 4-line rail corridor: Min



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 19: Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw Sunday announced plans for a dedicated four-line railway corridor along coastal Odisha, stretching from Balasore to Berhampur, aimed at significantly enhancing connectivity and easing congestion on the busy Howrah-Chennai main line.

The proposed corridor, to be developed under East Coast Railway, is expected to play a key role in strengthening both passenger and freight movement while supporting the state's economic growth.

Vaishnaw said the initiative is part of a broader push to integrate Odisha more closely with the national rail network.

Reviewing major infrastruc-

ture projects, the minister reiterated the Centre's commitment to transforming railway connectivity across the state.

He inspected the ongoing redevelopment of Bhubaneswar Railway Station under Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, focusing on passenger-centric improvements such as better accessibility, upgraded facilities, enhanced circulation areas, and modern, airport-like amenities.

During his visit, Vaishnaw interacted with passengers, who expressed satisfaction with the ongoing transformation. He directed officials to accelerate the pace of work and ensure timely completion.

The minister also reviewed the proposed elevated corridor on the eastern side of the station and instructed authorities to re-

solve pending issues on priority. He noted that railway projects worth over ₹90,000 crore are currently being executed in the state, marking an unprecedented phase of infrastructure development. The state has also received a record allocation of ₹10,928 crore in the railway budget—nearly 13 times higher than the average allocations in previous decades.

Emphasising inclusive growth, the minister announced a special focus on improving rail connectivity in Western Odisha. Key projects include the Junagarh-Nabarangpur-Jeypore-Malkangiri-Bhadrachalam corridor, which is expected to enhance access to tribal and aspirational regions.

Vaishnaw further informed that 59 railway stations across the state are being redeveloped under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, aimed at providing modern amenities and a better travel experience.

Reaffirming the government's vision, he said railway infrastructure in Odisha will continue to be upgraded with a focus on speed, safety, and passenger comfort, ensuring balanced and inclusive development across all regions of the state.

Ankana creates awareness on autism through art

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: Ankana- the first-ever art exhibition showcasing creative works of two autistic children was held at the Bhubaneswar Press Club here Sunday.

The exhibition offered a vision of creating awareness and promoting inclusivity among children on the autism spectrum in society. The event also stood as a celebration of talent, resilience, and power of expression beyond conventional boundaries. Speaking about the initiative, the organisers, who happen to be mothers of the two children shared, "Ankana aims to provide a sustained platform where neurodivergent children can showcase their hidden talents through various forms of art."



The artworks offered a profound glimpse into the inner worlds of these young artists, reflecting rich imagination, sensitivity, and creativity. Apart from highlighting their artistic abilities, the exhibition also traced their journeys of exploration, growth, and resilience. The showcase emphasised unwavering dedication and support of their families, whose efforts have been instrumental in nurturing their talents and facilitating their inclusion into mainstream society.

Distinguished guests in the event included Pratap Rath, Kasturi Mohapatra, Panchami Manoo Ukil, Swagatika Samantaray, Gargi Bhattacharya, Sujet Mohapatra, and Nilambar Rath.

INT'L CONTENT CREATORS EXPLORE STATE'S RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: Odisha's rich cultural heritage and rapid developmental progress took centre stage as a delegation of social media influencers and content creators from ten Asian countries visited the state from April 16 to 19.

The familiarisation visit, initiated by Ministry of External Affairs, was facilitated by department of Information and Public Relations (I&PR). The delegation included participants from Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The visiting group, comprising travel vloggers, food and lifestyle influencers, wellness bloggers, historians, and documentary filmmakers, explored state's cultural landmarks and traditions.

Their journey began with a visit

to the historic Khandagiri-Udayagiri Caves, where they gained insights into ancient Kalinga's history, Jain heritage, and remarkable rock-cut architecture.

The delegation also visited the iconic Konark Sun Temple, where they experienced the grandeur of its chariot-shaped structure and intricate carvings.

In addition to heritage sites, the influencers were introduced to Odisha's developmental strides. At the World Skill Center here, they observed internationally aligned skill development programmes in hospitality, construction and mechatronics.

The group actively engaged in hands-on experiences, including virtual reality-based training modules, wellness sessions, and technical demonstrations in mechatronics.

A key highlight of the visit was the trip to Raghurajpur

Heritage Crafts Village. The delegation witnessed traditional Pattachitra painting and palm leaf engravings. The influencers interacted with local artisans and attempted to learn intricate art techniques, gaining a deeper appreciation of Odisha's living cultural traditions.

Members of the delegation described their visit as 'enriching' and 'memorable', praising Odisha's warm hospitality, vibrant culture, traditional cuisine, and the friendliness of its people. Many expressed interest in returning and participating in similar initiatives in the future.

The programme was conducted under the guidance of I&PR Director Anuj Kumar Dasgupta, with active support from departmental officials who ensured the smooth execution of the visit.

Jharsuguda sizzles at 43.3 deg Celsius

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 19: Heatwave conditions persisted across large parts of Odisha Sunday, with Jharsuguda emerging as the hottest place in the state at 43.3 degrees Celsius, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

According to the IMD's evening bulletin, at least 14 places in the state recorded maximum temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius or above.

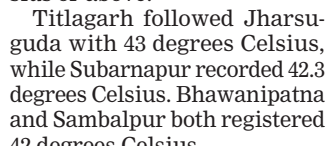
Titlagarh followed Jharsuguda with 43 degrees Celsius, while Subarnapur recorded 42.3 degrees Celsius. Bhawanipatna and Sambalpur both registered 42 degrees Celsius.

Rourkela, Bolangir and Sundargarh recorded 41.5 degrees Celsius each, while Angul logged 41.1 degrees Celsius. Hirakud and Nuapada reported 41 degrees Celsius each, it said.

In contrast, the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack recorded relatively lower temperatures at 36.6 degrees Celsius and 35.8 degrees Celsius, respectively, the bulletin said.

The weather office forecast hot and humid conditions in several districts, including Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam and Gajapati Monday.

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Calling the developments a violation of the spirit of the SC's Niyamgiri judgment and the 1997 Samatha verdict, the CCG said tribal lands and common resources should not be transferred to private entities without proper consultation, consent, and benefit-sharing.

The signatories urged the president to ensure a comprehensive re-examination of the December 2023 Gram Sabha resolutions and sought suspension of the Stage-I forest diversion clearance pending inquiry. They also demanded an immediate halt to road construction in the Sijimali mining area.

Further, the group requested that criminal cases registered against tribal protesters be reviewed by the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes and called for stronger implementation of the Forest Rights Act to protect both individual and community rights of tribal communities.

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SUNDARGRAM HIGH SCHOOL PLATINUM JUBILEE

EDUCATION GETS TOP PRIORITY: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: Highlighting the state's commitment to strengthening education and nurturing future generations, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi said his government gives top priority to education and has allocated the highest percentage among all sectors in 2026-27 state Budget. CM was addressing at Sundargarh Government High School Platinum Jubilee celebration in Cuttack Sunday.

Speaking at the event, CM described the 75-year journey of the institution as a 'remarkable achievement', crediting generations of teachers, founders, and supporters for its success. He said the school has evolved into a key center of social and intellectual growth in the region.

Majhi emphasised that the true pride of any institution lies in the accomplishments of its alumni. He noted that many former students of the school are now serving in prominent positions, contributing to society, and urged current students to follow their example.

Stressing the broader purpose of education, Majhi said it is not confined to academic learning but is equally important for building character and values. He encouraged students to focus on skill development, creativity, and innovation



IN A MAJOR BOOST TO THE SECTOR, MAJHI ANNOUNCED THAT ₹31,997 CRORE HAS BEEN ALLOCATED TO EDUCATION IN 2026-27 STATE BUDGET—THE HIGHEST AMONG ALL SECTORS—ACCOUNTING FOR 10.3 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL BUDGET

while advising them to limit excessive use of mobile phones and social media.

Highlighting reforms, CM pointed to the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020, with increased emphasis on digital education, smart classrooms, and online learning systems. He said such initiatives are transforming the education sector and strength-

ening its quality, especially in rural areas.

In a major boost to the sector, Majhi announced that ₹31,997 crore has been allocated to education in 2026-27 state Budget—the highest among all sectors—accounting for 10.3 per cent of the total budget. He also noted that nearly 20,000 teachers have been recruited in the past 18 months, with more hiring planned.

During the event, four students were felicitated for their achievements, and a commemorative souvenir was unveiled to mark the platinum jubilee. CM assured that the government would consider the school's development demands and take appropriate action.

Local residents also expressed gratitude for the announcement of ₹450 crore for the restoration of the Prachi River, a move expected to benefit the region.

The event was attended by several dignitaries, including Bibhu Prasad Tarai, Chhabi Mallick, noted writer Manoranjan Panigrahi, along with alumni, teachers, and local residents.

WORLD LIVER DAY

Liver transplant soon at SCBMCH: Health Minister

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: Liver transplant services at SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) in Cuttack will be launched soon, announced Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling at an awareness event titled 'The Liver Wellness Summit-2026' to mark World Liver Day here Sunday.

With liver diseases emerging as a global health concern, experts have called for urgent lifestyle changes and increased awareness to curb the rising burden. The summit, held at a City Hotel was organised by Odisha Gastro and Liver Care Foundation, led by noted gastroenterologist and hepatologist Dr Manoj Sahu.

Addressing the gathering, Mahaling highlighted the alarming rise in liver-related ailments, particularly fatty liver disease, which he described as a significant barrier in building a healthy nation. Emphasising prevention, he said that lifestyle modification is crucial for liver health. He also commended Sahu for his contributions to liver care in Odisha.

The day-long summit featured five thematic sessions engaging diverse sections of society. In first session 'Samparka', Sahu interacted with over 300 participants, discussing causes, prevention, and management of liver diseases. He stressed the importance of balanced diet, regular exercise,



avoiding substance abuse, and routine health check-ups.

The second session 'Kritagyata', focused on working professionals, where senior police and fire service officials spoke about the challenges of maintaining health amid demanding schedules and emphasised prioritising personal well-being.

The third session 'Dayitwa', dedicated to senior citizens, highlighted the need for sustained healthy habits in later life to prevent liver complications.

In the fourth session 'Swasthya Lipi', prominent cultural personalities spoke about the role of proper nutrition, adequate sleep, yoga, and pranayama in maintaining overall and liver health and the final session—'Sankalpa' focused on children and nutrition, stressing healthy eating habits from an early age and the importance of maternal care.

The event saw participation from a wide cross-section of society, including officials, healthcare professionals, senior citizens, women, and students. Attendees widely appreciated the initiative for its comprehensive approach to spreading awareness.

SIJIMALI MINING ROW

CCG writes to Prez over wrongful dispossession of tribal lands

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 19: The Constitutional Conduct Group (CCG), a collective of former civil servants from all-India and Central services, has written an open letter to President Droupadi Murmu, expressing concern over the alleged wrongful dispossession of tribal lands in the state and seeking immediate intervention in the contentious Sijimali mining project in Rayagada district.

In the letter addressed to president, the group said it was deeply disturbed by reports of police action in Kantamal village of Rayagada, where tribal residents were allegedly chased while trying to defend their community rights. Media reports cited in the letter claimed that more than 70 people were injured during clashes between villagers and police.

The outfit stated that the affected region falls under the



proposed to be diverted for mining. It claimed that the Stage-I forest clearance granted in December 2025 was based on allegedly fraudulent Gram Sabha resolutions passed in 2023.

According to the letter, villagers have alleged that non-residents participated in Gram Sabha meetings, while names of minors and deceased persons were also shown as attendees. It further claimed that consent was obtained through fraud and manipulation, and that in some cases the meetings may never have actually taken place.

The group also noted that two Gram panchayats had approached the Orissa High Court in February 2025 seeking cancellation of the 2023 resolutions. Though the matter was disposed of in March 2025 with directions to the Centre to consider the concerns raised, road construction work for the mining project allegedly continued under police protection.

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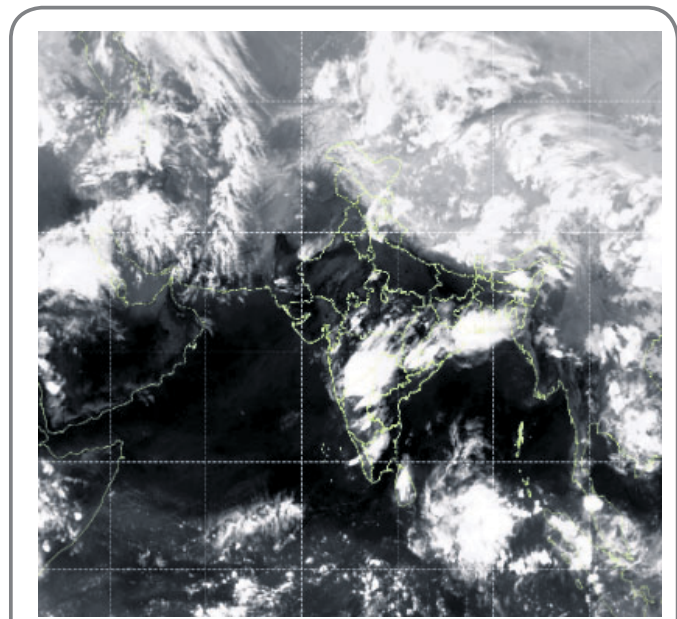
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WEATHER

	BBSR	CTC	FORECAST
Max Temp	36.6°	35.8°	Dry weather very likely to prevail over all the districts of Odisha
Min Temp	27.4°	25.0°	
Humidity	85%	85%	
Rainfall	Nil	Nil	



Forest dept driver critical in assault by timber smugglers

Simulia: A driver of the Forest department sustained critical injuries after being attacked by timber smugglers in Balasore district Sunday morning. The injured official was identified as Atmaram Sen, 29, a driver posted at the Kupari forest range. Sen was initially admitted to the Simulia Community Health Centre and later shifted to Bhadrak Medical College and Hospital. A resident of Saundia village under Makhanpur panchayat in Khaira block, Atmaram was reportedly at his native village when forest officials received information about a vehicle transporting illegal timber from the area. Acting on the tip-off, he chased the vehicle on a motorcycle. The accused allegedly waylaid him on a bridge over the Kansabansa River near the Bakreshwar Mahadev temple, assaulted him and vandalised his motorcycle. The attackers allegedly looted his mobile phone and gold chain before fleeing the spot. A complaint has been lodged against three accused Khanga Rout, Raju Rout and Goutam Rout in connection with the incident.

ASI concerned over illegal construction at key Buddhist site



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/Jajpur, April 19: Voicing concern over man-made interference and encroachment around Udayagiri Buddhist protected archaeological site, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has asked the civil and police administration in Jajpur district to intervene in the matter.

Udayagiri is widely regarded as one of the largest Buddhist complexes in Odisha, showcasing the region's rich Buddhist heritage.

It also forms part of the "Diamond Triangle" of Buddhist heritage sites, along with Lalitgiri and Ratnagiri. The site features ancient monasteries and stupas, with structures dating back to the 7th to 12th centuries.

Illegal construction is reportedly in full swing within prohibited 200-metre radius at the foot protected Buddhist heritage site.

ASI issued stop-work notice to the encroachers under the legal provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.

The District Collector and Superintendent of Police in Jajpur have been informed of the illegality being perpetrated around the prohibited area of

ASI-protected Buddhist heritage site. A police complaint has also been lodged in this connection, said Superintendent Archaeologist, ASI, Puri circle, Dr Dibishada Brajasundar Garnayak.

Visited by the Chinese traveller Hieun Tsang, the Udayagiri-Ratnagiri-Lalitgiri monasteries were centres of learning at par with their famed counterparts of Nalanda and Taxila, according to Buddhist researchers.

The marvellous and gigantic monasteries are uniquely built and leave visitors awestruck. Their distinctive style differs from similar Buddhist monuments found elsewhere in India.

The entire area still possesses a rich reserve of unexplored Buddhist treasures. Ninety per cent of Buddhist archaeological treasures continue to remain hidden underground. If ASI takes up exploring the unexplored remains, the monasteries could lay claim to become one of the finest Buddhist heritage sites of the country, say researchers.

The gigantic stupas and monasteries which bear the signature of Buddhist architectural carving are rare monuments found nowhere in the Indian sub-continent.

Minor student sexually assaulted by ITI principal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Deogarh, April 19: A minor girl studying in a government-run Industrial Training Institute (ITI) under Barkote police limits in this district was allegedly sexually assaulted over a period of one month by the principal of the institute.

The matter came to light after police launched an investigation into the charges after the 17-year-old girl lodged a complaint at the Barkote police station.

The accused principal, identified as Ratikant Parida, allegedly harassed and sexually assaulted the girl over the course of a month. The matter came to the fore after the victim, a resident of a local childcare home named 'Support', returned to the facility on a scheduled break.

Child Welfare Officer Satyapriya Pradhan of the childcare home grew suspicious after finding the student in possession of expensive gifts,



Accused Ratikant Parida

cash, and a mobile phone. Following an inquiry by District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) Romeo Mohapatra, counsellor Subhadra Sahu interviewed the girl, who detailed a pattern of systemic abuse.

According to the complaint, the hostel warden allegedly forced the victim to skip classes and serve food in the principal's private quarters while the other students studied in their classrooms. She was reportedly coerced into perform-

ing domestic chores, such as cleaning, plucking flowers and massaging the principal. The principal allegedly used his car to take the girl to various locations, purchasing snacks and gifts to groom her before engaging in sexual assault.

DCPO Mohapatra, along with childcare home manager Chandrasekhar Sahu and counsellor Subhadra Sahu, accompanied the victim to the Barkote police station and lodged a formal complaint Friday.

Police registered a case (161/26) under Sections 64(2) (F) and 64(2) (M) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), along with Section 6 of the POCSO Act (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences).

"An investigation is underway following the formal complaint," said Sushant Badhai, the Inspector-In-Charge of Barkote police station.

Efforts to contact Parida failed as he did not respond to several attempts to reach him via telephone for comment.

Minor kills self after being stopped from watching television

POST NEWS NETWORK

Simulia, April 19: A 15-year-old girl committed suicide by hanging at Kupura area under this police limits in Balasore district after her mother stopped her from watching television Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Dhariatri Maharana, a student of Class IX at a local Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya. According to reports, the girl was watching TV in the afternoon without bathing or completing her routine when her mother objected. Upset over the reprimand, she went into the bathroom, locked the door from inside and allegedly hanged herself using a towel.

When she did not open the door for a long time, family members broke it open and rushed her to the Simulia hospital, where doctors pronounced her dead. Simulia police seized the body and sent it for post-mortem examination. An unnatural death case has been registered and further investigation is underway.

Tusker tramples woman to death

Riamal: A 65-year-old woman was killed in an elephant attack in a forest under the Kundheigola forest section of the Riamal forest range in Deogarh district Sunday. The deceased was identified as Pati Pradhan of Aunli village. She had gone to the nearby Mahia forest around 8:30am to collect cashew when she encountered a tusker. The animal attacked and trampled her to death. On being informed, senior forest officials and staff reached the scene, launched an inquiry and made efforts to drive the elephant away from the area.

2 students meet watery grave in Ganjam reservoir

Bhanjanagar: Two students of Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja College here in Ganjam district drowned in Bhanjanagar reservoir Sunday afternoon, police said. The deceased were identified as Kahna Pradhan and Ashutosh Bhuyan of Lalsingh. Their bodies have been kept at the Bhanjanagar hospital for post-mortem examination, which will be conducted Monday. Police reached the hospital Sunday and launched an investigation. Sources said Kahna and Ashutosh had gone to the Bhanjanagar reservoir along with four friends from their village for a bath. The duo remained in the water for a long time and drowned due to apparent negligence. When their friends could not find them despite searching, they alerted the fire services and police. A rescue operation was carried out by the fire brigade and police led by station officer Jibananda Jena in the evening. The two were rescued from the reservoir and rushed to the Bhanjanagar hospital, where doctors pronounced them dead.

Minor dies in accidental firing during hunt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani/Chakapad, April 19: A hunting trip turned tragic after a minor was accidentally shot dead by one of his associates in Kandhamal district, police said.

The deceased was identified as Bibhuti Kanhar, 16, of Budeni village. The incident occurred in the Tikabali police limits, where three friends had gone into nearby Kamuti forest

for poaching. Police said that two youths from the village arrived at Bibhuti's house around 9pm April 18 carrying two country-made guns and asked him to join them for hunting. Despite objections from his father, Madhab Kanhar, the boy went with them.

About half an hour later, a gunshot was heard. One of the youths later informed the victim's family that Bibhuti had been accidentally shot. Family

members and villagers rushed to the spot and found him lying in a pool of blood. Police reached the scene after being alerted, seized the body and sent it to the DHH in Phulbani for post-mortem. The firearms used in the incident were also seized.

Two associates of the deceased are absconding, while one person has been detained for questioning. The source of the firearms and how the minors obtained them remain under investigation.

MKCG docs save boy with complex brain surgery

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur/Digapahandi, April 19: Doctors at MKCG Medical College and Hospital here successfully performed a complex brain surgery, giving a new lease of life to an 11-year-old boy who had sustained a severe head injury in a bicycle accident.

The Class VI student, Bankeswari Pradhan of Raulapada village under R Udayagiri block in Gajapati district, was discharged Friday after showing significant recovery.

He had met with the accident March 26 while on his way to school, when he fell from his bicycle and suffered a critical head injury, with a portion of his brain exposed.

He was rushed to MKCG Medical College and Hospital, where doctors immediately began emergency treatment. A team from the neurosurgery department carried out a complex operation to stabilise his condition.

The boy who was kept in the intensive care unit (ICU) for 13 days following the surgery responded well to treatment.

The surgical team was led by the head of the neurosurgery department, Dr Rabinarayan Panda, along with Dr Debadatta Senapati, Dr Debashree Mohapatra, Dr Tushar Kanta Rath and Dr P Hariprasad. The boy's family members expressed gratitude to the doctors for saving his life.

One killed, 8 critical as 'mentally unstable' man goes on rampage

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargaon, April 19: A man was killed and eight others sustained critical injuries after a man, who is reportedly mentally unstable, went on a rampage and assaulted villagers with an iron plough blade at Lakhupada hamlet in Sahajbhal village under this police limits in Sundargarh district late Saturday night.

The deceased was identified as Raj Kumar Barua, 56, of the village. Police Sunday arrested the accused Jogeshwar Chamar, 35, and registered a case (126/26) in this connection, Bargaon ASI Bijay Kumar Kar said. An investigation is underway, he said.

Sources said villagers were sleeping outdoors due to intense heat Saturday night when



the accused came out of his house around 11:30pm carrying the plough. He first attacked Barua, who was sleeping on a cot on the roadside, striking his head.

Hearing his screams, Barua's wife Subhadra, sister Jashoda and sister-in-law Chanchala Barua rushed out, but were also attacked. As local residents

attacked four other villagers Bantak Leheri, Bikash Leheri, Santosh Nag and Surajmani Nag with the iron plough blade.

Villagers eventually subdued the accused after a struggle and beat him up black and blue. The accused also sustained injuries during the melee. On being informed, police led by ASI Kar reached the spot, rescued the injured persons and took the accused into custody.

All injured persons were admitted to Bargaon hospital. Barua, who was critically injured, was referred to VSS Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) at Burla in Sambalpur district and later shifted to Rourkela, but he succumbed on the way.

Police and locals said the accused was believed to be mentally unstable.

Podadihi dak bungalow cries for resurrection

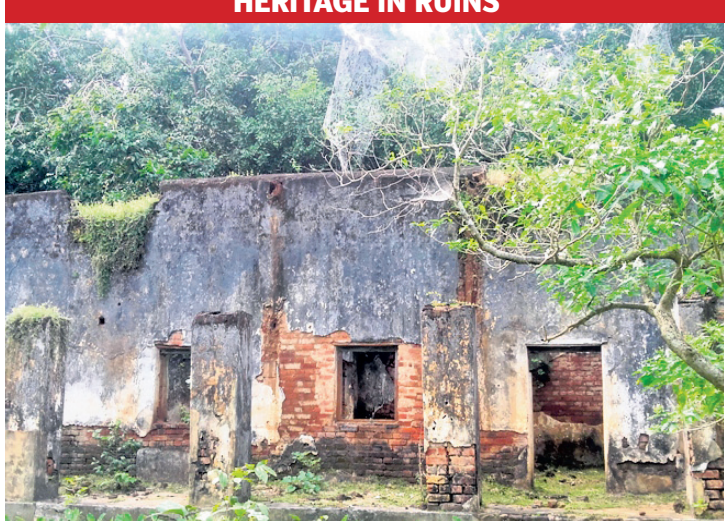
POST NEWS NETWORK

Kaptipada, April 19: A historic dak bungalow at Podadihi in Mayurbhanj district, believed to have been built more than a century ago, is in a dilapidated condition due to alleged negligence by the Public Works department (PWD), with locals pleading for its early restoration.

Once a symbol of the region's royal past, the bungalow is now facing existential threat, with locals alleging that the heritage building is being ignored when funds are spent on repairing insignificant structures.

Though no official records confirm its exact construction date, residents say the bungalow was built during the reign of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanj Deo, around 128 years ago. It was reportedly used as a resting place for the king during hunting expeditions in Similipal region. The structure, spread across nearly seven acres, once featured royal-style architecture along with facilities such as elephant sheds and stables.

HERITAGE IN RUINS



Historical accounts suggest that during World War II, the British used the bungalow while constructing underground structures in nearby hilly areas.

After Independence, the PWD took over maintenance of the bungalow, which remained functional until the 1990s and served as a stopover for trav-

ellers. However, after the retirement of its caretaker, the building fell into disuse and gradually became a hub for anti-social activities.

Encroachment has further worsened the situation, with doors, windows and valuable fittings reportedly stolen. Locals fear that without immedi-

ate intervention, the structure may vanish within a few years.

The bungalow is located near several tourist destinations, including Shami Bruksha site, Kalabandha area, Devkund shrine, and waterfalls like Chingudia and Machhakandana. With a proposed tourism circuit in the area under government consideration, residents believe the bungalow's importance could increase significantly.

Local writer Indramani Bindhani has called for its restoration, while villagers have urged authorities to revive and operationalise the site. Social worker Mohan Charan Das said that developing the bungalow could attract tourists from across the state and beyond, boosting the local economy.

Responding to concerns, Executive Engineer Rajendra Kisan said the lack of staff has hindered maintenance efforts. He added that the matter has been brought to the government's notice and restoration work could begin once personnel are appointed.

Happy Akshaya Tritiya

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DEMAND NOTICE

UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 ("the Act") AND THE SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES, 2002 ("the Rules")

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Ltd. (the Secured Creditor) under the Act and in exercise of the powers conferred under Sec. 13(12) of the Act read with Rule 3 issued Demand Notice(s) under Sec. 13(2) of the Act, calling upon the following borrower(s) to repay the amount mentioned in the respective notice(s) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The undersigned reasonably believes that borrower(s) is / are avoiding the service of the Demand Notice(s), therefore the service of notice is being affected by affixation and publication as per Rules. The contents of Demand Notice(s) are extracted herein below :-

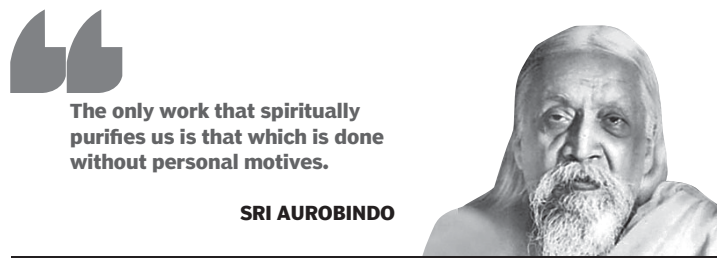
Sr. No.	Name & Address of the Borrower/s & Co-Borrower/s	Loan Amt.	Dt. of Demand Notice & D/s. Amt.	Description of the Property / Secured Asset
1	Loan A/C. No(S) : LAP4ANG00079574 1. Mr/Mrs. Bharat Charan Sahoo (Alias) Bharat Sahoo 2. Mr/Mrs. Jyotirmayee Sahoo Add For Sr. No. 1 & 2 :- Santapada, Near Sevak Nurshingh, Danara, Talcher, Angul Odisha, Pn 759104, Near Sevak Nurshingh Home, Colliery, Orissa - 759104 Add For Sr. No. 1 & 2 :- Plot No- 430/5628, Khata No-449/413, Mouza-Santhapada, Tah- Talcher, Ps-Talcher, Dist- Anugul, Odisha, Pin-759104	Rs. 30,00,000/-	15.04.2026 Rs. 29,85,883/- (Rupees Twenty Nine Lakhs Eighty Five Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Three Only as on 15.04.2026)	Mouza-Santhapada, Tahasil-Talcher, P/s-Talcher, District-Angul. Log No. Khata No. Plot No. Kismam Area Boundry (As per deed) As per sketch MAP Log-I 449/413 430/5628 Gharbari Ac. 0.100 Dec. North-Paramananda Pattanayak, South- Road, East-Gouranga Samal, West-Road Ref :- Owners Name and Status :- Jyotirmayee Sahoo W/o Bharat Charan Sahoo.

The borrower(s) are hereby advised to comply with the Demand Notice(s) and to pay the demand amount mentioned therein and hereinabove within 60 days from the date of this publication together with applicable interest, additional interest, bounce charges, cost and expenses till the date of realization of payment. The borrower(s) may note that Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Ltd. is a secured creditor and the loan facility availed by the Borrower(s) is a secured debt against the immovable property / properties being the secured asset(s) mortgaged by the borrower(s). In the event borrower(s) are failed to discharge their liabilities in full within the stipulated time, The Secured Creditor shall be entitled to exercise all the rights U/s. 13(4) of the Act to take possession of the secured assets(s) including but not limited to transfer the same by way of sale or by invoking any other remedy available under the Act and the Rules thereunder and realize payment. The Secured Creditor is also empowered to ATTACH AND / OR SEAL the secured assets(s) before enforcing the right to sale or transfer. Subsequent to the Sale of the secured assets(s), the Secured Creditor also has a right to initiate separate legal proceedings to recover the balance dues, in case the value of the mortgaged properties is insufficient to cover the dues payable to the Secured Creditor. This remedy is in addition and independent of all the other remedies available to the Secured Creditor under any other law.

The attention of the borrower(s) is invited to Section 13(8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets and further to Section 13(13) of the Act, whereby the borrower(s) are restrained / prohibited from disposing of or dealing with the secured asset(s) or transferring by way of sale, lease or otherwise (other than in the ordinary course of business) any of the secured asset(s), without prior written consent of the Secured Creditor and non-compliance with the above is an offence punishable under Section 29 of the said Act. The copy of the Demand Notice is available with the undersigned and the borrower(s) may, if they so desire, can collect the same from the undersigned on any working day during normal office hours.

Place : Anugul, Odisha
Date : 15.04.2026

Sd/-
Authorized Officer
For Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited



SRI AUROBINDO

Guise in Nomenclature

The defeat of the Bill linked to women's reservation in the Lok Sabha on 17 April is not merely a legislative setback for the government. It is a revealing episode in India's political theatre, one that exposes how a widely supported democratic reform can be refurbished to serve narrow political ends of the ruling party. Far from being a genuine attempt to enhance women's representation in Parliament and state assemblies, the Bill's failure suggests that the Opposition stood firm in its stance that this has nothing to do with women's rights for more representation but directly linked to delimitation and increase of Lok Sabha seats.

The Union government's decision to hurriedly operationalise the 2023 Women's Reservation framework on the night before the Lok Sabha voting appears that the government understood late that it will come a cropper the next day. The ruse of Women's Reservation, obviously, did not work. By convening a special Parliamentary session despite lacking the numbers required for a Constitutional Amendment, the government effectively staged a political spectacle. The Opposition's resistance was neither sudden nor incomprehensible. Most parties had consistently opposed the linking of women's reservation to the delimitation of constituencies. According to the 2023 Women's Reservation Bill, the idea was to put it into action after the currently undergoing 2026 Census results are published. It may be noted that the Women's Reservation Bill was passed in 2023 and the Opposition parties had supported it then. So the question can arise as to why the Union government brought this Bill to vote in a special brief session of Parliament. It can be surmised that the government probably calculated that with the pressure of state elections, the Opposition would not dare mess with a Bill that has been projected as being pro women. The unnecessary confidence could have been a complete misreading of current public sentiments across the length and breadth of India. Apart from this outcome due to the Opposition holding steady and united this time, the defeat of the Bill demonstrated very clearly that the present Union government does not possess enough strength in numbers in Parliament. This event has greatly damaged the image of invincibility that had been carefully crafted over the past decade and more. On the other hand, the Opposition has also gained massive confidence on its abilities. When united, they can easily thwart most major anti people moves by the government. Of course, we must remember that this was a Constitution Amendment Bill which requires 2/3rd majority to be passed. With the current NDA numbers, they can only pass regular bills.

Yet, the defeat does not seem to have been expected and must have hurt those who were overconfident of the nomenclature having Women in it.

WISDOM CORNER

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality.

DESMOND TUTU

Nothing is more noble, nothing more venerable than fidelity. Faithfulness and truth are the most sacred excellences and endowments of the human mind.

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

Most humans are never fully present in the now, because unconsciously they believe that the next moment must be more important than this one. But then you miss your whole life, which is never not now.

ECKHART TOLLE

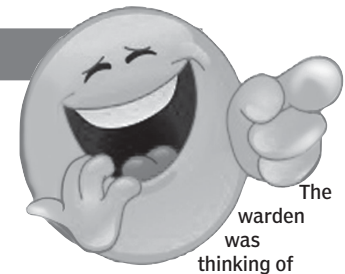
THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1653: England's Rump Parliament was dissolved by Oliver Cromwell and later replaced by the nominated Barebones Parliament, which was dissolved in the same year, leading to the declaration of the Protectorate.
- 1808: Napoleon III, president of the Second Republic (1850-52) and emperor of France (1852-70), was born in Paris.
- 1902: Pierre and Marie Curie discover the radioactive element radium. In 1903, the French couple received the Nobel Prize in Physics for their pioneering research.
- 1919: In an ongoing dispute over the possession of Vilnius, Polish forces drove out Russia's Red Army—which had previously ousted the newly established Lithuanian government—and occupied the city.
- 1924: Finalizing the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey's Grand National Assembly voted to adopt a full republican constitution, with General Mustafa Kemal, who had first proclaimed the Turkish republic about six months earlier, becoming the first president of the republic.
- 1968: Pierre Elliott Trudeau of the Liberal Party became prime minister of Canada; in that post, he discouraged the French separatist movement, oversaw the formation of a new constitution, and established relations with China.

LOL

A PRISONER WITH SKILLS

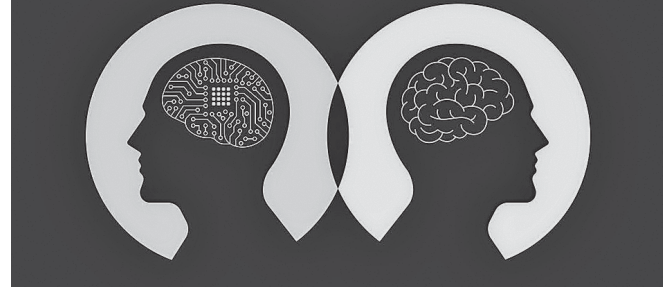
Several years ago, Andy was sentenced to prison. During his stay, he got along well with the guards and all his fellow inmates. The warden said that deep down, Andy was a good person and made arrangements for Andy to learn a trade while doing his time. After three years, Andy was recognized as one of the best carpenters in the local area. Often he would be given a weekend pass to do odd jobs for the citizens of the community.... and he always reported back to prison before Sunday night was over.



The warden was thinking of remodeling his kitchen and in fact had done much of the work himself. But he lacked the skills to build a set of kitchen cupboards and a large counter top which he had promised his wife. So he called Andy into his office and asked him to complete the job for him. But, alas, Andy refused. He told the warden, "Gosh, I'd really like to help you but counter fitting is what got me into prison in the first place."

FOCUS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

COGNITIVE OFFLOADING



Unlike many earlier technologies, AI is uniquely positioned to help those with fewer skills and less education—workers occupying the lower rungs of the economy

Only a few years ago, AI seemed like merely a nice toy: a chatbot that simulated intelligence by assembling complete sentences in response to users' prompts but that ultimately wasn't much more sophisticated than an advanced search engine. Yet now, it has proven to be an incredible tool that can perform tasks I never thought would be possible in my lifetime.

For example, I have used AI to locate online datasets, manipulate them, carry out statistical tests, and produce polished tables and charts, complete with sensible commentary on what the results mean, how they relate to the academic literature, and the strengths and weaknesses of the analysis. In less than half an hour, AI can do a job that would take a research assistant several days.



Dani Rodrik

THE QUESTION WE SHOULD BE DISCUSSING IS NOT WHAT AI WILL DO TO US, BUT WHAT WE WANT IT TO DO FOR US

Sometimes, the current crop of AI models seem almost capable of reading your mind. Unlike in programming or writing code, you do not have to specify very precisely what you are looking for, leaving no room for misinterpretation. The model will "intuit" what you are after and fill in the missing details (though you had better always check them, as law firms that have filed AI-generated briefs with fictional citations can attest). Or, barring that, the interface will prompt you until you have clarified your query.

It is comforting to think that AI could be a tool that will help us all become more productive and better at what we do. It has certainly made me more efficient at research. It lowers entrepreneurs' costs by providing marketing and consulting services on the cheap. It allows junior customer-service agents to avail themselves of the skills and experience of more senior staff. And it enables gig workers or craftsmen to provide more sophisticated

and technically demanding services.

Unlike many earlier technologies, AI is uniquely positioned to help those with fewer skills and less education—workers occupying the lower rungs of the economy. By endowing each one of us with greater capabilities, it offers advantages that are potentially most meaningful for those with the greatest initial disadvantages. That means it could function very differently from, say, automation, the main purpose of which is to replace workers on the assembly line or in sales/clerical work.

The worry, of course, is that AI will also do much more than that, with uncertain consequences. For now, I see choosing and framing research questions as my own prerogative, and the main source of my competitive advantage. But at some point, I can imagine feeling tempted to ask AI to generate the questions themselves. In fact, the AI tools I use are already nudging me to do that. At the end of an exercise of the kind I sketched above, they will gently suggest further avenues of fruitful scrutiny that I might follow up on.

AI substitutes for thought in other, more subtle ways. It is already shaping how I think of

existing research. Not only does it summarize what's out there; it also tells me how adjacent research relates to my work and how I should think about it. It makes connections across different parts of the literature that had not occurred to me.

Therein lies the bigger danger. The public discussion about AI's impact on society focuses largely on the potential displacement of workers and the loss of jobs. But an even greater risk is the displacement of human thought. When we allow AI to do the job of thinking for us, we cross an important threshold. Our collective ability to think degrades, as does our incentive to learn to think. And because the line between applying thought to a problem and thought itself is already fuzzy, it is easily crossed.

In an interesting recent paper, Daron Acemoglu, Dingwen Kong, and Asuman Ozdaglar of MIT formalise an intuition about how such cognitive offloading can produce catastrophic results. They ask what happens when AI models get very good at providing the kind of context-specific knowledge that can help people perform whatever specific tasks they are engaged in. Such outputs would allow people to achieve better outcomes, even

with less learning. But there is a problem here, because knowledge has an important externality. As I think about how to solve my problem, I also contribute to the general stock of knowledge about how others can solve theirs. When I invest less in my own learning, the general stock of knowledge suffers. In the limiting, dystopic case, general knowledge disappears completely.

True, this is only a theoretical possibility for now, and depending on what one assumes about the strength of competing effects, better outcomes are also possible. But the danger is real. When we allow AI to do our learning and thinking for us, we degrade our own human capabilities—and risk eventually destroying the knowledge base on which AI itself relies.

Addressing these issues will require the development of social and professional norms on the appropriate use of AI. For example, researchers may need to include detailed disclosures about how they have used AI—a process that could be automated by AI tools themselves—with publication and promotion decisions weighted heavily toward products of the human mind. Organisations like the Partnership on AI can help develop and disseminate general principles. We will need new forms of government regulation as well, as virtually every new technology has required.

A necessary condition for such remedies is a new way of thinking about AI. Above all, the public discourse needs a different framing. The question we should be discussing is not what AI will do to us, but what we want it to do for us.

The writer is Professor of International Political Economy at Harvard Kennedy School.

PROJECT PINDICATE

SPECTRUM ECONOMY

IMF and the GDP myth

The Iran war is hitting many countries beyond they could have imagined. The IMF forecast has subdued global growth. India is no less a sufferer. IMF makes India slip to sixth largest economy as the rupee sinks, oil prices hit inflation high, and a combination of factors make IPO's lose steam while the BSE Sensex thaws.



Shivaji Sarkar

GDP IS USEFUL, BUT ON ITS OWN IT CANNOT SHOW WHETHER LIVES ARE TRULY IMPROVING

The IMF warned that a prolonged conflict could heighten financial instability, requiring carefully calibrated policy responses. It has downgraded global growth forecast for 2026 from 3.3 to 3.1%, due to the war. It recalibrated global Indian position from fifth largest economy to sixth with GDP at current prices estimated at \$3.76 trillion against the UK's \$3.7 trillion.

However, IMF projects India's FY27 GDP growth at 6.5%, remaining the fastest-growing major economy, but warns that high oil prices pose risks to inflation seen at 4.7%. On the contrary, Goldman Sachs has slashed India's 2026 GDP growth forecast to 5.9% (from an earlier 7% projection) due to risks from the Iran conflict, high oil prices, and currency depreciation. Goldman Sachs

downgraded Indian equities to "market weight" and cut the Nifty 50 12-month target, citing less attractive risk-reward ratios. Increased Brent crude oil prices (expected to average high in March/April 2026) are raising inflationary pressures and widening the current account deficit to 2% of GDP.

The IMF sees the Indian rupee depreciating from ₹84.57 to a dollar in 2024 to ₹92.59 this year. It has not taken into calculation the rupee recent fall to ₹95.04 though for a while. Meanwhile, Reuters reports that Indian oil refiners are now paying for Iranian oil in Chinese yuan. Is Yuan emerging as new currency?

Statistics can be deceptive. The GDP as a measure for progress may also be elusive. Concerns over India's GDP data stem from a perceived gap between headline growth and ground realities, with critics arguing that expansion may be more "statistical" than real. A 2026 study by Arvind Subramanian, Abhishek Anand, and Josh Felman suggests GDP growth may have been overstated by 1.5-2 percentage points annually between 2012 and 2023 due to methodological issues.

Key doubts arise from weak manufacturing performance and limited job creation, which do not match high growth claims. GDP estimates may also underestimate the impact of shocks like demonetisation, GST, and COVID-19 on the vast unorganised sector. The use of Wholesale Price Index (WPI) rather than the Producer Price Index (PPI) for inflation adjustment, reliance on the MCA21 corporate database, and divergence from indicators like credit growth, exports, and electricity consumption further reinforce concerns about overestimated growth.

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs' MCA21 database has been questioned, as it may use limited, unreliable data for smaller firms, painting a rosier picture of company performance.

GDP counts output not reality. GDP doesn't count unpaid domestic work. Women in India contribute an estimated 7.5% of GDP in unpaid labour—childcare, cooking, cleaning and elderly care. If a family hires a cook, GDP goes up. If the mother does the same work, GDP doesn't move. The work is identical. The counting isn't.

GDP doesn't subtract envi-

ronmental damage. India lost 1.36 million hectares of tree cover between 2001 and 2023. Every tree cut generated economic activity that showed up in GDP. The long-term cost—flooding, soil erosion, water table collapse, health impact—doesn't get subtracted. The destruction is counted. The consequence isn't.

Nor does GDP distinguish debt-driven spending from real prosperity. India's household debt crossed 42% of GDP. Personal loans under ₹10,000 have a 44% spike in defaults. When a family borrows to buy a phone or pay a hospital bill, that spending adds to GDP. When they default, the default doesn't subtract from it.

There are alternatives. The UNDP's Human Development Index measures life expectancy, education, and income together. Bhutan uses Gross National Happiness. The OECD has a Better Life Index covering housing, jobs, health, environment, safety, and life satisfaction. India publishes none of these as a primary measure. GDP is useful, but on its own it cannot show whether lives are truly improving.

INFA

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



Vigilant Opposition

Sir, A government with an overwhelming majority often begins to equate numbers with unquestioned authority. But democracy is not a game of arithmetic alone; it rests on debate, dissent and accountability. The recent controversy around the so-called Delimitation Bill, perceived by many as being advanced under the broader shadow of the already-passed Women's Reservation Act of 2023, once again highlighted how crucial a vigilant Opposition is in ensuring that legislation does not pass without scrutiny. One cannot forget how the Citizenship Amendment Bill was passed at a time when the Opposition lacked the numerical and collective strength to effectively resist or reshape it. Public protests did take place across the country, but they could not substitute for a robust parliamentary challenge. Street protests and public outrage have their place, but in the final reckoning, it is within Parliament that laws are made or stopped. Without a strong Opposition, resistance remains symbolic rather than decisive. Democracy breathes through balance and for that balance to exist, a strong, articulate and persistent Opposition is of utmost importance..

A fatal inertia

Sir, India is currently a furnace. With mercury levels breaching 45°C we are witnessing a systemic collapse masked as seasonal weather. This isn't just a heatwave it's a preview of an uninhabitable future. While the vulnerable perish in 40°C+ zones our urban planning remains archaic favouring concrete over canopy. To survive, states must mandate Urban Heat Action Plans and no-work zones for outdoor labourers. Statistically every Re 1 invested in cooling infrastructure saves ₹4 in healthcare costs. We cannot shield ourselves with umbrellas against a climate we've set on fire. Unless states pivot to aggressive green infrastructure they aren't managing weather they are managing a graveyard. Governments must subsidise high albedo cool roofs, enforce strict reforestation quotas and overhaul power grids to support decentralised renewable cooling for all.

Noopur Baruah, TEZPUR (ASSAM)

Vijaykumar HK, RAICHUR (KARNATAKA)

SIR recasts WB polls as identity battle



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 19: What was shaping up as an election around corruption, jobs and anti-incumbency issues in West Bengal has suddenly turned into a battle over identity and citizenship after the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls deleted over 91 lakh names, changing not just the state's electoral arithmetic but the emotional vocabulary of its campaign.

The mood changed dramatically after the SIR deletions reduced the electorate by nearly 12 per cent. Political parties estimate that of the over 91 lakh names removed though the Election Commission has not released any religious break-up - around 31 lakh are Muslims, and the remaining 61 lakh are Hindus, giving the exercise a communal and political edge.

Till a few months ago, the BJP wanted the assembly election to revolve around the TMC's "15-years of misrule," jobs scam, women's safety, unemployment, and alleged TMC's minority appeasement.

The TMC, in turn, was preparing to defend 'Lakshmi Bhandar', a financial assistance scheme for women, 'Duare Sarkar' (government at doorstep), welfare delivery, roads and rural infrastructure, wrapping them in the larger plank of Bengali 'asmita' (pride).

Those issues have not disappeared. But they no longer dominate the campaign. Just days before the first phase of the assembly polls April 23, the most politically charged words in Bengal are not corruption, jobs or welfare. They are "deleted names", "citizenship", "foreigner", "infiltrator", and "bogus voter".

The question increasingly animating the election is not whether the TMC governed well or badly, or whether the BJP can offer better governance. It is whether the state recognises a person, who has voted for decades, as an elector or not. Political analyst Suman Bhattacharya said the SIR had altered the axis of the election.

"Till November last year, this looked like a classic anti-incumbency election against the TMC. Now the question is who is a genuine voter and whose name has been deleted from the voter list. The election is now a contest between the arithmetic of deletions and the emotion they have generated," he said.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has recalibrated her campaign in the last one

month. At rally after rally, she now speaks of "rights", "identity", and "constitutional protection".

No longer content with projecting herself merely as the defender of welfare and Bengali pride, Banerjee is now positioning herself as the protector of those who fear exclusion from the electoral roll.

"This election is no longer only about winning or losing. It is about saving the names, rights and dignity of people who have suddenly been told they may not belong," TMC leader Jaiprakash Majumdar said.

The TMC's new political line is blunt: if your name disappears from the roll, your citizenship comes under question.

For the BJP, the SIR has given a sharper political vocabulary to an argument it has long made -- that Bengal's electoral rolls contain "fake voters," illegal Bangladeshi migrants and infiltrators allegedly protected by the TMC.

"The earlier campaign was centred on corruption and unemployment. Those issues remain. But SIR has brought the focus back to infiltration. Genuine Hindu refugees have nothing to fear. Only bogus names and infiltrators are being removed," BJP leader Debjit Sarkar said.

The result is that the election is now being fought not merely over governance but over the definition of citizenship itself. The Left Front said both the BJP and the TMC have found in the SIR a convenient way to move the conversation away from unemployment, inflation and corruption.

"The real issues of jobs, price rise and the collapse of institutions have not disappeared. But identity produces sharper fear and deeper polarisation. That is why both sides are talking less about employment and more about who is an outsider," CPI (M) leader Sujan Chakraborty said.

Yet on the ground, it is clear which issue has overtaken all others. The school jobs scam still resonates in rural and semi-urban Bengal. Unemployment and corruption still worry young and middle-class voters. But in tea stalls, local clubs, market crossings and village squares across the state, the conversation now returns again and again to one question: whose name has disappeared?

The phrase "deleted names" has become the emotional centre of the campaign. The sharp impact is visible in districts where identity has always carried electoral weight.

No coaching, no problem: Aided by AI, student cracks RAS

Virendra's success story breaks a long-standing myth that cracking top civil services exams requires expensive coaching. Instead, it underscores the power of curiosity, consistency, and intelligent use of digital tools

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, April 19: In a result that is turning heads across Rajasthan, Virendra Charan from Pokharan in Jaisalmer has secured the second rank in the Rajasthan Administrative Service Examination, without stepping into a single coaching institute.

The son of a Head Constable and currently serving as a Tehsildar, Virendra's journey is not just about rank; it is about rethinking how India prepares for competitive exams. While most aspirants rely heavily on coaching hubs, Virendra chose a different path: self-study powered by discipline and smart use of technology.

"I prepared entirely on my own," he said. "I used tools like ChatGPT to understand concepts deeply. Whenever I had a doubt, I asked questions and explored answers in detail. It helped me go beyond surface-level preparation."

His approach reflects a growing shift among aspirants, where access to information is no longer limited by geography or finances. From the remote stretches of Jaisalmer to the state's top merit list, Virendra's story is a testament to that change.

Interestingly, Virendra outperformed even the topper in the interview round, scoring nine marks more than Barm-



er's Dinesh Bishnoi, who secured Rank 1. The margin between the two was razor-thin, just half a mark overall.

Recalling a key interview moment, Virendra shared

that when asked how he would promote tourism in Bundi as a Sub-Divisional Magistrate, he suggested night tourism, wildlife tourism, and the revival of histor-

ical stepwells. The idea was to combine heritage with sustainable development.

This year's results highlight a strong showing from Rajasthan's border districts. Candidates from Barmer, Balotra, Bikaner, Jaisalmer and Anupgarh have made a mark, signalling a shift in the state's academic landscape. Jaipur and Jodhpur, however, still led with the highest number of selections.

As Rajasthan celebrates its new batch of officers, one message stands out clearly: the future of preparation may no longer lie in crowded classrooms — but in focused minds, connected by technology.

AKSHAYA TRITIYA

Bundi tightens scrutiny against child marriages



Rajasthan's Bundi district officials said they have prevented 21 child marriages so far this year, following tip-offs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kota (RJ), April 19: Bundi district administration said it has adopted strict measures to prevent child marriages on the Akshaya Tritiya festival Sunday.

Akshaya Tritiya, locally known as Akha Teej, is traditionally considered an auspicious occasion for weddings in many rural areas. Several child marriages take place on or around the festival.

In Bundi district, child marriages are often reported among the Gurjar, Meena, Meghwal, Mali, Regar, Barwa and Bheel communities.

These are often conducted discreetly as part of mass weddings or individual events on auspicious occasions such as Akshaya Tritiya, in the Hindoli, Nainwan and Keshoraipatan blocks of the district.

Officials said the administration has activated a multi-layered monitoring mechanism, particularly in sensitive rural pockets where child marriages have been prevalent for decades.

A dedicated Child Marriage Control Room has been set up at the district headquarters with a 24-hour helpline (0747-2442305), while grassroots workers, including ASHA workers and Saathin volunteers, have been sensitised to report suspected cases.

Bundi district officials said they have prevented 21 child marriages so far this year, following tip-offs from local sources. Notably, four minor girls had approached authorities seeking intervention to stop their impending marriages, expressing a desire to continue their education and attain self-reliance.

Authorities said there has been a decline in the number of child marriages over recent years, attributing this to sustained awareness campaigns, strict enforcement of laws, and community outreach initiatives.

Bhairulal Nagar, Assistant Director (Women Empowerment), Bundi, said the Department of Women Empowerment has conducted nearly 600 Jajam Sabhas at the panchayat level to educate women about their rights, legal provisions, and government schemes aimed at eliminating child marriages.

The ongoing efforts align with the Centre's "Bal Vivah Mukht Abhiyan" launched in

2024, and a recent 100-day special campaign conducted between December 4, 2025, and March 8, 2026. The initiative is part of India's commitment to achieve the target under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 5.3, which aims to eliminate child marriage by 2030.

However, officials and child welfare authorities have raised concerns over persistent challenges on the ground. Despite administrative vigilance, civic indifference and alleged support from certain public representatives continue to hinder strict enforcement.

Bundi Child Welfare Committee chairperson Seema Poddhar described the situation as "concerning," citing instances of pressure from local representatives to release rescued minors. In one such case, two girls rescued from a village were placed in a shelter home until their scheduled marriage date, but were released later following a judicial order amid reported external pressure.

"Such interventions weaken enforcement and raise the risk of child marriages being conducted secretly," Poddhar told PTI.

The district has also received 12 applications seeking permission to organise mass weddings around Akha Teej. Officials said they are scrutinising these applications amid concerns that couples' age verification is often inadequate or incomplete.

Advocate Minakshi Mewara, a member of the Child Welfare Committee, highlighted operational challenges faced by field teams in preventing child marriages, especially in communities where the practice remains deeply rooted.

She noted that two child marriages were legally declared void in recent years, while applications from four girls seeking annulment of their marriages are currently under process.

Professors' group lists crisis in education sector



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 19: A group of Left-leaning college and university teachers has released a document ahead of the West Bengal assembly polls, alleging that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and state-level decisions have severely strained the higher education sector.

The All Bengal University Teachers Association (ABUTA) also urged people to make an informed choice while voting. Calling the document a "manifesto", the ABUTA said the introduction of a four-year undergraduate programme in line with NEP 2020 has increased the duration of study without a corresponding expansion in infrastructure, faculty strength, or institutional resources.

In the statement, around 50 teachers of various state-run colleges and universities said that support should be extended to those political parties which have taken a clear stand against the "anti-people education policies" and have actively mobilised against them, and commit to raise these issues in the assembly if their candidates are elected.

Requesting the electors to make an 'informed choice' whoever they vote for, the teachers' group highlighted a sharp decline in student admissions as a key indicator of the crisis.

Painting a dismal picture, the ABUTA claimed that of the total 9,36,215 undergraduate seats available in government and government-aided colleges in the state, only 2,69,777 students were admitted this year out of

4,21,301 applicants—just 28.81 per cent of total capacity, the ABUTA said in the document released on Saturday.

"This marks a steep drop compared to the previous academic year, when around 4.44 lakh seats were filled. Even premier institutions are witnessing vacant seats," senior ABUTA member Goutam Maity told PTI on Sunday.

The organisation alleged that despite publicly opposing NEP 2020, the state's TMC government has effectively implemented it in full, thereby accelerating the privatisation and commercialisation of education. The 'manifesto' also flagged the policy's emphasis on employability, terming it "misleading" in the context of rising unemployment and shrinking public sector recruitment.

It argued that reforms such as digitalisation, semesterisation, CBCS, multiple entry-exit systems, credit banks, and outcome-based education—along with self-financing courses, reduced public funding, PPP models, and foreign direct investment—are increasing the financial burden on students.

On the state's administrative front, the group pointed to alleged long-standing vacancies in teaching posts, lack of new recruitment, dependence on poorly paid contractual staff, and alleged corruption and political interference in appointments, promotions, and admissions.

It also flagged campus-level issues such as factionalism and a "threat culture" affecting academic environments.

SACRED GROVES

Rajasthan acts to preserve 'Oran' in desert region

'Oran' refers to a centuries-old system rooted in socio-religious beliefs, where local communities protect sacred groves by refraining from harming trees or natural resources within these areas

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, April 19: In a significant step towards environmental conservation while respecting local traditions, the Rajasthan government has undertaken a major initiative to reserve 'Oran' (sacred groves) land in Jaisalmer district to maintain ecological balance in the desert region.

'Oran' refers to a centuries-old system rooted in socio-religious beliefs, where local communities protect sacred groves by refraining from harming trees or natural resources within these areas.

Cutting trees or using axes in such zones is traditionally prohibited, allowing these ecosystems to remain naturally preserved over generations. These sacred landscapes rep-



resent a unique confluence of faith and conservation.

Under this initiative, a total of 3,666.2139 hectares of land has been reserved across various villages in Jaisalmer district for 'Oran' purposes.

In Ramgarh tehsil, 124.9502 hectares have been reserved in Dilawar Ka Gaon, 1,084.8043 hectares in Kuchhdi, and 583.9876 hectares in Poonamna-

gar. In Fatehgarh tehsil, 952.2752 hectares in Bhimsar and 96.7716 hectares in Binjota have been designated as 'Oran' areas.

Additionally, in Jaisalmer tehsil, land has been reserved in Mokla village across three blocks measuring 187.364 hectares, 256.2511 hectares, and 253.4034 hectares, along with 126.4065 hectares in Birma Kanod. The state government is

also in the process of reserving additional land for 'Oran' conservation. This includes 1,457.4991 hectares in Mokla village (Jaisalmer tehsil), 225.03 hectares in Askandra village and 229.5067 hectares in Didhu village (Nachna tehsil), and 333.9165 hectares in Mohanagarh BaraniPannodharay village.

The term 'Oran' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Aranya', meaning an untouched forest. These areas are not only a reflection of ancient cultural and religious traditions but also play a crucial role in preventing desertification and preserving biodiversity in arid regions.

The initiative is expected to strengthen conservation efforts in Jaisalmer while protecting traditional sites of faith and enhancing greenery and biodiversity across the desert landscape.



A vendor arranges clay pots for sale on a hot summer day, in Bikaner, Rajasthan

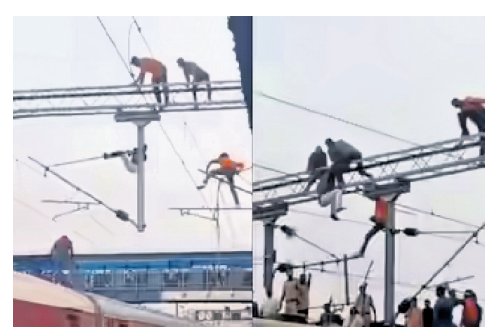
PTI PHOTO



The failure of the government to pass the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha means it does not represent the will of the people. Therefore, it has no right to remain in power. The Opposition, in real terms, represents people's will

MAN CLIMBS RLY GANTRY

High drama unfolded at Manmad railway station in Maharashtra's Nashik district after a mentally challenged man climbed onto a gantry and dangled from high-tension overhead wires, forcing a power shutdown and disrupting train services, officials said Sunday



of the day quote

The Congress and the INDI bloc will have to face the consequences of this grave sin of denying half the population their rightful leadership opportunities. Women in Chhattisgarh and across the country would respond strongly



Many people have worked only to promote dynastic politics. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, people associated with the Congress culture are unable to tolerate the changes happening in the country



In the name of the delimitation, opposition has tried to spread lies and confusion



ASSEMBLY POLLS

EC action against 11,000 unlawful social media posts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19: The Election Commission Sunday said it has taken action against 11,000 "unlawful" social media posts and other content related to the polls in five assemblies.

While Assembly elections have already taken place in Assam, Kerala and Puducherry, they will take place in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal later this month.

The poll authority pointed to its direction that any misleading or unlawful AI-generated or manipulated content has to be acted upon within three hours of being brought to the notice of the social media platforms.

Political parties, candidates and campaign representatives are also required to ensure that any synthetically generated or AI-altered content used for campaigning is clearly labelled as "AI-Generated", "Digitally Enhanced" or "Synthetic Content", along with disclosure of the originating entity, to maintain transparency and voter trust.

It said since the announcement of elections March 15, over 11,000 such social media posts/URLs have been identified and acted upon, including removal of content, FIR, clarifications and rebuttals in the ongoing elections.

ROAD SAFETY

Apex court issues pan-India directions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19: Observing that expressways must not become corridors of peril due to administrative lethargy or infrastructural gaps, the Supreme Court has issued a slew of pan-India guidelines for enhancing road safety, including a ban on parking of heavy vehicles on such roads.

A bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and AS Chandurkar pointed out that national highways constitute two percent of India's total road length but account for nearly 30 percent of all road fatalities. A bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and AS Chandurkar issued directions to the Ministry of Road and Transport, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and States and Union Territories to make roads safer, observing that the loss of even a single life to avoidable hazards like illegal parking or blackspots etc., represents a failure of the State's protective umbrella.

"The loss of even a single life to avoidable hazards like illegal parking or blackspots etc., represents a failure of the State's protective umbrella. The 'Right to Life' enshrined under Article 21 of the Constitution of India is not merely a guarantee against the unlawful taking of life, but a positive mandate upon the State to ensure a safe environment where human life is preserved and valued," the top court said in its order of April 13.

J&K ANTI-CORRUPTION BUREAU REPORT CARD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, April 19: A conviction rate of just 12.6 per cent in corruption cases over the last six years has put a spotlight on the Anti-Corruption Bureau of Jammu and Kashmir, which sent 214 cases to various courts in the last six years but could manage only 27 convictions.

According to data provided by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) in reply to an RTI query by Jammu-based activist Raman Sharma, in the last six years, the ACB received a massive volume of 23,798 complaints. However, they led to the registration of only 534 FIRs, representing a complaint-to-FIR conversion rate of just 2.24 per cent.

Roll out women's quota on current LS strength: Cong

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19: The Congress Sunday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of shedding "crocodile tears" over the issue of reservation for women and demanded that the quota be implemented immediately on the current strength of the Lok Sabha.

The Opposition party also asserted that what was defeated in the Lok Sabha April 17 was not the women's reservation Bill but delimitation. Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinata pointed out that the women's reservation Bill was passed unanimously by Parliament September 21, 2023, and it is part of the Constitution now.

"The women's reservation Bill was not defeated, the delimitation, which you (government) wanted to thrust on the nation, was defeated," she said at a press conference here.

"PM Modi is shedding crocodile tears and hiding behind the women's reservation Bill," she said. Shrinata displayed a cartoon, which showed the PM having a basket with 543 mangoes, but refusing to give women a 33 per cent share and telling them that he can give them their share only if he can increase the number to 850, which the opposition is not letting him do.

On the PM's address to the nation over the rejection of the Constitution amendment Bill in Parliament, the Congress leader reiterated her party's stand that if he was really sincere, he should immediately provide reservation to women within the current strength of the Lok Sabha of 543.

"You have put a condition on that. Remove that condition. You are the ones creating hurdles in women's reservation, you want to keep men happy and not reduce their seats," she said, hitting out at the government.

Referring to Modi apologising to women, Shrinata said



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the PM was right as he does owe an apology to the women of the country for what happened to two Manipur women during riots, what happened in Hathras and Unnao, what happened with the women Olympians and how the convicts in the Bilkis Bano case were honoured.

"You were right. Women won't forget their insults. Who else knows it better than you?" she said.

Shrinata said of the 240 MPs, only 31 are women, which is only 12 per cent. Of the 1,654 legislators across the country, there are only 164 women, which is less than 10 per cent. She pointed out that there is only one woman among the 21 chief ministers of the BJP. Shrinata said five BJP lawmakers are facing rape charges.

She also pointed out that the Congress had originally introduced women's reservation in 1989 under late Rajiv Gandhi and it was opposed by BJP veterans like Atal Bihari Vajpayee, L K Advani, Jaswant Singh and Ram Jethmalani.

On delimitation, the Con-

gress spokesperson questioned the PM's claims of a 50 per cent proportionate increase in Lok Sabha seats, pointing out that it was nowhere mentioned in the draft bill.

She said that even after the 50 per cent proportionate increase, the overall numbers of the southern states will come down from the existing proportion.

She also took a dig at the BJP over its protests on the issue of the women's reservation bill, saying it is good that the ruling party's leaders are going door to door. They will be asked by women who are responsible for their plight under the BJP rule.

In a major setback to the government, the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill to implement 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures in 2029 and increase the number of Lok Sabha seats to 816 was defeated in the Lower House Friday. While 298 members voted in support of the Bill, 230 MPs voted against it. Out of 528 members who voted, the Bill required 352 votes for a two-thirds majority.

PM calls Mamata govt 'anti-tribal'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Purulia (WB), April 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday mounted a blistering attack on the Mamata Banerjee government, accusing it of changing West Bengal's language and culture through infiltration, presiding over a regime of "Maha jungleraj" in tribal areas and betraying women, farmers and youths.

Addressing a rally in Purulia, Modi sought to turn the BJP's campaign in Janglemahal into a larger political battle

between what he described as "development and appeasement", sharpening the party's identity pitch ahead of the 2026 Assembly polls.

"Due to infiltration, Bengal's language and culture are witnessing a change," the Prime Minister said, alleging that the ruling TMC's politics had altered the social character of the state. He accused the TMC government of humiliating tribal languages and identity while pursuing "appeasement politics". The Prime Minister repeatedly described the TMC regime as "Maha jungleraj", accusing it of leaving districts with significant tribal population, such as Purulia, Bankura and Jhargram, deprived of roads, drinking water, jobs and basic amenities.

Seeking to project the BJP as the natural political choice of the tribal belt, Modi accused the ruling party of grabbing tribal land through local syndicates.

Punjab's sacrilege Bill to become law as Guv gives assent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 19: Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria has given his assent to the Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar (Amendment) Bill, 2026, Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said Sunday.

The Bill proposed stricter punishment, including life imprisonment and a fine of up to Rs 25 lakh for any act of sacrilege against the Guru Granth Sahib. It was unanimously passed by the Punjab Assembly April 13 and was sent to the governor for his assent.

Mann said the Bill passed in the Punjab Vidhan Sabha against 'beadbi' (sacrilege) of Guru Granth Sahib has now become law after receiving the assent of the governor, marking a significant legislative step towards safeguarding the sanctity of the holy scripture.

"The Bill passed in the Vidhan Sabha against the sacrilege of Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji has been signed by the Honourable Governor Shri Gulab Chand Kataria ji."

"Now this Bill has become a law. I am very grateful to Waheguru ji for taking this service from a humble person like me. Thanks to the entire 'Sangat'," Mann said in a post on X.

The AAP government April 13 had convened a special session of the Vidhan Sabha to amend the Jaagat Jot Sri Guru Granth Sahib Satkar Act, 2008, to make way for stricter punishment against sacrilege of the Guru Granth Sahib.

The acts of sacrilege against religious scriptures have been an emotive issue in Punjab. There were demands from various quarters for stringent

punishment for acts of sacrilege against religious texts.

Activist Gurjeet Singh Khalsa has been sitting atop a 400-foot mobile tower in Samana since October 12, 2024, demanding stringent punishment for sacrilege incidents.

According to the Bill, any person who commits sacrilege shall get a minimum of seven years of imprisonment, extendable up to 20 years, along with a fine of Rs 2 lakh to Rs 10 lakh.

Any person, who in criminal conspiracy, commits sacrilege with an intention to disrupt peace or communal harmony shall get a minimum of 10 years of imprisonment, extendable up to imprisonment for life, which may extend to Rs 25 lakh, as per the Bill.

Any person who attempts to commit an offence shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which shall not be less than three years but may extend to five years, and shall also be liable to a fine which shall not be less than Rs 1 lakh but may extend to Rs 3 lakh.

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

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Devotees carry the 'Panchmukhi Doli' of Lord Kedarnath, for its destination Kedarnath Temple, in Rudraprayag

23,798 complaints, only 27 convictions in last 6 years



The bureau also conducted 208 trap cases, recovering more than Rs 1.22 crore in bribe money, the data showed. Judicial outcomes, however, reflect significant challenges. Of the cases decided, only 27 resulted in convictions, compared to 72 acquittals and 115 cases not proved, the reply said.

The data from various ACB units across J&K showed uneven case registration and out-

comes, with several matters still pending at different stages of investigation and trial.

The Srinagar-Budgam-Ganderbal branch of the ACB recorded the highest activity between 2020 and 2026, registering 178 FIRs and arresting 93 officers through 70 trap cases.

Of these, 83 cases were chargesheeted, while 129 remain under investigation. Judicial outcomes show that

According to data provided by the Anti-Corruption Bureau in reply to an RTI query by Jammu-based activist Raman Sharma, in the last six years, the ACB received a massive volume of 23,798 complaints

However, they led to the registration of only 534 FIRs, representing a complaint-to-FIR conversion rate of just 2.24 per cent

four accused were convicted, 17 acquitted, while 25 were discharged after the charges against them could not be proved.

The Jammu-Samba-Kathua unit recorded the second-highest activity, registering 94 FIRs and arresting 32 officers through 25 trap cases.

Of these, 54 cases were chargesheeted, while 82 remain under probe. In terms of judicial outcomes, 15 accused were convicted, 23 acquitted, while 28 cases were not proved.

Similarly, the Baramulla-Kupwara-Bandipora branch registered 81 cases, followed by Anantnag-Pulwama-Kulgam-Shopian at 54, Central at 51, Pir Panjal at 28, Doda at 27, and the Udhampur ACB unit at 21.

These cases led to the arrest of 53, 41, 17, 14, 13, four, and 13 officers, respectively, the reply said. Despite 89 cases chargesheeted in the Baramulla-Kupwara-Bandipora branch and 13 in the Central branch, not a single conviction was secured among 70 accused.

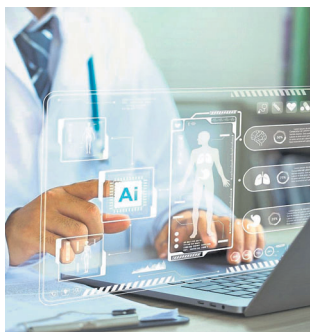


When some southern states raised the issue that rightful share might get reduced, both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah gave assurance that in accordance with the framework established by the 2011 Census, the representation for the southern states would increase in exactly the same ratio as it does for the northern and eastern states

YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CM

DOCTOR-LED AI 24X7 MONITORING PLATFORM LAUNCHED IN CHENNAI

In a move to expand its footprint in southern India and bolster preventive healthcare, a doctor-led, AI-enabled ecosystem offering real-time medical supervision beyond hospital settings was launched in Chennai, Tamil Nadu



of the day quote

Despite being a woman, Mamata Banerjee betrayed the women of Bengal by conspiring with parties like the Congress so that the women's reservation bill could not be passed in the Lok Sabha

NTIN NABIN | BJP PRESIDENT



I am telling the honourable PM with all respect, please speak like the Prime Minister. I wish you a long life. Please facilitate sending the ₹2 lakh crore dues you failed to release for Bengal over the last few years

ABHISHEK BANERJEE | TMC NATIONAL GENERAL SECY



I am addressing this press conference to assure mothers and sisters of Bihar that these opposition parties will have to pay for what they have done. Women workers of our party are going to hit the streets on the issue

SAMRAT CHOUDHARY | BIHAR CHIEF MINISTER



Indian tanker clears Hormuz



Crude oil tanker Desh Garima, with 31 Indian seafarers onboard, crossed the strategic waterway April 18 and is expected to reach Mumbai April 22, according to an update released by the government on developments in West Asia

Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) tanker is the 10th India-flagged vessel to have crossed the strait since early March

In contrast, very large crude carrier Samnar Herad and bulk carrier Jag Arnav reported a firing incident while transiting the strait in the past 24 hours and returned to the Persian Gulf

He urged Tehran to relay India's position to its authorities and to resume facilitating India-bound vessels through the route at the earliest.

"The Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in New Delhi was called in yesterday by the Ministry of External Affairs for a meeting with Foreign Secretary. During the meeting, Foreign Secretary conveyed India's deep concern at the shooting incident earlier yesterday involving two Indian-flagged ships in the Strait of Hormuz. He noted the importance that India attached to the safety of merchant shipping and mariners," the update said.

Reiterating his concern at this serious incident of firing on merchant ships, "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," it said.

The situation, it said, "continues to be closely monitored in coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs and relevant stakeholders. All Indian seafarers are safe."

State-run SCI owns Desh Vaibhav and Desh Vibhor, while Sanmar Herad is operated by Sanmar Shipping and Jag Arnav by Great Eastern Shipping Company.

According to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, a tanker reported being approached by two Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps gunboats and fired upon about 20 nautical miles northeast of Oman. This may have prompted the turning back of Indian vessels.

According to shipping monitor IndiaTankers.com, two India-flagged ships, including a supertanker carrying Iraqi crude, were forced to turn back after coming under fire.

The disruptions come as scores of commercial vessels and thousands of seafarers remain stranded in the Persian Gulf since the outbreak of the West Asia war February 28, which has sharply curtailed movement through the Strait of Hormuz. The Strait of Hormuz handles about a fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas flows, making it one of the world's most critical energy arteries. Iran's ability to disrupt traffic through the narrow passage has emerged as a key lever in the conflict.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19: An India-flagged crude tanker safely transited the Strait of Hormuz even as two other vessels were forced to turn back after being fired at, prompting New Delhi to raise concerns with Iran over the safety of merchant shipping.

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MarineTraffic data showed oil tankers Desh Vaibhav and Desh Vibhor also reversing course near the chokepoint, taking the number of India-flagged ships in the Persian Gulf to 14.

India's foreign secretary summoned Iran's ambassador in New Delhi to convey "deep concern" over the incident and underscored the importance of ensuring the safety of merchant shipping and mariners.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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MAN SLITS THROATS OF TWIN DAUGHTERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kanpur (UP), April 19: "He does not deserve to live," lamented a mother of twin 11-year-old girls after she woke up to the horror of finding her daughters dead in a pool of blood, allegedly drugged and killed by her husband.

The crime has tore apart the family of five - parents, two daughters and a young son. Reshma, who had come to Kanpur from West Bengal's Siliguri and married Shashi Ranjan Mishra, 48, in 2014, described a life that had slowly unravelled behind closed doors. The fami-

ly lived in a rented apartment in Kidwai Nagar, and were estranged by routines. She slept with their six-year-old son, while Mishra shared another room with the twin girls.

Once a medical representative, Mishra had left his job a few years ago to start a business, but had recently been without work. Reshma, too, who earlier worked at a beauty parlour, was unemployed. According to Reshma, the marriage had turned turbulent over the years. Mishra allegedly grew increasingly suspicious and accused her of infidelity and installed CCTVs

across the house.

He drank, took sleeping pills, and had been battling depression, especially after his mother's death. "He had said earlier that he would end his life," she told police, adding that he had even spoken about dying along with the children. On the night of the incident, Mishra took the daughters to his room, as was the routine. Reshma said she went to sleep with her son.

CCTV footage later showed Mishra taking one of the girls to the washroom around 2:30 am and returning, suggesting both children were alive at that point.

Screen time in kids linked to poor attention, sleep: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 19: The rising screen time among children is causing behavioural changes, with many increasingly showing signs of poor concentration, loneliness and sleep disturbances, a study conducted at the Rajasthan government's Sawai Man Singh (SMS) Hospital has found.

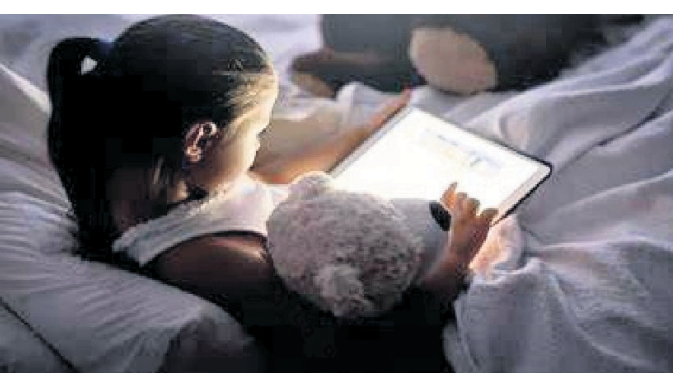
The study was conducted by senior psychologist Dr Jayshree Jain on 150 children in the age group of 10 to 16. It involved interactions with the children and their parents, along with behavioural observation.

Jain told PTI that the find-

ings revealed that 72 per cent of the children used mobile phones for three to six hours daily.

While 60 per cent of them reported having trouble focusing while studying, 48 per cent exhibited irritability and aggressive behaviour, and 41 per cent suffered from sleep-related issues due to late-night mobile usage. Additionally, 35 per cent of the children had reduced communication with family members, she said.

"Excessive mobile use is leading to dependency and children are feeling restless without access to their devices. Other behavioural patterns



include lying to parents about usage and frequent checking of social media," she said.

Symptoms of anxiety and depression were also observed

in several cases. Jain warned that such patterns could develop into psychological and behavioural dependence, comparable to other forms of

The study was conducted by senior psychologist Dr Jayshree Jain on 150 children in the age group of 10 to 16. It involved interactions with the children and their parents, along with behavioural observation

addiction.

The psychologist explained that social media and short

videos trigger the release of dopamine, a hormone associated with pleasure, reinforcing repeated usage.

"Lack of goals, physical activity or creative engagement further increases children's inclination towards mobile devices," she said.

Jain said families play a crucial role in regulating screen time. "Parents should set limits, create phone-free routines such as keeping devices aside during meals, and encourage children to engage in sports, reading and creative pursuits. Spending quality family time can help foster positive behaviour among children," she said.



An aerial view of Srinagar city on a cloudy day, in Jammu and Kashmir

PTI PHOTO

India, US to begin trade pact talks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19: About a dozen officers from India will reach Washington April 20 for three-day talks with the US authorities on the first phase of the bilateral trade agreement (BTA), an official said.

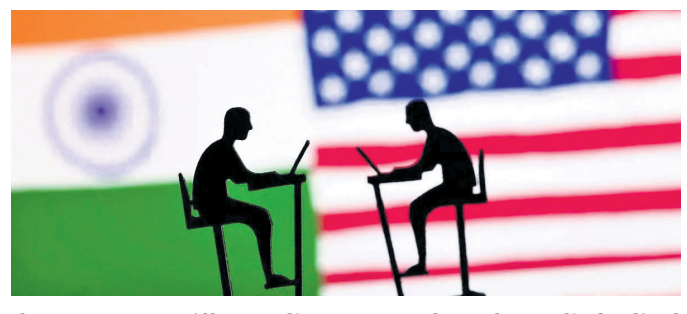
As the tariff landscape has changed in the US, both sides may like to relook at the framework of the agreement, the text of which was released February 7.

Following the decision of the US Supreme Court against the sweeping tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump on a number of countries, the Trump administration imposed a 10 per cent tariff on all countries from February 24 for 150 days.

"The meeting will happen from April 20-22 in Washington DC. India's chief negotiator Darpán Jain (additional secretary in the department of commerce) is leading the team. Officers from customs and external affairs ministry are also part of the Indian team," the official said. Further, the two unilateral investigations launched by the US Trade Representative (USTR) may also figure in the three-day deliberations.

India has strongly rejected allegations made by the US Trade Representative in those two investigations under its Section 301 of trade law and has requested to terminate the probes as the initiation notice has failed to provide cogent rationale to substantiate the claims.

According to that framework, the US had agreed to reduce tariffs on India to 18 per cent, from 50 per cent. It had removed



the 25 per cent tariffs on Indian goods for buying Russian oil and was to cut the remaining 25 per cent to 18 per cent under the pact.

But February 20, the US Supreme Court ruled against Trump's reciprocal tariffs which were imposed under the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).

After that, the President announced the imposition of 10 per cent tariffs on all countries for 150 days, starting February 24.

In light of these changes, a meeting between chief negotiators of India and the US scheduled in February was postponed. Now, they are meeting in Washington from April 20, 2026.

Under the agreed framework, India proposed to eliminate or reduce tariffs on all US industrial goods and a wide range of US food and agricultural products, including dried distillers' grains (DDGs), red sorghum for animal feed, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruit, soybean oil, wine and spirits, and additional products. India had also expressed its intentions to purchase \$500 billion of US energy products, aircraft and aircraft parts, precious metals, technology products, and coking coal over the next five years.

Further, when India finalised the deal, it enjoyed a comparative advantage over its competitor countries. Now, with all US trading partners facing a uniform 10 per cent tariff, the pact requires recalibration.

"So the agreement will have to be recalibrated, redrafted," a government source has said, adding, "that amount of change will take place from their side."

"In our case, since the agreement has not been signed, we have got the option where we can right now change whatever needs to be changed," the source has said.

As the circumstances have changed, every country is engaging with the US to see what is going to be the nature of their trade agreements with America.

China has overtaken the US to emerge as India's largest trading partner in 2025-26. The US was India's largest trading partner for four consecutive years till 2024-25.

The country's outbound shipments to the US grew marginally 0.92 per cent to USD 87.3 billion during the last fiscal year, while imports increased 15.95 per cent to USD 52.9 billion. The trade surplus declined to USD 34.4 billion in 2025-26 from USD 40.89 billion in 2024-25.

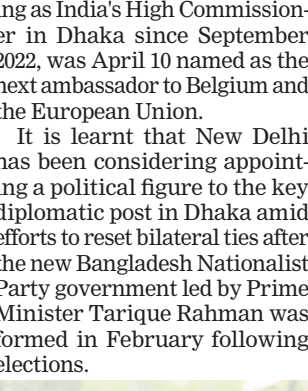
Dinesh Trivedi expected to be India's next High Commissioner to B'desh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19: Dinesh Trivedi, a former Union minister and veteran politician from West Bengal, is expected to be appointed India's next High Commissioner to Bangladesh, sources said Sunday.

Pranay Verma, who was serving as India's High Commissioner in Dhaka since September 2022, was April 10 named as the next ambassador to Belgium and the European Union.

It is learnt that New Delhi has been considering appointing a political figure to the key diplomatic post in Dhaka amid efforts to reset bilateral ties after the new Bangladesh Nationalist Party government led by Prime Minister Tarique Rahman was formed in February following elections.



The relations between India and Bangladesh witnessed a major downturn after the interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus came to power following the collapse of the Sheikh Hasina government in August 2024. Trivedi, 75, served as the railway minister and Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare during the UPA rule. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha from West Bengal and was a Lok Sabha MP from Barrackpore constituency in the state. He quit the Trinamool Congress in February 2021 and joined the BJP.

The sources said Trivedi is likely to be appointed as the High Commissioner in Dhaka, a key position, in view of his extensive experience. However, there was no formal announcement yet. Verma, a 1994-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, had assumed charge as the High Commissioner in Dhaka on September 21, 2022. Bangladesh Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman, accompanied by the prime minister's advisor for foreign affairs, Humayun Kabir, visited New Delhi early this month. It was the first high-level visit to India by a senior member of the new Bangladesh government.

PMLA CASE ED arrests bizman, raids Kolkata Police deputy commissioner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 19: The Enforcement Directorate Sunday arrested a Kolkata-based businessman after it conducted searches against him and Kolkata Police Deputy Commissioner Shantanu Sinha Biswas as part of a money laundering probe against an alleged criminal-linked syndicate in the poll-bound state, officials said.

Kamdar, Managing Director of Sun Enterprise, was taken into custody following a brief

round of questioning. He was picked from his residence during the raids and brought to the ED office, after which he was arrested under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), they said.

He will be produced before a local court, where the agency will seek his custody for detailed questioning, the officials said.

The day began with the ED searching the premises of Kamdar and Biswas, including the latter's residence in the Ballygunge area of Kolkata.

3 of family drown

Nalbari: Three members of a family, including two sisters, drowned in a river in Assam's Nalbari district Sunday, police said. The incident occurred at Niz Barshiral village. Two of the deceased, Pinki Das and her cousin Rohit Das, had come to their sister Kuntu Das Deka's residence from Guwahati. After lunch, the three had gone to the riverside where Kuntu Das Deka entered the water for a bath, police said.

Four killed in road mishap

Anuppur: Four persons were killed after a tractor-trolley veered off the road and overturned in Madhya Pradesh's Anuppur district Sunday morning, police said. The accident occurred in the Karanpathar police station area when the vehicle from Karanjia in Dindori district was heading to Anuppur to collect crushed gravel, an official said. The tractor lost control and overturned by the roadside, trapping its occupants, who died on the spot, Karanpathar station house officer Birendra Varkade told reporters. Police teams reached the spot and launched efforts to lift the overturned tractor, he said.

2 separate fires affect 15 shops

Mumbai: About 15 shops were affected in two separate fires in south Mumbai, civic officials said Sunday. Nobody was injured in the incidents that occurred in Mumbai Central and near Crawford Market, they said. Ten shops were damaged after a fire broke out at a commercial structure at 11.31 pm Saturday on D B Marg opposite a mall in Mumbai Central. The fire was confined to electric wiring, installations and equipment in around five large and a few small shops spread over nearly 5,000 sq ft on the ground and first floors of the structure, a civic official said.

SHORT TAKES

India attracts only 9 million foreign tourists a year which is roughly the same number as annual visitors to the Louvre alone. Vietnam, a far smaller country, attracted more than double this number last year. Why does a country of our scale and tourism potential remain such an underperformer on the global tourism dashboard?

@samjawed65

POST OF THE DAY

I am addressing this press conference to assure mothers and sisters of Bihar that these opposition parties will have to pay for what they have done. Women workers of our party are going to hit the streets on the issue

SAMRAT CHOUDHARY | BIHAR CHIEF MINISTER

I am telling the honourable PM with all respect, please speak like the Prime Minister. I wish you a long life. Please facilitate sending the ₹2 lakh crore dues you failed to release for Bengal over the last few years

ABHISHEK BANERJEE | TMC NATIONAL GENERAL SECY

Despite being a woman, Mamata Banerjee betrayed the women of Bengal by conspiring with parties like the Congress so that the women's reservation bill could not be passed in the Lok Sabha

NTIN NABIN | BJP PRESIDENT

international



We wish to build a country where old divisions are overcome once and for all, where hatred and violence disappear, and where the scourge of corruption is healed by a new culture of justice and sharing

POPE LEO | CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADER

NIGHT BAN HITS BALOCH FISHERMEN'S LIVELIHOODS

Nighttime fishing bans have been imposed by the Pakistani authorities across Balochistan's coastal district of Gwadar, further impacting the livelihoods of fishermen, who are already suffering due to repeated restrictions, according to local media reports



of the day quote

Attacks on peacekeepers must stop. They are grave violations of international humanitarian law and of Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006) and may amount to war crimes



ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECY-GENERAL

We are still not there yet to move on to an actual meeting because there are issues that the Americans have not yet abandoned their maximalist position



SAEED KHATIBZADEH | IRANIAN DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER

We all oppose any restriction, any agreement regime that would effectively amount to an attempt to privatise the strait, and obviously any toll system



EMMANUEL MACRON | FRENCH PRESIDENT

US negotiators to visit Pak for Iran talks: Trump



AGENCIES

Washington, April 19: President Donald Trump said US negotiators will head to Pakistan Monday for another round of talks with Iran, raising hopes of extending a fragile ceasefire set to expire by Wednesday even as Washington and Tehran remain in a standoff over the Strait of Hormuz.

The White House said Vice President JD Vance, who led the first round of historic face-to-face talks last weekend, would lead the delegation to Pakistan with envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner.

Pakistani authorities began tightening security in Islamabad. A regional official involved in the efforts said mediators were finalising preparations and US advance security teams were already on the ground. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorised to discuss preparations with the media.

Trump's announcement repeated his threats against Iranian infrastructure that have drawn widespread criticism and warnings of war crimes. If Iran doesn't agree to the US-proposed deal, "the United States is going to knock out every single Power Plant, and every single Bridge, in Iran," he wrote.

Transits of the Strait of Hormuz are impossible, says Iran Ships remained unable to transit the critical waterway amid threats from Iran and a US blockade on ships heading to and from Iranian ports. Roughly one-fifth of the world's oil trade normally passes through the strait, and the global energy crisis threat-

ened to deepen as the war is now in its eighth week.

Iranian officials earlier Sunday held firm that ships wouldn't pass while the US blockade remained in effect. In his post about talks, Trump accused Iran of violating the ceasefire by firing at ships transiting the strait. Iran has called the US blockade a violation, and foreign ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei Sunday called it an "act of aggression."

Iran had announced the strait's reopening after a 10-day truce between Israel and the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon took hold Friday. But Iran said it would continue enforcing its restrictions there after Trump said the US blockade "will remain in full force" until Tehran reaches a deal with the United States.

After a brief uptick in transit attempts Saturday, Iran fired on two India-flagged merchant ships that were forced to turn around, leading India to summon Iran's ambassador over the "serious incident." India noted that Iran earlier let several India-bound ships through.

For the Islamic Republic, the strait's closure - imposed after the US and Israel launched the Iran war February 28 during talks over Tehran's nuclear program - is perhaps its most powerful weapon, inflicting political pain on Trump. For the United States, the blockade squeezes Iran's already weakened economy by denying it long-term cash flow.

The war has killed at least 3,000 people in Iran, more than

Tehran rejects peace talks

Washington/Islamabad: Iran rejected new peace talks with the United States, its state news agency reported Sunday, hours after US President Donald Trump said he was sending envoys for talks in Pakistan and would launch new strikes on Iran unless it accepts his terms "We're offering a very fair and reasonable DEAL, and I hope they take it because, if they don't, the United States is going to knock out every single Power Plant, and every single Bridge, in Iran," he wrote. "NO MORE MR. NICE GUY!" Iran's official IRNA news agency cited no specific source in its report that Iran had rejected the talks. "Iran stated that its absence from the second round of talks stems from what it called Washington's excessive demands, unrealistic expectations, constant shifts in stance, repeated contradictions, and the ongoing naval blockade, which it considers a breach of the ceasefire," IRNA wrote. The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Iran's rejection of the talks.

2,290 in Lebanon, 23 in Israel and more than a dozen in Gulf Arab states. Fifteen Israeli soldiers in Lebanon and 13 US service members throughout the region have been killed.

Since most supplies to US military bases in the Gulf region come through the strait, "Iran is determined to maintain oversight and control over traffic through the strait until the war fully ends," Iran's Supreme National Security Council said late Saturday. That means Iran-designated routes, payment of fees and issuance of transit certificates. The council has recently acted as Iran's de facto top decision-making body.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, who spoke by phone with Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi Sunday, has said his country was working to "bridge" differences between the US and Iran. Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Saeed Khatibzadeh Saturday told The Associated Press.

N Korea launches multiple ballistic missiles toward sea

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, April 19: North Korea launched multiple short-range ballistic missiles toward the sea Sunday, its neighbours said, days after the UN's nuclear watchdog warned that North Korea was making "very serious" advances in efforts to build nuclear weapons.

The missiles fired from the North's Sinpo area flew about 140 kilometres (87 miles) each in a direction toward the country's eastern waters, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said. It said South Korea maintains a readiness to repel any provocations by North Korea and is closely exchanging information with the US and Japan.



In an emergency meeting of the National Security Council, senior South Korean officials expressed concerns about North Korea's repeated ballistic missile tests and urged it to stop them immediately. Sunday's launches came hours before South Korean President Lee Jae Myung left the country

to visit India and Vietnam.

The US and Japanese militaries also said they detected the launches. The US Indo-Pacific Command said it remains committed to the defence of the US homeland and its allies in the region. Japan's Defence Ministry said Tokyo strongly protested to Pyongyang, saying



Indian Ocean Ship (IOS) SAGAR - INS Sunayna departed Phuket, Thailand, on completion of a high-tempo three-day Operational Turnaround (OTR), marking the culmination of her second port call during the ongoing deployment

VP Radhakrishnan meets SL President

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, April 19: Vice President C P Radhakrishnan met Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake here Sunday and held productive discussions on further deepening the multifaceted bilateral ties, housing projects and fishermen issues between the two South Asian neighbours.



Radhakrishnan, who arrived here earlier in the day on a two-day visit, also discussed with Dissanayake the ongoing Indian project implementation in Sri Lanka with emphasis on the USD 450 million Cyclone Ditwah aid offered by India.

Accompanied by a 49-member delegation, the vice president was received at the Bandaranaik International Airport in Colombo by Sports Minister Sunil Kumara Gamage and several other dignitaries. Radhakrishnan's visit is the first ever by an Indian vice president to Sri Lanka, officials said.

UK police probe Iran links to arson attacks on Jewish targets

REUTERS

London, April 19: British police said they are investigating possible Iran links to a series of arson attacks on Jewish targets in London, which the UK chief rabbi said showed a sustained campaign of violence against the Jewish community was gathering momentum.

After the latest attack, at Kenton United Synagogue in the Harrow area of the city shortly after midnight, the third such incident in a week, UK counter-terrorism police said they were heading up investigations into the incidents. A pro-Iranian government group, which says it is also behind a spate of attacks across Europe on US, Israeli and Jewish targets, has said it was responsible.

"As the conflict in the Middle East continues to evolve, counter-terrorism policing and our partners remain alive to the threat of Iranian hostile activity in the UK," Vicki Evans, Britain's senior national coordinator for Counter Terrorism Policing, told reporters. "We are aware of public reporting that suggests this group may have links to Iran. As you would ex-

pect, we will continue to explore that question as our investigation evolves."

'SUSTAINED CAMPAIGN OF VIOLENCE'

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis said the Kenton fire, which did not cause any significant damage, was the third "cowardly" attack on Jewish sites in the British capital in less than a week.

"A sustained campaign of violence and intimidation against the Jewish community of the UK is gathering momentum," Mirvis said on X. "Thank God, no lives have been lost, but we cannot, and must not, wait for that to change before we understand just how dangerous this moment is for all of our society."

On Friday night, there was an attempted arson attack on a business premises with links to the Jewish community, while a few days earlier police arrested two suspects over an attempted arson attack on another synagogue in the capital. Meanwhile an area around the Israeli embassy in London was cordoned off following an online report that it had been targeted with drones carrying "dangerous substances".



Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis visits the scene after four ambulances belonging to Hatzola, a Jewish community organisation, were set on fire in an incident that the police say is being treated as an antisemitic hate crime, in northwest London March 23

Blue Origin lands reused New Glenn booster, heats SpaceX race

REUTERS

Washington, April 19 : Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin Sunday said its New Glenn rocket booster touched down after its launch, marking its first landing of a reused booster.

The rocket, which had a launch window of 6:45 a.m. to 12:19 p.m. ET Sunday, lifted off at around 7:25 a.m. ET (1125 GMT) from Cape Canaveral, Florida, and the booster touchdown happened about 10 minutes later.

New Glenn carries AST SpaceMobile's BlueBird 7 satellite to low-Earth orbit in a flight that marks a pivotal step for the Jeff Bezos-led company.

The mission was key to

demonstrating that New Glenn, a 29-story heavy-lift rocket, has a reliable booster reuse capability and can compete with Elon Musk's SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

The rocket's booster, dubbed "Never Tell Me the Odds," previously flew on the NG-2 mission in November and was recovered, setting up this week's milestone attempt.

The booster's name is a nod to a Han Solo line in the film "Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back."

Following a series of delays earlier this month, the mission comes amid a surge of activity in the space sector, including the successful NASA Artemis



II lunar flyby that took humans further from Earth than any had traveled before.

Blue Origin had said in November that it would build a bigger, more powerful variant

of its New Glenn rocket, called New Glenn 9x4.

AST SATELLITE CONSTELLATION

New Glenn is designed for the higher end of the commer-

cial launch market with a seven-meter (23-foot) nose cone allowing it to carry bulkier payloads, including multiple

satellites in a single mission. AST SpaceMobile's BlueBird 7, carried into orbit on NG-3, is the second satellite in its next-generation Block 2 constellation.

The satellite features what the company describes as the largest commercial communications array deployed in low-Earth orbit. Designed to connect directly with smartphones, the satellite is part of an effort to build a space-based cellular broadband network, similar to Amazon's Leo or SpaceX's Starlink.

AST SpaceMobile is targeting a constellation of 45 to 60 such satellites by the end of 2026.

New Glenn carries AST SpaceMobile's BlueBird 7 satellite to low-Earth orbit in a flight that marks a pivotal step for the Jeff Bezos-led company

The mission was key to demonstrating that New Glenn, a 29-story heavy-lift rocket, has a reliable booster reuse capability and can compete with Elon Musk's SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket



I think the beer industry is in major trouble right now because of the war and the financial impact it has on input costs and the inability to take pricing without government approval
VIVEK GUPTA | CEO AND MD, UBL

AIR INDIA SPEEDS UP 787 RETROFIT

Air India expects to complete retrofitting of seven more legacy Boeing 787-8 planes this year as it upgrades the fleet of these aircraft that is key to the airline's long-haul operations. The loss-making carrier, which is in the midst of an ambitious transformation plan, has received the first of its retrofitted legacy Boeing 787-8 plane, which has 250 seats in three class configuration of business, premium economy and economy. The plane landed in the national capital April 13



of the day quote

As we complete three decades in India, we see innovation and education as both an enabler of progress and a catalyst for inclusion



SP CHUN | SOUTHWEST ASIA CORPORATE VICE PRESIDENT, SAMSUNG

For precious metals, it's going to be a crucial week on deciding the continuation of trend or the possibility of a correction. Focus will be on the inflation data from Japan and the UK, and monetary policy decision by China



PRANAV MER | VICE PRESIDENT, EBG - COMMODITY & CURRENCY RESEARCH, JM FINANCIAL SERVICES

Health is one of the fastest-growing segments, and we are closely monitoring the emerging consumer needs in this space



HEMANT MALIK | CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE FOOD DIVISION AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ITC

Investors lose money as 7 penny stocks sink

The sharp decline in these stocks comes despite their popularity among retail investors looking for high-return opportunities with minimal initial investment



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 19: As many investors chase quick gains in low-priced shares, at least 7 penny stocks have emerged as major losers in calendar year 2026 so far, plunging between 40 per cent and 70 per cent amid high volatility and weak fundamentals. The sharp decline in these stocks comes despite their popularity among retail investors looking for high-return opportunities with minimal initial investment. The underperformers were

identified through a screening strategy that focused on companies with a market capitalisation below Rs 1,000 crore, share prices under Rs 20, and a minimum recent trading volume of 5 lakh shares. Among the worst hit is A-1, which has seen its value erode by 72 per cent so far this year, with its previous close at Rs 14. SRU Steels has also taken a significant hit, falling 63 per cent in CY2026, while Leading Leasing Finance And Investment Co has declined by 60 per cent during the same period. Other notable laggards in-

clude Evexia Lifecare, down 57 per cent, and Deep Health AI India, which has dropped 56 per cent so far this year. Padam Cotton Yarns has slipped 53 per cent, while Space Incubatics Technologies has declined 50 per cent. Market experts caution that while penny stocks may appear attractive due to their low prices, they often come with elevated risks. Limited liquidity, sharp price swings, and lack of transparency make them vulnerable to manipulation and sudden downturns. In the absence of disciplined investment strategies and strong risk management, such stocks can lead to significant losses for investors. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook for next week, the index is consolidating in the 24,100-24,400 range with immediate resistance near 24,400 and support around 24,000. "A sustained breakout above this level could extend the rally towards the 24,800-25,000 range," an analyst said.

LPG consumption slides 13% amid West Asia conflict

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19: India's cooking gas LPG consumption fell by a steep 13 per cent in March as supply disruptions linked to the West Asia conflict hit availability for both household kitchens and commercial users, according to latest official data. LPG consumption was at 2.379 million tonne in March, 12.8 per cent lower than 2.729 million tonne consumed in the same period last year. India imports about 60 per cent of its LPG requirements, much of it via the Strait of Hormuz, which was effectively shut following US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Tehran's retaliation. With supplies from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates disrupted, the government has cut LPG supplies to commercial establishments like hotels, and industries to safeguard household cooking gas availability.

According to the Oil Ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC), LPG cylinder sold to domestic households fell 8.1 per cent in March to 2.219 million tonne while those sold to non-domestic users was down almost 48 per cent. Bulk LPG sales was down by a massive 75.5 per cent. The PPAC data showed lower consumption when compared to government claims of LPG supplies being normal and all demand from domestic users being met.

KISNA unveils fifth showroom in Cuttack



POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, April 19: KISNA Diamond & Gold Jewellery announced the grand opening of its fifth exclusive showroom in Cuttack, located at Plot No. B-1393, CDA Sector VI. The inauguration was graced by Ghanshyam Dholakia, Founder & MD, Hari Krishna Group, further strengthening KISNA's presence in the region.

As a part of the ongoing festive season, KISNA has also announced 'The Biggest Festive Offer' under the 'Akshaya Happiness Campaign', featuring multiple exciting offers on diamond and gold jewellery, inviting consumers to celebrate and indulge in festive shopping. The brand is offering flat 40% off on making charges of diamond jewellery and flat 30% off on making charges of gold jewellery. Consumers can also enjoy complimentary 10 grams and 20 grams silver coins on select purchase of diamond and gold jewellery, along with 100% exchange value on old gold.

Enhancing the shopping experience further, KISNA is offering a 5% instant discount on ICICI credit and debit cards, along with a double rate protection benefit, allowing consumers to lock the gold rate with just a 25% down payment. Exclusive gift vouchers on diamond jewellery purchases make this festive season even more rewarding for customers. Parag Shah, CEO, KISNA Diamond & Gold Jewellery, said, "With our latest showroom in Cuttack, we aim to offer an elevated jewellery shopping experience that blends style, comfort and choice. The collection brings together contemporary elegance and traditional craftsmanship, catering to diverse customer preferences. Through our Akshaya Happiness Campaign, we are delighted to present festive offerings that add greater value to every purchase." Among others present at the event were Saunak Parikh, Sudipta Parikh, Raj Parikh, and Smita Parikh.

GROW THROUGH PASSION, PERSISTENCE: PREETI

Preeti Pallavi Patnaik is the dynamic co-founder of Osiris Agretail Private Limited, the parent company of the specialty brand ODYSSA Coffee. A visionary entrepreneur based in Bhubaneswar, she is dedicated to elevating Odisha's indigenous coffee culture. By sourcing directly from tribal farmers in Koraput, Preeti bridges the gap between traditional agriculture and modern retail. Her work focuses on sustainability, fair trade, and creating immersive café experiences that blend local heritage with global third-wave coffee standards, making her a key figure in India's growing speciality coffee scene. Excerpts...



PREETI PALLAVI PATNAIK
Co-founder, ODYSSA Coffee

What inspired ODYSSA Coffee to promote Koraput-grown Arabica coffee?
ODYSSA Coffee grew from our work with Koraput-origin coffee through Kalina DESIAGRO Foundation (KDF). As interest rose, we shared small batches of roasted beans with early supporters and hosted pop-ups in Bhubaneswar to promote locally grown coffee. We created the brand to offer consistent access to fresh, small-batch beans from quality Koraput lots while building a community. A natural extension of KDF, ODYSSA Coffee connects farmers and consumers, supporting sustainable livelihoods and a coffee-led ecosystem.

How does your brand's partnership with Kalina DESIAGRO Foundation support ethical and direct-trade sourcing?
Direct trade and full traceability are central to ODYSSA Coffee's identity, alongside our

commitment to sustainability and Odia pride. Through KDF, we work directly with farmers in Koraput, giving us visibility across cultivation, harvesting, and processing. Our in-house unit converts cherries into green beans, ensuring a clear farm-to-cup chain. By sourcing at the farm gate and eliminating intermediaries, we ensure fair pricing, offer quality premiums, build strong farmer relationships, and maintain traceability across every batch.

How has been your journey so far? What innovations in brewing methods or cafe formats helped ODYSSA Coffee stand out?
Our journey has been organic and adaptive. We began as a D2C brand delivering fresh, small-batch coffee, but pivoted after launching a cafe inside a salon in Patia to build an experiential retail presence. Today, we blend coffee with community through pop-ups, workshops, and events. We follow a coffee-first approach while innovating with global trends and local flavours like ragi, sattva, and mahua. Our cafe experience reflects Odia culture through thoughtful design and details, creating a space that is both immersive and locally rooted while continuing to evolve.

In what ways do community events like "ODYSSA Unscripted" contribute to coffee education and cultural storytelling?
ODYSSA Unscripted is a

community-first platform that extends us beyond a transactional cafe into a space for dialogue, discovery, and cultural exchange. We design it for both coffee and non-coffee audiences through accessible formats where coffee is experienced organically, encouraging curiosity and gradual engagement. For us, coffee plays a supporting role rather than a structured lesson. At its core, Unscripted is also a vehicle for cultural storytelling, blending contemporary and traditional Odia expressions and positioning us as a platform for shared cultural experiences.

As an entrepreneur, why did you choose to enter this line of business? What advice will you give to the new entrants?
ODYSSA Coffee was never a planned commercial venture but a natural extension of purpose through KDF. I wanted to build an ecosystem around Koraput coffee, supporting farmers with market linkages, visibility, and recognition while strengthening the coffee culture in Bhubaneswar. For me, it has never been just about buying and selling coffee but about creating meaningful, long-term impact. I believe genuine intent, passion, and a willingness to learn naturally lead to growth and visibility. For new entrants, I would say understand the value chain, identify gaps, define your USP, stay patient, keep learning, and remain committed to your vision.

AI PIVOT Tech sector layoffs accelerate in 2026

73,200 layoffs by 95 companies in the Q1 of 2026

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 19: Global technology firms accelerated job cuts in the first quarter of 2026, with over 73,200 layoffs by 95 companies, according to industry data. The data from Layoffs.fyi showed that the past two weeks saw a fresh surge in headcount reductions. Snap Inc., The Walt Disney Company, Meta Platforms and Oracle Corporation, announced layoffs recently as firms streamline operations to cut costs and shift resources



toward artificial intelligence. Social media platform Snap Inc. said it would cut about 1,000 jobs or roughly 16 per cent of its workforce and eliminate over 300 open roles to boost efficiency and accelerate growth.

Chief Executive Officer Evan Spiegel said advances in AI were enabling automation of repetitive tasks, and with streamlining operations, the company expects savings of over \$500 million by the sec-

ond half of 2026, while severance costs are estimated at \$95 million-\$130 million. It announced four months' severance pay, continued healthcare and accelerated equity vesting for its US-based employees. The Walt Disney Company plans to cut around 1,000 roles in its first major restructuring under new CEO Josh D'Amara, according to multiple reports. Meta Platforms continues its headcount reductions, with 198 roles planned layoffs across its California offices in Burlingame and Sunnyvale. In March, Meta had already cut 700 roles across recruitment, sales and operations, including positions in its Reality Labs division.

In January, the company announced 1,500 job cuts from augmented and virtual reality divisions. US tech giant Oracle plans to cut 20,000 to 30,000 jobs to expand its AI data-centre capacity, while Amazon recently announced lay off 16,000 employees as part of its AI restructuring plan. India is among the hardest-hit regions from layoffs in Oracle, with estimates suggesting around 12,000 employees affected across cloud, healthcare, sales and NetSuite divisions. Several tech industry leaders have said that most white-collar roles that rely on computers could be automated within the next 12 to 18 months.

Lenskart releases style guide welcoming religious symbols

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19: Following massive online backlash over a purported internal grooming document, eyewear retailer Lenskart has issued a public apology and released a standardised 'In-Store Style Guide' that allows employees to wear religious and cultural symbols at work. In a statement on X, the company said it is making its guidelines public and transparent to

address the concerns of its customers and community. The new policy "explicitly and unambiguously" welcomes all symbols of faith carried by team members, including the bindi, tilak, sindoor, kalawa, mangalsutra, kada, hijab, and turban. This comes following a controversy that erupted earlier this week when a document, alleged to be Lenskart's employee grooming policy, went viral on social media.

AFTER ONLINE BACKLASH

Banking sector resilient; 11-13% credit growth for Jan-June likely: Survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 19: India's banking sector remains resilient in the backdrop of heightened geopolitical uncertainties, with a majority of bankers anticipating a non-food credit growth of 11-13 per cent during January-June 2026, according to the FICCI-IBA Bankers' Survey unveiled Sunday. The outlook is supported by improving balance sheets, steady economic activity, sustained demand across multiple segments of the economy with robust retail and SME credit momentum, and early signs of revival in private capital expenditure. In contrast, industrial credit growth is expected to expand at a more measured pace, reflecting a gradual recovery rather than a sharp acceleration. The outlook suggests steady investment activity led by infrastructure development, manufacturing-linked sectors, and government-led capital expenditure. Term loan demand is expected to be largely driven by infrastructure, real estate, auto and auto components, pharmaceuticals, and emerging sectors such as data centres and defence-related industries. Most respondents expect the current monetary policy stance to remain broadly stable in the coming months, indicating a view that the existing policy framework remains appropriately calibrated to balance growth and inflation considerations, FICCI stated.

KKR end winless run

Rinku, Anukul script KKR's dramatic turnaround as they register four-wicket win against RR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 19: Vice-captain Rinku Singh lived up to expectations with a composed unbeaten 53 as Kolkata Knight Riders survived anxious moments to script their first win of IPL 2026 with a four-wicket victory over Rajasthan Royals, here Sunday.

Courtesy Rinku and Anukul Roy, the target was achieved with two balls to spare and the win took them to ninth spot in the 10-team table.

Wily Varun Chakravarthy (3/14) returned to his best, showing perfect chemistry with veteran Sunil Narine (2/26) as KKR rediscovered their spin magic at Eden Gardens to restrict RR to an under-par 155/9. Rookie pacer Kartik Tyagi (3/22) also shone at the death with important wickets.

The bowlers had done half the job for KKR in pursuit of their maiden victory after six matches, and it was up to the batters to finish the task.

But what followed was another familiar batting horror from a line-up that has struggled for consistency this season.

Reeling at 85/6 in 13.3 overs, KKR needed 69 runs from the last six overs, with RR's bowlers tightening the screws and Rinku alongside Anukul Roy appearing to be the last recognised pair.

Then came a moment of fortune as Rinku was dropped on eight by Nandre Burger -- a sitter that proved to be the turning point.

The KKR vice-captain made full use of the reprieve to change gears, while Roy played the per-



fect supporting role as the duo stitched a match-winning 76-run seventh-wicket stand off just 37 balls to seal KKR's first win of the season.

The much-awaited victory came after a six-match winless run, taking KKR to three points at the halfway stage. For RR, it was a second successive defeat, with their middle-order concerns persisting, especially with skipper Riyan Parag enduring a lean run.

The win will bring much-needed relief for KKR, who had lost from winning positions in recent games. It took them 22 days to

finally break the jinx.

On a day when skipper Ajinkya Rahane failed again, registering a second successive duck, it was Rinku who led from the front with 53 not out off 34 balls (5x4, 2x6). Roy complemented him well with 29 not out off 16 balls (1x4, 2x6).

RR will rue falling short by at least 30 runs, undone by the brilliance of Chakravarthy, Narine and Tyagi. However, they had a perfect start while defending 155. The fiery pace duo of Archer and Burger reduced KKR to 5/2 in 1.2 overs.

Earlier RR raced to 63 for no

loss in the power play after electing to bat.

But when they were inserted, the much-anticipated match-up between Sooryavanshi and the experienced spin duo lived up to the expectations.

The 15-year-old struck Narine for a second ball six, but the veteran responded with five dot balls in his first over.

Chakravarthy then dismissed him with his fourth delivery, reaching his landmark 200th T20 wicket.

Sooryavanshi's slog sweep lacked power and was taken by a well-judged Ramandeep Singh at deep midwicket.

That dismissal triggered a collapse as RR, cruising at nearly 10 runs per over at the halfway stage, slipped to 118/4 in 15 overs, with the run rate dropping below eight.

They lost Sooryavanshi (46 off 28), Dhruv Jurel (5), Jaiswal (39 off 29) and skipper Riyan Parag (12) in quick succession against the run of play. Parag, the controversial choice as RR skipper, has been the worst performer for Royals so far.

The middle phase belonged entirely to KKR's spin duo, who bowled in tandem and choked the scoring.

BRIEF SCORES

Rajasthan Royals: 155 for 9 in 20 overs (Jaiswal 39, Sooryavanshi 46; Chakravarthy 3/14, Tyagi 3/22, Narine 2/26) lost to **Kolkata Knight Riders:** 161 for 6 in 19.4 overs (Rinku 53 not out; Ravindra Jadeja 2/8) by four wickets

Arya, Connolly hammer LSG

Punjab Kings slay Lucknow Super Giants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mullanpur, April 19: Priyansh Arya, one of the country's most talked about T20 batting talent alongside Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, smashed his way to a magnificent 93 as Punjab Kings clinically demolished Lucknow Super Kings by 54 runs in an IPL match here Sunday.

The 24-year-old Delhi man, whose knock came off just 37 balls, joined hands with Cooper Connolly, the most talked about next-gen batting star in Australia, who also oozed class in his 45-ball-87 as Punjab Kings posted an insurmountable 254 for 7 in 20 overs.

The duo added an astounding 182 runs off just 80 balls with 16 sixes (9 from Priyansh and 7 from Connolly) and 12 fours shared between them.

In reply, Lucknow Super Giants despite a reasonably good Powerplay that fetched 61 runs were never in contention as they finished on 200 for five in 20 overs.

The likes of skipper Rishabh

IPL STANDINGS					
TEAMS	P	W	L	NRR	PTS
PBKs	6	5	0	1.420	11
RCB	6	4	2	1.171	8
RR	6	4	2	0.599	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	6	2	4	-1.173	4
KKR	7	1	5	-0.879	3
MI	5	1	4	-1.076	2



TODAY'S MATCH
GT VS MI
TIME: 7:30 PM
Star Sports channels & JioHotstar

his franchise coach Ricky Ponting proud.

Their batting styles were contrasting -- Priyansh scoring his half-century off just 19 balls and scoring the next 43 off 18 balls.

Connolly, on the other hand took some time as his 50 came off 35 deliveries but the next 37 came off 12.

Priyansh, who had a stellar debut IPL season, has been time and again proving that 2025 wasn't a mere flash in the pan.

The LSG bowlers sent down seven such overs in which 15 or more runs were scored including three in which 20 or more were taken. Aiden Markram alone conceded five sixes in an over. The only saving grace for them was Prince Yadav (2/25 in 4 overs) who shone brightly as most of his colleagues were sent on a leather hunt.

BRIEF SCORES

Punjab Kings 254/7 in 20 overs (Cooper Connolly 87, Priyansh Arya 93; Prince Yadav 2/25) beat **Lucknow Super Giants** 200 for 5 in 20 overs (Rishabh Pant 43, Mitchell Marsh 40, Aiden Markram 42; Vijaykumar Vyshak 1/30) by 54 runs

SHORT TAKES

Agarkar's contract renewed till next yr

New Delhi: Ajit Agarkar will continue as chairman of the senior selection committee after the BCCI decided to renew his contract for one more year, keeping an eye on the 2027 ODI World Cup. Under Agarkar's chairmanship, the selected Indian teams between October 2023 to March 2026 reached four ICC tournament finals, winning three of them -- two T20 World Cups and one ICC Champions Trophy -- and it was a foregone conclusion that his contract will be renewed for fourth year. "Agarkar didn't seek extension. A selector can continue up to four years in either junior or senior selection committee and five years cumulatively across both committees. Hence Ajit's contract is being renewed and not extended," a senior BCCI source told PTI. Sources close to Agarkar always maintained that he preferred to let the decision-makers assess his panel's performance rather than seek a renewal himself. Continuity ahead of the 50-over World Cup is one of the key factors behind the board's decision. During his tenure, the committee has taken several tough calls, including overseeing the Test retirements of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, and gradually phasing out senior pacer Mohammed Shami from international cricket. It also made a bold selection call, dropping Test and ODI skipper Shubman Gill from the T20 World Cup squad and instead fielding a form player in Ishan Kishan.

Messi scores brace; Miami beat Colorado

Commerce City: Lionel Messi had two goals, German Berterame scored for the second consecutive game, and Inter Miami beat the Colorado Rapids 3-2 to extend their unbeaten streak to seven games and win their first game under interim coach Guillermo Hoyos. Hoyos, who had been serving as club's sporting director, took over coaching duties after Javier Mascherano unexpectedly left the club due to personal reasons. Mascherano led Inter Miami to the 2025 MLS Cup title in his only full season with the club. Messi, who opened the scoring when he converted a penalty kick in the 13th minute, scored the go-ahead goal in 79th minute. After a Colorado turnover near midfield, Messi cut back near the right corner of the penalty box and flicked a rising shot that split a pair of defenders and slipped inside the back post. Messi has seven goals this season, tied with Sam Surridge and Petar Musa for most in MLS. Miami (4-1-3) hasn't lost since a season-opening 3-0 defeat to Los Angeles FC.

Proteas thrash eves

Durban: Laura Wolvaardt made a free-flowing 54 and Sune Luus complemented her skipper with a well-composed 57 as South Africa crushed India by eight wickets in the second women's T20I here Sunday. The match's script was written in clear letters once SA bowlers bundled out India for a below-par 147, and it was taken into its logical culmination by Wolvaardt and Luus who added 106 runs for the opening alliance in just 12 overs. The hosts made 148 for two in 17.1 overs. SA now lead the five-match series 2-0.

Selva Prabhu clinches triple jump title at Oregon Team Invitational

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Eugene, April 19: India's Selva Prabhu continued his impressive run in the 2026 athletics season by securing the men's triple jump title at the Oregon Team Invitational 2026 athletics meet.

Competing at the iconic Hayward Field, the 21-year-old produced a winning jump of 16.61m to finish at the top of the standings. He showed remarkable consistency across his attempts, also registering jumps of 16.57m and 16.37m during the competition.

Apalos Edwards finished second with a best effort of 16.53m, while Jhavor Bennett claimed third place after recording 16.11m. Selva Prabhu, who had earlier won a silver medal at the World Athletics U20 Championships 2022, has been steadily building momentum this season. His personal best of 17.05m, achieved at the NCAA Indoor Championships 2026 in Fayette-



ville, remains the Indian indoor national record in the event.

At the national level, the overall record in men's triple jump is held by Praveen Chithravel, who has cleared 17.37m on two occasions. The victory in Oregon marked Selva Prabhu's third title of the ongoing season. He had begun the year on a strong note by winning the Thane Baker athletics meet in Manhattan, Kansas, in January with a 16.49m effort. That performance also

helped him surpass the Athletics Federation of India's qualifying standard of 16.28m for the Asian Games 2026.

However, meeting the qualification mark alone does not ensure selection for the Indian squad. As per the Athletics Federation of India's guidelines, athletes must participate in at least three domestic competitions, including mandatory appearances at state-level meets, to be eligible for selection.

Rybakina bag Stuttgart crown for second time

Stuttgart: Top seed Elena Rybakina had her eyes on the prize, literally, as she overpowered Karolina Muchova 7-5 6-1 to win the Stuttgart Open Sunday and drive away with a Porsche car for the second time in her career. While the Kazakh claimed her second title of the season, it was the tournament's traditional Porsche award that truly captured Rybakina's attention more than the silverware itself. The victory elevated Rybakina into exclusive company, making her just the fourth active player to win at least five WTA-level titles on multiple surfaces, joining an elite group that includes Venus Williams, Elina Svitolina and Iga Swiatek. "It's an amazing tournament, we love coming back here... It really feels like home and you just want to come back every year," Rybakina said.



PREMIER LEAGUE

Spurs stuck in drop zone, Wolves near relegation



REUTERS

Manchester, April 19: Tottenham Hotspur conceded a stoppage-time goal in a 2-2 draw at home to Brighton & Hove Albion Saturday that left them in the Premier League relegation zone, while Wolverhampton Wanderers' are on the brink of the drop after a 3-0 loss at Leeds United.

Georginio Rutter's late equaliser for Brighton denied Tottenham a first league win of 2026, with the north London club stranded in 18th place in the table, while Wolves, marooned in the relegation zone all season, moved closer to the trap door.

In Saturday's late game, Manchester United strengthened their grip on third place with a 1-0 win at Chelsea in a blow to the home side's hopes of Champions League qualification.

Bournemouth edged Newcastle United 2-1 to boost their hopes of European football next season while dealing a blow to those of their hosts. Brentford versus Fulham ended in a 0-0 draw.

Spurs' draw left them winless in 15 league matches with the club starting at a first relegation since 1977. "I am sorry for the result, for the players because they are suffering too much," coach Roberto de Zerbi said after his first home game in charge.

Xavi Simons' stunning strike in the 77th minute seemed set to earn Tottenham a long-awaited victory before Rutter fired high into the net deep in added time.

Pedro Porro had headed Spurs in front after 39 minutes, but Brighton equalised in first-half stoppage time through a sublime volley from substitute Kaoru Mitoma.

Spurs have 31 points from 33 games, one behind West Ham United and two adrift of Nottingham Forest, and have played a

Spurs remain in relegation zone after late Brighton equaliser
Wolves' 22nd defeat leaves them on the edge of going down
Man United win 1-0 at Chelsea to cement third place in table
Bournemouth boost Europe hopes with late victory at Newcastle

game than both teams.

Wolves' 22nd league defeat of the season left them on 17 points from 33 matches, with their eight-year stay in the top flight hanging by a thread. A West Ham United draw or win at Crystal Palace Monday will seal Wolves' fate.

Manchester United's Mathew Cunha scored three minutes before halftime against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge, firing in from a pinpoint Bruno Fernandes cross with his side's first shot on target, before the visitors soaked up pressure to prevail.

The victory lifted United to 58 points, while sixth-placed Chelsea trail the top five Champions League spots by four points and sit 10 behind United with games remaining out.

Leeds, who have not lost in all competitions since early March, took control early through James Justin's acrobatic overhead kick from a corner after 18 minutes.

Bournemouth are eighth in the table on 48 points, while Newcastle dropped to 14th on 42.

Brentford are seventh in the table and level on 48 points with Chelsea. Fulham remain 12th with five matches to play.

Arsenal visit Manchester City Sunday in a potentially title-deciding match. Second-placed City trail leaders Arsenal by six points with a game in hand.

Real Sociedad lift fourth Copa del Rey trophy



REUTERS

- Real Sociedad beat Atletico 4-3 on penalties
- Marrero saves two penalties, Marin nets winner
- Atletico twice came from behind

Seville, April 19: Real Sociedad beat Atletico Madrid 4-3 on penalties to win the Copa del Rey Saturday following a 2-2 draw after extra time, with their goalkeeper Unai Marrero saving two spot kicks in the shootout to help his side win the trophy for the fourth time.

Sociedad last won the Cup in 2021, when the delayed 2020 final was also played at the La Cartuja stadium in Seville,

but there were no supporters present due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This time, the Basque side's fans were behind the goal to witness Marrero save Atletico's first two penalties from Alexander Sorloth and Julian Alvarez. Atletico keeper Juan Mus-

so then stopped Orri Oskarsson's kick but Pablo Marin kept his nerve to net the winning penalty.

"I tried to clear my mind. Calm and serene," Marin told RTVE. "Real is my life, I've lived here since I was a child. This is the greatest thing I