

Modi meets Yunus, raises concerns over safety of minorities

Bangkok, April 4: Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his meeting with Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus Friday underlined India's concerns over the safety of minorities, including Hindus, and conveyed the expectation that the Bangladeshi government would ensure their security, including by thoroughly investigating cases of atrocities against them.

The two leaders met on the sidelines of the Summit meeting of the leaders of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral and Technical Cooperation (BIMSTEC) grouping. It was their first meeting since the ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in August last year.

Briefing reporters on Modi's meeting with Yunus, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said Modi underlined India's concerns related to the safety and security of minorities in Bangladesh including Hindus.

PM Modi expressed his



expectation that the government of Bangladesh would ensure their security, including by thoroughly investigating all cases of atrocities against the minorities, Misri said at the media briefing.

During the meeting, PM Modi also urged that any rhetoric that vitiates the environment is best avoided, the foreign secretary said.

Prime Minister Modi reiterated India's support for a democratic, stable, peaceful, progressive and inclusive Bangladesh.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Waqf Bill fuels protests; Cong to move SC



CONTENTIOUS ISSUE: Police personnel detain people protesting the passage of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in Parliament, in Ahmedabad, Friday

Hours after the Parliament passed the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025 early Friday, huge protests erupted in Kolkata, Chennai and Ahmedabad against the contentious legislation, while the Opposition Congress announced that it will move the Supreme Court challenging the Bill's constitutionality. Muslim community members took to streets in the major cities after Friday prayers and rejected the Bill as 'unconstitutional' and 'anti-democratic'. One concern of all the protesters is that the new Waqf laws will be applied retroactively, thereby affecting existing properties. On the other hand, terming the Bill as 'anti-Muslim', the Congress claimed it has been brought with the sole intention of 'harassing minorities'

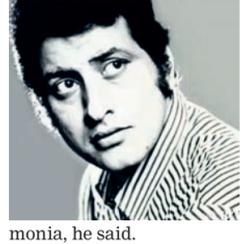
Veteran actor-filmmaker Manoj Kumar dies at 87

Mumbai, April 4: Veteran actor-filmmaker Manoj Kumar, who came to be known as 'Bharat Kumar' for his series of patriotic films such as 'Shaheed', 'Upkar' and 'Purab Aur Paschim', died in a Mumbai hospital early Friday. He was 87.

The industry veteran, whose films ruled the box office in the late 1960s and 1970s, had been ailing for a while and died of age related issues at the Kokilaben Ambani Hospital around 3.30 am, family friend and filmmaker Ashoke Pandit told PTL. "He had been hospitalized for the past few weeks," Dr Santosh Shetty, CEO and executive director of the hospital, said in a statement.

"He is out of his misery now," the filmmaker's son Kunal told PTL, adding that his father had been battling multiple health issues and was bedridden for the last few years.

Kumar had been in and out of hospital and was most recently admitted for pneu-



monia, he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi remembered him as an 'icon of Indian cinema'.

"Deeply saddened by the passing of legendary actor and filmmaker Shri Manoj Kumar Ji. He was an icon of Indian cinema, who was particularly remembered for his patriotic zeal, which was also reflected in his films. Manoj Ji's works ignited a spirit of national pride and will continue to inspire generations. My thoughts are with his family and admirers in this hour of grief. Om Shanti," the PM wrote on X.

Kumar, a Dadasaheb Phalke winner, was also known for hits such as 'Do Badan', 'Haryali Aur Rasta' and 'Gumnam'. **MORE P2**

Cabinet nod for two rail projects in state

Bhubaneswar, April 4: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday approved two projects of the Ministry of Railways for Odisha involving a total cost of Rs 5,104 crore.

The projects are the third and fourth lines between Sambalpur and Jarapda, and Jharsuguda and Sason.

The Sambalpur (Sason)-Jharsuguda corridor, valued at Rs 1,187 crore, will stretch for 87 km, while the Jarapda-Sambalpur project, costing Rs 3,917 crore, will span 277 km.

In an official statement on his X account, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Modi and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for their support in approving these crucial projects. He emphasised that the new rail lines would not only enhance connectivity but also accelerate Odisha's journey toward becoming a 'Viksit Odisha' (Developed Odisha).

Discord in BJD over Waqf Bill

The BJD's change of stance on the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025 which was passed by the Parliament in the early hours of Friday has exposed the rift within the party. A day before the Waqf Bill voting was taken up in Rajya Sabha, the party had stated that it would vote against it. Surprisingly, BJD's Rajya Sabha MP and national spokesperson Sasmit Patra said he voted for the Bill as the party did not issue any whip on the issue. This situation has led some senior party leaders to take up the issue with party supremo and former Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik even as rumours float about a possible split in the party



senior leaders led by BJD's advisory committee convenor and deputy leader in Assembly Prasanna Acharya met Patnaik Friday evening.

The senior leaders held a detailed discussion with Patnaik on how the party's stand on the Waqf Bill changed overnight and some BJD MPs voted in support of the Bill.

"We had a detailed discussion with party president Naveen Patnaik and he reiterated that the BJD continues to remain secular. There has been no change in the party's stand as far as its secular character is concerned," Acharya told reporters after the meeting.

He, however, avoided questions on how the BJD's stand changed on Waqf Bill despite its parliamentary party's announcement to oppose the legislation in Parliament.

BJD MP and national spokesperson Sasmit Patra, after passage of the contentious Bill in Rajya Sabha, said that he voted

for the Waqf Bill as the party did not issue any whip on the issue. While it was anticipated that the BJD's lone Muslim MP Muzibulla Khan, who stood to oppose the Bill in Rajya Sabha, has voted against the Bill, another MP Debashish Samantaray confirmed that he abstained from voting in protest against the party's confusing stand.

Opposition Congress strongly criticised the BJD and accused it of going against its promise to the Muslim community in the state by voting in favour of the Bill.

"The BJD Parliamentary Party had earlier decided to oppose the Bill. We had also heard that the party would boycott the RS during voting on the issue. Suddenly, the BJD changed its stand and voted in support of the Bill. BJD's decision has tarnished the image of Naveen Patnaik and the party," OP-CC president Bhakta Charan Das said.

Trump tariffs: Penguin memes fill internet

Washington, April 4: Donald Trump's tariffs have become a black and white issue on social media, where penguin memes have gone viral after he targeted an island inhabited by the flightless birds, but no people.

One widely shared image showed a penguin in place of Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the Oval Office during his recent row with the US president and Vice President JD Vance.

Another meme showed US First Lady Melania Trump gazing up at an emperor penguin - in place of former Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau - while Trump looks askance.

Trump's announcement of worldwide tariffs Wednesday certainly received an icy reception in



many countries. But there has also been bafflement about why some of the most remote parts of the world have been targeted.

A case in point: why would Trump slap 10 per cent tariffs on all exports from the Heard and McDonald Islands, a barren sub-Antarctic Australian territory without a human

Democratic leader Chuck Schumer, referring to the fact that Russia was not on the US tariff list.

The White House said sanctions on Russia over President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine meant that there was no 'meaningful' trade on which to impose tariffs.

Trump also caused puzzlement with his 29 per cent tariff on Norfolk Island, a tiny Australian territory in the Pacific with a population of a little over 2,000 humans.

"I'm not quite sure that Norfolk Island, with respect to it, is a trade competitor with the giant economy of the United States," Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said. Trump's tariffs have however been no laughing matter for global markets, with US stocks suffering their worst day since the COVID pandemic in 2020.

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ARIES
: A tough, action-packed day ahead! There may be difference of opinions with friends over trivial matters, but you will thrive on it. But all pending work will be completed, much to your relief. It's a promising and optimistic day, says Ganेशha!

TAURUS
Today, you may have something at the back of your mind that will grip you with its complexity, says Ganेशha. Speak freely as your words are capable of making a great impact on others. You may not be willing to confront unpleasant situations today. Don't worry, the stars seem in your favour, predicts Ganेशha.

GEMINI
Today, you would love to spend as much time alone as possible with your sweetheart, says Ganेशha. A casual conversation between the two of you may culminate into a sensuous consummation. In the evening, you will keep people charmed with your wit and wisdom, feels Ganेशha.

CANCER
If you are a stockbroker, you may feel that things are not going too well for you. Today, you may regret being a stockbroker. Manufacturers must delay the launch of a new product. However, after a waiting game, you may go on to launch the product with a fanfare. Ganेशha wishes you a good luck.

LEO
The travel bug inside you is itching to be let loose, but things are not so simple when it comes to finding new destinations, says Ganेशha. With you, holidaying goes hand in hand with delays. So, although you might be excited at the prospect of going to new places, this excitement will be somewhat curtailed thanks to postponements of travel plans.

VIRGO
Motivation will remain high today, says Ganेशha. Your talents and skills make you stand out as a superb artist. Words will glow if you let your creativity flow, and should you decide to dance or sing, you'll set the stage on fire today. Cultivate hobbies in performing arts and literature, advises Ganेशha.

LIBRA
Being in charge was never easy, but it's not for nothing that leaders are made of sterner stuff. As a person in charge, you are expected to give directions in a manner that gets the best efforts out of your juniors. Move away from traditional dictatorial style, and build a consensus that enables you to pull off the spectacular, says Ganेशha.

SCORPIO
You shall follow all things to the dot today. Your approach will be methodical and robotic. It is likely that you shall symbolise the saying, 'Actions speak louder than words'. Your powers of persuasion will help you amass the confidences of many, predicts Ganेशha.

SAGITTARIUS
Cupid is hunting and you are the game today. Cupid's arrows will have you adrift on the ocean of love and turbulent emotions. Your rescue is imminent, when a member of the opposite sex answers your SOS calls. But use your discretion as to which boat you hitch a ride back home, says Ganेशha.

CAPRICORN
The work load may take away all your vigour, leaving you lethargic and dull, but you will come out of the sluggish phase before it can do any harm to your reputation, says Ganेशha. Being observant and attentive while in meetings will help you in the long run, and in more ways than you can imagine.

AQUARIUS
Good news from across the seven seas brings cheer! If you're seeking a visa, you may get one today. Everything looks positive and it reflects in your mood. Share your happiness with your family, says Ganेशha, and you will find it multiplies manifold.

PISCES
Conflicts galore will come your way at the workplace today. Keep a calm head over your shoulders and do keep tabs on your tongue. Differences only crop up if there are substantial thought processes involved, and keeping this in mind ought to give you the perspective needed to get ahead, says Ganेशha.

Mumbai: Manoj Kumar will forever be Bharat for generations of filmgoers, an actor-filmmaker who framed his patriotism in celluloid just as a nascent India was coming into its own and beginning to realise its dreams and potential.

It was a fortuitous happenstance for the filmmaker who channelled his Partition angst to tell stories of an evolving India in films such as *Upkar*, *Purab Aur Paschim* and *Roti, Kapda aur Makaan* in the mid 1960s and 1970s. They were all blockbusters, finding a ready audience at the time and each helping carve a niche all his own.

His screen name was Bharat in several films, a cleverly chosen moniker that fused into his identity as a filmmaker and an actor and he came to be known as 'Bharat Kumar' to many.

Kumar, who found many takers for his brand of patriotic idealism, was also the romantic hero of films such as *Himalaya Ki God Mein*, *Do Badan* and *Pathar Ke Sanam*. His first success came in 1962 with *Hariyali Aur Raasta* opposite Mala Sinha.

The films were huge hits and so were the songs. Remember *Tauba Yeh Matwali Chaal*, *Mehboob Mere Mehboob*, *Chand Si Mehbooba Hogi Meri*, *Ek Pyaar Ka Nagma Hai* and *Pathar Ke Sanam*.

But Manoj Kumar's legacy will always be tied to his brand of patriotism rooted in an earlier era. Some of his films, including *Purab Aur Paschim*, could be viewed



1937- 2025 ICON OF PATRIOTIC CINEMA

as conservative and simplistic with an idea of India and the West that may sit uncomfortably with today's audiences.

He made his directorial debut with 1967's *Upkaar* in which he also played the lead. Kumar won a National Award for the movie, which also gave Pran his breakout role from the always villain to the kind and wise Malang Chacha. It was a turning point for Pran's career.

Two years before *Upkaar* was Shaheed, a biopic of freedom

Manoj's top 10

- Kranti- 1981
- Roti Kapada Aur Makaan- 1974
- Shor- 1972
- Be-Imaan- 1972
- Purab Aur Paschim- 1970
- Neel Kamal- 1968
- Upkar- 1967
- Shaheed- 1965
- Gumnaam- 1965
- Who Kaun Thi- 1964

fighter Bhagat Singh in which Kumar played the central role.

Among his biggest hits is the lavish multi-starrer *Roti Kapda Aur Makaan* (1974), which he produced, directed and acted in.

He was born Harikrishan Giri Goswami in Abbottabad in now Pakistan in 1937. Ten years later, when the subcontinent was divided, the family left their home and travelled to Delhi. Those were traumatic years. He lost his two-month-old brother who could not be cared properly in the hospital because of riots raging in the city.

Kumar was a much awarded actor. He won the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2015 by when he was sadly confined to a wheelchair and could not stand up to receive the honour. He was also awarded the Padma Shri in 1992.

Manoj Kumar will live on every time somebody reaches for a patriotic playlist. That legacy will endure.

Tributes pour in

Shah Rukh Khan: Manoj Kumar ji made films that uplifted our country, our cinema and focused on unity with unmatched sincerity. A legend in every sense. His films shaped an era and left a mark on our cinema. Thank you, sir. You will always be 'Bharat' to us.

Aamir Khan: Manoj Kumar was not just an actor, and film-maker, he was an institution. I have learnt so much watching his films. His films were often based on important social themes which brought him really close to the common man. My heartfelt condolences to his family.

ODISHA CM MOURNS

Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, in a message on X, stated: "Deeply saddened by the passing of the legendary actor #ManojKumar. His contributions to Indian cinema, especially in inspiring patriotism will always be cherished by his fans as 'Bharat Kumar'. My heartfelt condolences to his family & fans. May his soul rest in peace."

Salman Khan: Manoj Kumar ji... a true legend. Thank you for the unforgettable films and memories.

Akshay Kumar: I grew up learning from him that there's no emotion like love and pride for our country. And if we actors won't take the lead in showing this emotion, who will? Such a fine person, and one of the biggest assets of our fraternity. RIP Manoj Sir. Om Shanti.

Kajol: His films weren't just movies, they were emotions, they were inspiration #Kranti #PattharKeSanam #PurabAurPaschim #RotiKapdaAurMakan to name a few. #ManojKumar, you will always be remembered.

Kangana Ranaut: He was a legendary artist recognised for his patriotism, and he ignited the spark of patriotism in every individual. The film industry takes immense pride in having had such a talented artist, and we also express our heartfelt condolences.

DC FANS SLAM JAMES GUNN'S SUPERMAN TEASER TRAILER

James Gunn's highly anticipated *Superman* movie has sparked mixed reactions following its teaser trailer debut at CinemaCon 2025. While some praise his fresh approach, many DC purists are critical, leading to divided opinions on whether it's a bold new direction or a potential failure.



'Auditions help in showcasing one's versatility'

Mumbai: Actress Pooja Hegde recently shared her views on auditions, emphasising their importance for actors to showcase their versatility. She also pointed out the challenge of typecasting, particularly for female actors, which limits opportunities in the industry.

"Filmmakers often have a fixed perception about actors, especially women, and we tend to get typecast easily. That's why auditions are crucial to demonstrate uncharted traits. It's better to be considered for a role than overlooked. Some of the biggest stars audition in the West, so why not here?" she explained.

Having worked extensively in Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi cinema, Pooja has built a diverse career, breaking stereotypes and portraying varied characters. She remains committed to exploring new dimensions in her craft and encourages fellow actors to take risks.

Pooja's upcoming projects include the Tamil film *Retro*, alongside Suriya, and the Bollywood film *Hai Jawani Toh Ishq Hona Hai* with Varun Dhawan. Additionally, she will star in *Jana Nayagan*, Thalapatthi Vijay's final film before his retirement. Pooja continues to collaborate with visionary filmmakers, using auditions as a tool to challenge industry perceptions and expand her creative range.

FATIMA'S CASTING COUCH ENCOUNTER

Mumbai: Fatima Sana Shaikh has sparked an important conversation about the casting couch in the film industry, particularly in South Indian cinema.

In a recently resurfaced clip, the *Dangal* actress openly shared her experience of encountering exploitation by certain filmmakers and producers under the pretext of offering roles. She recalled a particular instance where, after sending her profile for a role, a producer repeatedly asked her if she was "ready to do anything" for the casting. Despite her responses, he insisted on pushing the conversation in a suggestive direction, which she ignored until he eventually stopped.

Fatima also shed light on the broader challenges faced by aspiring actors, especially women, in the industry. She revealed how small-time producers often implied that opportunities would only come if actors "met people" or "did things" for roles. While acknowledging that not everyone in the industry behaves this way, Fatima emphasized that such exploitation is widespread across industries, including Bollywood and modeling.

By speaking out, Fatima has highlighted the persistent issue of abuse in the entertainment world. Her brave remarks continue to draw attention to the systemic exploitation many face, serving as a reminder of the power dynamics at play within the industry.



PEANUTS



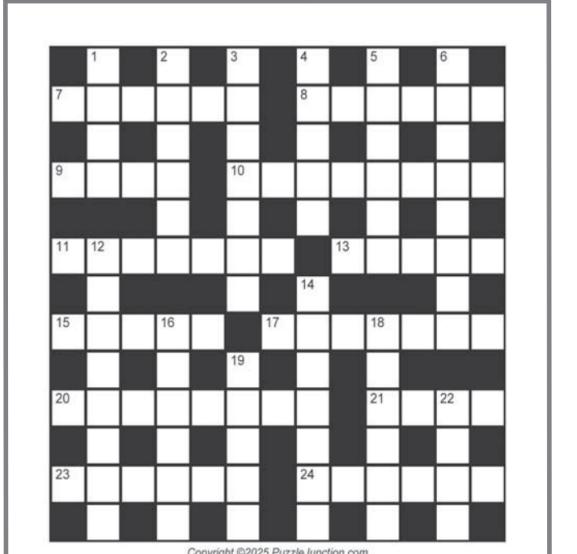
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



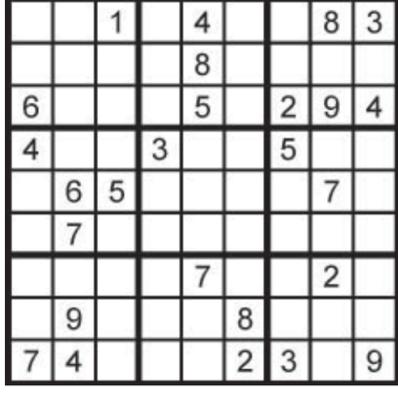
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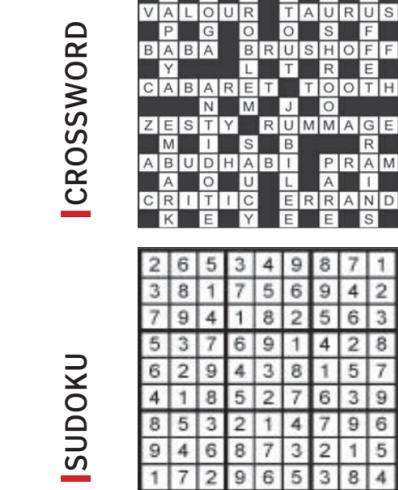
- Across**
- 7 Business fear (3,3)
 - 8 Ghost
 - 9 Muse of history
 - 10 Table linen (5,3)
 - 11 Lhasa apso, e.g.
 - 13 Recurring theme
 - 15 Squirrel's stash
 - 17 Frustrates
 - 20 1896 gold discovery site
 - 21 Horse's motion
 - 23 Morals
 - 24 Breakfast nook
- Down**
- 1 Canvasback kin
 - 2 Difficulty
 - 3 Sea captain
 - 4 Common
 - 5 "O tempora! O mores!" orator
 - 6 One with too many spouses
 - 12 Intensify
 - 14 Big cat
 - 16 Rotten, like food
 - 18 Guanaco relative
 - 19 Wash cycle
 - 22 Spanish sparkling white wine

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

10-11 heatwave days in state likely during April-June: IMD



NORMALLY, INDIA RECORDS FOUR TO SEVEN HEATWAVE DAYS DURING THE PERIOD

northern parts of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are likely to experience more heatwave days than usual.

Earlier this week, the IMD said India is expected to see higher-than-usual temperatures from April to June, with more heatwave days in central and eastern parts of the country and the northwestern plains.

The IMD has also warned that northwest India is likely witness heatwave conditions over the next six days, with temperatures in Delhi expected to reach up to 42 degrees Celsius.

Regions likely to be impacted include south Haryana, Delhi, west

Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat, Rajasthan and west Madhya Pradesh.

The IMD said maximum temperatures in many parts of central and northwest India are expected to rise by 2 to 4 degrees Celsius during this period.

In Delhi, daytime temperatures could reach around 42 degrees Celsius at some places by April 6 or 7.

India had an extremely harsh summer last year, recording 536 heatwave days, the highest in 14 years. The year 2024 was also the warmest recorded in India and globally.

This year, heatwaves hit parts of India as early as February 27-28. The year 2024 recorded its first heatwave April 5.

Although heatwaves are common in India during April and May, scientists say climate change is making them more frequent and intense.

A 2022 study said the risk of heatwaves is likely to increase 10 times in the 21st century. Over 70 per cent of India's land area may face severe heatwaves. Data shows that 12 of the warmest years in India have occurred since 2006, with 2016 being the hottest year so far.

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 4: Odisha, along with Uttar Pradesh (its eastern region), Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, is likely to see 10 to 11 heatwave days during April and June this year, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Friday.

Normally, India records four to seven heatwave days during the period.

According to the weather bureau, Odisha, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh,

2 criminals from Bihar hurt in City encounter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 4: Two members of the notorious 'Khara' gang were injured during an exchange of fire with police here, officials said Friday.

Police have seized two semi-automatic pistols, two rounds of 9mm, and one round 7.65mm ammunition, empty cartridges, a stolen motorcycle and some itching powder from their possession.

The injured were identified as Sonu Kumar Yadav, 30, and Manish Kumar Yadav, 27, of Katihar district in Bihar.

"They are members of the notorious 'Khara' gang," Bhubaneswar DCP Jagmohan Meena told reporters.

A case was registered against them at Badagada police station in the City, he said.

Meena said around 10.20 pm Thursday, there was exchange of fire between 'Khara' gang members and police at Kuakhai near village Bankuala.

"Two members of the gang opened fire at police. Police retaliated following which two



gang members sustained injuries on their legs," the DCP said, adding that they were initially taken to Capital Hospital for treatment, and later referred to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack.

The DCP said the gang is notorious for chain and bag snatching. "They have committed several crimes in Bhubaneswar, Puri and other places of Odisha," he said.

"Around 13 to 14 days ago, they had snatched six gold chains in Bhubaneswar using a stolen bike. They keep firearms to challenge the public or police if someone tries to catch them," he said.

3 Odisha MPs to join LS Speaker at 150th IPU Assembly in Tashkent

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: Three Members of Parliament (MPs) from Odisha - Bhartruhari Mahtab, Aprajita Sarangi and Sasmit Patra - will be joining Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla at the 150th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly in Tashkent, the capital city of Uzbekistan, from April 5 to 9.

The Indian delegation also includes Harivansh, Deputy Chairman, Rajya Sabha; Anurag Singh Thakur, MP; Vishnu Dayal Ram, MP; Ashok Kumar Mittal, MP; Kiran Choudhry, MP; Lata Wankhede, MP; Bijuli Kalita Medhi, MP; Utpal Kumar Singh, Secretary General of Lok Sabha and P C Mody, Secretary General of Rajya Sabha.

Birla will address the Assembly during the 'High Level Segment of General Debate' on the theme "Parliamentary Action for Social Development and Justice".

Members of the Indian parliamentary delegation will also participate in the meetings of various IPU bodies including the governing council, executive committee, standing committees, and various thematic panel discussions which will be held during the Assembly.

On the sidelines of the Assembly, Birla will share his perspectives on issues of common interest with his counterparts from other parliaments.

During his visit to Tashkent, Birla will also interact with members of Indian Community and Indian students in Uzbekistan.

MRSAM army version flight tests conducted

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 4: The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the army conducted four successful flight-tests of the army version of medium-range surface-to-air missile (MRSAM) from an island off the coast of Odisha April 3 and 4, the Defence Ministry Friday said.

The four operational flight-trials were carried out against high-speed aerial targets, it said in a statement.

"The missiles intercepted the aerial targets and destroyed them, registering direct hits. The trials were carried out to intercept four targets at long-range, short-range, high altitude and low altitude, proving the operational capability," the ministry said.

The flight-tests were carried out with the weapon system in operational condition.

"The performance of the weapon system was validated through the flight data captured by range instruments like radars and electro-optical tracking systems deployed by Integrated Test Range, Chandipur," it said.

The flight tests from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island were carried out in the presence of senior officials from the DRDO and the Indian Army.

The trials were carried out by the Indian Army from Eastern and Southern Commands under DRDO guidance.

"These trials have proven the operational capability of both Army Commands and paved the way for operationalisation of weapon systems in two regiments," it said.

The MRSAM is developed jointly by the DRDO and Israel Aerospace Industries for use by the Indian Army. The MRSAM army weapon system comprises multi-function radar, command post, mobile launcher system and other vehicles, the ministry said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has congratulated DRDO, Indian Army and the industries for the successful flight-tests.

Four successful tests have re-established the capability of the weapon system in intercepting targets at critical ranges, he said.

Secretary, Department of Defence Research and Development and DRDO Chairman Samir V Kamat complimented the teams involved in the successful flight-trial, terming it as "major milestones" for building operational capability of the Indian Army, the ministry said.

ASSISTANT ENGINEER AMONG 2 NABBED OVER BRIBERY

BHUBANESWAR: Vigilance sleuths Friday arrested an assistant engineer (AE) of Baliana block and his associate on charges of taking ₹10,000 as bribe. According to the anti-corruption wing sleuths, Sanghamitra Pattanayak, AE of Baliana block in Bhubaneswar, and his associate Benudhara Parida have been taken into custody for demanding and taking bribe of ₹10,000 from a contractor for clearing his pending bill. "The contractor had been requesting the AE to clear the pending bill of ₹42,000 against the total amount of ₹2 lakh. However, Pattanayak was demanding bribe from him to clear the outstanding amount. Finding no other way, the contractor approached the Vigilance authorities in this regard," said a Vigilance statement. On the basis of the complaint, a trap was laid and Pattanayak and his associate Benudhara Parida were nabbed by a Vigilance team while demanding and taking ₹10,000 from the contractor, it said. "The bribe money was recovered from their possession in presence of witnesses. Following the trap, simultaneous searches have been launched at multiple locations related to the accused. In this connection, a case (6/25) has been registered at the Vigilance PS in Bhubaneswar under the PC (Amendment) Act, 2018," it pointed out.



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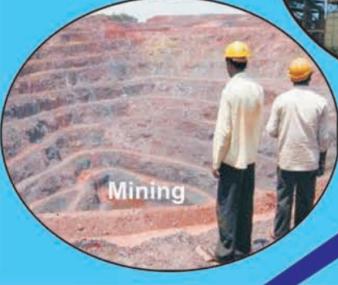
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Ensure Odia signboards in shops: Min to bizmen



Several awareness rallies were held in different parts of the state Friday as the government observes 'Odia Pakhya' (fortnight) from April 1 (Utkal Dibasa) to April 14 (Odia New Year)

Bhubaneswar, April 4: The Odisha government Friday warned businessmen and shop owners of legal action if they do not display Odia on their signboards.

The message was given to all business establishments as the Labour and Employees State Insurance department launched a campaign to ensure Odia signboards in shops.

Several awareness rallies were held in different parts of the state Friday as the government observes 'Odia Pakhya' (fortnight) from April 1 (Utkal Dibasa) to April 14 (Odia New Year).

Labour and Employees State Insurance, Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia inaugurated a rally in the state capital and appealed to the businessmen to clearly display Odia on signboards at shops and business establishments.

Noting that mother tongue is vital for the existence and future of a state, the minister said, "Our government is taking special steps to enrich our mother tongue Odia. For this, the Odia fortnight is being celebrated."

An official release said that according to the Odisha Shops and Commercial Establish-

ments Act (1956), it is mandatory to write signboards clearly in Odia. There is a provision for filing a case against the violators and levying a fine.

"Legal action will be taken against those who violate this rule. Therefore, those who have not yet written signboards in their shops and commercial establishments in Odia, they should take care of it as soon as possible by writing their signboards in Odia correctly and clearly," the department said.

Noting that the state's vision is to spread Odia identity along with the promotion of Odia language, the minister called upon all to make efforts to enrich Odia.



REGALING POSE: Students from Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya perform during a cultural programme 'Nrutyayana' at Rabindra Mandap in Bhubaneswar, Friday

World Bank reviews statistical ecosystems

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: A technical team of World Bank, led by Senior Economist and Team Lead Thomas Danielewitz, conducted a comprehensive review meeting with officers from the Directorate of Economics and Statistics (DES), Odisha, Friday. The meeting focused on enhancing the state's statistical data ecosystem as part of the World Bank-supported Odisha State Capability and Resilient Growth Programme.



During the session, the World Bank team engaged with state's Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary Anu Garg to discuss key strategies for improving the state's statistical systems. A primary point of discussion was the introduction of Generic Statistics Business Process Modelling within the state's operations.

This approach is expected to streamline the process of data collection, analysis, and usage, ensuring adherence to internationally recognised standards and incorporating cutting-edge methodologies and technologies.

In addition to strengthening the data system, the World

Bank team proposed organising exposure visits for DES officials to leading states and countries. These visits would offer an opportunity to observe global best practices in data systems, equipping the officials with the knowledge and skills to drive innovation and improvements in Odisha's governance.

A central focus of the meet-

ing was the creation of the Odisha Integrated Statistical System (OISS), a comprehensive framework designed to streamline data collection and ensure the availability of timely and accurate information for decision-makers across all sectors. The OISS would serve as the foundation for data-driven policymaking, ensuring that government decisions are based on reliable, real-time data.

In her closing remarks, Garg expressed her strong support for these initiatives, stressing the importance of integrating the latest technology—both in hardware and software—into the state's statistical system. She emphasised that a robust statistical framework would be vital for evidence-based decision-making, which would in turn, support effective planning, policy formulation, and governance in Odisha.

DCAC's Arambh showcases final-year students' work

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: A seven-day contemporary art exhibition titled 'Arambh', showcasing the creative expressions of final-year students from Dhauli College of Art and Crafts (DCAC), was inaugurated at the Lalit Kala Akademi Regional Centre here Friday.

The exhibition features a vibrant mix of paintings, sculptures, printmaking, and photography, reflecting diverse styles

and perspectives of 13 budding artists.

The event was inaugurated by Utkal University of Culture vice chancellor Prasanna Kumar Swain. Sculptor and Padma Shri awardee Adwaita Charan Gadnayak graced the occasion as the chief guest. Other distinguished guests included Lalit Kala Akademi (Regional Centre) secretary Ramakrishna Bedala, who joined as the chief speaker, Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha state president Avilash

Panda as guest of honour, and DCAC principal Panchanan Samal. Alongside art lovers, students, and local artists also attended the exhibition and engaged with the creators.

Addressing the gathering, Gadnayak praised the creative energy on display and said, "The artworks by these young artists are deeply rooted yet refreshingly modern. It is heartening to see such innovation coming from Odisha's next generation of creators."

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I, AMARJIT, S/O-Late Gokulananda Sahu resident of At/PO/PS- Nihalprasad, Dist- Dhenkanal, Odisha- 759016 declare by this affidavit No.62, dtd.04.04.2025 that now onwards I shall be known as AMARJIT SAHU for all future purposes.

I, Tangudu Sneha Patra, D/o. Prasanta Kumar Patra, R/o. Village-Thidikajore, PO.-Jhadrajing, PS.-Purunakatak, Dist.-Boudh declare by this Affidavit No.2580 dated 03.04.2025 that now onwards I shall be known as Sneha Patra for all future purposes.

I, Nibedita Mahapatra, W/o- Suresh Kumar Swain, resident of Duplex No.-4, Arya Home, Tankapani Road, Vill- Alarpur, P.O.- Rangabazar, Garasrirampur, Dist.-Khurda, Odisha, PIN-752100 declare by this affidavit No.-11165, dated 26.03.2025 that now onwards I shall be known as Nibedita Mohapatra for all future purposes.

ICAR-CIFA's fish harvest mela a big draw

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA) conducted a fish harvest fair recently.

According to ICAR-CIFA sources, the primary objective of organising the event was to spread public awareness about the activities of the institution and apprise people about the health benefits associated with regular fish consumption.

The event drew significant interest as more than 400 visitors thronged the fair to purchase live fish harvested from the ponds of the institute farm. Eleven varieties of live fish were displayed and sold to



the public, ensuring maximum freshness and quality.

The fish were made available at subsidised prices fixed by ICAR-CIFA. Additionally, the event highlighted ICAR-CIFA's advanced fish production technologies, especially in the

area of diversified aquaculture. Visitors expressed their satisfaction and appreciated the efforts of ICAR-CIFA.

Earlier, ICAR-CIFA also hosted nearly 1,000 school students from over 20 schools across Bhubaneswar, Puri and near-

by regions with the objective of familiarising school students with the world of freshwater aquaculture and its significance in ensuring food security, generating livelihoods, and promoting environmental sustainability.

Students took part in the event in well-organised batches throughout the day, following a structured itinerary that featured a live fish harvest demonstration, screening of aquaculture documentaries, an extensive exhibition of fish species, a drone demonstration, and a variety of engaging learning activities.

The exhibition included 25 aquariums highlighting the rich biodiversity of freshwater fish.

TV channel staffer's body found in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 4: Khandagiri police Friday recovered the body of a 25-year-old trainee marketing executive of an Odia television channel from a two-storey building near Panchasakha Nagar in Jagamara area under mysterious circumstances.

"Prima facie, it appears that the deceased, Sankalp Mohanty of Balasore district, might have jumped off the terrace late Thursday night," said Khandagiri inspector in-charge (IIC) Abhimanyu Das.

Sankalp had joined the news channel as a contractual em-

ployee nine months ago after completing his studies in a city-based private college. He was residing in the building, along with his friend, as a tenant. Das said Sankalp's landlord and his friend are being questioned to find out the exact reason behind his death. Besides, CCTV footage are being scanned for further leads in the case, he added.

The cops, however, are yet to discover any suicide note left behind by the deceased.

"We have registered an unnatural death case and sent the body to Capital Hospital for autopsy," the IIC said.

Community-led ecotourism generates ₹5.11cr revenue

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Sambalpur, April 4: The community-led ecotourism initiatives at Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary (DWS) and Hirakud Wetland achieved remarkable success, generating revenue of Rs 5.11 crore during the 2024-25 financial years. The success has been driven by hard work and dedication of local communities, effectively managing ecotourism activities which catered to 85,000 tourists.

Speaking about the feat, divisional forest officer (DFO) Anshu Pragnyan Das said, "A total of 85,000 tourists, including international guests, visited the ecotourism sites. The total revenue generated, Rs 5.11 crore, has been reinvested in the local community for sustainable de-



velopment, including income generation, village development, and capacity building."

The initiative is successful in providing employment to 85 families and has significantly benefited employees in different sectors, including tour operators, hospitality agents and local handicrafts industries,

said the DFO.

Women empowerment has been a key aspect of the ecotourism initiative. Margaret Baru, the first female safari driver, and Sangeeta Sikra, the first female eco-guide of the state took pioneering roles.

Tourists from 22 states of India and abroad, including US,

Tourists from 22 states of India and abroad, including US, UK, and Europe visited the sanctuary – a 40% increase in tourist footfall compared to the previous year

UK, and Europe visited the sanctuary – a 40 per cent increase in tourist footfall compared to the previous year.

DWS has become a premier wildlife destination, offering sightings of animals such as Indian bison, leopards, bears, and more. Additionally, over 320 species of birds are sighted.

Hirakud Wetland has emerged as the second-largest wintering ground in Odisha for migratory birds, hosting 3.77 lakh migratory birds of 122 species.

In order to handle the surge in tourist traffic, the management issued 'Jungle Safari Etiquette' – SOP for guides, safari drivers and visitors April 1, 2025 for convenience of the tourists.

The sanctuary's landscape supports a self-sufficient ecosystem, fostering biodiversity through its 7 per cent meadow area. This model of community-driven ecotourism highlights the potential for combining sustainable tourism with conservation and economic development for local communities, showing how collaboration can lead to significant environmental and social benefits.

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	36.8°	36.0°
Min Temp	25.0°	24.0°
Humidity	53%	61%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST Dry weather		

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	
SENSEX	75364.69	↓ 930.67
NIFTY	22904.45	↓ 345.65
DOLLAR	85.53	↓ 0.08
EURO	94.69	↓ 0.04
GOLD	₹88,090	↓ ₹196
SILVER	₹88,211	↓ ₹6188

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Oxygen cylinder blast in ambulance leaves woman critically burnt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Titilagarh, April 4: An oxygen cylinder explosion inside a 108 ambulance left a woman critically injured near Pipilpada village under Titilagarh police limits in Bolangir district, Friday afternoon.

The incident occurred while newborn twins were being transferred from the Maternal and Child Care Hospital in Titilagarh to the Bolangir District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) for advanced treatment. The explosion severely injured the woman, identified as the twin's maternal grandmother Dutiya Jani, who suffered severe burns to both legs and multiple injuries on her body.

According to reports, the infants and her mother narrowly escaped death in the mishap. The twin's father, Rishabh Jani, sustained minor injuries while trying to rescue his daughters.

Rishabh, a resident of Chik-inibahali village under Muri-bahal block, had admitted his wife Radha to the Maternal and Child Care Hospital late Thursday night as she was experiencing labour pain. Radha delivered twins early Friday morning. However, due to the babies' low birth weight and the need for specialised care, doctors advised transferring them to Bolangir DHH.

After arranging an ambulance, Rishabh, his two newborn daughters, wife Radha, and her mother boarded the ambulance. However, shortly after the vehicle started, the oxygen cylinder exploded, causing a fire inside the ambulance.

The severely injured woman was admitted to Titilagarh government hospital, while the newborns and their mother were transferred to Bolangir DHH in another ambulance.

Police from Titilagarh have initiated an investigation, but there was no comment from the hospital authorities on the incident.

Vacancy roadblock in commissionerate status for Rourkela: Khurania

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, April 4: Director General of Police (DGP) Yogesh Bahadur Khurania toured Rourkela Thursday and held discussions with officials on law and order, Maoist activities, security measures in place for upcoming Ram Navami, and other issues.

During an investiture ceremony at the Civic Centre Thursday morning, the DGP awarded police officers the DGP Disc for outstanding service.

On the sidelines of the ceremony, Khurania spoke to the media about several important issues, including the long-pending demand for granting Rourkela commissionerate status here," he said.

"The recruitment process has just begun. Once completed, recruits will undergo training, and only then can we take this matter forward. At this moment, it is not feasible," he added.

South Odisha famous Budhi Thakurani Yatra begins

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, April 4: Amidst elaborate security arrangements, the famous Maa Budhi Thakurani Yatra, one of the biggest cultural carnivals of southern Odisha, commenced in the early hours of Friday and will continue till April 28.

The Yatra began with the symbolic arrival of Maa Budhi Thakurani, the presiding deity of the Silk City, at her father's house on Desibehera Street, in accordance with centuries-old tradition.

On Thursday, P Durga Prasad Desibehera, regarded as the father of the Goddess, along with other dignitaries, visited the Thakurani temple in a ceremoni-

Pre-school edu goes haywire in Mayurbhanj

1,055 Anganwadi Centres in the district lack permanent buildings, 293 run from rented spaces

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, April 4: With the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 this academic year, significant changes have been introduced in the state's education system to improve enrollment rates. The government has also launched 'Khadi Chhuan' programmes under 'Sishu Vatika' initiative to encourage early childhood education.

However, in rural areas, pre-school education continues to face challenges. Many Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), which serve as the primary means of early education for young children, operate from rented spaces. This has raised concerns about the effectiveness of government initiatives in ensuring quality education.

In Mayurbhanj district, there are 5,152 AWCs across 26 blocks, two municipalities, and two Notified Area Councils (NACs). However, 1,055 of these centres lack permanent buildings or foundational infrastructure, while 293 operate in rented accommodations.

Additionally, 180 AWCs function in community buildings, and 582 are housed in school buildings, which many parents consider unsafe for the children. As a result, parents hesitate to send their children to these centres and increasingly opt for private schools instead.

Although there are plans to construct new AWCs, some projects remain incomplete while others are still under construction. The lack of proper infrastructure has hindered the successful implementation of programmes related to teaching, mid-day meals, play-based learning, and educational gardens.



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The absence of hygienic learning environments and the need for children to study on the floor have also negatively impacted their educational experience. These factors have led to declining trust in AWCs, driving parents to enroll their children in private schools instead.

As a result, the district's early childhood education system has been severely disrupted.

Despite the District Collector's repeated monthly reminders to Block Development Officers (BDOs), the issue remains unresolved.

The lack of accountability and neglect by officials and staff has led to this disorder, according to Purnendu Basang, Shakti Basang, and Dipu Basang, parents from Belpa village in Badasahi block. They pointed out that not a single AWC has been built in the area for the past 20 years.

The district has a total of 2,45,441 beneficiaries, including 1,13,632 children aged three to six months, 12,764 postpartum mothers, 17,392 pregnant women, 12,452 infants under six months, and 89,201 children between six months and six years old. However, the schemes intended for them have largely failed.

When questioned about the situation, District Social Welfare Officer Niharika Mahati stated that all necessary measures have been initiated under the District Collector's directives. Construction efforts are ongoing through municipal authorities in urban areas and block administrations in rural regions. However, delays have prevented the completion of these projects, making existing AWCs ineffective.

To improve child recreation facilities and enhance the health and nutrition of pregnant and postpartum women, a plan has been launched to transform AWCs into model centres.

The Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC) had earlier prepared a blueprint to upgrade Mayurbhanj district. In 2019, OMBADC proposed a Detailed Project Report (DPR) worth Rs 528 crore to construct 826 required AWCs. Each centre was allocated Rs 15 lakh, while funds ranging from Rs 4.5 lakh to Rs 7.5 lakh were set aside for renovating existing ones.

In the first phase, OMBADC approved funding for 346 model AWCs in 2021-22, with construction beginning shortly thereafter. Of these, 300 centres have been completed, while work on 46 remains in progress. However, funding approval for an additional 480 centres has been pending despite multiple notifications from the administration to the concerned departments.

Parents have expressed concern that unless early education is prioritised under the NEP 2020, both Central and state government schemes will fail to achieve their objectives.

NHRC directs Bhadrak SP to expedite probe, rescue missing minor

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, April 4: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the Superintendent of Police (SP), Bhadrak, to expedite the investigation on a priority basis to rescue the missing minor child.

The apex rights body further asked the Bhadrak SP to submit a status report within four weeks, failing which the commission shall be constrained to invoke coercive processes under Section 13 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. The NHRC passed the order while acting on a petition filed by Sagar Kumar Jena, a human rights activist.

The activist, quoting reports published by various newspapers July 29, 2024, alleged in his petition that a one-and-a-half-year-old boy was kidnapped by two persons in the Bhandaripokhari area of Bhadrak district.

The child's mother reportedly alleged that her son was kidnapped by one of her close relatives, Alok, who had been frequently visiting her house. She sought the intervention of the commission in the matter.

The commission has asked the SP to ensure that the additional and complete report is submitted no later than May 11, 2025, for further consideration.

Man shoots dead friend during hunt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, April 4: A man was accidentally shot dead during a hunting trip near Manpur village under Rasol police station in the Hindol sub-division of Dhenkanal district. The incident occurred late Thursday night.

A group of five friends had gone hunting in the nearby forest when one of them, mistaking another for an animal, fired his

gun. The victim, identified as Babuli Nayak, also known as Kalia, aged 40, died on the spot.

The group consisted of Santosh Nayak, Babuli Nayak, Prashant Nayak of Kadalipal village, Naresh Swain and Dandua Dehuri from Kotama village. According to the police, Prashant Nayak fired the shot, mistaking Babuli for an animal.

Later that night, someone informed Babuli's wife, Jhili Nayak, about the incident. Vil-

lagers also notified the Rasol police station. Upon arrival at the scene, police seized the body and arrested the other four members of the group.

Additionally, Paramananda Chhatar of Kotama village, who allegedly supplied the gun, was also arrested. Prashant Nayak has been charged under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code (murder), while the others were charged under the Wildlife Protection Act. All five accused

have been sent to court. Despite increasing incidents of illegal hunting and gun trafficking in the area, there appears to be no proactive intervention from the Forest Department, leading to frequent unpleasant situations.

Speaking on the matter, Hindol SDPO Satya Kumar Nanda said, "Preliminary investigations suggest the gun was fired with the sole intention of hunting animals."

Woman accused remanded to 2 days police custody

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 4: Pramila Parida, the main accused in a case involving the cheating of lakhs of rupees through fraudulent job offers, was taken into two-day remand by the Town police Friday for further investigation.

Parida, along with accomplice Bhuban Mahanta, was arrested March 26 for defrauding people in the name of job offers at the Kendujhar Medical College. Police Friday raided Parida's residence in Amrit Vihar, where they recovered several significant items including important papers, a bag full of applications, and a diary detailing the amounts taken from victims.

Additionally, a bank locker asso-



ciated with the company financing gold transactions was seized. The police also found various items including a chair and a sofa, which were purchased for setting up a Dhaba. Srikant Sahu, IIC of the Town Police Station, said that the investigation will continue. Several documents and forms have been seized,

and the police have stated that anyone involved in this fraud will be investigated.

Sources indicated that following Parida's arrest, more victims have come forward accusing her of fraud. The scale of the scam appears to be growing, with more individuals reporting the fraud daily. Some victims have shared their videos and sting operations with the police and media.

Police have stated that action will be taken against those involved, including the hospital employees, once the investigation concludes. Dr Kishore Chandra Prusti, Chief District Medical Officer of Keonjhar, assured that appropriate measures will be taken following the police probe.

Jajpur admin bans parking of trucks on NHs for a month

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur: In a bid to curb road accidents, Jajpur collector P Anvesha Reddy has prohibited unauthorised parking of goods vehicles on the main carriageways of national highways (NHs) passing through the district. Goods vehicles parked illegally on the main carriageways of NH-16, NH-53 and NH-20 are hindering movement of essential vehicles and posing a risk of road accidents, a notification said. "Keeping in view the safety and security of general public, unauthorised parking of all goods carriers has been restricted on main carriageways of NH-16 (Sathipur to Nelia), NH-53 (Balichandrapur to Duburi) and NH-20 (Panikoili to Ragadi Chhak) for a period of one month," the notification added.

Missing man's body recovered

Rajnagar: The body of a missing man was recovered from the Brahmani river in Rajnagar block of Kendrapara district, Friday. The deceased, who was missing since Thursday early morning, has been identified as Chandrabhanu Rath, a retailer from Rajapur village under this block. Locals first suspected he might have drowned or been dragged away by a crocodile after discovering his slippers near the riverbank. Despite extensive searches by the Forest department, ODRAF team, and villagers, Chandrabhanu's whereabouts remained unknown until his body was found today near the spot where his slippers were left. The body bore no visible injury except bleeding from the nose, suggesting a lack of external assault. The positioning of his slippers near the riverbank and the absence of injuries have led authorities to believe that the incident was a suicide. A case of unnatural death was filed and the body was sent for post-mortem examination. A retailer in the Supply department, Chandrabhanu's sudden death has raised questions about the reasons behind his apparent suicide.

val, will start from the third day, said Desibehera, the organiser of the festival.

Adequate security arrangements were made to maintain law and order and a temporary police control room was set up at Desibehera Street.

Over 300 police personnel of different ranks were deployed on the first day, while on other days at least six platoons will be deployed for the purpose, Berhampur SP Saravana Vivek M said.

Berhampur Mayor Sanghamitra Dalei said a total 80 sanitary workers have been engaged to maintain proper sanitation, as the festival attracts thousands of people from far off places in the state.



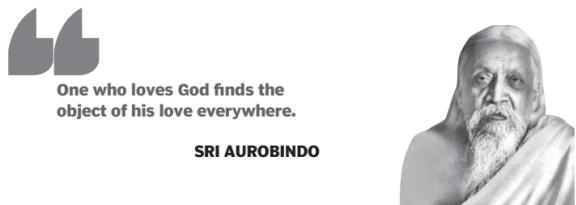
al procession to invite the deity. Later at midnight, they returned with a garland of Itala (Ita Malli) flowers, carried in a basket, and placed it inside a makeshift temple built in front of Desibehera's residence. The 'ghata parikrama' (roaming of the earthen pot), one of the attractive parts of the festi-

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Form No. STK - 6 PUBLIC NOTICE (Pursuant to sub-section (2) and sub-section (4) of section 248 of the Companies Act, 2013 and rule 7 of the Companies (Removal of Names of Companies from the Register of Companies) Rules, 2016) Public Notice: ROC/C-PACE/STK-2/248(2)/2024-25/2125 Date: 25/03/2025 Reference: In the matter of striking off or removal of names of (10) companies in the state of Odisha under section 248 of the Companies Act, 2013 in respect of:



A Curious Appointment

Former Enforcement Directorate (ED) chief Sanjay Kumar Mishra has been appointed a full-time member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM). Yes, an investigator is now advising on economic policy. Are we running out of economists, or is the economy now a case for forensic analysis?

Before we jump to conclusions, let's give credit where it's due. Mishra's tenure at the ED was marked by high-profile investigations and a no-nonsense approach to financial malfeasance. His experience in navigating the murky waters of economic offences could bring a fresh perspective to the EAC-PM. After all, understanding the underbelly of financial crimes might offer unique insights into the loopholes that plague our economy.

But here's the rub: Is this appointment a testament to a dwindling pool of economists willing to step into advisory roles? The untimely demise of Bibek Debroy, the former chairman of the EAC-PM, left big shoes to fill. Debroy was not just an economist; he was a polymath who seamlessly blended economic theory with cultural scholarship. Replacing such a towering figure is no small feat.

The reluctance of seasoned economists to enter the fray of policy advising is palpable. The political landscape can be treacherous, and the role of an economic advisor often involves walking a tightrope between academic integrity and political pragmatism. It's no wonder that professionals might hesitate to dive into such turbulent waters.

Moreover, the current ensemble of economic advisors seems to lack the heft and gravitas that figures like Debroy brought to the table. While fresh perspectives are invaluable, the absence of seasoned economists raises questions about the depth of economic discourse within the council.



So, what does Mishra's appointment signify? Is it an acknowledgment that our economy needs a watchdog's scrutiny, someone adept at identifying and plugging financial leaks? Or is it a subtle nod to the idea that traditional economic strategies need a shake-up, perhaps through the lens of law enforcement experience?

Sign of changing priorities in PMO?
 A diplomat as the Prime Minister's private secretary? That's a move worth talking about. Nidhi Tewari, a 2014-batch IFS officer, has just been appointed to this key role, a position usually dominated by IAS officers. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is shaking things up.

At just 24, Tewari secured the 96th rank in the UPSC civil services examination, a feat that set her on a trajectory through India's diplomatic ranks. Her recent role as deputy secretary in the PMO has evidently prepared her for this significant step up. But this appointment raises an interesting question: is the government signaling a shift in how Narendra Modi manages both domestic and foreign policy?

Traditionally, this role has been the domain of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers, the generalists who navigate the vast machinery of governance. The IFS, on the other hand, is typically the cadre of diplomats, the nation's face to the world. This appointment suggests a subtle yet intriguing shift in the PMO's dynamics.

In an era where foreign policy and economic diplomacy are deeply linked to domestic priorities, having an IFS officer in this position might be a strategic masterstroke. Trade deals, global alliances, and India's international standing are now as crucial as internal governance. And let's not forget—Modi's global outreach is a key part of his leadership style.

This isn't the only unconventional appointment in the PMO. We've seen a trend of bringing in expertise from outside the usual IAS-dominated circles. If this continues, we might be witnessing a quiet but significant shift in the way India's highest office functions.

Powerful response to prejudice
 Let's be honest—India's obsession with fair skin runs deep. It's in our movies, our marriage ads, and even in casual compliments. But when Kerala Chief Secretary Sarada Muraleedharan was hit with a colourist remark, she didn't just brush it off—she turned it into a masterclass in self-assurance and dignity.

Responding to a social media comment comparing her leadership to that of her predecessor (and husband) in terms of "black vs. white," Muraleedharan didn't play the victim. Instead, she reclaimed blackness. She called it powerful, all-absorbing, universal. "Black is the all-pervasive truth of the universe," she wrote. A statement so poetic that it almost makes you wonder why society ever tried to vilify it in the first place.

The IAS Association stood firmly behind her, rightly calling out the pettiness of judging an officer's competence by skin colour. But the fact that such a defence is needed in 2025 speaks volumes. Prejudice against dark skin isn't just a remnant of the past—it's alive, loud, and insidious. And it's not just about colour; it's often intertwined with sexism, class bias, and deep-seated social conditioning.

Muraleedharan's response wasn't just about shutting down one nasty remark—it was about flipping the script entirely. It was a reminder that confidence is the best answer to ignorance. Maybe it's time the rest of us followed her lead.

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WISDOM CORNER

“An eye for an eye ends up making the whole world blind.”
 MAHATMA GANDHI

“Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.”
 ALBERT EINSTEIN

“When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace.”
 JIMI HENDRIX

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

■ **1792:** George Washington issued the first presidential veto in U.S. history; the rejected legislation concerned congressional redistricting.

■ **1818:** Chile's independence movement, led by José de San Martín and Bernardo O'Higgins, won a decisive victory over Spain in the Battle of Maipú, which left 2,000 Spaniards and 1,000 Chilean patriots dead.

■ **1994:** American grunge rocker Kurt Cobain, leader of the band Nirvana, died by suicide at the age of 27.

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

US-EUROPE DIVIDE

President Donald Trump's radical changes to US foreign policy have led many to suspect that he wants to align America more with Russian President Vladimir Putin over the long term. The expectation now is that the United States, China, and Russia will carve up the world among themselves, as the victors of World War II did at the 1945 Yalta Conference. As Trump abandons America's 80-year-old commitment to preserving a rules- and law-based international order, the world is heading back to the age of "might makes right." Yet because Trump sees all diplomacy as transactional, he is surrendering America's main power multiplier: its ability to form and lead alliances.

Of course, Trump's approach does not necessarily mean that he will seek an especially close relationship with Putin or express admiration for Chinese President Xi Jinping. Moreover, one should not assume that Putin and Xi would ever come to trust the US, even if they become friendly with Trump. Why would the leaders of authoritarian, dictatorial systems suddenly put their faith in a country whose strategy could fundamentally change after the next election?

A better description of the situation is that Trump has turned not so much toward Russia as away from Europe. He simply wants to be done with the war in Ukraine and, ideally, with the entire transatlantic partnership. As a project that confers equal rights on all its member states, the European Union flies in the face of his understanding of the world.

In Trump's view, the Ukraine war and America's obligations toward European allies are costly obstacles to national greatness. He believes that the US can dominate the world single-handedly if it dispenses with rules, norms, and international commitments. The ensuing



Germany can help Europe by remaining a strong voice for dialogue and diplomacy, even as it embarks on a new defense-building drive

great-power competition need not rise to the level of military conflict, but it will certainly feature a war-like struggle for technological, economic, and financial supremacy.

Such a change in US strategy has profound implications for Europe. America's withdrawal leaves a power vacuum on the continent, which is already being buffeted by the harsh crosswinds of the geopolitical competition. Trump thinks he has unburdened America by abandoning Europe, but the Russians and Chinese know better. They are all too eager to exploit the breakdown of the transatlantic alliance. Ultimately, Trump, Xi, and Putin will each try to divide Europe, albeit for their own reasons.

Paradoxically, at a time when the global center of gravity has shifted from the Euro-Atlantic to the Indo-Pacific, Europe is nonetheless becoming the fulcrum of world politics once again. Europe may not yet have much geopolitical heft without the US, but that doesn't mean its member states and institutions are condemned to be minnows swimming in a sea of sharks. Europe's technological, economic, and military potential is substantial; Europeans' success or failure at realizing it will determine the future world order.

Until now, the EU's need for unanimity has rendered it

ineffective and too slow to act, owing to the considerable differences between its member states. Thus, the first task is to develop a new structure for cooperation. The recently proclaimed "coalition of the willing" in support of Ukraine is a first major step toward freeing ourselves from dependency on the US. Notably, this initiative includes non-EU members, and it is being led by France and the United Kingdom, rather than by the EU.

With France and the UK (each a nuclear power) continuing to lead, the group should create a provisional security council to work toward establishing a European defense union that also includes Germany, Poland, and Italy. In addition to addressing questions of membership, this council can clarify the coalition's relationship with the EU and NATO, determine members' contributions to conventional and nuclear deterrence, and coordinate military support for Ukraine.

But these changes will not be enough for Europe to survive on its own. Europe also must find new sources of economic strength. Beyond reducing bureaucracy and creating attractive conditions for companies, Europe needs stronger incentives to promote innovation and research and development. If it cannot marshal the resources to attract the

world's top researchers and most innovative companies, it will not achieve the dynamism that it needs.

Finally, Europe must work with its neighbors to the south. By contrast, withdrawing from international cooperation to focus its resources on tanks and grenades would only fuel the zero-sum geopolitical contest that Europe is trying to navigate around.

Germany will have a central role to play in these efforts. For many years, it seemed to lose sight of Europe, engaging in fruitless navel-gazing. Fortunately, this dangerous posture now seems to be a thing of the past. Even before taking office, incoming Chancellor Friedrich Merz has sent a powerful signal to the world: Germany is back, and it is back in an altogether different way. The vast sums of money promised to strengthen its defense posture and infrastructure show that these are not empty words. Merz understands that a successful German "pivot to Europe" requires a robust, dynamic German economy.

Merz and his future coalition partner, the Social Democratic Party, clearly recognize how much Europe's fate depends on Germany stepping up to promote European integration. So, too, does French President Emmanuel Macron, who is already working in close coordination with the incoming German leadership.

But Germany can also help Europe by remaining a strong voice for dialogue and diplomacy, even as it embarks on a new defense-building drive. Military strength and openness to engagement are two sides of the peace-building coin. The future of European peace and prosperity is now wholly in Europeans' hands.

Sigmar Gabriel is Chairman of Atlantik-Brücke while Peter Eitel is Senior Director of Geopolitical Risk Advisory at FTI Consulting in Germany.

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Sigmar Gabriel and Peter Eitel

IN TRUMP'S VIEW, THE UKRAINE WAR AND AMERICA'S OBLIGATIONS TOWARD EUROPEAN ALLIES ARE COSTLY OBSTACLES TO NATIONAL GREATNESS

SPECTRUM DIPLOMACY

India's outreach to Latin America

The practice in the media and political circles is creating a buzz and excitement when leaders of big powers visit India. Leaders from United States, Japan, European Union, China and Russia draw a good deal of public attention. The proposed visit of Russian President Putin is already featuring in several media. Prime Minister Modi seems to be departing from that trend and is inviting leaders of countries having small and medium power. Last year when he met the new President of Chile Gabriel Boric Font on the sidelines of G-20 meeting in Brazil, he invited the latter to visit India. In response, Chilean President made his first official visit to India from 1 to 5 April.

The visit of Font is significant on more than one account. He is a new generation politician in Chile who moved from student politics to the highest office of President of the country. He promised to break the mould in Chilean politics. Prime Minister Modi singled out Chile in his appreciation for its participa-

tion in all the three editions of the Voice of Global South summits. Besides, Chile was the only Latin American (LA) country which sent an envoy to the celebration of Independence of India in 1947 and among the first LA nations to sign a trade agreement with India in 1956.

India-Chile diplomatic relations go back to 76 years beginning in 1949. There has been a fair convergence of positions in international relations between both countries. They have had moderate bilateral relations ever since 1949 with major component being trade.

During this visit, the whole gamut of bilateral relations was reviewed and many new initiatives were taken. The Chilean President was accompanied with a big delegation from diverse sectors to cover the entirety of bilateral relations.

One important development which concerns many Indians is about the visa. Chilean President announced multiple entry visas to Indian business persons. Like in any bilateral relations, people-to-people contact was given priority.

Exchange of students, faculty and cultural programmes was also discussed.

Trading on minerals from both countries figured in a big way. This was necessary to boost the industries in both countries. A MoU on traditional medicines was signed between both countries. Chile invited Indian attention to building infrastructure like railways, and support in defence preparedness. India reciprocated by offering to train Chile's defence personnel in its premier institutes like NDC, NDA and HDMC.

Terrorism was another topic which was seriously discussed. Both leaders agreed to work for a comprehensive cooperation in international terrorism.

President Font appreciated India's initiative in setting up the International Solar Alliance (ISA). India took the leadership along with France to set up this renewable energy association. Prime Minister Modi also thanked Chile for joining the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) since January 2021.

New Delhi offered to help Chile in building its digital public infrastructure. India is leading in building digital platforms. Even at a small tea stall or fruit vendor, one can pay digitally. This has been appreciated across the world. Chile will do well to invite Indian technology and the know-how to enhance the digital sector. The other area of interest is the pharma industry. The President invited Indian pharma manufacturers to trade in his country.

At the time of writing, Font was to visit Agra, Mumbai and Bangalore in order to meet companies, local politicians and others interested in doing business with Chile.

All in all, it should be a good visit by the President of Chile which would lead to deepening of relations. Focussing on spreading Spanish language would perhaps accelerate the people-to-people contact which is the key to good bilateralism. Good luck President of Chile.

The writer is a Professor at NIIS Group of Institutions, Odisha

INFA



AN INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS CHAIR ON INDIAN STUDIES HAS BEEN DECIDED TO SET UP IN ANY OF THE CHILEAN UNIVERSITIES

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
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Stalin's double standards

Sir, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin's fierce opposition to the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, citing threats to minority rights and religious harmony, raises a vital question: Why the selective secularism? While Stalin decries central overreach into Waqf matters, he turns a blind eye to the state-controlled mismanagement of Hindu temples under the HR&CE Act—an Act firmly under his purview. Thousands of temples in Tamil Nadu, many centuries old, suffer from neglect, misappropriation of funds, and bureaucratic interference, even as devotees fight legal and public battles to reclaim religious autonomy. Sacred lands are encroached upon, temple jewels and funds vanish, and rituals are disrupted—not by invaders, but by the very state meant to protect heritage. If Stalin truly champions religious freedom and institutional autonomy, why ignore the voices of millions of Hindus in his own backyard? A true secular leader ensures equal dignity for all faiths—not just political convenience cloaked as concern.

Gopalaswamy J, CHENNAI

A true legend

Sir, With the demise of Manoj Kumar, Indian cinema has lost one of its finest actors and filmmakers. He redefined the art with his commitment and dedication to his craft, making him a legend. Kumar was also one of the most successful filmmakers in Indian cinema. He was particularly known for his films that focused on patriotism and nationalism. His films, such as Shaheed, Purab Aur Paschim, Upkaar, Roti Kapda Aur Makaan, and Kranti, are cinematic masterpieces that have made their way into the Indian cinema hall of fame. Apart from patriotic movies, he also showcased his excellent acting skills in hit films like Woh Kaun Thi?, Himalay Ki God Mein, Gumnaam, Shor, Dus Numbari, Pathar Ke Sanam, and Sanyasi, among others. Songs played an important role in his movies, and most of them are evergreen numbers that have been passed down from one generation to another. His contributions to Indian cinema earned him a National Film Award, the Padma Shri in 1992, and the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2015. His films will undoubtedly continue to inspire generations of actors, filmmakers, and film lovers.

M Pradyu, KANNUR

Bihar reports alarming rise in forest fires

More than half of the total forest fires in the state took place in the Valmiki Tiger Reserve

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, April 4: Bihar has witnessed an alarming increase in forest fires, rising to 771 from 283 in just one year, according to the Bihar Economic Survey-2024-25 report.

The areas affected by the fire incidents also rose to 1404.9 hectare from 386.9 hectare during the same period, the report said.

More than half of the total forest fires in the state took place in the Valmiki Tiger Reserve, the lone national park in Bihar, says the report.

State Forest Secretary Bandana Preyashi told PTI that most of the incidents were ground fire or bush fire and those were immediately doused.

According to the Economic Survey report tabled in the assembly recently, "The state witnessed 283 forest fires in 2022-23, and the number rose drastically to 771 in the year 2023-24". The state had seen 445 wildfire incidents in 2021-22.

The areas burnt due to such fires have also risen alarmingly in the state. According to the report, 1404.9 hectare of area was burnt because of wildfire incidents in Bihar in 2023-24, while the figure was 386.9 hectare in 2022-23.

"Forest fires are a major threat to forest ecosystems and human communities around the world. As per the Indian State of Forest report, persistent hotter and drier weather due to climate change and other human factors such as land conversion for agriculture are the main drivers of in-



1404.9 hectare of area was burnt because of wildfire incidents in Bihar in 2023-24, while the figure was 386.9 hectare in 2022-23

crease in forest fires."

"More than half of the total fire incidents in the state took place in the Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR), the only national park in Bihar," said the report.

Fortunately, half of Bihar's forests are categorised as less fire-prone, it said adding that the state is keen to create awareness among the public about fire safety and minimising instances of crop residue burning across the state.

Out of the total 771 forest fire incidents in the state, VTR reported 505, followed by the districts of Rohtas (66), Jamui (40), Banka (30), Kaimur (29), Munger (27), Nawada (26), Gaya (21), Nalanda (20) and Aurangabad (7).

It may be recalled that a fire incident recently occurred in

Mandar Hills in Banka district March 30. Since the hill is mostly rocky and full of bushes, officials called it a bush fire which was doused after some time.

Commenting on the reasons for the increase in the forest fires in Bihar, Preyashi said "Most of the forest fires in Bihar are ground fire or bush fire which are immediately doused. It is true that the number of forest fire incidents has increased in the state, but damage is very limited. The department handled these incidents effectively."

Timely reporting and communication of incidents from the Forest Survey of India (FSI) to field units have resulted in better monitoring, the official said.

"A long period of dry, non-rainy weather has increased the susceptibility of forests to fires, creating an environment conducive to fire ignition and spread. Besides, random and sporadic fire incidents have also been attributed to activities like crop burning", explained Preyashi.

Talking to PTI, Prabhat Kumar Gupta, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, said, there are other reasons for the forest fire too, especially in VTR which has adjoining forests.

"The VTR, located in West Champaran district, shares its boundary with the Chitwan National Park and Parsa Wildlife Reserve of Nepal, and Sohagbarwa Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh," Gupta said.

One cannot deny that climate change is intensifying, raising the frequency and severity of forest fires worldwide, he said.

Dry Bihar recorded 190 hooch deaths in last 9 years: Official

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, April 4: A total of 190 people have died due to consumption of illicit liquor in Bihar since prohibition was imposed in the state in April 2016, a senior Excise official said Friday.

The manufacture, trade, storage, transportation, sale and consumption of liquor in Bihar was banned by the Nitish Kumar government in April 2016. However, the smuggling of liquor continues unabated in dry Bihar, notwithstanding the ongoing drive against the bootleggers in the state.



Speaking to PTI, Department of Prohibition, Excise and Registration secretary Vinod Singh Gunjiyal said, "The state has witnessed around 190 'confirmed hooch deaths' from different districts in the state since 2016. The districts which reported the maximum number of confirmed hooch deaths were Saran, Siwan, Gaya, Bhojpur, Buxar and Gopalganj."

A statement issued by the department said, "Till March 31, 2025, a total of 9.36 lakh cases pertaining to violation of prohibition laws have been registered by the department in which a total of 14.32 lakh people have been arrested so far."

Sangam water's first global consignment dispatched to Germany



The grand Prayagraj Maha Kumbh from January 13 to February 26 witnessed an overwhelming turnout, with over 66 crore devotees taking a sacred dip at the Triveni Sangam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj, April 4: Noting the growing demand overseas for the sacred water of Triveni Sangam, the Uttar Pradesh government Friday said 1,000 bottles have been dispatched to devotees in Germany in the first international consignment to extend the spiritual essence of Maha Kumbh beyond India.

The grand Prayagraj Maha Kumbh from January 13 to February 26 witnessed an overwhelming turnout, with over 66 crore devotees taking a sacred dip at the Triveni Sangam, the UP government said in a statement.

"To extend the spiritual essence of this divine event beyond the festival grounds, the Uttar Pradesh government, through the Fire Department, ensured the distribution of Triveni's holy water to all 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh," the government said.

"Now, this sacred water is gaining international recognition, with the first consignment already dispatched from Prayagraj to Germany," the government said.

After the conclusion of the Maha Kumbh, the UP government resolved to deliver Sangam water as 'Maha Prasad' to devotees across the state who could not attend the event, it noted.

"However, with growing overseas interest, requests have started coming in from abroad. The initial international consignment - comprising 1,000 glass bottles of Ganga water - has been sent to Germany," it said.

This shipment was facilitated by Acharya Mahamandaleswar Swami Avdheshanand Giri of Shri Panch Dashnam Juna Akhara and is intended for devotees in Germany who could not make it to the pilgrimage, it added.

Rajiv Kumar Singh, Deputy Commissioner of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) in Prayagraj, informed that the holy Ganga water is being packaged and supplied by the Nari Shakti Mahila Prerna Sankul-level committee from Jasra.

Committee in-charge Namita Singh revealed that the self-help group has already distributed more than 50,000 bottles of Triveni water, including a recent shipment to the Shiv Shambhu Group Society in Nagpur. The domestic consignments were sent in 500 ml bottles, while the consignments to Germany were dispatched in 250 ml bottles.

The Fire Department supported the distribution across all 75 districts of UP. During this ongoing process, Sant Raja Ramdas of Param Shivam Shiv Mandir Yogashram in Guwahati arrived at the Triveni Sangam with a private tanker from Assam.

With the assistance from Prayagraj Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Pramod Sharma and his team, the tanker was filled and sent back to Assam, further extending the spiritual reach of the holy Triveni water, according to the statement.

BULLDOZED DREAMS Losses too big for victims to get over

The Supreme Court recently ordered the Prayagraj Development Authority (PDA) to pay ₹10 lakh in compensation to each of the five petitioners

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Prayagraj, April 4: While the Supreme Court's recent ruling, deeming the 2021 demolitions in Prayagraj "inhuman and illegal," has brought relief to those affected, the emotional and material losses remain

profound, particularly for those whose homes were razed under suspicion of ties to mafia figure Atiq Ahmed.

The Supreme Court recently ordered the Prayagraj Development Authority (PDA) to pay Rs 10 lakh in compensation to each of the five petitioners in the matter.

However, for some, the damage extends beyond monetary value. Ali Ahmed Fatmi, a retired Allahabad University Urdu department professor, lost his home and a valuable collection of rare books.

"On the evening of March 6, 2021, the PDA gave a notice and came to demolish the house March 7. We could not even remove our belongings. I had a big library in which



there were thousands of books which were very rare. We could not even protect those books," Fatmi said. He detailed the irreplace-

able loss of his library and the subsequent emotional toll, including the death of his wife and his own heart condition. "The house is gone, so are

our books. In September of that year, my wife also passed away. She could not bear the shock and later I was also diagnosed with heart disease," he said.

Fatmi, who now lives with his daughter in a flat he had purchased, said he now hopes the court's order would include the return of his land.

Vijay Kumar Singh, another victim, recalled how the house that he had bought with hard earned money was razed within a matter of hours.

"I had bought the house just nine months ago but it was razed within hours. I was forced to live in a rented house. I had spent all my earnings buying that house," he said.

Julie inspires self-reliance with pickle biz

Julie, with her pickle business, not only saved her family from financial turmoil but also brought positive change in the lives of other women by providing them employment

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, April 4: Julie Praveen, a resident of Bihar's Saharsa district, has become an example of self-reliance. Her success story of launching and steering the pickle business is inspiring fellow villagers to take up the entrepreneurship route.

Julie, with her pickle business, not only saved her family from financial turmoil but also brought

positive change in the lives of other women by providing them employment.

Julie Praveen's husband, Mohd Mehtab, used to run a shoe-slipper business, but the Covid pandemic resulted in the closure of his shop. Sales dropped drastically, and it was shut by the end of 2021. The sudden financial crisis put the whole family in trouble.

The family was trou-

bled, but Julie didn't give up hope. She started a pickle-making business in January 2022 from a small rented house. Initially, she earned only Rs 50,000 a year, but gradually her home-made pickles became popular in the locality and found many buyers.

During this time, Julie got a loan of Rs 2 lakh from the Chief Minister's Entrepreneur Scheme, with which she expanded her business further. Now Julie is making 10 quintals of pickle every month and selling it in the market.

Julie Praveen, sharing her experience with

IANS, said, "I never imagined that the pickle-making business would grow to such a large size. Now my dream is to expand this business and provide employment to more and more women."

Mohammad Mehtab says that Julie's endeavour and enterprise has changed their lives.

"When our old business closed, we were very upset, but today we have become self-reliant again. Although there was some difficulty in the beginning but we kept moving forward," he said.

CM Yogi inaugurates housing scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 4: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Friday inaugurated the Anant Nagar Housing Scheme under the Lucknow Development Authority (LDA), calling it a major step towards providing world-class residential facilities in the city.

The CM emphasised that the state government's priority is to ensure that people get better housing options and improved ease of living. He credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership over the past 10 years for

significant advancements in this direction.

"Bringing modern technology into the housing sector, ensuring affordability, and delivering projects ahead of schedule is the need of the hour. The Lucknow Development Authority has taken steps in this direction," Adityanath said.

The 800-acre Anant Nagar project, developed with an investment of nearly Rs 7,000 crore, is strategically located near the international airport, expressway, and Lucknow Ring Road. Designed as an integrated township,

the scheme will include reserved spaces for educational institutions, high-rise residential buildings, and affordable housing plots.

"In today's world, high-rise buildings that used to take 5-10 years to construct can now be completed in just a few months using advanced technology. Our goal is to ensure that this project also incorporates modern techniques, providing affordable and high-quality housing with a green and spiritual environment," Adityanath added.

Office of the Superintending Engineer, Potteru Canal Division, M.V-79

At-M.V-79, PO-Lachhipeta, Dist : Malkangiri, (Odisha) 'e' mail id :- eepcdbhuba65@gmail.com

QUOTATION CALL NOTICE NO.-01/2025-26

No.A-08 : Sealed quotations are invited from interested reputed Travel Agencies/ Tour operators / Private individuals having valid GST / GeM registration number, PAN card, first track banking facility etc. for providing Non-AC/AC diesel driven vehicle or BS-VI compliant Diesel vehicle (TUV300 / Bolero / Sumo Gold / Ertiga) having sitting capacity not more than ten including driver, which shall confirm to the Terms & Conditions of the quotation call notice for the official use of the different offices of Potteru Canal Division, M.V-79 on monthly rent basis for the period from 05/2025 to 03/2026 (for the financial year 2025-26)

- Date and time of availability of quotation documents for sale :- From dtd. 10/04/2025 to dtd. 19/04/2025 during office hours and on working days only.
- Date and time of receipt of quotation documents :- From dtd. 10/04/2025 to dtd. 19/04/2025 (during office hours and on working days only).
- Date and time of opening of quotation documents:- on 21.04.2025 at 10.00 A.M. in the office chamber of the Superintending Engineer, Potteru Canal Division, M.V-79.

Please visit the office of the undersigned or website <http://www.odisha.gov.in/> <http://www.dowrodisha.gov.in/> for details.

Sd./- Superintending Engineer, Potteru Canal Division, M.V-79

OIPR-32441/11/0006/2425

OFFICE OF THE BARIPADA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, BARIPADA

Phone:06792-252703, Fax:-06792-252703, Email:baripadam.hud@nic.in Website:www.baripadamunicipality.in No.636, Date:31.03.2025

Tender Reference No.BPDM 1 of 2025-26 and BPDM 2 of 2025-26 CORRIGENDUM DETAILS

No.C-31:In partial to this Office "e" Procurement Tender Reference No. BPDM 1 of 2025/26 and No.BPDM 2 of 2025/26 the following Terms and Conditions are incorporated in addition to the said Tender Call Notice. The extension of last date and time submission of bids required due to unavoidable technical reason.

Sl. No.	Description	Previously Critical Dates	Presently changed to Critical Dates
(i)	Period of availability of tenders online for bidding	From Dt.22.03.2025 (01.00 P.M.) to Dt.07.04.2025 (05.00 P.M.) & From Dt.24.03.2025 (01.00 PM) to Dt.08.04.2025 (05.00 P.M.)	From Dt.22.03.2025 (01.00 P.M.) to Dt.15.04.2025 (01.00 P.M.)
(ii)	Last Date and Time of bidding online (submission of Bids/)	Dt.07.04.2025 (05.00 P.M.) & Dt.08.04.2025 (05.00 P.M.)	Dt.15.04.2025 (01.00 P.M.)
(iii)	Date and Time of opening of the Bid Received online	Dt.08.04.2025 (11.30 A.M. onwards) & Dt.09.04.2025 (11.30 A.M. onwards)	Dt.16.04.2025 (10.30 A.M. onwards)

The Tender Call Notice vide e-procurement Tender Reference No.BPDM-01 of 2025-26 and Tender Reference No.BPDM-02 of 2025-26 are being amended to the above extent through this 1st Corrigendum. All other terms and conditions are remain unchanged. Further details may also be seen from the procurement portal i.e. www.tendersorissa.gov.in/

OIPR-13078/11/0034/2425

Sd./- Executive Officer, Baripada Municipality

ROURKELA SMART CITY LIMITED, Rourkela

Udit Nagar, Rourkela-769012, Email: rourkelascl@gmail.com

BID ID:- RSCL/422/2025 Date:04.04.2025

NOTICE INVITING TENDER NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

No.C-21: The Chief Executive Officer, RSCL invites bids from eligible contractors for the following project:

Sl. No.	Name of the Projects	Estimated Cost of the Project Rs.
1	Design and Construction of Tribal Shrine Crafts for the Tribal Museum at Rourkela One Project in Rourkela	20.50 Lakhs

The Tender Fees of Rs.7,100/- to be deposited with the bid which is Non-refundable. The complete BID documents can be viewed/downloaded from official portal of Rourkela Municipal Corporation (<https://www.rmc.nic.in> or e-Procurement portal of Odisha <https://tendersodisha.gov.in> from 05.04.2025 to 11.04.2025 (upto 17.00 Hrs. IST). Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on 07.04.2025 at 12.30 P.M. in the Conference Hall of RSCL. For queries, intending bidder may contact Debasmita Mahanta, Ar. Designer vide Phone No. 7838895830 and Email Id: rourkelascl@gmail.com.

Sd./- Chief Executive Officer Rourkela Smart City Limited

OIPR-13080/11/0019/2425

ODISHA LIFT IRRIGATION CORPORATION LIMITED

(A Government of Odisha Undertaking) OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, L.I. DIVISION, BHUBANESWAR e-mail : eeoilicivn.bbsr@gmail.com, Tel. 0674-2391847

e-Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No. 740/2024-25 Dt. 02.04.2025

No.CAD-04 : The Executive Engineer, Lift Irrigation Division, Bhubaneswar on behalf of ODISHA LIFT IRRIGATION CORPORATION LIMITED, BHUBANESWAR invites percentage Rate bids in online mode for Revival & Re-Energisation (Reinforcement) of Lift Irrigation Projects in Puri & Khordha district under PLAN FUND 2024-25 in TURNKEY Basis as mentioned below from the reputed Contractors/Firms having valid HT license issued by E.L.B.O, Odisha and Civil license as mentioned below with experience in similar nature of work.

- Nature of work : Execution of work for installation & Re-Energisation of 114 Nos. L.I. Projects in different blocks of Puri & Khordha district.
- Estimated cost : Varies from Rs. 1129324/- to Rs. 3667597/-
- Period of completion : 90 days
- Date & time of availability of bid documents in the portal : 07.04.2025 at 10.00 A.M.
- Last date & time for receipt of bids in the portal : 16.04.2025 up to 5.00 P.M.
- Date & time of seeking clarification : 07.04.2025 at 10.00 A.M. to 15.04.2025 up to 5.00 P.M.
- Opening date & time : 17.04.2025 at 11.00 A.M.
- Name & address of the officer inviting Bid : Executive Engineer, Lift Irrigation Division, Bhubaneswar

The details of tender are available in the Government tender website i.e. www.tendersorissa.gov.in and other related documents are available in the DTGN for bidding. Any Addendum / corrigendum / Cancellation of tender will be available in the said website.

Sd./- Executive Engineer L.I. Division, Bhubaneswar

OIPR-32155/11/0011/2425



People thought when the new government comes, it would protect their rights. Unfortunately, it has been six months, but it has not talked about the plight of youths in jails, the termination of our employees, the issues of daily wagers, or unemployment. The government has shown cowardice in everything

JOSHI FLAGS CONCERN OVER FAKE PANEER

Food Minister Pralhad Joshi has urged Health Minister JP Nadda to take immediate action against the sale of fake and adulterated paneer in fast food joints, restaurants, and other markets across the country



of the day uote

Buddhism attracted the world on the strength of its compassion and friendship, not on the strength of the sword



YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CM

I congratulate all countrymen on the passing of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025 and the Mussalman Wakf (Repeal) Bill in both the Houses



NAYAB SINGH SAINI | HARYANA CM

We are the Best, yet again!! The Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Ministry of Power, Govt. of India, has just announced the annual ranking of all the 201 thermal power plants in the country, based on operational efficiency (PLF - Plant Load Factor) parameters



MAMATA BANERJEE | WB CHIEF MINISTER

Centre has declined consent for TN's anti-NEET Bill: Stalin

Opposition AIADMK slammed the DMK over the NEET issue, with the former accusing the ruling party of deceiving people while the latter said the CM's "NEET drama has ended" and challenged him to approach the Supreme Court



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 4: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin Friday informed that the Assembly resolution seeking NEET exemption for the state that was sent for Presidential assent, has been declined and called the rejection a "dark chapter in federalism."

Opposition AIADMK slammed the DMK over the NEET issue, with the former accusing the ruling party of deceiving people while the latter said the CM's "NEET drama has ended" and challenged him to approach the Supreme Court.

Speaking on the floor of the TN Assembly, Stalin said the state would continue its struggle to abolish the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) and announced a meeting of the legislature party leaders has been convened April 9 in this connection.

Informing the House about the Centre's decision, Stalin expressed disappointment over the move and said "the rejection is a dark chapter in federalism."

The Bill proposed to allow admissions to medical courses solely based on Class XII marks. It was passed in the Tamil Nadu Assembly in 2021 and re-adopted the following year after initial objections from Governor R N Ravi. Stalin accused the Centre of disregarding the will of Tamil Nadu people and the Assembly bill, too.

"Despite the Tamil Nadu government furnishing all necessary clarifications through various ministries, the Union government has now rejected the exemption from NEET," he said. "Due to the implementation of NEET, the dreams of the poor and rural students of becoming a doctor have been out of reach. This will affect the medical services in rural and backward areas of the state in the future," Stalin said in his address to the House.

The Tamil Nadu Admission to Undergraduate Medical Degree Courses Act, 2021 was unanimously passed in the Legislative Assembly September 13, 2021. The Governor sent it back for reconsideration. Following this, a resolution to reintroduce the Bill in the Assembly was passed unani-

mously, he explained. NEET has emotional undertones in Tamil Nadu as many aspirants, either having failed to crack the entrance test or apprehensive over clearing it, have died by suicide over the past years. They include S Anita from Ariyalur district, whose death in 2017 sparked an outrage in the state. All political parties in the state barring the BJP support 'abolition' of NEET.

Leader of the Opposition and AIADMK chief, Edappadi K Palaniswami accused the chief minister of doing politics on abolishing the national level screening test and said the people will give a fitting

BJP state chief K Annamalai said the NEET 'drama' of the DMK regime has come to an end and the "chapter is closed" and there are "no more chapters" for the entrance test. While they could pin the blame on Governor or President till such time the bill seeking exemption for the state was not cleared, nothing could be done now as the President has rejected the state Bill and has said the reasons adduced for seeking exemption were not acceptable.

Modi gifts Sarnath Buddha to Thai King

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has gifted a brass Sarnath Buddha in 'dhyana mudra' to Thailand King Maha Vajiralongkorn and a brocade silk shawl to the queen, officials said Friday. Modi chose a brass dokra peacock themed board as his gift for Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra and silver-gold cufflinks for her spouse. The officials said that Modi gifted a brass urli with peacock and diya to former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra.

The brass statue of Sarnath Buddha is a stunning representation of Buddhist spirituality and Indian craftsmanship, inspired by the Sarnath style. Originating from Bihar, the statue reflects the Gupta and Pala art traditions with its serene expression, intricately detailed robe and iconic lotus pedestal, they added. The 'dhyana mudra' posture symbolizes deep meditation and inner peace, with the Buddha seated in padmasana, radiating wisdom and compassion.

The silk shawl from Uttar Pradesh, particularly from Varanasi, is a masterpiece of India's rich weaving tradition, the officials said. Crafted from the finest silk, it features intricate motifs depicting village life, divine celebrations and nature, inspired by Indian miniature and pichwai art. The dokra brass peacock board with tribal rider is a stunning example of traditional Indian metal craft, originating from the tribal communities of Chhattisgarh. Made using the ancient lost-wax casting technique, each piece is handcrafted and unique.

ELECTORAL BONDS

SC refuses review of decision against confiscating funds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: The Supreme Court has dismissed a plea seeking the review of its decision rejecting the petitions for confiscating Rs 16,518 crore received by political parties under the 2018 electoral bond scheme.

A bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra dismissed the review plea filed by one Khem Singh Bhati against the top court's decision of August 2, 2024. The apex court had then rejected the petition seeking confiscation of money received under the scheme.

The bench March 26 held, "The review petition is dismissed in terms of the signed order. Pending application(s), if any, shall stand disposed of." The top court's order, made available recently, also refused to accept Bhati's prayer for an open-court hearing in the matter. A five-judge Constitution bench headed by former CJI D Y Chandrachud February 15 last year scrapped the electoral bonds scheme of anonymous political funding introduced by the BJP government. Following the top court's judgement, the State Bank of India, the authorised financial institution under the scheme, shared the data with the election commission which made it public.

The electoral bonds scheme, which was notified by the government January 2, 2018, was



pitched as an alternative to cash donations made to political parties as part of its efforts to bring in transparency in political funding. The top court, August 2 last year, rejected a batch of pleas including the one filed by Bhati for a court-monitored probe into the electoral bonds scheme and observed it couldn't order a roving inquiry.

The review plea, filed through advocate Jayesh K Unnikrishnan and settled by senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, said February 15, 2024 the apex court in Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) v. Union of India held the scheme unconstitutional for violating Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.

"The effect of declaring the electoral bond scheme and the various statutory provisions as unconstitutional is that the said scheme never existed and is void ab-initio and it is a settled position of law that the court only finds law and it does not make law," it argued. The verdict in the ADR case, the plea said, rendered the EBS void since inception, and therefore, the subsequent pleas seeking confiscation of the amount collected by political parties could not have been dismissed.

SHORT TAKES

3 Class VII girls go missing from school

Meerut (UP): Three Class VII female students have gone missing from a government residential school in Sarurpur area here, a senior police official said Friday. The students, who have been missing from Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya from Thursday afternoon, are yet to be traced. District Magistrate VK Singh and Senior Superintendent of Police Vipin Tada visited the school and also interacted with locals in the area. SSP Tada said based on information received late Thursday night, four police teams were formed and a search was launched.

Warangal court gets bomb threat

Hyderabad: The District Courts Building complex in Warangal, Telangana, received a bomb threat via email. However, after a thorough search of the premises, it was declared a hoax, police said Friday. A senior police official said they received information from the court about the threat email at around 10 AM, which was sent to the judge's office, stating that a bomb had been planted in the complex and would explode. Police teams, along with a bomb disposal unit and a sniffer dog squad, thoroughly checked the premises and found nothing suspicious. Police officials confirmed it was a hoax email.

Senior Bokaro Steel Plant official arrested

Bokaro: A chief general manager of Jharkhand's Bokaro Steel Plant (BSL) has been arrested in connection with an incident of alleged lathi charge by the CISF to disperse a group of protesters in the district, officials said Friday. The CGM (HR) of BSL, Hari Mohan Jha, was apprehended over the alleged CISF action Thursday in which one person died, they said.

Assam govt hikes DA for employees

Guwahati: The Assam cabinet gave its nod Friday to increase the Dearness Allowance for government employees by 2 percentage points, becoming the first state in the country to provide 55 per cent DA, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. Addressing a press conference, Sarma described it as a Bihu gift for the state's 7,38,000 employees and pensioners.

Parl's Budget session ends with over 100% productivity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: Parliament's nod to the Waqf (Amendment) Bill rendering it the government's most consequential piece of legislation in its third term, and the political heat it generated inside and outside the legislature defined the second half of the Budget session which ended Friday.

Debates scored over disruption in this session during which 16 Bills were approved by the two Houses and the President's rule in Manipur received Parliament's nod during post-mid night discussions in both chambers.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju told reporters that the productivity of Lok Sabha during the session, which began with an address by President Droupadi Murmu January 31 and ended Friday with a recess from February 14 to March 9, was 118 per cent and that of the Upper House 119 per cent.

He said history was created and old records broken in Rajya Sabha when it sat without a break for 17:02 hrs from 11 AM Thursday to the early hours

Friday to debate and pass the Waqf Bill besides endorsing President's rule in Manipur.

He noted that a lively discussion on the Bill was seen in both Houses without any disruption and occasional exchanges of sarcasm and banter. After both the ruling National Democratic Alliance and the Opposition INDIA bloc voted along the party lines on the Bill, Rijiju said a similar pattern in polling was witnessed in Rajya Sabha save for "conscience" voting by some members, which boosted the strength of the treasury benches.

However, if the BJD's decision to allow its members to vote according to their conscience was a shot in the arm for the BJP, Tamil Nadu's AIADMK went with the INDIA bloc in opposing the bill at a time when the regional party is in talks with the ruling party for an alliance in Tamil Nadu. Rijiju claimed that the Bill would have got many more votes if Opposition parties had not issued whips and allowed their members to vote according to their choice as many such MPs expressed "support" to him privately.



A rare long-snouted vine snake (Ahaetulla longirostris), rediscovered in the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve

Virgin Atlantic flight lands in Mumbai after being stranded in Turkey

Mumbai: After being stranded for more than 40 hours at a Turkey airport, over 250 Virgin Atlantic passengers, including Indians, landed at the Mumbai airport late in the evening Friday. The passengers were stuck at the Diyarbakir Airport in Turkey after their Mumbai-bound aircraft from London was diverted to the airport Wednesday. Sources said the flight landed at around 9 pm at the Mumbai airport. "With all necessary technical approvals now secured, the plane departed Diyarbakir Airport at 13:00 local time Friday 4th April, operating as flight VS1358. Customers are now en route to Mumbai, with an expected arrival at approximately 20:49 local time," the spokesperson said in a statement earlier in the day. Over 250 passengers were stuck at the airport. An A350-1000 aircraft was operating the flight that has over 300 seats, according to sources. A passenger, who was among those stranded at the airport, told PTI on Thursday that all passengers were sitting on the floor, and there were no blankets available.technical inspection before the aircraft was cleared to operate.

Police impose entry curbs on 400-acre parcel land near varsity

The Telangana government's plan to auction this ecologically sensitive land for the construction of urban infrastructure and an IT Park has triggered protests by the UoH Students' Union

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, April 4: The Cyberabad Police Friday imposed restrictions until April 16 on the entry of people into a 400-acre land parcel in Kancha Gachibowli, adjacent to the University of Hyderabad (UoH), citing the prevailing law and order situation and the need to maintain public tranquility.

The Telangana government's plan to auction this ecologically sensitive land for the construction of urban infrastructure

and an IT Park has triggered protests by the UoH Students' Union.

The matter is currently being heard in both the Telangana High Court and the Supreme Court. In view of the Supreme Court's orders, the directions of the Central Empowered Committee, and the prevailing law and order situation, DCP (Madhapur Zone) Vineeth G issued an order prohibiting people who do not ordinarily have work in the area from entering it for any purpose other than their bona fide duties.



The order aims to prevent danger to human life and safety, maintain public tranquility, and avert the possibility of riots, affray, or obstruction to any person lawfully discharging their duties.

The order was issued under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), which restricts unau-



thorised gatherings.

According to a notification, the order will remain in force from 6 am on Friday until April 16, covering the 400-acre area that is currently the subject of litigation in both the High Court and the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the UoHSU held a rally on campus late Friday evening, demanding the re-

moval of police camps from the premises and the fulfillment of their other demands, including the revocation of FIRs against students, civil society groups, and other activists.

They also demanded that the UoH administration file a petition in the High Court asserting ownership of the land.

On Thursday, the Telangana High Court posted the case for hearing April 7.

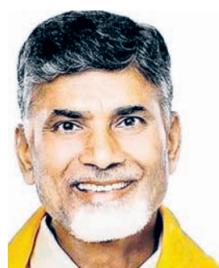
The Supreme Court, also Thursday, asked the Telangana government to explain the "compelling urgency" behind clearing a large tree cover on the land parcel next to the university and stayed any further activity until further orders.

The court inquired about the status of the felled trees and directed the Central Empowered

Committee to visit the site and submit a report before April 16, when the matter will be heard again.

Following the Apex Court's directive, the Telangana government has decided to form a committee of ministers to hold discussions with the UoH executive committee, civil society groups, students, and other stakeholders to address concerns over the land parcel adjacent to the university.

Responding to the Supreme Court's order to stay any further activity until further notice, Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and Industries Minister D Sridhar Babu said in a joint statement Thursday that the government would abide by the apex court's directives.



Start formulating an action plan to establish 100 to 300-bedded hospitals in every constituency in the state... Think about building and running these hospitals under the PPP model

WB'S 'NOLEN GUR SANDESH' AMONG 7 ITEMS GETS GI TAG

West Bengal has earned Geographical Indication (GI) tags for seven state products, including the iconic 'Nolen Gurer Sandesh' and Baruaipur guavas...



of the day note

Already two rounds of discussions have been held on the selection of council candidates. Further discussions are required

A bulldozer moves on wheels of arrogance, fueled by egotism, with no reins of justice

If anyone of that rank (constable, head constable or ASI) is found issuing challan, then citizens can click their pictures and send them to the police department...

WAQF (AMENDMENT) BILL Cong, AIMIM leaders move SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: Congress MP Mohammad Jawed and AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi Friday challenged the validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025 in the Supreme Court...



The Bill was passed in the RS with 128 members voting in favour and 95 opposing it

accorded to Waqfs and Hindu, Jain, and Sikh religious and charitable endowments alike.

and the State Waqf Boards disturbs this delicate constitutional balance and tilts it to the detriment of the right of Muslims as a religious group to remain in control of their Waqf properties...

interference" in religious governance unlike Hindu religious endowments, which were exclusively managed by Hindus under various state enactments.

"This selective interference, without imposing similar conditions on other religious institutions, is an arbitrary classification and violates Articles 14 and 15," it said.

The proposed law, the plea said, also modified the process of dispute resolution by altering the composition and powers of the Waqf tribunals.

The plea said the change disproportionately affected willingness to resort to legal recourse through specialised tribunals, in contrast to the robust protections provided to other religious institutions under their respective endowment laws.

By expanding state control over Waqf assets, the plea said, it limited the ability of persons to dedicate property for religious purposes.

Subjecting Waqf properties to heightened scrutiny, the bill goes against the apex court's 1954 decision which held that transferring control of religious property to secular authorities was an infringement of rights of religion and property, it added.

TEACHERS' RECRUITMENT

WBSSC to hold fresh job drive



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 4: The West Bengal School Service Commission (WBSSC) Friday said it would abide by the Supreme Court directive and soon initiate the process of conducting fresh exams for all teaching and non-teaching candidates...

Majumdar said. "We will initiate the process of starting the fresh examination of 22 lakh candidates as soon as possible. We will also send our recommendations to the school education department, but cannot share any further details at this stage," he said.

While 12,905 working teachers in classes 9 and 10 in state schools lost their jobs in the wake of the Supreme Court verdict, the number of job losers in classes 11 and 12 stood at 5,712. The remaining among the nearly 26,000 affected employees are non-teaching staff in Groups C and D category.

In its judgment, the apex court pulled up the WBSSC, saying it "intentionally" covered up the lapses and illegalities in the appointment of the teachers and staffers, and upheld the Calcutta High Court's findings on illegalities in the selection process on 17 counts. Asked about the commission's alleged failure to separate the tainted from the deserving candidates before the Supreme Court that led to the cancellation of appointments en masse, Majumdar said, "We did submit those figures in the form of sworn affidavits. It's a different matter, though, that we were unable to satisfy the court with our figures."

To a question about completing within three months the recruitment process of those teaching and non-teaching school employees who had left their earlier workplace and sat for the 2016 recruitment exams for better postings as directed by the court, he said, "We will facilitate the process (of them for joining their previous workplace) at the earliest as per the directive."

SHORT TAKES

BJP worker dies by suicide

Bangalore: A BJP worker, who was earlier arrested on charges of making comments against Congress MLA AS Ponnanna, allegedly died by suicide Friday stating in a purported suicide note that he was unable to bear the humiliation, police said.

Jet crash: Flight Lieutenant cremated

Chandigarh: Flight Lieutenant Siddharth Yadav, who was killed in the Jaguar fighter jet crash in Gujarat, was cremated with full military honours at his native Majra Bhalkhi village in Haryana's Rewari district Friday.

Pathar Pratima blast: Another accused held

Kolkata: Police Friday arrested another accused in connection with a blast that left eight people dead at Pathar Pratima in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district. The arrested person is the brother of the prime accused Chandrakanta Banik, who was apprehended Wednesday.

4 Naxals surrender

Sukma: Four hardcore Naxalites with a cumulative reward of ₹20 lakh on their heads surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district Friday, a police official said. The surrender comes hours ahead of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to the state.

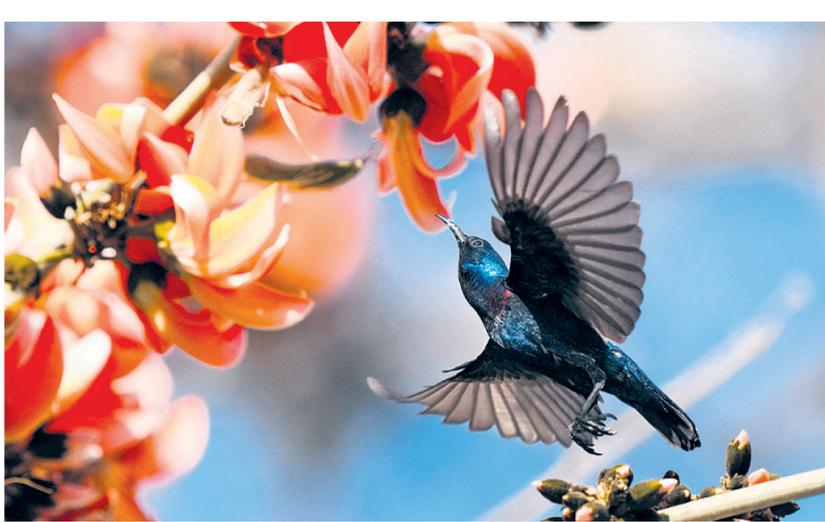
ED searches Empuraan producer Gopalan's chit fund firm in FEMA case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi/New Delhi, April 4: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) Friday conducted searches at the chit fund company premises of Kerala-based businessman Gokulam Gopalan, one of the producers of the movie 'L2: Empuraan', as part of an alleged ₹1,000-crore foreign exchange violation case, official sources said.

The searches are being undertaken by the Kochi office of the agency at five premises in various states, including in Chennai (Tamil Nadu) and Kochi (Kerala), under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), the sources said. The action is being undertaken against Gopalan and his company Sree Gopalan chit and Finance Co Ltd for alleged FEMA violations of ₹1,000 crore with certain NRIs and some related "unauthorised" transactions, the sources said.

The agency is also understood to be analysing some "cheating" cases against the company for possible investigation under the anti-money laundering law. The federal probe agency's searches come following the recent controversy surrounding 'L2: Empuraan', the second part of the movie Lucifer, which was released March 27 in Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada and Telugu.



A purple sunbird visits a spring season flower in bloom in Chandigarh, Punjab

PTI PHOTO

Transfer row: MLAs call for respecting people's mandate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, April 4: Amid differences with the Raj Bhavan over transfer of state officials, MLAs from the ruling NC-led alliance in Jammu and Kashmir Friday stressed the need for all to respect people's mandate, asserting "our silence" should not be construed as weakness.

"We are repeatedly saying this and this is our final re-

quest that do not push us to the wall." National Conference chief spokesperson and MLA Zaidal Tanvir Sadiq told reporters here after an emergency legislature party meeting of the ruling allies. The meeting passed two resolutions: one condemning the passage of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill by parliament, and the other calling for respecting people's mandate. The meeting comes



in the backdrop of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Tuesday ordering the transfer of 48 officers of the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Ser-

vice (JKAS). The Abdullah government regards the LG's move as a violation of the legal and administrative framework under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act.

Briefing reporters after the nearly two-hour-long emergency meeting of the ruling MLAs here, NC spokesperson Sadiq said, "The elections in Jammu and Kashmir were praised by the top leadership of this coun-

try for enthusiastic voting. And, now if anyone stands in a denial mode or tries to undermine it, is showing disrespect to the people's mandate." He said the ruling alliance is of firm opinion that the mandate of the people needs to be respected and "our coordination, whether it is with Delhi or with the LG administration, is only aimed at solving the problems of the people."

SC frowns upon suppression of criminal history in bail pleas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: Saying it was "taken for a ride", the Supreme Court has frowned upon a "growing trend" where persons suppress their criminal history while seeking bail or protection from coercive action.

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Manmohan said, "A growing trend is being noticed of individuals, seeking from this court the concession of bail or concession of protection from arrest, not disclosing in the special leave petitions their involvement in other criminal cases".

The bench, as a result, rejected the bail plea of a murder accused finding "suppression of material facts". "This court has shown leniency in the past but we think it is time that such state of affairs is not allowed to continue further," it noted.

Going forward, the court said, every person moving the top court with a "special leave petition (criminal)" against the orders of the high courts or sessions courts denying them reliefs under Sections 438/439 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (bail or anticipatory bail), 1973, or under Sections 482/483, Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita should mandatorily disclose in the "synopsis" whether they have "clean antecedents" or possess the knowledge of being involved in a criminal case.

The bench's April 3 order said if the disclosure was found to be incorrect subsequently, it would be a ground in itself to dismiss the special leave petition.

The top court said it entertained the pleas and issued notices in several such cases after a prima facie satisfaction that there existed a long incarceration



tion without reasonable progress in the trial, curtailing the right to life of the accused or that the offences for which the FIR were registered were not too serious. However, it said it was only after the state filed its counter affidavits on the bail or anticipatory bail pleas that the criminal antecedents of the accused were disclosed.

While being "conscious" that complying with such a direction would inconvenience some, the court outlined the "institutional interest" so that the proceedings before it were not taken lightly. The bench observed previously too, in two different criminal cases, the apex court batted for a complete disclosure of information in pleas for bail and pre-arrest bail.

The top court said it entertained the pleas and issued notices in several such cases after a prima facie satisfaction that there existed a long incarceration without reasonable progress in the trial, curtailing the right to life of the accused or that the offences for which the FIR were registered were not too serious

However, it said it was only after the state filed its counter affidavits on the bail or anticipatory bail pleas that the criminal antecedents of the accused were disclosed

"Registry is directed to bring this order to the notice of all concerned, in such a manner as deemed appropriate, for compliance till such time the rules are amended in terms of the orders dated October 13, 2023 and October 19, 2023..." it said. The murder accused before the top court challenged the October 3, 2023 order of the Allahabad

High Court rejecting his bail plea.

The Uttar Pradesh government informed the bench that the trial was underway with the examination of witnesses. The accused was involved in eight cases and in one of the cases of theft he was convicted, it alleged.

The bench said, "Be that as it may, since the petitioner has suppressed material facts with regard to his involvement in criminal cases, he is not entitled to the discretionary relief of bail. Even otherwise, the trial has progressed reasonably and hence, no case for releasing the petitioner on bail has been set up." On October 13, 2023, the top court in a criminal case noticed the filing of special leave petitions bereft of crucial information such as the age of the accused or the petitioner.



Extrajudicial killings are serious violations and their perpetrators, as well as those with command responsibility, must be held accountable
THAMEEN AL-KHEETAN | SPOKESPERSON, OHCHR

KURDISH FIGHTERS LEAVE NORTHERN CITY IN SYRIA

Scores of US-backed Kurdish fighters left two neighbourhoods in Syria's northern city of Aleppo Friday as part of a deal with the central government in Damascus, which is expanding its authority in the country. The fighters left the predominantly Kurdish northern neighbourhoods of Sheikh Maksoud and Achrafieh, which had been under the control of Kurdish fighters in Aleppo over the past decade



international

of the day **QUOTE**

If we let ourselves be divided as allies, then we do our foes a favour. And I will do everything that I can to prevent that from happening



METTE FREDERIKSEN | PRIME MINISTER, DENMARK

We are the first to introduce such a security and defense fund in the (National Recovery Plan) and I already know that other countries ... are asking how to do it



KATARZYNA PELCZYNSKA-NALECZ | DEVELOPMENT FUNDS AND REGIONAL POLICY MINISTER, POLAND

I am convinced that this otherwise important international judicial forum has been degraded into a political tool, with which we cannot and do not want to engage



VIKTOR ORBÁN | PRIME MINISTER, HUNGARY

GLOBAL TRADE WAR

China hits back hard

REUTERS

Beijing/Washington/Brussels, April 4: China announced additional tariffs of 34% on US goods Friday, the most serious escalation in a trade war with President Donald Trump that has fed fears of a recession and triggered a global stock market rout.

In the standoff between the world's top two economies, Beijing also announced controls on exports of some rare earths and filed a complaint at the World Trade Organisation.

It added 11 entities to the "unreliable entity" list, which allows Beijing to take punitive actions against foreign entities, including firms linked to arms sales to democratically governed Taiwan, which China claims as part of its territory.

Nations from Canada to China have readied retaliation in a mounting trade war after Trump raised US tariff barriers to their highest level in more than a century this week, leading to a plunge in world financial markets.

Investment bank JP Morgan said it now sees a 60% chance of the global economy entering recession by year end, up from 40% previously.

US stock futures fell sharply Friday, signaling more losses on Wall Street, after China



- CHINA ANNOUNCES 34% ADDITIONAL TARIFFS
- SHARP ESCALATION IN GLOBAL TRADE WAR
- RUBIO DISPUTES TALK OF ECONOMIES CRASHING
- BIG TECH STOCKS HIT AGAIN
- EU'S TOP TRADE NEGOTIATOR TO SPEAK TO US OFFICIALS FRIDAY

retaliated with fresh tariffs a day after the Trump administration's sweeping levies knocked off \$2.4 trillion from US equities.

In Japan, one of United States' top trading partners, Prime Minister Shigeru Ishi-

ba said the tariffs had created a "national crisis" as a plunge in banking shares Friday set Tokyo's stock market on course for its worst week in years.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio Friday disputed any economic crash, telling reporters that markets were reacting to the change and would adjust.

"Their economies are not crashing. Their markets are reacting to a dramatic change in the global order in terms of trade," he said at a press conference in Brussels. "The markets will adjust."

DIVISIONS AND MIXED SIGNALS

With European shares also heading for the biggest weekly loss in three years, the Europe-

an Union's trade commissioner Maros Sefcovic will speak to US counterparts.

"We will not shoot from the hip - we want to give negotiations every chance to succeed to find a fair deal, to the benefit of both sides," he said on social media.

The EU is divided on how best to respond to Trump's tariffs, including on use of its 'Anti-Coercion Instrument', which allows the bloc to retaliate against third countries that put economic pressure on EU members to change their policies.

Countries that are cautious about retaliating and thereby raising the stakes in the standoff with the U.S. include Ireland, Italy, Poland and the Scandinavian nations.

French President Emmanuel Macron led the charge on Thursday by calling on companies to freeze investment in the U.S.

However, French Finance Minister Eric Lombard later cautioned against like-for-like countermeasures on the US tariffs, warning this would also rebound on European consumers.

China is retaliating for Trump's 54% tariffs on imports from the world's No. 2 economy. The European Union faces a 20% duty.

Yoon removed from office over martial law



REUTERS

Seoul, April 4: South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol was ousted Friday by the Constitutional Court, ushering in an election after it upheld parliament's impeachment over his imposition of martial law that sparked the nation's worst political crisis in decades.

The unanimous ruling caps months of political turmoil that have overshadowed efforts to deal with the administration of US President Donald Trump at a time of slowing growth in Asia's fourth-largest economy.

The decision now sets in motion a race to elect the next president within 60 days as required by the constitution. Prime Minister Han Duck-soo will stay on as acting president until a new leader is sworn in.

Lee Jae-myung, the populist leader of the liberal Democratic Party who had lost to Yoon by a razor-thin margin in 2022, is a clear front-runner but faces legal challenges of his own under multiple trials for corruption.

The conservatives have a wide-open field of candidates.

"The Constitutional Court's unanimous ruling has removed a major source of uncertainty," said Professor Leif-Eric Easley of Ewha University in Seoul, noting how the next government would have to navigate challenges including North Korea's military threats, China's

diplomatic pressure and Trump's trade tariffs.

Acting Chief Justice Moon Hyung-bae said Yoon violated his duty as president with his December 3 martial law declaration, acting beyond his constitutional powers with actions that were "a serious challenge to democracy".

"(Yoon) committed a grave betrayal of the people's trust," Moon said, adding that the declaration of martial law created chaos in all areas of society, the economy and foreign policy.

Human Rights Watch called the ruling a win for the country's resilience, quest for human rights and democratic values. Thousands of people at a rally calling for Yoon's ouster erupted into wild cheers on hearing the ruling, chanting "We won!"

YOON OUSTED FOR VIOLATING CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS, SPARKING POLITICAL CRISIS
PRIME MINISTER HAN DUCK-SOO TO SERVE AS ACTING PRESIDENT UNTIL ELECTION
JUNE 3 ELECTION DATE BEING DISCUSSED, ELECTION COMMISSION SAYS
YOON ALSO FACES CRIMINAL TRIAL FOR INSURRECTION CHARGES

SHORT TAKES

Indian-origin catholic priest shot dead

Seneca (Kansas): An Indian-origin Catholic priest was shot and killed by a man who approached him at his parish rectory in the town of Seneca, Kansas, church officials said. "I am heartbroken to share the tragic news of the death of Fr. Arul Carasala, who was fatally shot earlier today," Archbishop Joseph Naumann of the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas said in a Facebook post Thursday. "This senseless act of violence has left us grieving the loss of a beloved priest, leader, and friend." Carasala had been the pastor at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Seneca since 2011, according to his profile on the parish website.

Bimstec leaders agree to boost trade ties

Bangkok: Leaders of nations in the Bay of Bengal region pledged to improve trade and transport cooperation as they concluded a summit in Bangkok Friday. Thailand's Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra said the seven nations also agreed to increase natural disaster relief efforts after an earthquake last week killed more than 3,000 people in Myanmar and Thailand. The leaders also expressed their "condolences, solidarity, and commitment to supporting the affected countries" in a joint statement on the earthquake, the Thai leader and meeting chair said. The meetings faced controversy by the attendance of the head of Myanmar's military government, Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing, who has been shunned by many countries over his 2021 takeover and the brutal oppression that followed.

Comedian Russell charged with rape

London: British police Friday charged Russell Brand with rape and sexual assault following an 18-month investigation sparked when four women alleged they had been assaulted by the controversial comedian. London's Metropolitan Police force said Brand, 50, faces one count of rape, one of indecent assault, one of oral rape and two of sexual assault. The alleged offences involve four women and took place between 1999 and 2005. In September 2023, British media outlets Channel 4 and the Sunday Times published claims by four women of being sexually assaulted or raped by Brand. The accusers have not been identified.

SNIPPETS

Israel kills Hamas commander in Lebanon, further testing ceasefire

BEIRUT: Israel killed a commander of the Palestinian militant group Hamas in an airstrike on southern Lebanon Friday, further testing a ceasefire that halted last year's war between Israel and Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. The Israeli military said the targeted militant, Hassan Farhat, was behind a rocket attack on the city of Safed last year that killed and wounded several Israeli soldiers. It vowed to act against Hamas fighters "wherever they operate". A security source said Farhat was killed along with his son and daughter in the strike in the southern Lebanese city of Sidon. Hamas' armed wing the al-Qassam Brigades said Farhat was assassinated in his apartment in Sidon, and praised his "blessed contributions" to the confrontation with Israel over the years. Iran-backed Hezbollah condemned the strike in a statement, saying that the "targeting of Sidon is evidence of the enemy's intention to expand the scope of its aggression and target all of Lebanon".

IMF team arrives in Pak to review governance, corruption issues

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) arrived in Pakistan to conduct a comprehensive review of governance and corruption issues, according to a media report Friday. The IMF team will begin meetings with Pakistani officials Monday, the Express Tribune newspaper reported, quoting sources. The mission's primary objective is to provide technical assistance to enhance Pakistan's reform capacity. Its discussions will focus on strengthening governance and addressing corruption issues to support it, according to the report. The IMF team will review budget proposals for the fiscal year 2025-26 and engage in follow-up negotiations regarding technical support for governance issues, sources said. The delegation will also discuss measures to improve tax revenue, control government expenditure, and finalise proposals for the upcoming budget with Ministry of Finance officials.

Musk will probably leave Doge: Trump

ASSOCIATED PRESS



Washington, April 4: President Donald Trump said Thursday that Elon Musk would likely leave his administration in "a few months," the clearest sign that his most powerful and disruptive adviser will be wrapping up his work inside the government.

Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One that "Elon is fantastic" but he has "a number of companies to run."

"I want him to stay as long as possible," he said. "There's going to be a point where he's going to have to leave."

Musk has spearheaded the Department of Government Efficiency, which is playing a leading role in downsizing and overhauling the federal government. Trump said that

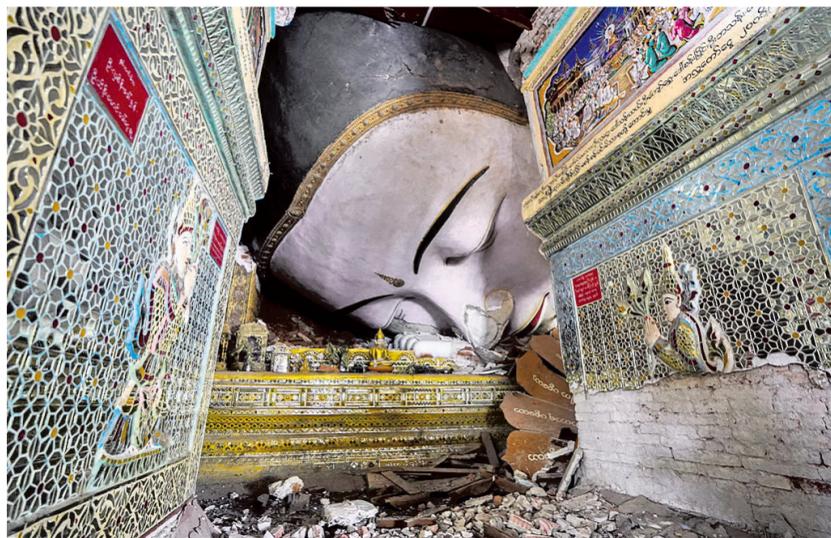
work would continue within various agencies.

The Republican president's comments came after a steady drumbeat of suggestions over the last week that Musk's time was limited. Musk also faced a setback Tuesday in Wisconsin, where voters rejected his choice for a state Supreme Court candidate despite more than \$21 million in personal donations and his campaign appearance over the weekend. There are more problems for

the billionaire entrepreneur at Tesla, his electric automaker, which saw a 13 per cent drop in sales in the first three months of the year.

The White House has not disclosed any timeline for closing down DOGE, and the government cost-cutting organization was never supposed to become a permanent fixture in Washington. But it could be reaching a conclusion faster than anticipated. DOGE was originally intended to operate until July 4, 2026.

Now there are signs that already is winding down. DOGE employees have been shifted to various federal agencies, which are supposed to take the lead on cutting costs. Government-wide layoffs are underway to accomplish some of the goals laid out by Musk and Trump.



A damaged lying Buddhist statue is pictured inside a pagoda following a strong earthquake in Mandalay, Myanmar, April 4

Myanmar confirms 180,000 Rohingya refugees eligible for return

THE ANNOUNCEMENT, FOLLOWING TALKS IN BANGKOK, OFFERED A POSSIBLE BREAKTHROUGH IN THE LONG-STALLED REPATRIATION PROCESS, ALTHOUGH MANY ROHINGYA REFUGEES SAY ALL OF THEM SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO GO HOME

REUTERS

Dhaka, April 4: Myanmar has confirmed that 180,000 Rohingya refugees living in Bangladesh since fleeing their homeland are eligible to return, the Bangladesh government's press office said Friday.

The announcement, following talks in Bangkok, offered a possible breakthrough in the long-stalled repatriation process, although many Rohingya refugees say all of them should be allowed to go home.

More than a million Rohingya have been crammed into the camps in southeastern Bangladesh, the world's largest refugee settlement. Most fled a brutal crackdown by Myanmar's military in 2017, although some



have been there for longer.

Around 70,000 Rohingya crossed into Bangladesh last year, many fleeing worsening hunger and violence in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

Friday's announcement followed a meeting in Bangkok between Khalilur Rahman, High Representative of Bangla-

desh's interim government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, and Than Swe, Myanmar's deputy prime minister and foreign minister, on the sidelines of the 6th BIMSTEC Summit.

The 180,000 names were part of a list of 800,000 Rohingya that Bangladesh submitted to Myanmar in six batches between 2018 and 2020. Myanmar has also indicated that final verification of another 70,000 refugees is pending further review of photographs and identity details.

The statement said Myanmar had pledged to expedite the verification process for the remaining 550,000 names on the original list. Myanmar's government did not immediately comment on the outcome of the meeting

in Bangkok.

The Rohingya refugees have little hope of returning to their homeland, where they continue to face systematic denial of citizenship and basic rights.

Attempts to begin repatriation in 2018 and 2019 failed as the refugees, fearing prosecution, refused to go back.

"After all these years, they are confirming only 180,000 names. This feels like nothing more than an eyewash," one Rohingya refugee, Shafiqur Rahman, told Reuters.

"Myanmar must take all of us back - not just a selected few - and they must ensure we return with full rights, dignity, and citizenship. Without that, this process means nothing to us."

Twin earthquakes strike western Nepal

KATHMANDU: Two back-to-back earthquakes struck western Nepal Friday evening, occurring just three minutes apart, officials here said. The first tremor of magnitude 5.2 was recorded at 8:07 pm local time at Jajarkot district, followed by a stronger 5.5 magnitude earthquake at 8:10 pm, according to the National Earthquake Monitoring Centre. Both quakes had their epicentre in the Panik area of Jajarkot district, approximately 525 km west of Kathmandu. The tremors were felt across neighbouring districts, including Surkhet, Dailekh, and Kaikot in western Nepal. Despite the intensity of the quakes, there have been no immediate reports of casualties or significant damage. Nepal, situated in a seismically active zone, frequently experiences earthquakes. The region continues to be on alert, with authorities monitoring for any aftershocks or potential structural damage in the affected areas.

Business



This (26 per cent reciprocal tariffs) will have a small indirect effect on India given our low trade dependence
ARVIND VIRMANI
MEMBER, NITI AAYOG

₹10, ₹500 TO HAVE RBI GUV'S SIGNATURE

The Reserve Bank of India Friday said it will shortly issue ₹10 and ₹500 denomination banknotes in Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series, bearing the signature of Governor Sanjay Malhotra. The design of these notes is similar in all respects to ₹10 and ₹500 banknotes in Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series, the central bank said in a statement



of the day quote

It's very important for India to maintain its sovereignty in technological advancement and leading from the front, we must not become a technological colony of either the West or of any other country in the world

AMITABH KANT | G20 SHERPA

India's office sector is on a solid trajectory for sustained leasing growth, driven by strategic expansions from both domestic and global occupiers

ANSHUMAN MAGAZINE | CHAIRMAN & CEO, CBRE

By boosting local production, we are not only catering to the growing demand of our Indian customers but also creating sustainable employment opportunities that contribute to the country's industrial development

ATUL TRIPATHI | MD, EBM-PAPST INDIA

From 27% to 26%: US revises tariff

The 26% duty is over and above the existing duty being faced by Indian goods in the US

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: The United States has revised downwards the import duties to be imposed on India from 27 per cent to 26 per cent, according to a White House document.

These duties will come into force from April 9.

While announcing the reciprocal tariffs against different countries Wednesday, US President Donald Trump held up a chart that showed the tariffs that countries such as India, China, the UK, and the European Union will now have to pay.

The chart indicated that India charged 52 per cent tariffs, including currency manipulation and trade barriers, and America would now charge India a discounted reciprocal tariff of 26 per cent.

Earlier, the White House documents showed a 27 per cent duty on India.

However, as per the latest updates, it has been revised downwards to 26 per cent.

When asked, industry experts said one per cent would not have much of an impact.

From 2021-22 to 2023-24, the US was India's largest trading partner. The US accounts for about 18 per cent of India's total goods exports, 6.22 per cent in imports, and 10.73 per cent in bilateral trade.

With America, India had a trade surplus (the difference between imports and exports) of \$35.32 billion in goods in 2023-24. This was \$27.7 billion in 2022-23, \$32.85 billion in 2021-22, \$22.73 billion in 2020-21, and \$17.26 billion in 2019-20.



In 2024, India's main exports to the US included drug formulations and biologicals (\$8.1 billion), telecom instruments (\$6.5 billion), precious and semi-precious stones (\$5.3 billion), petroleum products (\$4.1 billion), gold and other precious metal jewellery (\$3.2 billion), ready-made garments of cotton, including accessories (\$2.8 billion), and products of iron and steel (\$2.7 billion).

Imports included crude oil (\$4.5 billion), petroleum products (\$3.6 billion), coal, coke (\$3.4 billion), cut and polished diamonds (\$2.6 billion), electric machinery (\$1.4 billion), aircraft, spacecraft and parts (\$1.3 billion), and gold (\$1.3 billion).

India was among about 60 other countries against which the US has announced these high taxes to cut their trade deficit and boost manufacturing. The US has claimed that American goods face 52 per cent duty in the Indian market.

On Thursday morning, government officials had also confirmed that the additional duty was 27 per cent.

Besides India, the duty has been revised by 100 basis points for over a dozen other countries including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Cameroon, Falkland Island, Malawi and Myanmar.

Biraja Rout: Odia visionary who built India's homegrown burger empire

From a modest side hustle to building 'Biggies Burger' brand, the story of Biraja Rout, an entrepreneurial trailblazer, is more than just a business success; it's about recognising an opportunity where none seemed to exist, taking calculated risks, and relentlessly pursuing a dream



In a country where fast food giants like McDonald's, Domino's and KFC dominate, one homegrown brand—Biggies Burger—is making waves in the Indian burger scene. Behind its phenomenal success is an Odia entrepreneur, Biraja Rout, who turned his passion into a thriving business.

Hailing from Keonjhar, Rout pursued his education at the Silicon Institute of Technology, Bhubaneswar. Like many young professionals, he followed the conventional path, landing a job at Infosys in Bangalore. It was there, at the age of 21, that he had his first-ever burger—an experience that would unknowingly shape his future.

He noticed a glaring gap in the Indian food industry. While international fast-food chains flourished, there was no Indian brand specialising in gourmet, grilled burgers. This sparked an idea: why not create a desi alternative that could offer a superior, home-grown burger experience?

FROM A SMALL KIOSK TO A NATIONAL CHAIN

With a modest investment of ₹20,000, Rout set up a small kiosk near Infosys Bangalore, selling burgers on weekends in 2011. What started as a side hustle soon turned into a full-fledged venture with revenues



hitting hundreds of crores.

By 2016, he took the bold step of quitting his IT job to manage Biggies Burger full-time. The brand rapidly gained traction, standing out for its commitment to quality, authenticity, and grilled burgers—a healthier alternative to the fried options dominating the market. Today, Biggies Burger boasts of over 150 outlets across 16 states, making it India's largest homegrown burger chain.

A SMART BUSINESS MODEL

Rout's success is not just about great burgers—it's about a smart business strategy.

Franchising Model: Biggies Burger follows an aggressive franchise expansion strategy, welcoming investors from diverse backgrounds, including government officials, army veterans, and IT professionals.

Quality First: Unlike many

fast-food brands, Biggies Burger focuses on authentic grilled burgers, ensuring high-quality ingredients and better nutritional value.

Targeting Tier II & III Cities:

While many food brands focus on metros, Biraja is expanding into smaller cities where demand for premium yet affordable fast food is growing. They aim to open 25 new stores every quarter.



BEYOND BURGERS

Not one to stop with just burgers, Rout has also launched Beamer Brands, a parent company managing multiple food and beverage ventures like Biggies Burger and Bigguys Wings & Burgers. This move showcases his long-term vision—to build an ecosystem of diverse food brands catering to different customer segments. While Biggies Burger continues to expand, Rout is already eyeing

the next phase of growth. His ambition is to make Biggies Burger a global brand, taking an Indian-origin burger chain beyond the country's borders.

ODIA ENTREPRENEUR MAKING INDIA PROUD

Rout's journey—from Bhubaneswar to Bangalore, from an IT employee to a food industry disruptor—is nothing short of inspiring. His story is a testament to the power of vision, perseverance, and innovation.

As he continues to grow his empire, his success serves as motivation for aspiring entrepreneurs across Odisha and India—proving that with the right idea and determination, anything is possible.

Biggies Burger is not just about great food; it's about the dream of an Odia entrepreneur who dared to challenge the giants—and came out victorious.



TRUMP TARIFFS TRIGGER TRADE WAR FEARS

Sensex, Nifty join global selloff

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 4: Equity benchmarks Sensex Friday slumped over 900 points to crash below the 76,000 level due to an across-the-board sell-off, tracking weak global markets amid growing global trade war fears.

Besides, heavy selling in market heavyweights Reliance Industries, Larsen & Toubro and Infosys and a sharp correction in global crude prices, indicating recessionary fears, added to the gloom, analysts said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 930.67 points or 1.22 per cent to settle at 75,364.69. During the day, it plummeted 1,054.81 points or 1.38 per cent to hit an intraday low of 75,240.55.

The broader NSE Nifty declined 345.65 points or 1.49 per cent to close at 22,904.45. In the session, the 50-share benchmark gauge 382.2 points or 1.64 per cent to 22,867.90.



"The recent implementation of higher-than-anticipated US tariffs has had a significant impact on global markets, triggering a bearish trend as investors assess the broader implications. The likelihood of retaliatory measures against the US has further heightened uncertainty. US bond yields and oil prices are trending downward, reflecting concerns over potential economic slowdown and increased recessionary risks," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments, said.

As much as 2,820 stocks de-

clined, 1,126 advanced and 130 remained unchanged on the BSE.

Tata Steel was the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, sliding 8.59 per cent, followed by Tata Motors, Larsen & Toubro, Adani Ports, IndusInd Bank, Tech Mahindra, Reliance Industries, Sun Pharmaceutical, HCL Technologies, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, and NTPC, were the major laggards.

On the other hand, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank, Nestle India, ICICI Bank, ITC, Asian

Investors' wealth dropped by ₹10L-cr Friday as the BSE Sensex slumped over 900 points to crash below the 76,000 level

During the week, the BSE Sensex tanked 2,050.23 points or 2.64%, while the NSE Nifty declined 614.8 points or 2.61%

Paints and Axis Bank were among the gainers.

In Asian markets, Tokyo and Seoul ended lower. Hong Kong and Shanghai stock markets remained closed for the holidays.

European markets were trading lower in the mid-session deals. US markets closed lower in overnight deals Thursday, witnessing their biggest drop since 2020.

Global oil benchmark Brent Crude slipped 3.26 per cent to \$67.85 a barrel.

Meanwhile, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth ₹2,806 crore Thursday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) purchased shares worth ₹221.47 crore on a net basis.

SLOWDOWN IN OUTPUT, SALES

Services sector growth moderates in March

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: India's services sector activity eased slightly in March, weighed down by a marginal slowdown in sales amid softer demand conditions and easing inflationary pressures, a monthly survey said Friday.

The seasonally adjusted HS-BC India Services PMI Business Activity Index fell from February's reading of 59.0 to 58.5 in March, but remained above its long-run average of 54.2.

In the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"India recorded a 58.5 services PMI in March 2025, softening slightly from the month prior. Domestic and international demand remained fairly buoyant, despite being sequentially a tick lower than the month before," Pranjul Bhandari, Chief



India Economist at HSBC, said. According to survey participants, output was supported by buoyant underlying demand and ongoing increases in new business. However, sales rose at a softer pace than in February, they added.

The slowdown in the growth of total new business reflected a weaker increase in international sales. New orders from abroad rose at the softest pace in 15 months. On the price front, output charge inflation slowed to a three-and-a-half-year low in March. Only 1 per cent of survey participants reported higher average fees than in February, with the remaining companies signalling no change.

Ultraviolette showcases product portfolio in City

Bhubaneswar: Ultraviolette, makers of the 'Fastest Indian Motorcycle', proudly announced the debut of its cutting-edge product range in Bhubaneswar today. With a strong presence across thirteen cities, this showcase marks yet another milestone in Ultraviolette's remarkable journey and underscores its dedication to serving customers across India. Odisha will now be able to experience Ultraviolette's technologically advanced and performance-driven two-wheelers that have long captivated customers across the country. As part of its commitment to enhancing customer service, Ultraviolette is also set to establish its state-of-the-art experience center in Bhubaneswar this year. The 3S Experience Centre will offer comprehensive ownership services, ensuring an unparalleled experience for customers in Bhubaneswar and the surrounding regions in Odisha. Narayan Subramaniam, CEO and co-founder of Ultraviolette stated, "Showcasing our entire product portfolio in Bhubaneswar is a proud milestone for Ultraviolette, reiterating our commitment to delivering exceptional mobility solutions across India, through cutting-edge design, performance, and technology. This step reflects our vision of being present across markets, fulfilling both local and national aspirations. We will bring our innovative products and seamless customer experience to Bhubaneswar in the coming months and cater to the neighbouring regions in Odisha, marking a significant leap in our journey across India."



Goyal's critique of startups sparks debate

REUTERS

Mumbai, April 4: India's commerce minister said his country's startups needed to emulate China by focusing on high-end tech and not quick grocery deliveries or fancy ice cream - harsh criticism that had entrepreneurs quickly pointing out the government's shortcomings.

Piyush Goyal told a startup event in New Delhi late Thursday that too many were offering food delivery so that "the rich can get their meals without moving out of their house" and were "turning unemployed youth into cheap labour."

"Are we going to be happy being delivery boys and girls?"



(Making) fancy ice cream and cookies ... is that the destiny of India?" he said, showing a

The commerce minister triggers uproar after telling startups to create tech like China, not ice cream

Indian startups raised \$11.3 billion in venture capital funding in 2024, up 43% from last year

slide titled "India vs. China. The Startup Reality Check".

He didn't name companies but his speech was seen as an apparent attack on quick commerce businesses like Zomato, Swiggy and Zepto that deliver food and groceries in as little as 10 minutes.

"What do the Chinese startups do? Work on developing electric mobility, battery technology ... look at what the other

side is doing - robotics, automation, machine learning, preparing themselves for 3D manufacturing," Goyal said.

His comments prompted hundreds of posts on social media from startup founders and venture capitalists, taking the government to the task for failing to create high-quality infrastructure and jobs and not doing enough to support entrepreneurs. "The government (needs) to actively support the creation of these local champions, not pull down the teams," Zepto co-founder Aadit Palicha retorted on X.

"Minister @PiyushGoyal should not belittle our startups but ask himself what has he done as our Minister to help

deep tech start ups grow in India?," Mohandas Pai, chairman at venture fund Aarin Capital, wrote on X.

Shark Tank India judge and founder of Shaadi.com Anupam Mittal, in a post on X, said that he was left mighty impressed by a few deep-tech companies that he has met.

"In the last few months, I have met a few deep-tech companies that have absolutely blown me away. From AI and space tech to material science, Indian entrepreneurs are ready to take on the world. But capital and the ecosystem for growth and commercialisation are severely lacking," he said. Founders can do most things but not everything, Mittal wrote.

LSG see first home win

Suryakumar's half-century, Hardik's maiden five-for in vain as LSG bowlers hold nerve to edge MI by 12 runs



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, April 4: Led by Digvesh Rathi, Shardul Thakur and Avesh Khan taking a wicket each, the Lucknow Super Giants bowlers held their nerve to register their first home win of IPL 2025 after edging Mumbai Indians by 12 runs at the BRSABV Ekana Cricket Stadium Friday.

When openers Mitchell Marsh and Aiden Markram smashed fifties while David Miller applied finishing touches with a late cameo as the trio carried LSG to 203/8, it always gave the look of an uphill chase for MI. Suryakumar Yadav and Naman Dhir hit 67 and 46 respectively to keep MI in the hunt.

But with Suryakumar falling in the 17th over and Tilak Varma enduring a horror time with the bat, it meant that LSG's bowlers were able to keep things under control, especially sticking to the wide-ball plan in the death overs, to help the

side get their sixth win over a formidable MI outfit in the IPL. LSG's defence began on a bright note as Akash Deep struck on his fourth ball by having Will Jacks pulling straight to deep backward square leg for five. Thakur was next to strike by dismissing Ryan Rickleton in the same fashion for 10.

Dhir injected some momentum through ruthless counter-attack against Akash - pulling for his four and two sixes, before glancing to get another boundary in a 21-run fourth over, as MI eventually ended power-play at 64/2. The duo took a boundary each off both Akash and Ravi Bishnoi, before Rathi castled Dhir for 46 right after the first time out ended.

Suryakumar continued to sizzle by sweeping Bishnoi for four, before driving Avesh for back-to-back boundaries and later rolled his wrists to hit Thakur through wide of deep cover for another four. Despite Varma struggling, Suryakumar

brought up his fifty in 31 balls with a delightful late cut off Bishnoi past third man for four. But MI were given a big blow when Suryakumar moved across to scoop, but lost his balance and was caught by backward square leg off Avesh for 67. Tilak and Hardik Pandya, though, hit a four each off Avesh, before the latter swept Rathi for another boundary and bring equation down to 29 runs off 12 balls.

With Thakur giving away five singles in the penultimate over by nailing his half-volleys and low full tosses, an out of sorts Varma was retired out and Mitchell Santner came in, as the equation became 22 runs needed off the final over.

With a slow over-rate penalty meaning LSG could keep only four fielders outside 30-yard circle, Pandya lofted Avesh over deep extra cover for six. But he couldn't get a boundary in the rest of the final over as LSG emerged victorious.

SCORECARD

Lucknow Super Giants: Mitchell Marsh c & b Puthur 60, Aiden Markram c Bawa b Pandya 53, Nicholas Pooran c Chahar b Pandya 12, Rishabh Pant c sub (Bosch) b Pandya 2, Ayush Badoni c Rickleton b Ashwani Kumar 30, David Miller c Naman Dhir b Pandya 27, Abdul Samad c Naman Dhir b Boult 4, Shardul Thakur not out 5, Akash Deep c Santner b Pandya 0, Avesh Khan not out 2. **Extras:** (W-8) 8; **Total:** (For 8 wickets, 20 overs) 203; **Fall of wickets:** 1-76, 2-91, 3-107, 4-158, 5-173, 6-182, 7-200, 8-200; **Bowling:** Trent Boult 3-0-28-1, Deepak Chahar 2-0-23-0, Ashwani Kumar 3-0-39-1, Mitchell Santner 4-0-46-0, Vignesh Puthur 4-0-31-1, Hardik Pandya 4-0-36-5.

Mumbai Indians: Will Jacks c Ravi Bishnoi b Akash Deep 5, Ryan Rickleton c Ravi Bishnoi b Thakur 10, Naman Dhir b Rathi 46, Suryakumar Yadav c Abdul Samad b Avesh Khan 67, Tilak Varma retired out 25, Hardik Pandya not out 28, Mitchell Santner not out 2. **Extras:** (LB-4, W-4) 8; **Total:** (For 5 wickets, 20 overs) 191; **Fall of wickets:** 1-11, 2-17, 3-86, 4-152, 5-180; **Bowling:** Shardul Thakur 4-0-40-1, Akash Deep 4-0-46-1, Avesh Khan 4-0-40-1, Digvesh Rathi 4-0-21-1, Ravi Bishnoi 4-0-40-0.

CSK vs DC: Spotlight on spinners

Kuldeep, Noor to take centre stage as it will be an afternoon game in sapping Chennai heat and the kind of tracks on offer will certainly make it a difficult match

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 4: Noor Ahmed's guile will meet its perfect match in Kuldeep Yadav's artistry as two wrist spinners will drive the narrative in a match where Chennai Super Kings could be led by MS Dhoni in place of injured Ruturaj Gaikwad against Delhi Capitals here Saturday.

Gaikwad suffered a blow on his unprotected elbow against Rajasthan Royals in Guwahati last Sunday and the CSK skipper remains doubtful for the contest against the visitors.

Kuldeep with an economy rate of 5.25 is the best in terms of quality among the four spinners expected to be in action during the game. Afghanistan spinner Noor has so far got nine wickets at an equally impressive economy rate of 6.83 and he can certainly prove to be a handful during the middle overs with balls expected to grip the surface.

It will be an engaging contest as both wrist spinners are very different in nature. While Noor bowls at a quicker pace and mostly takes the ball away from the right handers, wily customer Kuldeep has perfected the art of using the angles of the crease and varying the pace of his deliveries.

In case of Noor, the trajectory is flatter while Kuldeep gives the ball more air while also changing his arm speed as per requirement.

In terms of batting, DC will certainly hold a slight advantage with the middle-order having a bit more firepower this year with presence of Ashutosh Sharma, Vipraj Nigam and the seasoned KL Rahul, who is expected to play with lot more freedom given that there are no captaincy burden on him in his



Table toppers PBKS look to maintain dominance vs RR

Mullanpur, April 4: Table toppers Punjab Kings will be looking to maintain their winning momentum when they host struggling Rajasthan Royals in match 18 of the IPL 2025 Saturday evening. With two wins already under their belt, PBKS will be determined to add another victory to their tally to maintain their position on top, while RR, who have just one win in three games, will be aiming for a turnaround to their campaign. PBKS are brimming with confidence after launching their campaign with two back-to-back wins under the leadership of Shreyas Iyer, who has smashed consecutive half-centuries to score 149 runs in two games at a strike rate of over 200. He smashed 13 sixes in the tournament so far, trailing Lucknow Super Giants' batter Nicholas Pooran (15) in the most sixes list. Besides skipper Iyer, PBKS has more firepower in their batting unit in the form of Shashank Singh, Prabhsimran Singh and young Priyansh Arya, who further boost their batting lineup from top to bottom. In their bowling unit, led by Aeshdeep Singh, Vijaykumar Vyshak is one to watch out for in the game RaR, after the 28-year-old rookie made an instant impact in PBKS' season-opening win against Gujarat Titans, delivering game-changing performances coming in as an impact sub that caught everyone's attention. On the other hand, struggling RR will be boosted by the return of Sanju Samson as the skipper and full-time wicketkeeper after getting the clearance from NCA following a surgery on his right index finger after sustaining an injury during India's T20I series against England in February.



new franchise. For CSK, the diminishing returns of Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who is no more the finisher he was, is an issue. Save Shivam Dube, CSK do not have players who can belt bowlers at a strike-rate between 180 to 200 during the back-10 if they are chasing a score of 180 plus. O opener Rahul Tripathi, who has been a sought-after utility-man for various teams at the top of the order, hasn't exactly looked comfortable against top quality pace bowling in the matches so far. Tripathi has failed to justify Dhoni's move to play him as an opener and drop Ruturaj Gaikwad one slot below despite regular skipper's proven record at the start of the innings. That CSK isn't convinced with Tripathi is evident after the team management called up 17-year-old Mumbai opener Ayush Mahatre, who has already played for India U-19 and scored first-class centuries in the last edition of Ranji Trophy.

Singh bags WC bronze in 50m rifle 3-positions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 4: Asian Games medallist shooter Chain Singh earned India its first medal in the ISSF World Cup here, winning a bronze in the men's 50m rifle 3-positions event in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Hungarian Istvan Peni won gold (461.0), his seventh ISSF top-podium finish, while China's Tian Jiaming (458.8) bagged the silver, as Chain notched up 443.7 points to settle for bronze.

Earlier, two-time Olympian Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, Niraj Kumar and Rio Olympian Chain had qualified for the final.

Aishwary qualified second ahead of the experienced Chain in third. Both shot identical scores of 589, with Chain giving up a spot, on accuracy. Niraj was fifth with 587.

World Boxing Cup: Hitesh first Indian to reach final

The tactically brilliant pugilist adopted a cautious approach at the start against Olympian Traore but was always on the lookout for the counterattack

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 4: National champion Hitesh displayed exceptional tactical awareness to pack off France's Makan Traore 5:0 in the 70kg bout to become the first Indian boxer to reach the final in the World Boxing Cup Brazil 2025 at Foz Do Iguaçu Thursday.

The Indian pugilist adopted a cautious approach at the start against Olympian Traore but was always on the lookout for the counterattack.

The strategy allowed Hitesh to



control the pace of the bout and though he received a penalty in the third and final round, the end result was never in doubt. He will now face Odel Kamara of England in the summit clash. Among the other Indians in fray, Jadumani Singh Mandengbam took the fight to former Asian U-22 champion Asilbek Jalilov of Uzbekistan but ended on the wrong side of a 2:3 split verdict in the 50kg semifinals.

Vishal went down 0:5 against Turabek Khabibullaev of Uzbekistan in the 90kg semifinal

while Sachin lost to Poland's Pawel Brach in 60kg bout. Earlier, Manish Rathore, Hitesh and Abhinash Jamwal showcased their title ambitions with commanding victories in the quarterfinals in their respective weight categories Wednesday.

Jamwal tamed Germany's Dennis Bril with a unanimous decision in the 65kg category while Hitesh defeated Italy's Gabriele Guidi Rontani by an identical scoreline in the 70kg category.

In the 55kg category, Manish Rathore was up against Australia's Paris Olympian Yusuf Chothia and the Indian national champion proved that he was well prepared for whatever his opponent threw at him.

Both the boxers kept things tight in all three rounds with Rathore emerging victorious as three judges ruled in his favour while two gave equal points to both.

SENIOR NATIONAL KHO KHO C'SHIP

Maharashtra eves beat Odisha to take crown

In the final rankings in women's category, Odisha is in second place and AAI is in third

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Puri, April 4: The 57th Senior National Kho Kho Championship concluded in Puri today with Maharashtra clinching the Women's Championship title after a nail-biting encounter against host Odisha. Railways emerged victorious in the Men's category, defeating defending champions Maharashtra in an electrifying contest.

In the women's final, Maharashtra edged past Odisha 25-21 in a high-octane contest. Odisha won the toss and chose to defend first, but Maharashtra launched a strong attack, restricting the hosts to just 2 dream run points. When it was Maharashtra's turn to defend, they fielded a solid trio comprising captain Ashwini Shinde, Priyanka Ingle, and Sandhya Survase. Ashwini Shinde's performance stood out as she held her ground impressively until the final 2 minutes and 50 seconds of the first inning.

At the end of the first inning, the scores were tied at 10-10, raising the stakes for the second half. In the second inning, Odisha's defenders struggled to resist Maharashtra's aggressive gameplay, with six defenders being ousted in quick succession.

The Rani Laxmibai Award for Player of the Tournament went to Maharashtra's Tanvi Bhosale. In the men's section, Maharashtra's Laxman Gawas was awarded Best Defender, Railways' Rahul Mandal was named Best Attacker, and the Eklavya Award for Player of the Tournament was presented to Jagannath Das of Railways.

In the final rankings in the women's category, Odisha is in second place and AAI is in third. Delhi stood in joint third place, followed by Kolhapur (5th), Gujarat (6th), Karnataka (7th), and Andhra Pradesh (8th). In the men's category, Maharashtra finished as runner-up. Kolhapur secured the bronze (3rd place), Odisha (joint third place), Kerala (5th), West Bengal (6th), Andhra Pradesh (7th), and Karnataka (8th).



Bruyne to bid farewell to Manchester City

The 33-year-old Belgium playmaker to leave Manchester City at the end of the season after 10 years at the club

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, April 4: Kevin De Bruyne says he will leave Manchester City - confirming these are his "final months" with the Premier League champion.

The 33-year-old Belgium playmaker, who is out of contract this summer, announced the news in an emotional post on his social media channels Friday.

"Nothing about this is easy to write, but as football players, we all know this day eventually comes. That day is here," he wrote.

De Bruyne joined City from Wolfsburg for around \$71 million in 2015 and has gone on to win every major honor with the club, including six Premier League titles and the Champions League.

In all he has won 14 major trophies at City and established



This city. This club. These people... gave me EVERYTHING. I had no choice but to give EVERYTHING back! And guess what - we won EVERYTHING. Whether we like it or not, it's time to say goodbye

himself as one of the all-time Premier League greats.

"This city. This club. These people... gave me EVERYTHING. I had no choice but to

De Bruyne did not say if he would take part in the Club World Cup, which runs through June and July in the United States.

There was also no mention in the post about where he wanted to play next.

With 118 assists in the Premier League, De Bruyne is second behind Manchester United great Ryan Giggs, who provided 162, on the all-time list.

He reached that total in 280 appearances, as opposed to 630 for Giggs.

While De Bruyne will go down as one of the finest players to play for City, he could have instead spent the bulk of his career at Chelsea after joining club from Belgian team Genk in 2012. But he grew frustrated after making only two league starts and eventually moved to Wolfsburg in Germany in 2014. There he revitalized his ca-

Masterful decade

De Bruyne was named Premier League player of the season in 2019-20 and 2021-22.

The number of major trophies De Bruyne has helped City win over the past decade. The haul: six Premier League titles (2018, 19 and 2021-24); the Champions League (2023); the FA Cup twice (2019 and '23); five English League Cup titles; the 2023 UEFA Super Cup; and the 2023 FIFA Club World Cup.

The number of Premier League goals the midfielder has scored in 280 appearances. He scored 15 league goals in the 2021-22 season.

The Belgium playmaker is second all-time in the Premier League with 118 assists. Ryan Giggs tops the list with 162. Only five players have 100 or more assists. Stats provider Opta said: "Of players to make 50+ appearances in the Premier League, Kevin De Bruyne has the best minutes-per-assist ratio in the competition's history (177)."

reer and convinced City to make him the club's record signing.