



Painful past

Actor Shrutti Haasan says she was humbled by life at a young age following the separation of her parents

LEISURE | P2



Uncertainty over Kursk

Russia says last Ukrainian troops have been expelled from Kursk region, Kyiv denies assertion

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Made in India iPhones

Apple aims to make most of its iPhones sold in the United States at factories in India by the end of 2026

BUSINESS | P11



Bad start for eves

Indian women's hockey team fights valiantly before losing 3-5 to a clinical Australia 'A' in its opening match of tour Down Under

SPORTS | P12



ADIEU PEOPLE'S POPE: The coffin of Pope Francis is carried in St. Peter's Square. World dignitaries and Catholic faithful attended the funeral in Vatican City Saturday (Report P10)

Massive explosion at Iranian port kills 5, injures over 700

Muscat, April 26: A massive explosion and fire rocked a port Saturday in southern Iran purportedly linked to a shipment of a chemical ingredient used to make missile propellant, killing five people and injuring more than 700 others. Mehrdad Hasanzadeh, a provincial disaster management official, gave the updated casualty figure in an interview on state television.

The blast at the Shahid Rajaei port happened as Iran and the United States met Saturday in Oman for the third round of negotiations over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear programme.

While no one in Iran outright suggested that the explosion came from an attack, even Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi acknowledged that "our security services are on high alert given past instances of attempted sabotage and assassination operations designed to provoke a legitimate response."

For hours, authorities in Iran offered no clear explanation for what caused the blast at the port which is just outside of Bandar Abbas.

ROW OVER BJD MP'S REMARKS

Bhubaneswar: Opposition BJD Rajya Sabha MP Sulata Deo faced backlash Saturday after making contentious remarks about the Pahalgam attack that claimed 26 lives, including a tourist from Odisha. Speaking to television journalists, Deo remarked that it would have been impossible for the attackers to determine the religion of each victim before opening fire. "It may be my speculation, but it is impossible to enquire the religion of each tourist before killing them," she said. Her remarks drew sharp criticism from the BJP, with state Law Minister Prithviraj Harichand condemning those as 'insensitive.'

Pak back to old tricks

Following days of aggressive posturing and punitive diplomatic actions by India and Pakistan in the aftermath of April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, Islamabad Saturday offered to join any 'neutral and transparent' probe into the carnage. Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif said that his country is open to taking part in a 'credible' investigation. Sharif's statement came a day after Pakistani Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, in an interview with New York Times, said that Pakistan was 'ready to cooperate' with 'any investigation which is conducted by international inspectors'. New Delhi is yet to respond to Sharif's offer, which is perceived as yet another ploy to internationalise the Kashmir issue. Amid Sharif's overtures, Pak army chief General Asim Munir Saturday reiterated the 'two-nation theory', stating that Muslims and Hindus are two different nations. Meanwhile, US president Donald Trump maintained distance from the tension between the two nuclear-powered states, asserting that India and Pakistan will figure out themselves 'one way or the other'. Like the US, China too has so far maintained a neutral posture over the Indo-Pak tension, leaving India to fend for itself

HOUSES RAZED, HUNDREDS DETAINED IN KASHMIR

Srinagar: Authorities in Kashmir have launched a massive crackdown on terrorists and their sympathisers in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, razing homes of the ultras, raiding their safe havens and detaining hundreds of overground workers for questioning, officials said Saturday. Houses of six terrorists or their associates have been demolished in the past 48 hours with officials saying similar action will be taken against others involved in terror activities. Raids were carried out at more than 60 places Saturday in Srinagar 'to dismantle the terrorist ecosystem', a J-K Police spokesman said.

Minister Mohsin Naqvi in a press conference in Lahore said, "If neutral people of any third country carry out a probe into this incident, we are ready to cooperate with them."

Sharif said Muhammad Ali Jinnah had called Kashmir a jugular vein of Pakistan. He said the 'globally recognised dispute' remained unresolved despite UN resolutions.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump said there has always been tensions between India and Pakistan and the two countries will figure it out between themselves 'one way or the other'.

"I am very close to India and I'm very close to Pakistan, as you know. And they've had that fight for 1,000 years in

Minor found dead; relative arrested for rape, murder

Berhampur, April 26: Police Saturday recovered the body of a four-year-old girl from an under-construction Anganwadi centre at a village in Ganjam district, an officer said.

The girl was missing since Friday evening when a festival was going on in the village. Her body was recovered from under Pattapur police station limits in the district.

Family members suspected that the girl might have been raped and killed by miscreants. Senior police officers, including SP (Ganjam) Subhendu Kumar Patra visited the spot. A forensic team and dog squad were also engaged to assist in the investigation.

The body was sent to MKCG Medical College and Hospital here for post-mortem examination. The exact cause of the death would be ascertained only after getting the autopsy report, said police.

"We are investigating from all angles and interrogating some of the people in the village suspecting their involvement in the gruesome incident," said the SP.

However, later in the evening, the police arrested a

27-year-old man on the charge of rape and murder of the girl. The accused is a distant relative of the deceased, said the SP.

The accused lured the girl by offering chocolate and a visit to the festival. He took her to an isolated place and attempted to rape her. He killed her by throttling her and then dumped the body. He was under the influence of liquor, police said.

The girl along with her mother had gone to her paternal uncle's house for the festival. She went missing while playing in the verandah of the house Friday evening. A missing complaint was lodged at the Pattapur police station.

The villagers found her body in the under-construction house of the Anganwadi centre and informed the police. A police team immediately rushed to the spot and recovered the body.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Article 370, surgical strikes, notebandi, fiery speeches... we've done it all. What else can be done to end terrorism?

India, China to resume Kailash Mansarovar Yatra from June

New Delhi, April 26: After a gap of nearly five years, India and China will resume the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra from June -- a move being seen as an attempt to normalise their relationship that was severely hit by the eastern Ladakh border standoff.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Saturday said the Yatra is set to take place from June to August via two routes -- Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand and Nathu La in Sikkim.

The pilgrimage to Mount Kailash and Mansarovar Lake in China's Tibet Autonomous Region holds religious significance to Hindus as well as Jains and Buddhists.

"Kailash Manasarovar Ya-

113mn-yr-old Brazilian fossil preserves oldest known ant

Brasilia, April 26: Scientists have identified the fossilised remains of the oldest-known ant - a winged insect with fearsome scythe-like jaws that lived about 113 million years ago during the age of dinosaurs and was preserved in limestone unearthed in northeastern Brazil.

The species, called Vulcanidris cratensis, is part of a lineage called hell ants - named for their demonic-looking jaws - that prospered in a wide geographical range during the Cretaceous Period but have no descendants alive today. A previously discovered Cretaceous hell ant was named Haidomyrmex in honor of Hades, the ancient Greek god of the underworld.



A medium-sized ant about a half-inch (1.35 cm) long, Vulcanidris possessed highly specialised jaws that would have enabled it to pin down or impale prey. Like some ants alive today, it had wings and appears to have been a capable flier. It also had a well-developed stinger like a wasp.

"It would probably be confused with a wasp by an untrained eye," said entomologist Anderson Lepeco of the Museum of Zoology of the University of São Paulo, lead author of the study published this week in the journal Current Biology, opens new tab.

"They probably used their mandibles (mouthparts) to handle their prey in a specific way," Lepeco said.

Its mandibles moved up and down and not side to side, as they do in today's ants.

"Currently, many odd mandible shapes can be found in ants, but they usually articulate horizontally," Lepeco said.

This ant is roughly 13 million years older than the previous oldest-known ants, specimens found in France and Myanmar that were preserved in amber, which is fossilized tree sap.

The Vulcanidris anatomy is remarkably well preserved in the limestone, which was excavated decades ago in the Crato geological formation in the Brazilian state of Ceará, probably in the 1980s or 1990s, according to Lepeco. It was held in a private collection before being donated to the São Paulo museum about five years ago.

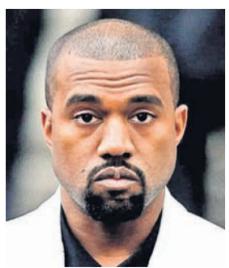
Ants are believed to have evolved from a form of wasp. Their closest living relatives are wasps and bees.

Vulcanidris inhabited an ecosystem teeming with life. Fossils from the region show that Vulcanidris lived alongside other insects, spiders, millipedes, centipedes, various crustaceans, turtles, crocodilians, flying reptiles called pterosaurs, birds and dinosaurs including the feathered meat-eater Ubirajara. The ant's predators may have included frogs, birds, spiders and larger insects.

Ants have colonized almost everywhere on Earth, and research published in 2022 estimated that their total population is 20 quadrillion globally. That dwarfs the human population of about 8 billion.

"They are one of the most abundant groups in most environments on Earth," Lepeco said.

leisure



KANYE WEST'S SHOCKING PARIS HILTON CONFESION

Kanye West has claimed he wishes he had children with Paris Hilton rather than his ex-wife Kim Kardashian. The controversial rapper made the shock confession during a recent livestream, where he insisted he should have had children with his ex-wife Kim's former boss, socialite Paris Hilton, rather than the reality TV star.

DREW BARRYMORE REVEALS SECRET TO AGING GRACEFULLY

Hollywood star Drew Barrymore has revealed the secret to 'ageing gracefully' and shared that she doesn't intend to have any cosmetic surgery. In a behind-the-scenes moment on *The Drew Barrymore Show*, the actress, who celebrated her 50th birthday recently, was asked to reveal her secret to 'ageing gracefully'.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
Old, fond memories will define your mood today, which will show up in the manner in which you deal with work, where your mellow side will be visible to others. You are also circumspect with money and tend towards saving it. Ganesha says people dealing in cash and money-lenders will benefit.

TAURUS
Ganesha urges you to be prepared for setbacks and disappointments today. Your efforts may end in being a waste of precious time and energy. The results you get are likely to be far below your expectations. Falling short of your target is likely to weigh you down with stress and anxiety. You can, however, ease and reduce your frustration by reexamining your expectations and lowering them down to a comfortable, achievable level.

GEMINI
You will be in a state of heightened sensitivity today. Therefore you need to curb down on your emotions. You will be able to successfully express your feelings to someone, and your feelings will play a vital part in your life, says Ganesha.

CANCER
Ganesha suggests you not to be sentimental or hasty. Try to handle things deftly in stead of dodging bad episodes or turning a blind eye to them. You will give priority to domestic and private life in stead of career or business aspects.

LEO
Guides help other people choose the right path in life and to select the correct alternatives. It is a good day for those who are in the teaching or coaching professions. It is also a progressive day for those working in MNC's. Ganesha's blessings are with you.

VIRGO
Financial affairs will face a major obstruction today. Ganesha advises you to allow your mind to prevail over your heart. Take extraordinary care of your precious personal possessions, apart from your legal duties and new projects keeping in view their long-term effect on your mind.

LIBRA
It's a day of reaching new heights when it comes to finances. The cosmos favours moneylenders and stock marketeers. Call it the special touch that you give to all transactions monetary, but today you have the uncanny knack of raking in the moolah from all sources. Sit back and see your tenacity multiply your fortunes, says Ganesha.

SCORPIO
Today, there are chances that you would be disturbed by continuous flow of negative thoughts in your mind. Try to divert your mind and look for positive people or friends who would cheer you up. Understanding needy people and living up to their expectations would bring some respite to your disrupted mind, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
Lady luck is all smiles for you today, predicts Ganesha. Suddenly, you feel like multi-tasking and becoming a jack of all. This is likely to keep you busy, almost throughout the day. If need be, your colleagues and peers will lend a helping hand.

CAPRICORN
The journey from defeat to success is driven by optimism. You will be very optimistic today – about your work, future and everything that can lead you to success, says Ganesha. You will also be very careful while dealing with day-to-day work, and will capitalise on every opportunity that can get you a step closer to your goals. Determination and good luck is all you need to realise your dreams; you will have both today.

AQUARIUS
Things barely move today. But just like the proverbial tortoise, you seem to be winning the race, for many opportunities will come your way. There won't be any cash crunch, so you needn't lose sleep over that, says Ganesha.

PISCES
The focus will be on children today, says Ganesha. While they will be the cause of an unfair share of your headache, you will be surprised at their ability to step up to the occasion, with just a little amount of coaching.

Shruti: Never felt 'entitled'

Chennai: Actor Shruti Haasan opened up about the years when she had to witness the separation of her parents, Kamal Haasan and Sarika. In an interview with a film magazine, Shruti shared that she never felt 'entitled' as someone coming from a family of actors, because she was 'humbled' at a young age herself. Her parents separated and divorced in 2004.

During the interview, when Shruti was asked whether she ever felt 'privileged and entitled' as someone growing up, she said, "No, because a lot of people don't know what happened to me prior to me joining the film industry. I was humbled by life with my parents' separation. We were not living in the big mansion, and when my mom decided

to leave, we moved from Chennai to Mumbai. It wasn't comfortable. I am glad for those lessons because I learnt that you can go from Mercedes to local train... like really quick in life. Both are a journey that you can learn from."

She went on to add, "When I joined the movies, by then I had reconnected with Appa, and I went to study music abroad. But I always had this sense of I want my own space and I want to earn my own money and I want my own independence. I was a bit attitude-y but when I look back it was not from a place of thinking that I am better. It was completely from a place of fear and thinking I am lesser, and projecting confidence." AGENCIES

Wamiqa says she's a little confused

Mumbai: Actress Wamiqa Gabbi, who is gearing up for the release of her upcoming film *Bhool Chuk Maaf*, said she was feeling a little confused.

Wamiqa lit up Instagram with a series of stunning close-up shots, dressed in a sleek all-black ensemble. But it was her mesmerising eyes that truly stole the spotlight, holding the camera in a quiet and powerful gaze.

She wrote: "Aapki Premiya aaj thodi confused si hai par pyaar barkaraar hai dil mein ('Your Premiya is a little confused today, but the love still remains strong in her heart.')

Talking about *Bhool Chuk Maaf*, the trailer of her upcoming film was unveiled April 10.

It has Wamiqa along with Rajkumar Rao. Their characters are caught in a real-life struggle between their romantic relationships and professional aspirations.

Set against the vibrant backdrop of Varanasi, the film tells the story of Ranjan, a hopeless romantic who secures a government job to win the heart of his love, Titli. However, just before their wedding, things take a comical turn. Stuck in a time loop that repeats a single day, Ranjan must unravel the mystery behind his life hitting the pause button.



Nyrra on what helps her stay in character

Mumbai: The latest episode of Hungama OTT's show *Hasratein S2* introduced us to a new character, Leela, played by Nyrra M Banerji.

Leela is a gifted perfumer whose creative soul has long been overshadowed by a neglectful marriage. But everything changes when a work trip brings her face-to-face with Rajveer, a charismatic fellow perfumer. When a professional collaboration ignites more than just olfactory magic, Leela embarks on a journey of reclaiming her confidence, desires, and identity.

Sharing insights about her character, Nyrra said, "Leela felt incredibly real to me. Her story is a celebration of quiet courage and untapped potential. She's someone who has forgotten to choose herself for so long, and it's through creativity and connection that she finally finds her voice. Portraying her reminded me how important it is for women to feel seen, heard, and valued. It is not your typical love story, it's a story of self-love."

Speaking about her deep connection to the world of fragrances, Nyrra revealed, "I've always had a love for perfumes. Actually, I have my own distinct perfume that I wear all the time. And every place I visit, I make it a point to pick up perfume from there—it's my way of carrying memories. So, playing Leela, who lives and breathes scent, felt natural to me. In fact, while shooting, I used my own perfume to help me stay in character—it instantly transported me into Leela's world."

Walker, Rahman, Shreya to serenade audience

Mumbai: The upcoming first edition of the WAVES Summit 2025, will see the likes of musicians like Alan Walker, AR Rahman, and Shreya Ghoshal to wooing the attendees with their live performances.

The event will be held from May 1 to May 4 in Mumbai, and carries the visionary theme: "Leverage to Create in India". It will bring together key stakeholders shaping the future of India's creative economy. It will feature leading voices from across the sector, from creators and studios to policymakers and investors, united by a vision to shape the future of India's creative economy.

In addition to its industry-focused programming, the summit will feature a spectacular cultural showcase highlighting



India's vibrant musical and artistic legacy.

The grand opening ceremony will feature a stunning 50-piece orchestra led by the legendary MM Keeravaani, setting the stage for an immersive celebration of creativity.

In a tribute to Indian folk music, Shantanu Moitra will lead a heartfelt performance

featuring acclaimed singers like Shaan, Papon, and more, at NMAC.

Adding to the star power, Shankar Mahadevan has curated an extraordinary lineup including Shivam Mahadevan, Ajay-Atul, AR Rahman, and Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy, showcasing his most iconic compositions across Hindi, Marathi,

Tamil, and other languages.

As part of the event, India's vast and vibrant cultural heritage will be showcased through folk dances, martial arts, drumming, and traditional masked performances. Each segment will be regionally categorized to reflect the country's diverse artistic roots.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

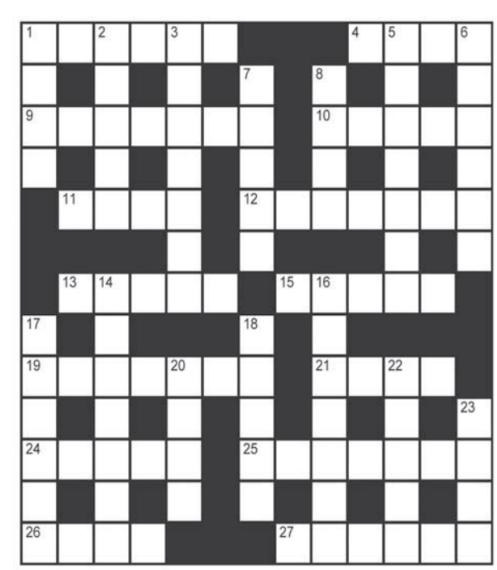


BREVITY



FUN POST

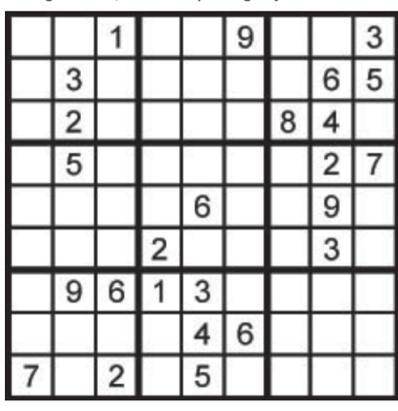
CROSSWORD



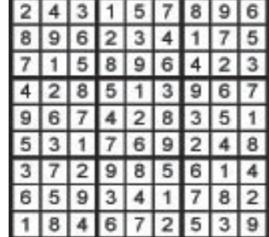
- Across**
- 1 Russian capital
 - 4 Hunt for
 - 9 Spartan
 - 10 Summary
 - 11 Pacific island nation
 - 12 Swiss cheese
 - 13 Birds of prey
 - 15 Sign of life
 - 19 Picture
 - 21 Taxing trip
 - 24 Watchful
 - 25 Booked
 - 26 Boat propellers
 - 27 2004 Olympics site
 - 5 Surpasses
 - 6 Smoked herring
 - 7 Neutral shade
 - 8 Mrs., in Bonn
 - 14 Rookie
 - 16 High-strung
 - 17 Shrew
 - 18 Flu symptom
 - 20 Greek letter
 - 22 Tidal bore
 - 23 Time to beware
- Down**
- 1 Honeyed drink
 - 2 Raw fish dish
 - 3 Stone pillar

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

Shree Jagannath Temple Administration chief Arabinda Padhee presides over a meeting to discuss repair and conservation of Ratna Bhandar in Puri, Saturday



downtown

In Odisha for 35 yrs, Pak-born woman asked to leave country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 26: Fifty three-year-old Pakistani-born Sharada Kukreja, who has been living in Bolangir district for the last 35 years after marrying an Indian citizen, Saturday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi not to separate her from her family as she has been issued a notice by police to leave the country.

Sharada, who was born in Sukkur city of Pakistan's Sindh province, fled to India to escape forced conversion and marriage to a Muslim youth there.

She has been staying in Bolangir district for 35 years after marrying Mahesh Kumar Kukreja. She has two children – a son and a daughter. Both her children are married.

When contacted, Bolangir Superintendent of Police (SP) Abilash G told PTI that the administration has served a notice on Sharada to leave the country at the earliest. He said the notice was served on the woman alone, neither on her husband nor children.

Asked about Sharada's claims that she has an Aadhaar card and participated in elections, the SP said, "We have served the notice as per the record. We have to verify her claims."

India announced Thursday that all visas issued to Pakistani nationals would be revoked from April 27 and asked these people to leave the country as tensions between the two countries escalated after the barbaric terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam left 26 people dead.

Sharada said she, along with her four sisters and five brothers, fled Pakistan fearing conversion and settled in Bolangir 35 years ago. All her siblings are also married and living in different parts of India. "First, we arrived in Koraput district and came to Bolangir after marriage. I've been in Bolangir for 35 years



SHARADA KUKREJA STILL HOLDS A PAKISTANI PASSPORT

now. I was only 18 when I got married in 1990," she said, adding that they had migrated to India on a 60-day visa in 1987.

While all her family members are Indians, she still holds a Pakistani passport and is technically a citizen of that country.

"I have an Aadhaar card and also voted in different elections. But, technically, I am not considered an Indian," Sharada claimed, adding that she was hopeful that she would get Indian citizenship after the Citizenship Amendment Act. Indian citizenship still eludes her, she said.

With the fear of being driven out of the country and separated from her family at this age, Sharada appealed to the PM and CM not to separate her from her husband and children.

"If at all, the Indian government sends me back to Pakistan, where should I go and whom should I meet there? I have no one in that country. I have never visited Pakistan after 1987. I have no connection with that country which failed to give me and my family protection," she said.

With a choked voice, Sharada said she cannot live for a moment without her family. Her son, daughter and grandchildren are also equally worried and refuse to allow Sharada to be separated from them.

The Odisha government has so far identified 12 Pakistani nationals residing in the state either on long-term visas or on short-term visas and asked them to leave the country by April 27.

Meanwhile, a Pakistani woman married to a shop owner in Bhubaneswar in 2008, found that her pending country exit permit has been approved by the police Saturday. Her long-term visa expired in 2024 and she obtained a visitor visa after her application for an extension of the visa was rejected. She then applied for a country exit permit in February.

"Yes, we have approved her country exit permit and also served the 'leave country' notice for being a Pakistani national. She has been ordered to leave India by April 27," Bhubaneswar DCP Jagmohan Meena said.

Meena said that the action is being taken as per an order of the Centre which has revoked different types of visas allotted to Pakistani nationals. "We have received the order from the state government and based on that, we verified and found that one Pakistani national was in Bhubaneswar. She was identified and contacted," the DCP said.



RICH TRIBUTES: People from various walks of life, including Speaker Surama Padhy and Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, pay tributes to Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati, one of the key personalities who helped create Odisha, on his birth anniversary, on Assembly premises in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

₹255-crore fishery projects on cards

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 26: Union Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh will Monday inaugurate and lay the foundation stones for key projects for six coastal states, including Odisha, and a Union territory with an outlay of ₹255.30 crore under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

The minister, at the coastal states' meet to be held in Mumbai, will also launch a set of key initiatives aimed at strengthening marine fisheries and promoting sustainable practices including Marine Fisheries Census Operations, Turtle Excluder Device (TED) project and release of standard operating procedure (SOP) for Vessel Communication and Support System.

The grand event will also be



attended by Ministers of State for Fisheries and Animal Husbandry SP Singh Baghel and George Kurian.

According to an official statement, certificates will also be distributed to outstanding cooperatives, fishery farmers' producer organ-

Initiatives aimed at strengthening marine fisheries and promoting sustainable practices including Marine Fisheries Census Operations will also be launched at the event to be held in Mumbai April 28

isations, fisheries startups, and climate-resilient coastal fishing villages.

As part of Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PMMKSSY), beneficiaries will also receive Aqua Insurance certificates and Kisan Credit Cards.

Notably, the Union government has introduced Aqua Insurance for the first time, offering dedicated financial protection to aquafarmers. This landmark initiative ensures targeted insurance coverage, digital accessibility, and focused support for marginalised communities in the fisheries sector.

Fisheries Ministers from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Puducherry will be present, besides state government officials.

This meet serves as a vital platform for addressing region-specific challenges, promoting modern, eco-friendly approaches tailored to coastal ecosystems, and enhancing livelihood opportunities, productivity, and long-term economic development in the fisheries sector.



FOR A CAUSE: Fire Services Director General Sudhanshu Sarangi speaks during the '48th Borasambar-Senapati Debate' at Ravenshaw University in Cuttack, Saturday

Pahalgam: Sulata courts controversy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 26: BJD Rajya Sabha MP Sulata Deo faced backlash Saturday after making contentious remarks about Pahalgam attack that claimed 26 lives, including a tourist from Balasore.

Speaking to television journalists, Deo said that it would have been impossible for the attackers to determine the religion of each victim before opening fire.

"It may be my speculation, but it is impossible to enquire the religion of each tourist before killing them," she said.

Her remarks drew sharp criticism from the BJP, with state Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan condemning the



remark as "insensitive".

"Such insensitive remarks have no place in politics. People should reject such comments and the leader," he said.

Harichandan also accused Deo of mocking the grief of the victims' families. "This mindset is not acceptable," he added.

In response, Deo defended her comments, saying her in-

Such insensitive remarks have no place in politics. People should reject such comments and the leader

PRITHIVIRAJ HARICHANDAN | LAW MINISTER

attention was misunderstood.

"I have not said anything wrong. I just said that during the brief duration of the attacks, it would not be possible to inquire about victims' religious identities," she clarified.

"Terrorists are not linked to any religion," she added.

Meanwhile, senior BJD leader and former minister Debi Prasad Mishra remarked, "Those who mock others deserve to be mocked."

Man held for burglary in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 26: Bharatpur police Saturday arrested a 21-year-old miscreant for allegedly breaking into the house of a woman at Pandakudia slum cluster and decamping with ornaments and valuables worth over lakhs Friday evening.

The accused was identified as Niranjan Das of the same slum. "He is a history-sheeter and has been booked four times in the past by City police for burglary," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Jagmohan Meena.

Three gold earrings, seven mobile phones, two silver anklets, as many gold rings, and other valuables have been seized from the possession of the accused, the DCP added.

Meena said Padmabati Rout of the slum lodged a complaint alleging Niranjan, along with a few of his associates, broke into her house around 5pm Friday before stealing cash and valuables.

However, the miscreants ran out of their luck as neighbours spotted them exiting the house. While, they managed to catch hold of Niranjan, his aides managed to flee the scene. The locals informed Bharatpur police which rushed to the scene and made the arrest.

A purported CCTV footage of the miscreants exiting the main gate of the house made rounds in the social media, Saturday.

The police have booked Niranjan under Sections 331 (6), 305, and 3(5) of BNS. He was produced before a local court Saturday.

BCJD, ABVP members hold hunger strike at Utkal Univ

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 26: In an unusual show of unity, the activists of Biju Chhatra Janata Dal (BCJD) and Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) have been staging a hunger strike on Utkal University premises here raising the demand for ensuring students' safety on the varsity campus, though they differed on non-students issue.

Reports said while the ABVP is firm on making the hostels free of non-students, BCJD opposed this saying that non-students deserve hostel accommodation as they are the university's alumni. They have nothing

to do with narcotic smuggling busted inside the campus April 11, 2025.

CAMPUS SAFETY

ABVP national executive body member Biswajeet Patra, also a varsity student, said, "Our protest has entered the third day. Our demand is to enhance security on the university premises by installing CCTVs, and intensifying police patrolling to curb the illegal activities."

Patra further said, "The non-students are from BCJD who have occupied the hostels illegally. A notice has been is-

sued to vacate the non-students from hostels but it is yet to come into effect. We will continue our protest until the university administration vacates the non-students from the hostels."

The BCJD members and students raised similar demands regarding campus security but refuted the allegations of ABVP members who termed the alumni as 'non-students'.

Similarly, BCJD state general secretary Asit Ranjan Mohanty, an LLM student said, "The allegations of ABVP are completely false. The non-students are alumni of this campus and they have contributed to the development of this university."

Thunderstorm likely today: IMD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 26: The state continued to reel under extreme hot and humid conditions as 14 places recorded temperatures at or above 40 degree Celsius even as the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) warned of thundershowers in several districts Sunday.

According to IMD's Saturday evening bulletin, Jharsuguda remained the hottest place in the state for eight days in a row, recording 44.7 degrees.

According to the weather office, most places in western Odisha experienced extreme heat.

Jharsuguda was followed by Boudh at 44.5 degree Celsius, Sambalpur (43), Bolangir and Sonepur (42.2), Angul and Rourkela (42.1) and Sundargarh

and Titilagarh (42).

Hirakud logged 41.9 degrees, Nuapada (41.8), Bhanuipatna (41.6), Bargarh (40.4) and Talcher (40.2). Bhubaneswar and Cuttack recorded temperatures of 36.2 degree Celsius and 36.4 degrees, respectively.

Meanwhile, IMD's forecast for Sunday could bring relief as it issued Orange Warning — be prepared to take action — on thunderstorms, lightning with wind speeds reaching 50-60 kmph and hailstorms during afternoon/evening over the districts of Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Keonjhar, Koraput and Ganjam.

The weather office issued Yellow Warning for Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Gajapati, Subarnapur, Boudh, Nuapada, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Nabarangpur, Rayagada and Malkangiri districts.

ROZGAR MELA

258 candidates get appointment letters

[Modi govt provided 1.5 times more jobs to youths than UPA govt, says Union Minister Harsh Malhotra]



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 26: Union Minister of State for Corporate Affairs, Road Transport and Highways Harsh Malhotra distributed appointment letters to 258 candidates during a Rozgar Mela held at the Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (IMMT) here Saturday.

The event was part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's nationwide Rozgar Mela initiative, with simultaneous fairs across 47 locations benefiting over 51,000 youths.

Addressing the gathering, Malhotra highlighted the Modi government's commitment to youth employment, stating that it has provided 1.5 times

that Saturday's programme marked the 15th edition of the initiative. "More than 10 lakh youths have secured employment opportunities through these fairs so far," he added, underlining the government's sustained focus on job creation.

The minister also praised initiatives like Mission Karmayogi and the i-GOT portal, which are aimed at strengthening the efficiency of public service delivery.

He informed that these platforms offer over 1,400 courses and have already benefited more than one crore government employees, thus driving a major transformation in governance.

Emphasising the role of digital empowerment in rural India, Malhotra expressed optimism about the youth's pivotal role in building a developed India by 2047. "The steps we take today will shape the destiny of generations to come," he remarked.

The event witnessed participation of several distinguished guests including CGST & Customs, Bhubaneswar Division Chief Commissioner MS Singh, IIT-Bhubaneswar Director Sripad Karmalkar, AIIMS-Bhubaneswar Executive Director Ashutosh Biswas, and Chief Postmaster Nirmaljit Singh, along with senior officials from various Central government departments.

OVER 51,000 YOUTHS BENEFITED NATIONWIDE ACROSS 47 LOCATIONS

MISSION KARMAYOGI AND I-GOT PORTAL TRAINING OVER ONE CRORE EMPLOYEES

MORE THAN 10 LAKH YOUTHS HAVE SECURED JOBS THROUGH ROZGAR MELAS SINCE 2012

more jobs compared to the previous UPA government.

"Through this Rozgar Mela, Prime Minister Modi has distributed over 51,000 appointment letters via video conferencing to newly-recruited youths in various government departments and organisations," he said.

Tracing the origins of Rozgar Mela to 2012, Malhotra noted



PATRIOTIC PROTEST: Artists from Vande Mataram stage a street play at Gandhi Marg in Bhubaneswar, Saturday, voicing a call for a strong response to the Pahalgam terror attack

Security beefed up at Srimandir

Puri: In the wake of the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir, the state government has strengthened security at the Srimandir, one of Hinduism's four sacred Dhams. As part of the enhanced measures, one commandant, two deputy commandants, and three assistant commandants have been deployed to oversee the temple's security arrangements.

According to an order issued by the Additional DGP, the appointed officers are required to report by April 28 and will serve on deputation for a period of three years, informed Puri Superintendent of Police Vinit Agarwal. To further bolster security and maintain order, eight inspectors, 31 sub-inspectors, and 24 assistant sub-inspectors will also be stationed around the shrine. Their responsibilities will include managing the queue system during darshan and safeguarding key areas like the Parikrama corridor, Gundicha temple, and Mausima temple, Agarwal added.

WORLD VETERINARY DAY

'One planet, one health a necessity'



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 26: Emphasising the critical link between animal health, environmental protection, and human well-being, Fisheries and Animal Resources Development (F&ARD) department Principal Secretary Suresh Kumar Vashishth said "One Planet, One Health" is the need of the hour.

He was speaking as the chief guest at the state-level celebration of World Veterinary Day 2025 at the Lok Seva Bhawan Convention Hall Saturday.

Vashishth highlighted the crucial role of veterinarians in promoting sustainable practices and safeguarding biodiversity. He called for a collaborative approach in strengthening animal healthcare systems.

Director of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Vijay Amruta Kulange presented various government schemes designed to support livestock

farmers. Over 300 farmers from across Odisha attended the event, interacting with experts and learning about new initiatives.

A workshop on the Mukhyamantri Kamdhenu Yojana (MKY) and Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM) was conducted, moderated by Rajeev Sharma, with Bismita Nandi and Satyaprakash Mohapatra serving as rapporteurs. Senior officials including Antaryami Khuntia, Swapananda Mohapatra, Biswaranjan Tripathy, Hadibandhu Bhoi, and Mihir Kumar Nayak actively participated in discussions.

Later, a technical seminar titled "Livestock Farmers, Civil Society, and Veterinarians: A Team Approach in Animal Health" was held, moderated by Samapika Mohapatra, with speakers like Rabindra Mohan Maharatha, Sanat Mishra, Kumarshree Behera, Biswanath Sahoo, and Subrat Prusty sharing insights.

NSUI alleges faculty hiring flaws at BPCSE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 26: The National Students' Union of India (NSUI) Saturday alleged irregularities in the faculty recruitment process at Biju Patnaik College of Science & Education (BPCSE) here.

During a press meet, Odisha NSUI in-charge Channu Singh, Congress leader Shah Rukh Khan, and NSUI state president Udit Pradhan criticised the

state government, claiming that the flaws in the new education policy were harming students.

Pradhan said, "The 'Double Engine' government's promises have turned into illusions. The new education policy will only weaken India's academic structure."

He also alleged that former principal Pradipta Kumar Gahan, despite facing serious allegations of financial misconduct during his tenure, was re-appointed against government norms that prohibit such reinstatements. According to Pradhan, Gahan's alleged familial connections with Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan and his earlier links with Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo enabled him to avoid scrutiny and complete his term.

Pradhan urged Higher Education Minister Suryabanshi Suraj to launch an investigation into the recruitment irregularities.

H&UD Min visits Okhla waste-to-energy plant



POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, April 26: Housing & Urban Development (H&UD) Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra visited the cutting-edge waste-to-energy plant at Okhla Saturday, managed by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. The plant processes approximately 2,000 metric tonnes (MT) of municipal solid waste daily and generates around 23 megawatts (MW) of green energy.

During his visit, the Minister

of promoting a cleaner and greener India. He expressed that such initiatives could prove pivotal in addressing the growing waste management challenges while simultaneously contributing to clean energy generation.

The Minister emphasised that the success of the Okhla plant offers a promising model that could be replicated in Odisha and other states. He assured that the concept would be given serious consideration for future implementation to foster sustainable waste management practices.

The Okhla waste-to-energy plant project management head Sandeep Dutta, along with senior municipal corporation officials, provided insights into the plant's operations during the visit. Housing & Urban Development additional secretary Binay Dash also accompanied the Minister.

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By the virtue of an Affidavit before the Executive Magistrate, Nimapara. I, Kabindra Kumar Nayak, S/o. Batakrushna Nayak, At/Po: Tentuliguan, P.S. - Charichhak, Dist - Puri, PIN - 752113 declare that my daughters name has been wrongly recorded as Aakankshya Priyadarshinee instead of Aaradhya Nayak in her Aadhaar Card vide no. xxxx xxxx 8155. Henceforth she shall be known as Aaradhya Nayak for all future purposes.

Extraordinary evidence needed to prove alien life

The discovery of life beyond Earth would be one of the most profound scientific breakthroughs in human history. With hundreds of millions of potentially habitable planets in the Milky Way alone, astronomers are using powerful space telescopes to search for molecular signs of life in distant atmospheres.

Despite the excitement, no solid evidence for extraterrestrial life has been found so far. A recent paper published in April 2025 claimed to detect a possible biosignature in the atmosphere of the exoplanet K2-18b.

While the finding is intriguing, most astronomers, including the authors themselves, agree that it falls short of confirming the existence of alien life.

The famous astronomer Carl

Sagan once said, "Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence," a reminder that remarkable discoveries demand equally remarkable proof. The recent detection around K2-18b identified dimethyl sulfide, a molecule associated with life on Earth, particularly from oceanic bacteria and plankton. However, non-biological processes could also produce it, making this signal intriguing but inconclusive.

Moreover, the strength of the detection matters. In this case, the signal was significant at the 3-sigma level, implying a 0.3 per cent chance it was a random fluke.

While this sounds impressive, scientists typically demand a 5-sigma level—where the chance of error drops to nearly zero—for a claim of this



magnitude.

For instance, the discovery of the Higgs boson required two years of data collection to reach 5-sigma certainty before it was confirmed. Lastly, a credible discovery must be repeatable. Future observations,

such as detecting additional biosignature gases like oxygen, will be crucial before any firm conclusions can be drawn about life on K2-18b.

History is filled with cautionary tales of premature claims. Over a century ago,

astronomer Percival Lowell famously believed he had observed artificial canals on Mars, supposedly built by a dying civilisation.

His claims, however, were never confirmed by other astronomers and are now attributed to optical illusions and wishful thinking.

In 1996, NASA scientists announced that they had found possible microfossils in a Martian meteorite, only for subsequent studies to offer non-biological explanations. More recently, fluctuating methane levels detected on Mars stirred excitement, but insisted results from different spacecraft have kept scientists from confirming a biological origin.

The search for intelligent extraterrestrial civilisations has also produced intriguing but inconclusive evidence.

The famous "Wow!" signal detected in 1977 was a strong, one-minute radio burst from space that has never been repeated, and the mysterious interstellar object 'Oumuamua', which passed through our solar system in 2017, led some to speculate it could be artificial. Yet in both cases, the evidence was not strong or repeatable enough to justify extraordinary claims.

Even in cosmology, scientists must tread carefully. A 2014 claim that cosmic inflation had been detected was quickly retracted when galactic dust turned out to be the culprit.

However, the discovery of the universe's accelerating expansion in 1998, confirmed independently by two teams, stands as an example of the scientific method at its best. (The Conversation)

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NHRC seeks ATR on woman's suicide after killing 2 daughters

PNN & AGENCIES

Kendrapara, April 26: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought a detailed Action Taken Report (ATR) from the Jagatsinghpur Superintendent of Police (SP) regarding the case of a woman who allegedly killed her two daughters before committing suicide. The NHRC Friday directed the SP to submit the ATR within four weeks.

According to reports, a 34-year-old woman from Pokariapada village under Kujang in Jagatsinghpur district allegedly committed suicide after killing her two physically-disabled daughters by throwing them into a village pond last October.

Acting on a petition filed by human rights defender Radhakanta Tripathy, the apex rights panel issued the direction. The complainant, Tripathy, alleged that the victim, Jhili Parida, was tortured by her in-laws for dowry and further abuse after giving birth to two disabled daughters.

Facing extreme cruelty, especially after her in-laws allegedly attempted to kill the children, she threw both her daughters, aged 4 and 2 years, into the village pond October 7 last year. The woman later hanged herself from a tree. The deceased woman's brother, Madhav, filed an FIR at Kujang police station detailing the abuse and the tragic incident.

"Let a copy of the complaint be transmitted to the Superintendent of Police, Jagatsinghpur, Odisha, calling for an Action Taken Report within four weeks," stated the commission in its direction.

NIA team records statement of Pahalgam victim's spouse

During the recording of the statement of Acharya, other members of the deceased's family were not allowed in the room

PNN & AGENCIES

Balasure, April 26: A three-member NIA team Saturday recorded the statement of Priyadarshani Acharya, the wife of CIPET employee Prashant Satpathy, one of the 26 people killed in the Pahalgam terror attack, an official said Saturday.

The team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) reached Satpathy's native village Ishani, under the Remuna block in Balasore district, around 11am and continued the investigation till 3pm, the deceased's family members said.

Acharya's statement is "crucial" for investigation as she and her 9-year-old son Tanuj were eyewitnesses to the killings of innocent people Tuesday, he said. During the recording of the statement of Acharya, other members of the deceased's family were not allowed in the room where the NIA team was carrying out the investigation, the official said.

"No comment," a member of the NIA team told reporters before leaving the Ishani



12-hr bandh in Kuanrunda

Kuanrunda, a small town in tribal-dominated Sundargarh district, observed a 12-hour bandh Saturday in protest against the Pahalgam attack. As a mark of protest against the April 22 bloodbath, residents voluntarily shut down shops and business establishments in a show of solidarity with the nation. They also demanded the construction of a martyrs' memorial to honour the 26 victims. "We condemn the killing on the basis of religion. Let Prime Minister Narendra Modi take the strongest action against the culprits," one of the protesters said. BJP supporters also held a procession in Rourkela city protesting the terror attack. "We have submitted a memorandum to the President of India through the local administration condemning the incident at Pahalgam," Raghunathpalli MLA Durga Charan Tanti said.

village after recording Acharya's statement.

Prashant's elder brother, Sushant Satpathy, said, "I was not present during the statement recording. What I gathered is that they asked questions about the physical appearance of terrorists, and what terrorists asked tourists before the killing of innocents. They also wanted to know her whereabouts during the firing. The NIA team also asked whether the

victims received any help from locals and others."

Prashant's mother said the family members demanded stringent action against the culprits and said they cooperated with the NIA team.

Prasant (41), who was working with the Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology (CIPET) in Balasore, had travelled to Jammu and Kashmir with his wife and son on a vacation.

Mother kills 6-yr-old girl over superstition

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, April 26: In a shocking incident, a woman has been arrested for allegedly strangling her six-year-old daughter to death driven by superstitious beliefs, in Kotasamalei village under Birmaharajpur police station limits in Subarnapur district.

The accused, identified as Ashalata, was arrested by Birmaharajpur police Saturday and later produced before a local court. The victim, Nisha, daughter of Ganesh Mahapatra, was a student in the first grade at a local school.

After returning from school and having her meal, Nisha was resting at home when her mother, allegedly under the influence of hallucinations and blind faith, strangled her Thursday. At that time, Nisha's father along with his two sons had gone to assist food service at a wedding feast nearby.



Upon returning home, Ganesh attempted to wake Nisha but found her unresponsive. Noticing injury marks on her neck, he immediately rushed her to Ulunda Hospital on a motorcycle. However, doctors declared the child dead on arrival. Initially, an unnatural death case was registered at Birmaharajpur police station. Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Bibhu Prasad Baral led the investigation. Although Ganesh had earlier mentioned that his wife was suffering from mental health issues, police treated the case with seriousness due to the suspicious neck injuries.

During interrogation, Ashalata confessed to the crime, stating that she killed her daughter following a "divine command" she claimed to have received in a dream. Consequently, police registered a murder case (96/25) against her. The investigation is ongoing.

CB questions 11 individuals



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, April 26: Continuing its investigation into the high profile murder of former Health Minister Naba Das, a Crime Branch team led by ASP Vijay Kumar Mallik Saturday visited the Berhampur residence of Gopal Das, the police ASI arrested for the minister's murder.

The team conducted a detailed discussion with Gopal's wife, Jayanti Das, near Panchasila Marg in the Industrial Estate area. According to ASP Mallik, they questioned her extensively about Gopal's interactions with her both on the day of the shooting and prior to the incident. Her statement has been officially recorded.

So far, statements from 11 individuals have been recorded, Mallik confirmed. The investigation remains ongoing, and more people are expected to be questioned in the coming days.

The CB team, which is sta-

tioned in Berhampur since April 23, has been interrogating people since 24 April. Investigators have retrieved Gopal Das' call detail records (CDRs) and are questioning individuals he spoke with before the murder.

Sources suggest that some crucial information has emerged during the investigation, although the CB has not yet made any official disclosure regarding the findings. The possibility of further interrogation has not been ruled out.

Previously, the team questioned Gopal's son Manoj Das, his brother Satyanarayan Das, and his nephew Pradeep Das. His wife's statement was also recorded Saturday. During earlier visits to Berhampur, the CB had recorded the statements of four family members, a police colleague, and a bus conductor from OSRTC, completing the documentation of 11 individuals' accounts.

Vedanta spreads Malaria awareness in Kalahandi

Bhawanipatna: In an effort to raise awareness of malaria prevention among vulnerable communities, Vedanta Aluminium conducted a large-scale campaign in tribal-dominated Kalahandi district to mark World Malaria Day. The anti-malaria awareness drive focused on the villages of Nakrundi and Gunpur, along with other remote areas. The campaign featured street plays by seasoned performers, attracting more than 380 rural residents. The performances highlighted key malaria prevention strategies, with an emphasis on using medicated mosquito nets previously distributed by Vedanta's Sijimali Bauxite team. Following the performances, villagers participated in interactive discussions, allowing them to ask questions and share personal insights to further strengthen community understanding of malaria control. "We recognise that good health is the foundation of thriving communities and sustainable development," said Sunil Gupta, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Vedanta Aluminium. "Our commitment goes beyond providing healthcare services. We strive to foster a culture of wellness through comprehensive outreach programmes that educate and empower individuals at the grassroots level."



2 toddlers drown in pond

Nishchintakoili: In a tragic incident, two toddlers drowned in a pond at Ramakrushnapur village under this block in Cuttack district Saturday. The victims were identified as Kameshwar, 2, son of Dilip Kumar Sahu of Ramakrushnapur village under Nishchintakoili block, and Bhagyalaxmi, 3, daughter of Ballabh Sahu of Ostapur village in Umar panchayat of Mahanga block. Reports said Ballabh's wife Madhusmita had brought her daughter Bhagyalaxmi to visit her brother Dilip's house at Ramakrushnapur village. The incident occurred when the family members were inside while Kameshwar and Bhagyalaxmi were playing near the house. Meanwhile, the children wandered towards a nearby pond while playing, fell into the water and drowned. A local resident noticed the girl floating and alerted the families. Family members rushed to the spot and pulled Bhagyalaxmi from the water and rescued Kameshwar after an extensive search. They rushed the two kids to the Nishchintakoili Community Health Center, where doctors pronounced the two dead. Police sent the bodies for post-mortem and launched an investigation.

Lovebirds found hanging from tree

Bhawanipatna: Police Saturday recovered the bodies of a man and a girl hanging from a tree in Kalahandi district. The bodies of a 23-year-old man and a 17-year-old girl were found hanging from a tree at Kaodala village under Ampani police station area of the district, police said. Police suspect that they died by suicide as their 'relationship' was allegedly not accepted by their families, since they belonged to separate castes. They might have died by suicide as their relationship was not accepted by their families, police said, adding that both the victims hailed from the same village.

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Master in Computer Applications (MCA)	Patna, Aizawl, Imphal, Kohima, Srinagar
M.Sc. in Bioinformatics	Imphal
M.Sc. in Computer Science (With Specialisation in Data Science)	Calicut, Itanagar
M. Sc. in Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning	Srinagar
M.Sc. in Information Technology	Agartala, Imphal

Bachelor Degree Programs	Campus
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B.Tech. in Computer Science and Engineering	Patna, Aurangabad
B.Tech. in Computer Science and Engineering (AI & ML)	Ropar
B.Tech. Electronics Engineering - Lateral Entry	Aurangabad

PG Diploma Programs	Campus
Post Graduate Diploma in Computer Application (PGDCA)	Imphal, Kohima

Diploma Programs	Campus
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What is God after all? An eternal child playing an eternal game in an eternal garden

SRI AUROBINDO



Trump's Masterstroke

Can a competent plan on a vital matter be incompetently executed?

The United States says it is being looted by the world in trade and wants compensation. This looting has happened through the US not being able to export as much as it imports because of a strong dollar. And the dollar is permanently strong because the whole world uses it and it is constantly in demand. The US is thus forced to have a high trade deficit with most nations, including its allies, who cheat the US through subsidising their home companies and keeping their currencies artificially low.

And then the US also spends trillions on the safety of the world by maintaining military bases across the globe and fighting wars. The world must repay the US by accepting President Donald Trump's new customs duties without retaliation and buying more things from the US, including defence equipment. They must also invest in factories in the US or they can simply send money to the US treasury.

This, more or less, is the plan that the US president has presented before the world and now asked it to pay up. Whether this is fair or not, or even true or not, is a separate matter. The US trade deficit is linked to its budget deficit and overspending, requiring capital to come from abroad to make up the gap.

The world has not asked America to set up bases outside its borders. Who the US attacks and who it defends is not based on some global consensus but a US assessment which it carries out alone. But all that is, as I said, separate. The issue at hand is this: Can a competent plan on a vital matter be incompetently executed?

And this is of course a vital matter. The tariff plan's goals are to bring manufacturing back to America again; to decouple or reduce dependency on China; to at the same time reduce the relative value of the dollar while retaining its position as the reserve currency; to collect billions from tariffs that will be spent on tax cuts; and to balance the budget — in short to make America great again. It is a serious matter and it deserved serious levels of planning and execution.

Alas, the American tariff plan has unfolded with a series of pauses, withdrawals and exemptions — all of which were forced by events that had been predicted by critics. The result is chaos. Watching the American business networks it becomes apparent that nobody is really sure what the precise situation is with tariffs on any given day. The US trade representative is deposing before elected members in Congress and does not know that a U-turn has happened at the White House on the very issues that he is taking questions on. Statements made by the treasury secretary (finance minister) are at odds with those made by the commerce secretary. Trump tells Time magazine Chinese President Xi Jinping has called him to negotiate, apparently to mollify the markets that are getting jittery. The Chinese immediately issue a statement saying this is a lie and the markets are weak again.

Any competent plan would have assumed that targeted nations would retaliate. On 24 April the Washington Post ran a headline reading 'U.S. agencies alarmed by China's curbs on exports of rare-earth minerals.' The report said that 'Beijing's curbs on rare earth exports, used to make military drones, consumer electronics, electric cars and more, have caused alarm across federal agencies.'

Why should retaliation from those being targeted 'alarm' anyone unless they did not think of the consequences of their actions? The people drafting the plan on such a vital matter should have not only anticipated this but also studied in detail the fallout, rather than being alarmed.

As the madness has unfolded it is unclear even what the ultimate objective is. If the aim is really free trade then how will manufacturing shift to the US from lower-cost nations? If the manufacturing of iPhones, shoes, garments, steel and semi-conductors is brought back to America and imports reduced, then the tariffs will not bring in much revenue and the deficit will remain. Both problems cannot be solved through this approach. If the aim is decoupling from China because it is poised to overtake the US as the world's largest economy then what is the point of begging it for negotiations?

These are questions of course that should have been asked before the commencement of the exercise. They were not asked, except by critics who were dismissed as haters or anti-nationals determined to stop America from becoming great again.

To return to the question we began with, the answer is no. It is not possible for a competent plan on a vital matter to be incompetently executed. This is because any plan made with seriousness will and must anticipate the consequences, in particular the negative ones. A casual approach such as the one America is showing reflects not only on the execution, which is shoddy by all accounts including those of its supporters, but on the plan itself.

It means that little thinking has gone into creating it and not much weightage assigned to concerns that it may not work as intended and perhaps even fail.

It is shoddy work and shoddy thinking revealing itself in real time through the disorder of execution. It is a masterstroke.



Aakar Patel

A casual approach such as the one America is showing reflects not only on the execution, which is shoddy by all accounts including those of its supporters, but on the plan itself



DK Giri

WHATEVER THE NATURE OF RESPONSE, IT HAS TO BE DECISIVE IN THE SENSE THAT TERRORISM ON INDIAN SOIL BECOMES A THING OF THE PAST

The cold blooded murder of innocent tourists in Pahalgam has shocked not only India but the whole world. World powers have swiftly reacted to the dastardly attack. Apparently the spot chosen by the assailants was not patrolled by the army or the paramilitary. No doubt, irrespective of the absence of security personnel, the ambush of unsuspecting tourists indicates the failure of intelligence. There are complaints of other lapses that led to this bloodshed. Those issues can be debated and investigated later. The important question to ask and watch is how the Indian government is reacting to this incident.

The terrorists called out the tourists from their tents and asked them to identify their religion to ascertain if they were Hindus, and then they shot the victims point blank. A lady begged to be killed as her husband was shot in her presence. She was spared her life and was advised to report the killing to Prime Minister Modi. A local pony man plunged at a terrorist to save a tourist and paid with his life. Such pathetic, humanistic as well as gory details of the massacre are gradually emerging in the public domain.

The attack is clearly the handiwork of Pakistani terror network. Whether the imminent attack was lost on the intelligence of the government is another point of debate. Observers point out that Pakistan's ruling establishment had blamed India for aiding and abetting Baloch Liberation Army in hijacking of a local train in Balochistan and the murder of hundreds of hostages on 11 March this year. India had flatly denied



Indian Army captures or kills some terrorists and more are sent by Pakistan. This ghastly cycle will continue until the terrorist bases in Pakistan are destroyed

any involvement in that terrorist act. Pakistan had rejected the denial and the Pakistani army had sworn revenge. The other conjecture is about the strategic timing of the attack which coincided with the visit of US Vice President JD Vance. Although Vance is on a partly personal visit, he is outspoken on international affairs; therefore it was done during his presence on Indian soil in order to draw international attention.

Third, the choice of the spot for the attack; Pahalgam is a major tourist attraction. It is reported that there were more than two thousand tourists camping in that area on that fateful day. For some reason, there was not a single member of State Armed Forces — Army, Para-Military or even the local police — at the Baisaran meadow which is just five km from Pahalgam town and a designated tourist spot.

Be that as it may, innocent lives have been lost. The government's claim of making the Valley of Kashmir free of terrorism also got busted. So the government as well as the people are raring to go after the

terrorists wherever they may be hiding. The public anger will force the government and the army to take some drastic action to bring the culprits to the book.

The larger question is what should India do to eliminate sporadic, unanticipated and inhuman attacks by terrorists coming from across the border? The second related question is how does India destroy the military-cum-militant machine that manufactures thousands of terrorists every year? Indian Army captures or kills some terrorists and more are sent by Pakistan. This ghastly cycle will continue until the terrorist bases in Pakistan are destroyed. It should be like the IDF (Israel) going after Hamas terror network and infrastructure.

New Delhi has to follow a two-pronged strategy. One, to mobilise diplomatic support for a decisive attack on terrorist hideouts and bases in Pakistan. New Delhi has initiated certain non-military steps like declaring the Pakistani High Commissioner non-grata, cancelling the Indus Water Treaty that will choke Pakistan with-

out water and openly declaring that it will not stop at anything short of stoppage of supply of terrorists from Pakistan.

India is a democracy. Citizens, military officers, and strategic experts have started debating if an all-out military intervention into Pakistani territory would be a prudent step. That is not for non-military persons who are not at the helm to suggest any concrete action. It is not a calculation whether India will succeed in weeding out terrorists from Pakistan. It is unavoidable for India to go in search of the terrorists.

Whatever the nature of response, it has to be decisive in the sense that terrorism on Indian soil becomes a thing of the past. It is so worrying that, as a nation, when things tend to become normal people begin to live in relative peace and security, Pakistan throws a spanner by sponsoring terrorist activities like those in Mumbai, Uri, Pathankot, Pulwama and Pahalgam. New Delhi has been mobilising the world relentlessly against terrorism by raising it in international forum. Yet, the scourge of terrorism does not stop inflicting India.

The world should rally together to fight this evil. New Delhi has been advocating against terrorism. Now it is time it should lead in action as well. Terrorism is an international menace. It has to be fought collectively. Let India give this message loud and clear through diplomacy as well as forceful action whenever necessary.

The writer is Professor of Practice, NIIS Group of Institutions.

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SPECTRUM GEOPOLITICS

The choice between Caesar & Aurelius



Ahmet Davuto lu

A SINGLE PRINCIPLE NOW SEEMS TO PREVAIL: MIGHT IS RIGHT

At the beginning of Donald Trump's first term in the White House, I argued that this would be no ordinary US presidency. The international order, already beset by fundamental weaknesses and disputes over its core values and institutions, was now facing a seismic shift.

With the beginning of Trump's second term marked by even greater chaos, what once seemed like an isolated shock has evolved into a full-blown "systemic earthquake." Trump's inflammatory rhetoric, often unhinged executive orders, and despotic approach to the wars in Gaza and Ukraine have shaken the very foundations of the multi-lateral system, which took four centuries of wars and suffering — dating back to the Peace of Westphalia — to build.

Trump's actions and pronouncements over the past two months suggest that we are entering an era of profound uncertainty in which crises can erupt and escalate at any moment. A single principle now seems to prevail: might is right. After all, at the heart of international law lies the principle of pacta sunt servanda: treaties must be honored. Yet within weeks of returning to the White House, Trump

has violated, invalidated, or withdrawn from numerous agreements and commitments made by previous US administrations, including his own.

Trump's broader foreign-policy objective appears to be to dismantle the global order established 80 years ago by a generation scarred by the horrors of World War II and usher in an era of neo-colonial competition. His threats to annex Greenland "one way or another," reclaim control of the Panama Canal, and turn Canada into the 51st state — along with his portrayal of Gazans as little more than an obstacle to a real-estate deal — offer a stark glimpse of his neo-imperialist worldview.

Unlike the imperial systems that preceded it, the postwar US-led order rested on three pillars: US-dominated multi-lateral institutions, a global security architecture built around alliances like NATO, and an economic order based on free trade and the dollar's status as the world's main reserve currency.

By contrast, Trump's vision of Pax Americana for the twenty-first century is one of unchecked, tech-driven totalitarianism. This shift didn't come out of nowhere. The US-led order has been fraying

for years. Since the end of the Cold War, US foreign policy has been marked by strategic discontinuity, with each administration adopting wildly different doctrines. George HW Bush's call for a "new world order" was followed by Bill Clinton's humanitarian interventionism. The terrorist attacks of 11 September, 2001, fuelled George W Bush's neo-conservative rationale for invading Afghanistan and Iraq.

Barack Obama's multilateral but often passive diplomacy, in turn, triggered the reactionary reflexes that defined Trump's first term, just as Joe Biden's inconsistent and largely ineffective foreign policy — particularly in Gaza — helped pave the way for Trump's return.

Now, with Trump more emboldened than ever, we are witnessing the consequences of America's strategic discontinuity: a neo-colonial order driven by Christian nationalism, empowered by advanced technologies, sustained by irrational impulses, and wrapped in brazen rhetoric.

In the spring of 2002, in a lecture at Princeton University, I noted the surge of extreme nationalism in post-9/11 America and warned that the US did not need a Caesar-like leader who seeks domination through mil-

itary might. Instead, it needed a Marcus Aurelius — a philosopher-statesman capable of leading a complex global order with wisdom, restraint, and respect for international law.

For a while, I believed Obama could become such a leader. When he took office in 2009 and chose Turkey as his first overseas destination — followed by Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt — I felt a genuine sense of hope. Alas, I was wrong. But my own experiences as foreign minister and later prime minister of Turkey reinforced my belief in the possibility of balancing diplomacy and force in a way that serves the interests of all countries — not just those of great powers.

From Argentina to Turkey, countries around the world face the same fundamental choice confronting the US: Will we succumb to authoritarian Caesars who become more oppressive as their power grows, or will we choose leaders who, like Marcus Aurelius, seek to govern deliberately? That is the defining question of our time, and we must answer it together.

The writer is a former prime minister and foreign minister of Turkey.

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WISDOM CORNER

Happiness is that state of consciousness which proceeds from the achievement of one's values

AYN RAND

If you do not tell the truth about yourself you cannot tell it about other people

VIRGINIA WOOLF

Knowing your own darkness is the best method for dealing with the darkensses of other people

CARL JUNG

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1822: Ulysses S. Grant, who commanded the Union armies during the late years (1864-65) of the American Civil War and later served as president of the United States (1869-77), was born.

1865: The worst maritime disaster in U.S. history occurred when the overloaded steamship SS Sultana exploded on the Mississippi River, killing some 1,800 people, many of whom were former Union POWs returning home from the Civil War.

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

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Weaponising water

Sir, This refers to "Not a drop of water for Pakistan," **Orissa POST**, April 26. Six decades after that Cold War bargain, New Delhi has suspended the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) and put water—South Asia's most irreplaceable resource—squarely on the strategic chessboard. Islamabad's dash to the International Court of Justice is predictable, yet history shows ICJ verdicts bite only when backed by power. Cutting even ten per cent of Indus flow scorches Pakistan's Punjabi breadbasket—the same demographic pool that feeds its terror pipeline. Hunger concentrates minds faster than diplomatic dossiers. Pakistan is the perpetrator, exporting jihad; India is the victim. Expecting the victim to hydrate its attacker is strategic absurdity. New Delhi's willingness to weaponise water sends a clear signal to Beijing, which eyes the Brahmaputra from Tibet. China now knows any adventurism in Ladakh or Arunachal could trigger reciprocal pain—hydrological or otherwise. Suspending the IWT is not cruelty; it is rational statecraft. Pakistan wagered that nuclear weapons provided a terror umbrella India dare not breach. Balakot air strikes poked the first hole; hydrological pressure tears it wider. .

N Sathasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

No more delusion

Sir, India has decided to go for Pakistan's jugular by invoking measures like visa bans, suspending the Indus Water Cooperation, closing the Attari-Wagah border and asking Pakistani nationals to leave India. Truth be told, such measures ought to have been taken long ago. This is neither the first time that Pakistan has inflicted serious and severe damage upon India in terms of lives lost, nor will it be the last. When the cricket teams of India and Pakistan are facing off on the cricket ground, the hostility between the two nations is all too palpable. India is not in any way obliged to keep up the pretence of friendship. In fact, it has been deluding itself by repeatedly saying that the two countries have a lot in common in terms of food, dress, culture, etc. The collective DNA of the two countries is as different as chalk is from cheese.

Avinash Godbole, DEWAS

Pahalgam killings deepen Bengal's identity rift, give way to fresh wave of polarisation



As political parties scramble to frame the narrative through religion, nationalism and victimhood, the deaths have transformed into a new battleground in Bengal's fierce political contest

nationalism and victimhood, the deaths have transformed into a new battleground in Bengal's fierce political contest.

The fourth coffin — of soldier Jhantu Ali Sheikh from Nadia killed in a separate ambush in Udhampur — has further complicated the emotional and political discourse, as martyrdom and terror are increasingly viewed through communal prisms.

The invocation of religious identity following the attacks has signalled a shift in Bengal's political choreography — one that observers say is aligned with the BJP's ideological thrust and the TMC's appeasement politics.

"This isn't just a story of terror and tragedy. It's about the religious identity of the dead. We are now witnessing a contest of competing narratives, shaped by identity and political stakes," political scientist at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Maidul Islam, told PTI.

What unfolded at Kolkata airport Wednesday evening highlighted the intensity of the moment.

As the coffins arrived, Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari, and a large contingent of BJP leaders staged an emotionally charged appearance at the cargo terminal.

With folded hands and bowed head, Adhikari knelt beside a coffin, touched his forehead to it, and cradled Bitan's infant son. He solemnly declared, "They were killed because they were Hindus," and urged the grieving widow to recount her version of events.

The TMC, though present at the airport through leaders like Firhad Hakim and Arup Biswas, appeared momentarily caught off-guard by the BJP's theatrics.

Biswas met Bitan's family and Hakim visited the home of another victim.

The TMC also sought to highlight the sacrifice of Jhantu Ali Sheikh, stressing that martyrdom knows no religion. But the BJP struck back sharply.

"The TMC is trying to equate a terrorist attack with the death of a soldier," said state BJP spokesperson Keya Ghosh.

"In Kashmir, just like during the Murshidabad riots, Hindus were killed by Islamic terrorists after identifying their religion. Sheikh died in an ambush. Both are not the same. Islamic terrorism is a reality; the sooner we accept it, the better," she said.

The remark laid bare the deeper ideological clash while the BJP seeks to frame the killings through the lens of religious identity, the TMC is attempting to dilute that narrative by emphasising a broader idea of national sacrifice.

TMC veteran Sougata Roy, however, rejected the BJP's framing. "This is clearly a security and intelligence failure. The BJP is using this incident to stir communal sentiments ahead of the Bihar elections and next year's Bengal polls," he told PTI. But the BJP remains unwavering.

"The Hindus of Bengal know that TMC panders to jihadis and fundamentalists for vote-

bank politics," said BJP state president and Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar.

Political analysts believe the Pahalgam killings have given the BJP's Hindutva plank a significant emotional push — echoing the post-Pulwama sentiment of 2019, though with a sharper, more divisive edge.

"In Pulwama, martyrdom was a unifying force rooted in nationalism. In Pahalgam, it's being interpreted through a religious lens, which is far more divisive," said political scientist Biswanath Chakraborty.

"What happened in Kashmir is now being fought over in Bengal's streets by the TMC and the BJP. The focus on religious identity is only going to deepen existing communal divides ahead of the 2026 assembly polls," he said.

Another analyst echoed the sentiment. "The politics around the religious identity of the corpses will sharpen the state's fault lines."

From the CAA-NRC protests to recurring incidents of communal violence in districts like Murshidabad, West Bengal has seen an uptick in religious tensions over the past few years.

Both the TMC and the BJP have capitalised on these fissures, portraying themselves as protectors of their respective vote bases — Muslims and Hindus.

The Pahalgam episode may further deepen these divides, especially if the religious identity of the dead continues to dominate the narrative around terrorism and martyrdom.

The CPI(M) and the Congress, meanwhile, which find themselves politically sidelined in this increasingly polarised environment, have issued cautious appeals for restraint.

"One form of fundamentalism breeds another. We must not let martyrdom be used as fuel for hatred," said CPI(M) leader Sujan Chakraborty.

But in Bengal's high-stakes political arena, where optics often outweigh nuance, such cautionary voices risk being drowned out.



VENTING ANGER: Vehicles pass over a painting that reads 'Pakistan Murdabad' on a road, made in protest against the Pahalgam terror attack, at Jhotwara area in Jaipur, Saturday

Over 400 Pakistani nationals in Rajasthan face expulsion

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, April 26: Following the recent terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir's (J&K) Pahalgam area in which 26 people were brutally killed and scores were injured, Rajasthan authorities have initiated the process of identifying and sending back Pakistani citizens currently residing in the state.

This action comes after clear directives to this effect from the Central government.

It has been reported that over 400 Pakistani nationals are staying in Rajasthan.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has instructed Chief Ministers across the country to take immediate action in this regard, with specific emphasis on Rajasthan to ensure the return of all Pakistani citizens present within its borders via the Attari border, which remains open for their return.

In response to these directives, the Rajasthan Intelligence Department and the state police have been actively working to identify individuals who arrived from Pakistan on various visas.

They are currently verifying records to ascertain who has already returned and who remains in the state.



The Intelligence Wing of the Police Headquarters has issued clear instructions to Superintendents of Police (SPs) of all districts and Intelligence officers to facilitate the return of all Pakistani citizens who entered India on tourist, religious, student, medical, or any other short-term visa.

Sources indicate that a number of Pakistani citizens have already left India following the increased scrutiny from both the central and state governments.

Notably, Hindu and other minority refugees who have migrated from Pakistan to escape persecution will be exempt from this expulsion order.

Initial reports indicate that

out of approximately 30 Pakistani citizens in Jaipur, seven have already returned, while 23 residing in Jodhpur have contacted the Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) to facilitate their return.

According to Intelligence sources, the FRRO is actively contacting all Pakistani citizens in the state, instructing them to return to Pakistan via the Attari border.

Concerned SPs are also being informed about the Pakistani citizens residing in their respective jurisdictions to verify their return status.

CM Bhajan Lal Sharma has directed the Home Department to strictly implement the order.

Hundreds turn up to honour fallen soldier



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 26: Hundreds of people thronged the narrow lanes of Tehatta village in West Bengal's Nadia district Saturday to pay their last respect to Armyman Havildar Jhantu Ali Sheikh whose mortal remains were brought to his native village this morning.

Sheikh laid down his life during an anti-terror operation in Jammu & Kashmir's Udhampur district.

His sacrifice was honoured with a wreath-laying ceremony at the 166 Military Hospital in Jammu Friday, where senior officials of the Army, CRPF, BSF, and Jammu & Kashmir Police paid their final respects.

His mortal remains were brought to Kolkata Friday night and then Barrackpore before being taken to his native village Saturday morning, an official said. The body, wrapped in the tricolour, reached his home at around 8am.

As the body arrived in the village, a large number of people, irrespective of caste, creed, and religion, gathered on both sides of the lanes, rooftops and balconies to bid farewell to their hero.

Emotions ran high as Sheikh's family, inconsolable

in their grief, received the coffin. A stage was set up near a local mosque where the mortal remains were placed, allowing residents to pay their last respects. His niece, Amina Sheikh, said that six bullets had hit the martyr's body — one injuring his throat and ear, another hitting his ear and head, while the rest four struck his back as the firing took place from the rear.

Before the final rites, Army personnel arranged for bathing the body. During this time, female family members were not allowed near the site as per protocol, she said. The national flag draped over the coffin was later folded and handed over to his wife by Army personnel.

The burial took place near his home around 11.45am, she added. His wife demanded justice. "Those responsible for his death must be punished," she said.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed deep sorrow over the soldier's death and pledged all possible support to his bereaved family. "The entire state stands by the family of Jhantu Ali Sheikh. His sacrifice will never be forgotten," the CM said.

Jhantu is survived by his wife, a 10-year-old son and a 6-year-old daughter.

Don't panic, remain vigilant: Rajasthan BSF IG tells public

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, April 26: Inspector General (IG) of Rajasthan Frontier BSF, ML Garg, said Saturday that the public should not panic but remain vigilant in the wake of likely strikes on terror infrastructure in the neighbouring country following the killing of tourists and a civilian in Kashmir's Pahalgam.

"Our borders are fully secured, and any act of terrorism will be given a befitting reply. The citizens should not panic but remain vigilant at all times. Security measures have been significantly reinforced in the wake of volatile activities

across the border," said IG BSF during his media interaction in Bikaner.

Appealing to the general public, IG Garg cautioned against falling prey to misinformation spread through social media and other channels.

"All security agencies are on high alert and maintaining close coordination at every level. There is no need for panic, but utmost vigilance is essential," he reiterated.

Highlighting the robust surveillance mechanisms in place, IG Garg revealed that every inch of the border area is being closely monitored using advanced drone technology.

'Band, baaja, baraat' but wedding in limbo

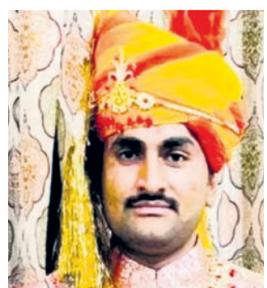
INDIAN GROOM STUCK AT ATTARI-WAGAH BORDER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, April 26: Rajasthan's Shahtan Singh got engaged to Kesar Kanwar from Pakistan's Sindh province four years ago. As the groom's family struggled for years to get visas, the cross-border wedding was hit by another hurdle when the government closed the Attari border Thursday.

With his wedding attire ready and all set to tie the knot in Pakistan's Amarkot city, April 30, Singh along with his family and 'baraat' set out from Barmer district for the Attari border Tuesday.

But by the time they reached there, authorities refused to let them cross the border as India Wednesday ordered an immediate shutdown of the Attari-Wagah border as part



of a series of retaliatory steps following the tragic Pahalgam terror attack.

"We've waited a long time for this day," said Singh, adding that after years of efforts, he, his father, and his brother were granted visas only recently, February 18.

The groom's cousin Surendra Singh said the situation has left both families disheartened.

"Our relatives from Pakistan had come here but they had to return. We are very disappointed. Terror attacks cause



"We are utilising the UAVs extensively to ensure real-time monitoring and immediate response," he said.

He added that considering the extreme heat conditions,

the BSF has set up cool rooms at all Border Outposts (BOPs) to safeguard troops against heat strokes and dehydration.

"Nursing assistants have been specially deployed to ensure immediate medical aid to jawans as the current border temperature has touched 44°C and, according to meteorological predictions, it may rise up to 56°C. Protecting the health of our personnel is a top priority," said IG BSF.

Further elaborating on BSF's commitment beyond border security, IG Garg stated that the force is also actively contributing to the development of border villages.

Whatever the terrorists did was wrong. The wedding has been interrupted. What to do? It is a matter of borders

SHAHTAN SINGH | GROOM

a lot of damage. Relations get spoiled. Movement on the border stops," he said as the cross-border wedding remains disrupted.

The visa of Singh, a resident of Indroi village in Barmer district, is valid until May 12, giving the families a glimmer of hope that the wedding might still happen if the border reopens in time.

"Whatever the terrorists did was wrong. The wedding has been interrupted. What to do? It is a matter of borders," the groom said.

The cross-border marriage was arranged through family ties, a common practice among the Sodha Rajput community, which has a significant population in the Sindh

province of Pakistan. Many of them prefer marrying within the community and often seek matches across the border to preserve their cultural traditions.

Singh, who works in the finance sector, is one of many in the region with relatives in Pakistan. For now, his family waits in the hope that the situation improves and the border reopens in time for the marriage to go ahead.

India Wednesday downgraded diplomatic relations with Pakistan following the April 22 terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were gunned down.

A Cabinet Committee on Security meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, took a series of retaliatory steps, including suspension of the Indus Water Treaty of 1960, revocation of visa services of Pakistani nationals and immediate shutting down of the Attari land-transit post.

Terror attack: NIA team visits victim's house in Kolkata

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 26: A three-member team of the NIA Saturday visited the residence of Samir Guha, one of the 26 people killed in the Pahalgam terror attack, in Kolkata's Behala area to record statements of his family members, a senior official said.

The NIA team would also meet the wife of Bitan Adhikari, another deceased in the terror attack, in the Baishnabghata area to record her statement, he said.

"We will record the statements of the family members of Guha and file a report on that. We will also visit Adhikari's house and talk to his wife to take a detailed note of the attack," the official said.

Three victims — Bitan Adhikari (of Baishnabghata, Kolkata), Samir Guha (Sakher Bazar, Kolkata), and Manish Ranjan (Jhalda, Purulia) — were from West Bengal.

Special teams of the NIA have started reaching out to eyewitnesses, including tourists who survived the deadly attack by terrorists in south Kashmir's Pahalgam, officials had said Friday.

Armed with the latest gadgets like Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and drones, Jammu and Kashmir Police, Army and paramilitary forces continued their massive operations to hunt down the terrorists in the dense jungles of the Pir Panjal range, overlooking Pahalgam and the Jammu-Srinagar national highway.

Initial investigations into the terror attack indicate that the number of terrorists involved could range from five to seven. They were aided by at least two local militants who received training in Pakistan, the officials said.



Politics, democratic politics have fundamentally changed across the globe. Sometimes, when I speak to younger members of our party, what was effective 10 years ago, the tools that worked 10 years ago, simply do not work anymore

RAHUL GANDHI | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

BOMB THREATS AT VARIOUS HOTELS IN KERALA CAPITAL

Bomb threats were received by email at various hotels in the state capital Saturday, prompting police to deploy bomb disposal units and dog squads to carry out inspections. An officer of Cantonment police station said that inspections were being carried out at all the hotels where the bomb threat was received



of the day note

Today, we have not come here to make any big decision. My purpose was to convey a message to the people that we are alive to their situation. We do not want them to think that all our attention is on Pahalgam and we have forgotten Ramban



OMAR ABDULLAH | CHIEF MINISTER, JAMMU AND KASHMIR

The prime minister should have been there during the all-party meeting. He had gone to electioneering in Bihar. So what is important to him? He is putting 'Topi' (hat) on people (meaning fooling people)



SIDDARAMAIAH | CHIEF MINISTER, KARNATAKA

Tamil Nadu has its own unique identity. IAS and IPS officials of TN cadre are held in high regard. And if they are from the state, then their stature increases



MK STALIN | CHIEF MINISTER, TAMIL NADU

Govt issues advisory to media channels

The advisory extends to news agencies, digital platforms, and social media users, emphasizing the need for utmost caution and responsibility in reporting matters related to national security

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 26: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Saturday issued an advisory directing all media outlets to refrain from broadcasting live coverage of military operations or movements of security forces.

The advisory extends to news agencies, digital platforms, and social media users, emphasizing the need for utmost caution and responsibility in reporting matters related to national security.

"In the interest of national security, all media platforms, news agencies, and social media users are advised to exercise utmost responsibility and adhere strictly to existing laws and regulations while reporting on matters concerning defence and other security-related operations," the Ministry said in a statement.

The government specifically prohibited the real-time dissemination of visuals, live reporting from sensitive locations, and the use of "source-based" information relating to ongoing military actions.

It warned that premature disclosure of sensitive operational details could inadvertently assist hostile elements, jeopardising both the effectiveness



The Ministry warned that premature disclosure of sensitive operational details could inadvertently assist hostile elements, jeopardising both the effectiveness of missions and the safety of personnel involved

of missions and the safety of personnel involved.

Citing past experiences such as the Kargil conflict, the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, and the Kandahar hijacking, the advisory underlined how unrestricted media coverage in times of crisis had in the past led to unintended con-

sequences detrimental to national interests. The Ministry stressed that the media, digital platforms, and individual users play a crucial role in upholding national security.

"Beyond the legal obligations, it is a shared moral duty to ensure that collective actions do not compromise the integrity of ongoing operations or endanger the lives of security forces," the statement said.

This advisory reiterates earlier communications from the Ministry, reminding broadcasters of Rule 6(1) (p) of the Cable Television Networks (Amendment) Rules, 2021. The rule clearly states: "No programme should be carried in the cable service which contains live coverage of any anti-terrorist operation by security forces, wherein media coverage shall be restricted to periodic briefing by an officer designated by the appropriate Government, till such operation concludes."

7 sanitation workers killed, 5 hurt after being hit by vehicle

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gurugram, April 26: Seven sanitation workers, six of them women, were killed and five others were injured after they were run over by a speeding truck near Ibrahimbas village on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway in Nuh district Saturday morning, police said.

The injured have been admitted to the hospital for treatment where their condition remains critical, they said.

The accident took place around 10 am when about 11 sanitation workers were cleaning the expressway.

A speeding pickup vehicle hit the workers, killing six of them on the spot, police said.

Locals informed the police and helped rushing the injured to the hospital, they said.

The deceased have been identified as Resham, 60, Prem, 60, Ratna, 40, Pista, 30, Jaidei, 40, Satanbati, 30, all natives of Kheri Kalan village under Pinangwa Police Station, and Aas Mohammad, 45, a native of Jhimrawat village under Ferozpur Jhirka Police Station.

The injured were Lajawati, 41, Hemlata, 37, Jagwati, 32, all of them natives of Kheri Kalan village. They were referred to Delhi due to their critical condition.

The fourth injured Anita, 32, a native of Rigad village, was admitted to medical college, Nalhar.

Nuh District Commissioner Vishram Kumar Meena said all possible financial help will be given to the affected families.

Police have arrested the truck driver and identified him as Monu, a native of Mohammadpur village in Mahendergarh district.

UPSC releases score cards



Civil services exam topper Shakti Dubey scores 51.5 per cent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 26: Banaras Hindu University's (BHU) post-graduate Shakti Dubey has scored 51.5 per cent in the civil services examination, according to the details of the selected candidates' marks released by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

Dubey (28) got a total of 1,043 marks - 843 in the written exam and 200 in the personality test. She cleared the exam in her fifth attempt with political science and international relations as her optional subject.

The merit is determined out of the total of 2,025 marks - the written or main exam is of 1,750 marks and the interview is of 275 marks. Second-rank achiever Harshita Goyal has scored 1,038 marks (51.28 per cent) - 851 in the main exam and 187 in the interview.

Goyal did her post-graduation in chartered accountancy. She has a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. Goyal (24) qualified the exam with political science and international relations as her optional subject in her third attempt. She lives in Gujarat's

Vadodara and her home state is Haryana. Third and fourth-rank holders Dongre Archit Parag and Shah Margi Chirag have got 1,038 (848 in the main exam and 190 in the interview) and 1,035 (825 in the main exam and 210 in the interview) marks, respectively.

Thus, Parag has also scored 51.28 per cent and Chirag 51.11 per cent. Parag holds a Bachelor of Technology degree in electrical and electronics engineering from the Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT), Tamil Nadu. A native of Pune, 26-year-old Parag cleared the exam in his third attempt.

Chirag (26) has a Bachelor of Engineering degree in computer engineering from the Gujarat Technological University, Ahmedabad. She cracked the examination in her fifth attempt. Delhi topper Akash Garg has got 1,032 marks (831 in the main exam and 201 in the interview) or 50.96 per cent.

Garg (24) secured the fifth rank in his second attempt, with sociology as his optional subject.

He has a Bachelor of Technology degree in computer science from the Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi.

As many as 1,009 candidates - 725 men and 284 women - have cleared the civil services examination this year, the results of which were declared on Tuesday.

SHORT TAKES

Mercury soars to 42.1 deg C in Delhi

New Delhi: Delhi Saturday recorded its highest maximum temperature in the last three years, with the mercury touching 42.1 degrees Celsius. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the last time a higher temperature was recorded was in 2022, when the maximum had reached 43.5 degrees Celsius. The minimum temperature Saturday settled at 20.7 degrees Celsius, 3.1 notches below the seasonal average. Humidity levels fluctuated between 35 per cent and 15 per cent.

TN CM Stalin hikes pension of ex-MLAs

Chennai: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin Saturday announced in the State Assembly that the pension of former MLAs and MLCs (members of the now defunct upper house, legislative council) would be increased to ₹35,000 from ₹30,000. The annual medical allowance for them shall also be increased to ₹1 lakh from the current ₹75,000, he said. Referring to representations seeking a hike in pension of former MLAs and MLCs, Stalin said, effective April 1, 2025, it would be increased to ₹35,000 per month from ₹30,000.

Mob attacks police station in Bihar

Katihar (Bihar): Five policemen were injured after a mob attacked Dandkhora police station in Bihar's Katihar district, officials said Saturday. Speaking to PTI, Katihar SP Vaibhav Sharma said, "The incident took place when a group of people attacked Dandkhora police station in the intervening night of Friday and Saturday with an aim to free a person arrested in connection with violation of the prohibition laws."

4 killed as speeding ambulance overturns

Mirzapur (UP): A pregnant woman among four was killed when the ambulance they were travelling in overturned while attempting to overtake a truck loaded with gravel here Saturday, police said. Two other people were injured in the accident and were referred to a hospital in Varanasi, they said. Senior Superintendent of Police Somen Verma said that Saturday afternoon near Chhato Trimukhani gram sabha. An ambulance was carrying a pregnant woman, Hiravati Devi, to a hospital, along with five other passengers.

SNIPPETS

Mumbai police question Tahawwur Rana for 8 hours

Mumbai: A Mumbai crime branch team questioned Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a key accused in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, for over eight hours in New Delhi where he is in National Investigation Agency's custody, officials said Saturday. The crime branch team comprising four officers questioned Rana Wednesday for his alleged role in the conspiracy of the terror attacks, an official said. During the questioning, Rana gave evasive answers and did not cooperate, the official said without giving any further information. Rana, a 64-year-old Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman, was extradited from the USA for his alleged role in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks earlier this month. He is currently in the NIA's custody in the national capital.

Bharat Summit passes Hyderabad resolution on global issues

Hyderabad: The Bharat Summit 2025, a two-day global conclave held here Saturday adopted the 'Hyderabad Resolution: Delivering Global Justice' a 44-point charter, reaffirming steadfast commitment to the values of freedom, equality, justice, and solidarity. The resolution condemned terrorism in all forms, including by nations that support violence and vowed to stand with progressive movements around the world that are being silenced. Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi delivered the keynote address on the second day. Social and traditional media are being manipulated, and intrusive surveillance is employed against activists and dissenters while undermining the rule of law and public accountability fosters an environment ripe for unchecked power and corruption, it said.



Tourists visit the Taj Mahal on a hot summer day, in Agra, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

Pakistani Hindu refugees anxious over visa status

As the April 27 deadline approaches, the atmosphere among Hindu refugees from Pakistan remains tense, with families clinging to hope that they will not be uprooted again

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 26: Pakistani Hindu refugees staying at Delhi's Majnu Ka Tila are anxious about their status due to inadequate information even though the government has clarified that Long Term Visas (LTVs) already granted to Hindu Pakistani nationals will remain valid.

Delhi Police officials said that a verification drive has been launched but they will ensure that no one is harassed unnecessarily.

India announced Thursday that all visas issued to Pakistani nationals would be revoked from April 27 and asked

these people to leave the country as tensions between the two countries escalated after the barbaric terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam left 26 people dead.

While the government later clarified that LTVs already granted to Hindu Pakistani nationals will remain valid, many refugees say they are worried about their fate as their visas are renewed every two years and their applications for Indian citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 are still being processed.

Sona Das, president of the Hindu refugee community at Majnu Ka Tila, said several families have been living



in Delhi for years, renewing their visas periodically after document verification by authorities.

"Also, many of these families crossed over from Pakistan just one or two months ago, some are living in camps near Majnu Ka Tila, while others have taken shelter under the Signature

Bridge," Das told PTI.

Recently, the police asked the refugees to submit their documents for verification to check if anyone was staying illegally or using forged papers, he said.

"All relevant documents were collected, but people are nervous about what might happen next," he added.

Many refugees, awaiting citizenship under the Citizenship Amendment Act, fear potential displacement as authorities conduct document verification drives

Delhi Police officials said they will ensure that no one is harassed unnecessarily. "We are simply checking that all migrants have proper documents," an official said.

Following the government's directive, the Delhi Police has launched a drive to ensure that no Pakistani nationals are residing illegally in the capital. Officials said the focus would be

on verifying documents of those who recently entered India.

Krishan Lal, another resident of the refugee camp, said he is worried about his family. "My wife, children and brother applied for Indian citizenship, but it hasn't been granted yet," Lal said.

Earlier, March 11, the Centre had granted Indian citizenship to 186 Pakistani Hindus under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019. However, many others are still waiting.

After the decision, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has also spoken to the chief ministers of all states, directing them to ensure that no Pakistani national stays beyond the new deadline.

The revocation of visas does not apply to long-term visas issued to Hindu Pakistani nationals, these remain valid, officials said.



A monthly pension of ₹10,000 will be provided to Adhikari's father. The ₹10 lakh compensation for the family will be divided equally, with ₹5 lakh going to his wife and ₹5 lakh to his parents

MAMATA BANERJEE | CHIEF MINISTER, WEST BENGAL

HC ADMITS PETITION AGAINST DY CM KESHAV PRASAD MAURYA

The Allahabad High Court has admitted a petition against Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya that alleged that he furnished a 'fake' degree while getting a licence for a petrol pump and contesting the election



of the day quote

Our objective is to challenge the mindset which has kept Assam a dependent state. We are promoting innovative thinking so that Assam can become a contributory state in the country

Things should be in order. Everything should be done properly. I observed that in some parts of Maharashtra, wrong things are taking place. I won't spare even the district collector and the district planning officer who come under me (Department of Planning)

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | CM, ASSAM

These incidents represent the desperate last efforts of those powers. It is an unbearable attack, but we will not spare anyone

PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION MINISTER

POST OF THE DAY

Dream 11 banned Pakistan cricket matches on their app Cricbuzz banned Pakistan cricket matches coverage on their app Actors from Pakistan also banned from releasing movies in theatre Then why ArnabGoswami is inviting people from Pakistan on his debate show? To get TRP? This must be banned right now. He isn't doing any good to nation by milking viewership.

@Amockx2022

SHORT TAKES

4 cadres of banned outfits in Manipur held

Imphal: Four members of two proscribed outfits in Manipur were arrested in Imphal East and West districts, police said Saturday. Acting on a tip-off, police personnel apprehended two cadres of the banned Prepak (Pro) from Seijang Mayai Leikai and Tellou Mamang Leikai areas in Imphal East district Friday, a senior officer said. They have been identified as Khongbantabam Samarjit Meitei (26) and Elangbam Langamba Meitei (25), and are "directly involved in extortion activities", he said.

Eminent historian MGS Narayanan no more

Thiruvananthapuram: MGS Narayanan, an eminent historian, academic and former chairman of Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), died at his residence in Malaparamba, Kozhikode, Saturday due to age-related ailments, family sources said. He was 93. He is survived by wife, son, and daughter. One of India's most reputed historians, he headed the department of history at University of Calicut from 1976 to 1990 and served as ICHR chairman from 2001-2003.

4 killed in cracker blast in Tamil Nadu

Salem (Tamil Nadu): Four persons, including two boys, were killed in an accidental firecracker blast near a temple at Kanjanaickenpatti village in the district Friday night, police said. Expressing his heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin Saturday announced a solatium of ₹3 lakh each to the affected families.

IN MAJOR MOVE TO NORMALISE TIES

India, China to resume Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Saturday said the Yatra is set to take place from June to August via two routes - Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand and Nathu La in Sikkim

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 26: After a gap of nearly five years, India and China will resume the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra from June - a move being seen as an attempt to normalise their relationship that was severely hit by the eastern Ladakh border standoff.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Saturday said the Yatra is set to take place from June to August via two routes - Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand and Nathu La in Sikkim.

The pilgrimage to Mount Kailash and Mansarovar Lake in China's Tibet Autonomous

Region holds religious significance to Hindus as well as Jains and Buddhists.

"Kailash Mansarovar Yatra organised by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is set to take place during June to August 2025," the MEA said.

The Yatra was suspended initially in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequently because of the military standoff between the two sides on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

The militaries of India and China completed disengagement of troops at the two remaining friction points of Demchok and Depsang under a pact



sealed October 21 last year.

Two days later, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks in the Russian city of Kazan and agreed to revive various

bilateral dialogue mechanisms.

Following the Modi-Xi talks, the two sides held a series of meetings in the last few months which were aimed at normalising the bilateral relations.

POST PAHALGAM MASSACRE

Houses razed, hundreds detained in Kashmir

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, April 26: Authorities in Kashmir have launched a massive crackdown on terrorists and their sympathisers in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack, razing homes of the ultras, raiding their safe havens and detaining hundreds of overground workers for questioning, officials said Saturday.

Over the past 48 hours, security forces have demolished the homes of six terrorists or their associates and detained hundreds of overground workers (OGWs) for questioning.

Officials said the campaign aims to dismantle the "terrorist ecosystem" and create a deterrent against similar attacks. Jammu and Kashmir Police raided over 60 locations in Srinagar Saturday, including areas like Safakadal, Soura, Bemina, and Lal Bazar. The searches, conducted legally in the presence of magistrates, targeted OGWs and associates of proscribed outfits, with a focus on seizing digital devices, weapons, and documents.

In Anantnag district, round-the-clock search operations are underway. Security forces have set up mobile checkpoints across the region to monitor suspicious movement. The crackdown intensified after



Tuesday's attack in Baisaran, Pahalgam, where terrorists opened fire on tourists, sparking fresh India-Pakistan tensions. Prime Minister Narendra Modi vowed to pursue the attackers "to the ends of the earth."

Among the homes demolished was that of Aadil Thoker, named as one of the attackers, in Bijbehara. Another blast destroyed the house of Asif Sheikh in Tral, whose role in the attack is under investigation. Four more houses were razed in Pulwama, Shopian, Kulgam, and Kupwara Friday night. These belonged to known terrorists including LeT commander Shahid Ahmad Kuttay and Pakistani-trained Ahsan ul Haq.

In Bandipora, one alleged OGW, Altaf Lalli, was killed by terrorists during a security operation. He had led forces to a suspected hideout when ultras

opened fire, injuring two policemen and escaping.

Police emphasized their commitment to uprooting terrorist networks, warning that anyone aiding anti-national activities will face strict legal consequences under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Meanwhile, tensions escalated along the Line of Control (LoC), with the Pakistani military carrying out unprovoked firing for a second consecutive night. Indian forces responded appropriately, and no casualties were reported. The Pakistani military is reportedly on high alert after India's pledge to avenge the Pahalgam killings.

Officials say the ongoing operations aim to disrupt terror networks, strengthen security, and reassure civilians as the region grapples with one of its deadliest attacks in recent years.

14 held in Assam so far for 'pro-Pak' posts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, April 26: At least 14 people have been arrested in Assam so far for making 'seditious comments' in the wake of the Pahalgam attack, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said Saturday.

He warned that if required, these people would be booked under the National Security Act (NSA).

"There are no similarities between Bharat and Pakistan. The two countries are enemy nations and we must remain like that," Sarma told reporters on the sidelines of a programme at the state BJP office here.

He said a leader of Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti was apprehended Friday for his 'anti-India comment' and warned that anyone who takes such a stance will be arrested.

"If required, we will impose provisions of NSA on them. We are examining all (social media) posts, and action will be taken against those who, we feel, are anti-national," the chief minister asserted.

In a post on X, he said the number of arrested persons for making 'pro-Pakistan' comments has increased to 14.

At least six arrests were reported during the day, including two in Cachar and one each in Hailakandi, Nagaon and Sribhumi.

Sarma, in another post on X, said one person was held in Sribhumi district Friday night.

MAJOR CRACKDOWN ON IMMIGRANTS IN GUJARAT

More than 1,000 illegal Bangladeshis detained

At least 890 Bangladeshis were detained in Ahmedabad and 134 in Surat, in what the minister termed as the biggest operation of its kind by the Gujarat police to date

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, April 26: More than 1,000 illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, including women and children, were detained following combing operations in Ahmedabad and Surat, and efforts were underway for their deportation, Minister of State for Home Harsh Sanghavi said Saturday.

At least 890 Bangladeshis were detained in Ahmedabad and 134 in Surat, in what the minister termed as the biggest operation of its kind by the Gujarat police to date.

Sanghavi warned illegal immigrants residing in Gujarat to surrender before the police on their own accord, or else they will be nabbed and deported.

He also warned of legal action against people providing shelter to illegal immigrants. "A historic success has been achieved in nabbing illegal Bangladeshis. As many as 890 illegal immigrants were caught by the Ahmedabad police and 134 by the Surat police. This is the biggest operation of the Gujarat Police against people



171mn lifted above poverty line in 10 yrs: WB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, April 26: India has lifted 171 million people from extreme poverty in the decade between 2011-12 and 2022-23, the World Bank said.

"Over the past decade, India has significantly reduced poverty. Extreme poverty (living on less than \$2.15 per day) fell from 16.2 per cent in 2011-12 to 2.3 per cent in 2022-23, lifting 171

million people above this line," the World Bank said in its 'Poverty & Equity Brief' on India.

It added that rural extreme poverty dropped from 18.4 per cent to 2.8 per cent, and urban from 10.7 per cent to 1.1 per cent, narrowing the rural-urban gap from 7.7 to 1.7 percentage points - a 16 per cent annual decline.

The brief said that India also transitioned into the lower-middle-income category. Using the

\$3.65 per day LMIC poverty line, poverty fell from 61.8 per cent to 28.1 per cent, lifting 378 million people out of poverty.

Rural poverty dropped from 69 per cent to 32.5 per cent, and urban poverty from 43.5 per cent to 17.2 per cent, reducing the rural-urban gap from 25 to 15 percentage points with a 7 per cent annual decline.

India's five most populous states - Uttar Pradesh, Maha-

rashtra, Bihar, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh - accounted for 65 per cent of the country's extreme poor in 2011-12 and contributed to two-thirds of the overall decline in extreme poverty by 2022-23, it said.

"Nevertheless, these states still accounted for 54 per cent of India's extremely poor (2022-23) and 51 per cent of the multidimensionally poor (2019-21)," the brief said.

Humans to blame for 80% drop in three-striped roofed turtle numbers

The study, supported by the National Mission for Clean Ganga, has revealed an alarmingly low genetic diversity in the rescued population of the freshwater reptile species, raising concerns over its long-term survival

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 26: The three-striped roofed turtle, once found in numbers in the Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers, has now largely disappeared with a government-funded study detecting an over 80 per cent drop in its population in half a century,

largely due to habitat loss, illegal trade and pollution.

The study, supported by the National Mission for Clean Ganga, has revealed an alarmingly low genetic diversity in the rescued population of the freshwater reptile species, raising concerns over its long-term survival.

Underscoring the urgent need for science-backed conservation efforts, the study called for long-term genetic tracking, stricter enforcement against poaching, and efforts to restore the semi-aquatic turtle's habitat, especially in its last stronghold - the National Chambal Sanctuary.

The sanctuary is located on the Chambal river near the tri-point of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. "The population of Batagur



dhongoka (three-striped roofed turtle) has experienced a substantial decline due to entanglement in fishing nets, the construction of major hydrological projects affecting river flow dynamics and nesting beaches, water pollution, and the detrimental effects of illegal trade," the study said.

life Institute of India analysed genetic samples from the turtles housed at two Turtle Rescue and Rehabilitation Centres - TRRC in Varanasi and GARRC in Narora - part of a captive care initiative under the Namami Gange programme.

Using mitochondrial DNA and microsatellite markers, the study found that the population

exhibit low levels of genetic variation, a warning sign for any species on the brink.

The genetic data showed only weak structuring between the two populations, one from TRRC in Varanasi and the other from GARRC in Narora, suggesting past intermixing but also indicating the danger of inbreeding. The average heterozygosity was under 50 per cent and many individual turtles carried similar genetic markers. Moreover, the demographic pattern estimated by the Bayesian skyline plot (BSP) analysis indicates historical stability followed by growth in the effective population size, with a recent reduction in population size from 2,000 years ago.

The study flagged a major concern for the ongoing rehabilitation programme - a lack of clarity around the geographic origin

of some rescued turtles. This not only makes it harder to plan successful reintroductions but also raises the risk of outbreeding depression if genetically mismatched turtles are placed with wild populations, it said.

"Gathering information on the geographic origin of individual (turtles) is sometimes difficult and the release of these unknown origin rescue individuals in the wild is often accompanied by high initial losses of released individuals.

In order to ensure the effective protection and conservation of the three-striped roofed turtle, the government has taken a proactive measure by incorporating it into Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, as amended in 2022. Species under this schedule enjoys the highest level of protection.



Singaporeans may have different views about issues, but we cannot allow external actors to exploit whatever differences we may have to weaken us or advance their interests. Singapore's politics must be for Singaporeans alone to decide

LAWRENCE WONG | PM, SINGAPORE

UGANDA EBOLA OUTBREAK ENDS

Uganda Saturday declared an end to the country's latest outbreak of ebola, three months after authorities confirmed cases of the highly infectious and often fatal viral hemorrhagic infection in the capital Kampala. East African country announced its latest outbreak on January 30 after the death of a male nurse who tested positive for the virus



of the day quote

China shall give full play to the advantages of the new system for mobilising resources, uphold self-reliance and self-strengthening, prioritise application-oriented development, and promote orderly advancement of the AI sector toward a beneficial, safe and equitable direction



XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

The idea of a truce or its duration is not rejected by us, and we are ready to discuss it within the framework of negotiations. We are open to any serious proposals to end the war



TAHER AL-NONO | MEDIA ADVISER, HAMAS

I will resign after 14 months and hand over the premiership to Deuba



KP SHARMA OLI | PM, NEPAL

SHORT TAKES

Israel continues assault; 49 killed

Deir Al-Balah: At least 49 people were killed by Israeli strikes in the last 24 hours, according to health officials, as Arab mediators scrambled to restart a ceasefire. An airstrike in a neighbourhood in western Gaza City early Saturday morning, flattened a three-story house, killing 10 people, according to a cameraman cooperating with The Associated Press. The number was confirmed by Gaza's Health Ministry, along with three more people who were killed in the Shati refugee camp along the city's shoreline. The attacks come as Hamas said on Saturday that it sent a high-level delegation to Cairo to try and get the stalled ceasefire back on track. There was no immediate comment from Israel on the strikes.

US, Iran N-talks

Muscat: Iran and the United States began in-depth negotiations in Oman over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear programme Saturday, talks that likely will hinge on the Islamic Republic's enrichment of uranium. Iranian state television reported the talks had begun in Muscat, the mountain-wrapped capital of this sultanate on the eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula. However, neither Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi nor US Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff offered any immediate specifics or details on the talks that they'll lead. Araghchi arrived Friday in Oman and met with Omani Foreign Minister Badr al-Busaidi, who has mediated the two previous rounds of talks in Muscat and Rome.

PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK

Reprehensible act of terrorism: UNSC

The 15-nation Security Council underlines need to hold perpetrators accountable

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, April 26: The UNSC has "condemned in the strongest terms" the terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir, stressing that those responsible should be held accountable and the organisers and sponsors of this "reprehensible act of terrorism" should be brought to justice.

The 15-nation Council issued a Press Statement on 'terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir' in which the members "condemned in the strongest terms the terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir" April 22, during which at least 26 people were killed and many more injured. "The members of the Security Council underlined the need to hold perpetrators, organisers, financiers and sponsors of this reprehensible act of terrorism accountable and bring them to justice," the press statement said.

"They stressed that those responsible for these killings should be held accountable, and urged all States, in accordance with their obligations under



international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with all relevant authorities in this regard," it said.

A press statement is a declaration to the media made by the President of the Security Council on behalf of all 15 Members. France is President of the Council for the month of April and the press statement was issued by Council President Permanent Representative of France to the UN Ambassador Jerome Bonnafont.

It is learnt that the US had floated the draft statement, which was then discussed by Council members. Pakistan currently sits in

the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member. A press statement requires agreement from all Council members and is a negotiated text.

The members of the Security Council expressed their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government of India and the Government of Nepal, and wished a speedy and full recovery to those who were injured. In the April 22 terror attack in Pahalgam, 25 Indians and one Nepali citizen were killed. The victims were mostly tourists from all across India.

The UNSC members reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations

constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. They reiterated that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable, regardless of their motivation, wherever, whenever and by whomever committed.

They reaffirmed the need for all States to combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

India, Pak will figure it out: Trump

New York: US President Donald Trump has said there has always been tensions between India and Pakistan and the two countries will figure it out between themselves "one way or the other". Trump made these remarks Friday after he was asked about tensions between India and Pakistan in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 civilians were killed and if he would be talking to the leaders of the two nations. "I am very close to India and I'm very close to Pakistan, as you know. And they've had that fight for 1,000 years in Kashmir. Kashmir has been going on for 1,000 years, probably longer than that. And it was a bad one yesterday, though, that was a bad one. Over 30 people," Trump said during a press gaggle with reporters aboard Air Force One on the way to Rome. There have been "tensions on that border for 1,500 years. So you know, the same as it's been, but they'll get it figured out one way or the other. I'm sure... I know both leaders. There is great tension between Pakistan and India. But there always has been", he said.

Pak official's throat slit gesture at protesters in UK



There was a face-off between Indian diaspora groups who gathered to protest Pakistan-backed terrorism in the wake of the Pahalgam terrorist attack and counter-protesters outside the Pakistan High Commission here, which saw scenes of a Pakistani diplomatic official making threatening gestures. In videos posted by Indian community groups from Friday evening's protest on social media, the Pakistani official can be seen taunting them from the balcony of the mission building at Lowndes Square. He was holding a poster with a sketch of Captain Abhinandan Varthaman and the words "Chai is Fantastic" - a reference to the Indian Air Force (IAF) pilot's captivity in February 2019. The official, standing next to a large banner reading "Pakistan stands with Kashmiris", could be seen making a threatening throat-slitting gesture towards the Indian protesters across the building. There was a strong Metropolitan Police security detail in place, with several officers lined up between both groups of demonstrators to ensure order. The tense face-off saw Indians waving placards calling on Pakistan to "End Terror on Kashmir" alongside the Indian national flag. "Holding the Indian tricolour and placards reading 'Stop Terrorism', we are here to condemn the killing of innocents by Pakistan's support of terrorism in Kashmir. We demand strict international action and urge the UK government to stand with India and reconsider its policy towards Pakistan," said a spokesperson for the Friends of India Society International (FISI) UK. "In a shocking and utterly deplorable display, a member of the Pakistani High Commission in the UK brandished a photo of India's Wing Commander Abhinandan and made a barbaric throat-slitting gesture during a protest over the Pahalgam attack - an act that reflects not only blatant hostility but also a dangerous disregard for diplomatic norms and human decency," the spokesperson added. "Join us to stand for unity, justice and humanity and protest against terror attacks on innocents," read the flyers outside the Pakistan High Commission in London. The Pakistani counter-protesters had organised loudspeakers and were blaring patriotic songs in an attempt to drown out the Indian protesters' anti-terror sloganeering and speeches.

SNIPPETS

Over 450 Indians leave Pak for home via Wagah border

Lahore: More than 450 Indians have left Pakistan for their home via the Wagah border over the last three days after they were forced to cut short their visits because of cancellation of visas in the wake of developments following the Pahalgam terror attack. Among those who left Saturday were 23 Indians, who were part of a broadcast company of PSL (Pakistan Super League) 2025, officials said here. Around 300 Indians returned home Friday and 100-odd Thursday via the same route, the officials added. At the same time, 200 Pakistani nationals have returned home from India, they said. In Pakistan, individuals holding long-term visas, Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) and those with 'No Objection to Return to India' stamps were denied border crossing. Some Indian-origin foreign nationals, including Sikh families, were stopped by Indian immigration and security officials from entering into Pakistan, the officials said.



Pak initiates 'emergency' steps to secure drug supplies

Islamabad: Pakistani health authorities have initiated "emergency preparedness" measures to secure pharmaceutical supplies in response to the suspension of trade ties with India, according to a media report Saturday. Geo News reported that India trade halt triggered "urgent measures to secure" pharmaceutical needs in Pakistan and health authorities have initiated "emergency preparedness" measures to secure the supplies. The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has confirmed that while there has been no formal notification regarding the ban's impact on the pharmaceutical sector, contingency plans are already in place, it said. "Following the 2019 crisis, we had started preparing for such contingencies. We are now actively looking at alternative avenues to meet our pharmaceutical needs," the report quoted a senior DRAP official as saying. Currently, Pakistan relies on India for 30% to 40% of its pharmaceutical raw materials, including Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) and various advanced therapeutic products.



Russia declares liberation of Kursk; Ukraine denies claim

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Moscow, April 26: Russia Saturday declared full liberation of western Kursk region and lauded the role of North Korean troops in purging the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Parts of the Kursk region were captured by the Ukrainian armed forces in August 2024 in incursion. Ukraine denied Russia's claim.

Briefing President Vladimir Putin, Chief of the General Staff of RF Armed Forces, Gen Valery Gerasimov said: "Kursk

region is fully liberated from Ukrainian troops after the last habitation of Gornal was liberated this morning."

"Soldiers and officers of the Korean People's Army, performing combat missions shoulder to shoulder with Russian servicemen, demonstrated high professionalism during the repelling of the Ukrainian invasion, demonstrated fortitude, courage and heroism in the battle," TASS quoted Gen Gerasimov as saying.

"The Russian side will never forget its friends from



the DPRK," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova thanked the North Koreans for standing by Russia.

Kiev had attempted to occupy the Kursk region bordering on eastern Ukraine to take over control of gas export terminal Sudzha as a bargaining chip in

future negotiations. However, backed by NATO arms and mercenaries, Ukrainian forces were unable to capture the regional Atomic Power plant.

In August 2024, Ukraine attacked across the border and took control of approximately 1,300 square kilometres of land in the hope of using it in future negotiations.

Ukrainian officials denied Russia's claim about the Kursk region. They said the fighting was still continuing. "The statements of representatives of the high command of the aggressor

country about the alleged end of hostilities in the Kursk region of the Russian Federation are not true," Ukraine's General staff said Saturday.

"The defensive operation of the Ukrainian Defence Forces in certain areas in the Kursk region continues. The operational situation is difficult, but our units continue to hold designated positions and carry out assigned tasks, while inflicting effective fire damage on the enemy with all types of weapons, including using active defense tactics," it added.

N Korea unveils new 'Kim Jong Un style' 5,000-tonne warship



REUTERS

Seoul, April 26: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un attended a ceremony for the launch of a "new multipurpose destroyer", state media KCNA reported.

The 5,000-tonne warship was equipped with the "most powerful weapons" and built "within 400-odd days perfectly with our own strength and technology", the report said, quoting Jo Chun Ryong, a secretary in the ruling Workers' Party.

Kim, in a speech from the launch reported by KCNA, said the warship would be handed over to the navy and go into service early next year.

Footage from North Korea's state-run television KRT showed Kim arriving in Nampho with his daughter Ju Ae after travelling to the western port city by train.

"If the US continues to renew its record in the protests of military power, we will have no choice but to renew it in the exercise of strategic deterrence," the leader was heard saying on TV footage.

The launch, which took place Friday at the military shipbuilding dockyard of Nampho, marked a new era of the "great Kim Jong Un-style fleet building", KCNA said, quoting Vice-Admiral Pak Kwang Sop.

MASSIVE FUNERAL, HUMBLE BURIAL

REUTERS

Vatican City, April 26: Presidents, royalty and simple mourners bade farewell to Pope Francis Saturday at a solemn funeral ceremony, where a cardinal appealed for the pontiff's legacy of caring for migrants, the downtrodden and the environment to be kept alive.

US President Donald Trump, who had clashed with the pope on those issues, sat with the rows of foreign dignitaries on one side of Francis' coffin in the vast St Peter's Square.

On the other side sat cardinals who will pick Francis' successor at a conclave next month, deciding if the new pope should continue with the late pontiff's push for a more open Church or cede to conservatives who want to return to a more traditional papacy.

The Argentine pope, who reigned for 12 years, died at the



age of 88 Monday after suffering a stroke.

"Rich in human warmth and deeply sensitive to today's challenges, Pope Francis truly shared the anxieties, sufferings

and hopes of this time," said Italian Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, who presided over the funeral Mass.

In spiritual language, the 91-year-old Re gave a simple

- Presidents, royalty, pilgrims attend funeral Mass
Vatican estimates crowd of 250,000 at the event
Pope's casket taken through Rome in ceremonial procession
His tomb inscribed just 'Franciscus', his name in Latin

message: there was no going back. The first pontiff from Latin America had been "attentive to the signs of the times and what the Holy Spirit was awakening in the Church," he said.

Applause rang out as Francis' coffin, inlaid with a large cross, was brought out of the basilica and into the sun-filled square by 14 white-gloved pallbearers at the start of the Mass.

The Vatican estimated more

than 250,000 people attended the ceremony, cramming the square and the roads around.

The crowds clapped loudly again at the end of the service when the ushers picked up the casket and tilted it slightly so more people could see.

Aerial views of the Vatican showed a patchwork of colours - black from the dark garb of the world's leaders, red from the vestments of some 250 cardinals, the purple worn by some of the 400 bishops and the white worn by 4,000 attending priests.

Francis, who shunned much of the pomp and privilege of the papacy, had asked to be buried there rather than in St Peter's - the first time a pope had been laid to rest outside the Vatican in more than a century.

The burial itself was conducted in private.

The popemobile left the Vatican from the Perugino Gate, a side entrance just yards away

“If steel is the backbone of India's economy, then coal and mines are the foundation. A robust raw material strategy is key to sustaining growth. We must secure consistent availability of essential raw materials like coking coal, limestone, iron ore, and critical elements such as magnesium, nickel, and chromium”

G KISHAN REDDY | UNION MINISTER

COOPERATION MINISTRY AND SWIGGY INSTAMART SIGN MoU

The cooperation ministry has signed a memorandum of understanding with Swiggy Instamart to onboard cooperative dairy and other products on the e-commerce platform. Under the agreement, products under Bharat Organics and other cooperative dairy products will be available on Swiggy's e-commerce and q-commerce platforms.



of the day quote

Steel is an essential component in nearly every sector of life, be it shipping, shipbuilding, railways, defence, automobiles, infrastructure across the country, it is there in every walk of life

PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION MINISTER

We have focused on execution, not exaggeration, and that discipline sets our portfolio apart. By listening deeply and innovating with intent, we have expanded the brand across every channel. We will continue growing with the same consumer-first mindset because that's what drives real scale

VINAY NAIR | COCA-COLA INDIA AND SOUTHWEST ASIA VICE PRESIDENT

The company is observing some softness in the urban areas when it comes to credit pick up as government spends have not happened in the last year

UMESH REVANKAR | SHRIRAM FINANCE EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN

Apple plans to make most iPhones for US in India

REUTERS

Bangalore, April 26: Apple aims to make most of its iPhones sold in the United States at factories in India by the end of 2026, and is speeding up those plans to navigate potentially higher tariffs in China, its main manufacturing base, a source told Reuters.

The US tech giant is holding urgent talks with contract manufacturers Foxconn and Tata to achieve that goal, the person, who declined to be named as the planning process is confidential, said Friday.

Apple and Foxconn did not immediately respond to requests for comment, while Tata declined to comment.

Apple sells over 60 million iPhones in the US annually with roughly 80 per cent of them made in China currently.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has in recent years promoted India as a smartphone manufacturing hub, but higher duties on importing mobile phone parts compared to many other countries means it is still expensive for companies to produce in India.

For iPhones, manufacturing costs in India are 5-8 per cent higher than in China, with the difference rising to as much as 10 per cent in some cases, the source said.

Apple has already stepped up production in India to beat



US President Donald Trump's tariffs, shipping some 600 tons of iPhones worth \$2 billion to the United States in March. The shipments from India marked a record for both its contractors Tata and Foxconn, with the latter alone accounting for smartphones worth \$1.3 billion, Reuters reported last week.

In April, the U.S. administration imposed 26 per cent duties on imports from India, much lower than the more than 100 per cent China was facing at the time. Washington has since paused most du-

ties for three months, except for China.

Trump's administration has since signalled openness to de-escalating the trade war between the world's two largest economies that has raised fears of recession.

The Financial Times first reported about Apple's plan Friday.

As Apple diversifies its manufacturing beyond China, it has positioned India for a critical role. Foxconn and Tata, its two main suppliers there, have three factories in all, with two more being built.

Edible oil industry seeks hike in import duty of palm oil

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 26: Edible oil industry body SEA has demanded that the government should raise import duty on refined palm oil to 40 per cent from the current 32.5 per cent to protect the domestic processing industries.

Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) President Sanjeev Asthana has written a letter to Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi requesting him to raise import duty difference between CPO and RBD Palmolein for providing level-playing field to domestic refining industries.

"This import of finished goods is contrary to our national interests and is seriously affecting the capacity utilisation of our palm refining industry," Asthana said, adding that the refined palmolein is cheaper by USD 50 per tonne currently.

"The main reason for rise in palmolein imports is the encouragement given by exporting countries (Malaysia and Indonesia) to their industry. They have kept high export duties on CPO and low export duty on palmolein (finished product)," he said.

Asthana urged the minister to increase RBD palmolein duty from current level of 32.5 per cent to 40 per cent.

Effective September 14, 2024, the Basic Customs Duty on Crude Soybean Oil, Crude Palm Oil, and Crude Sunflower Oil has been raised from zero to 20 per cent, making the effective duty on crude oils to 27.5 per cent.

Anant Ambani appointed Executive Director of RIL



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 26: Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's youngest son, Anant has been appointed as Executive Director of Reliance Industries Ltd for a five-year term effective May 1, the company said.

Ambani had in August 2023 inducted his three children - twins Isha and Akash and Anant - on the board of oil-to-telecom conglomerate as non-executive directors, in preparation of an eventual succession plan.

Asia's richest person in recent years has said that the children would have significant roles at Reliance, India's most valuable and profitable company.

Eldest son Akash is already chairman of the telecom arm, Jio Infocomm since June 2022 after joining the unit in 2014.

His twin sister Isha drives the company's retail, e-com-

merce and luxury businesses. Anant overseas new energy business.

All three children are on board of Jio Platforms, the unit that holds telecom and digital properties of Reliance, and Reliance Retail.

"The Board of Directors of Reliance at its meeting on April 25, on the recommendation of the Human Resources, Nomination and Remuneration Committee, considered and appointed Anant M. Ambani, a Non-Executive Director... as Whole-time Director designated as Executive Director of the Company, for a period of 5 years with effect from May 1, 2025, subject to approval of members of the company," Reliance said in a stock exchange filing.

Anant, a graduate from Brown University, is the first among the Ambani siblings to be appointed as an executive director at Reliance.

Q4 RESULTS CORNER

India Cements profit at ₹14.68cr

New Delhi: The India Cements Ltd, now an Aditya Birla Group firm, Saturday reported a consolidated net profit of ₹14.68 crore for the quarter ended in March 2025. It had reported a net loss of ₹60.55 crore in the January-March period a year ago, according to a BSE filing. However, its revenue from operations was down 3.11 per cent to ₹1,197.30 crore in the March quarter of FY25. This was at ₹1,235.74 crore in the corresponding quarter last fiscal. Total expenses of India Cements were at ₹1,313.2 crore, down marginally in the March quarter. Total income, which includes other income, declined by 2.52 per cent to ₹1,255.66 crore in the March quarter.

MRPL net profit drops 68%

New Delhi: Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) Saturday reported a 68 per cent drop in its March quarter net profit on the back of a fall in refining margins. Net profit was ₹363 crore in January-March - the fourth quarter of April 2024 to March 2025 fiscal year - compared with ₹1,137 crore earnings in the same period a year back, the company said in a statement. The firm, which is a subsidiary of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), earned USD 6.23 on turning every barrel of crude oil into fuel in the fourth quarter as compared to a gross refining margin of USD 11.35 per barrel a year back. Revenue from operations dropped to ₹27,601 crore from ₹29,190 crore in January-March 2024 on lower oil prices.

L&T Finance profit up 15%

New Delhi: Retail-focused non-bank lender L&T Finance has reported a 15 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to ₹636 crore for the January-March quarter of 2024-25. The company had earned a net profit of ₹554 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year. During the quarter, the NBFC's total income increased to ₹4,027 crore from ₹3,676 crore a year ago, L&T Finance said in a regulatory filing. Interest income grew to ₹3,750 crore during the period under review, from ₹3,323 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago.

10.35% annual growth in domestic air passengers

Airlines are expanding their fleet as well as networks to meet the rising air travel demand in the country, which is one of the world's fastest-growing civil aviation markets

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 26: India saw a robust 10.35 per cent annual growth in passengers carried by domestic airlines at 431.98 lakh last fiscal (FY25), from 391.46 lakh in the previous fiscal (FY24), according to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) data released Saturday.

In the month of March, the figure was 145.42 lakh as against 133.68 lakh during the corresponding period of the previous year, thereby registering a monthly growth of 8.79 per cent, according to the official data.

Low-cost carrier IndiGo reached 93.1 lakh passengers with



a market share of 64 per cent. Air India Group (Air India and Air India Express) flew 38.8 lakh passengers with 26.7 per cent market share, the DGCA data revealed.

Akasa Air and SpiceJet clocked 7.2 lakh and 4.8 lakh passengers, respectively, last month - with a market share of 5 per cent and 3.3 per cent.

The overall cancellation rate of scheduled domestic airlines for the month of March 2025 has been 0.56 per cent, according to the DGCA.

During March, a total of 739 passenger-related complaints had been received by the scheduled domestic airlines. The number of complaints per 10,000 passengers carried for the month of March has been around 0.51.

Indian stock markets extend recovery

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 26: The Indian stock markets extended their recovery for yet another week, registering nearly a one per cent gain amid a phase of consolidation.

After an initial surge, the benchmarks traded in a narrow range through the middle of the week, before witnessing profit-taking in the final session. Ultimately, the Nifty and Sensex ended at 24,039.35 and 79,212.53 respectively.

According to analysts, global market stability, driven by ongoing discussions between the United States and its trade partners on new trade agreements, helped ease concerns about the impact of tariffs on global commerce.

"This, coupled with renewed foreign institutional investor (FII) inflows, bolstered market sentiment. However, rising geopolitical tensions between India and Pakistan - following a terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir - sparked investor caution and led to some profit-booking," said Ajit Mishra-SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd.



Sector-wise, the sharp rebound in the IT sector stood out as a key driver.

Additionally, the auto, pharma, and real estate sectors also posted gains. Conversely, financials and fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sectors ended the week in the red. Broader market indices managed to close in the green, delivering gains in the range of 0.83 per cent to 1.73 per cent.

According to a note by Bajaj Broking Research, index on weekly chart has formed a bull candle with a long upper shad-

ow which maintained a higher high and higher low, signalling positive bias with profit booking at higher levels after recent strong up move.

"Going ahead in the coming truncated week, a move above last 3 sessions almost identical high (24,365) will open further upside towards 24,550 being the 61.8 per cent retracement of the entire decline (26277-21743). Failure to move above last week high (24365) will signal consolidation in the range 23,500-24,350," the note said.

Bank Nifty formed a bear candle with a lower high and lower low signalling consolidation with corrective bias for the third session in a row amid profit booking after recent strong rally of 11 per cent in the preceding 7 sessions.

"We expect index to consolidate in the range of 53,500-55,500 in the coming sessions thus working off the overbought condition developed after the recent strong rally," said Bajaj Broking Research.

In the current scenario, it is advisable to maintain a positive yet cautious approach, with a preference for hedged positions in the index.

Stock-specific opportunities are likely to remain abundant on both the long and short sides. Hence, the focus should be on identifying stocks with favourable risk-reward setups, said market watchers.

On the macroeconomic front, investors will closely track the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) data and the HSBC Manufacturing PMI Final data. Meanwhile, geopolitical developments between India and Pakistan will remain on the radar.

World breathes sigh of relief as Trump spares Fed, IMF

REUTERS

Washington, April 26: Global policymakers gathering in Washington this week breathed a collective sigh of relief that the U.S.-centric economic order that prevailed for the past 80 years was not collapsing just yet despite Donald Trump's inward-looking approach.

The Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were dominated by trade talks, which also brought some de-escalatory statements from Washington about its relations with China.

But some deeper questions hovered over central bankers and finance ministers after Trump's attacks on international institutions and the Federal Reserve: can we still count on the U.S. dollar as the world's safe haven and on the two lenders that have supported the international economic system since the end of World War Two?

Conversations with dozens of policymakers from all over

the world revealed generalised relief at Trump's scaling back his threats to fire Fed Chair Jerome Powell, the guardian of the dollar's international status whom he had previously described as a "major loser".

And many also saw a silver lining in U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's call to reshape the IMF and World Bank according to Trump's priorities because it implied that the United States was not about to pull out of the two lenders that it helped create at the Bretton Woods conference of 1944.

"This week was one of cautious relief," Austria's central bank governor Robert Holzmann said. "There was a turn (in the U.S. administration's stance) but I fret this may not be the last. I keep my reservations."

A politicization of the Fed and, to a lesser extent, the hollowing out of the IMF and World Bank are almost too much to fathom for most officials.

Deprived of a lender of last



resort, some \$25 trillion of bonds and loans issued abroad would be called into question.

At the heart of policymakers' concerns is that there is no ready alternative to the United States as the world's financial hegemon - a situation that economists know as the Kindleberger Trap after renowned histori-

an Charles Kindleberger.

To be sure, the euro, a distant-second reserve currency, is gaining popularity in light of the European Union's newly found status as an island of relative stability.

But policymakers who spoke to Reuters were adamant that the European single currency was not ready yet to dethrone the dollar and could at best

hope to add a little to its 20% share of the world's reserves.

Of the 20 countries that share the euro only Germany has the credit rating and the size that investors demand from a safe haven.

Some other members are highly indebted and prone to bouts of political and financial turmoil - most recently in France last year - which raise lingering questions about the bloc's long-term viability.

And the euro zone's geographical proximity to Russia - particularly the three Baltic countries that were once part of the Soviet Union - cast an even more sinister shadow.

With Japan now too small and China's heavily managed currency in an even worse position, this left no alternative to the dollar system underpinned by the Fed and the two Bretton Woods institutions.

In fact, the IMF and the World Bank could scarcely survive if their largest shareholder, the United States, pulled out, officials said.

"The U.S. is absolutely crucial for multilateral institutions," Polish Finance Minister Andrzej Domanski told Reuters. "We're happy they remain."

Still, few expected to go back to the old status quo and thorny issues were likely to await, such as widespread dependence on U.S. firms for a number of key services from credit cards to satellites.

But some observers argued that the market turmoil of the past few weeks, which saw U.S. bonds, shares and the currency sell off sharply, might have been a shot in the arm as it forced a change of tack by the administration.

"When President Trump talked about firing Jay Powell, the fact that markets reacted so vigorously to that ended up being a disciplining reality just reminding the administration that, if you cross that line, it could have some very severe implications," said Nathan Sheets, global chief economist at Citi.

Indian women's hockey team loses 3-5 to Australia 'A' in tour opener

Aussies draw first blood

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Perth, April 26: The Indian women's hockey team fought valiantly before losing 3-5 to a clinical Australia 'A' in its opening match of tour Down Under here Saturday.

India found the back of the net through Mahima Tete (27th minute), Navneet Kaur (45th), and Lalremsiami (50th), while Neasa Flynn (3rd), Olivia Downes (9th), Ruby Harris (11th), Tatum Stewart (21st), and Kendra Fitzpatrick (44th) scored for Australia 'A' at the Perth hockey stadium.

The match began at a frenetic pace, with Australia 'A' taking early control with a well-constructed field goal by Flynn.

The home team continued to press hard, and in quick succession, Downes and Harris capitalised on Indian defensive lapses to score two more field goals, ending the first quarter with a commanding 3-0 lead.

Australia 'A' carried the momentum into the second quarter, putting relentless pressure on the Indian defence.

After earning back-to-back penalty corners, Stewart converted one, stretching their advantage to 4-0.

Despite the early onslaught, India showed resilience, and Tete pulled a goal back with a sharp field goal, injecting some energy into the Indian side as they headed into half-time trailing 1-4.

The hosts upped the ante and



were rewarded for their efforts as Fitzpatrick netted another goal for her side to make it 5-1.

The Indian team launched a counterattack and the efforts bore fruit when vice-captain Navneet found the back of the net, narrowing the gap.

In the final quarter, both the teams created scoring opportunities. India showcased their fighting spirit once again when Lalremsiami slotted home a fine field goal, keeping the

Eves will aim to bounce back strongly when they face Australia 'A' again in the second match of the tour Sunday

comeback hopes alive.

Despite some late pressure, India could not find the net again.

In a touching gesture of solidarity, the India players wore black armbands during the match to mourn the loss of innocent lives lost in the Pahalgam attack April 22.

The team has decided to continue wearing black armbands for the remainder of the Australia tour as a mark of respect and remembrance for the victims and their families.

Thunderstorm washes out KKR vs PBKS clash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 26: Rain played spoilsport as Kolkata Knight Riders' IPL match against Punjab Kings was called off after the visiting team posted 201 for 4 here Saturday.

Prabhsimran Singh and Priyansh Arya slammed stellar half-centuries to lay a solid opening foundation, but KKR pulled things back at the death as Punjab Kings posted 201 for 4 after PBKS opted to bat.

In reply, KKR were seven for no loss in one over when a sudden thunderstorm struck around 9.35pm, sending debris flying across the ground and even blowing the covers into the stands.

The ground staff quickly covered the pitch, but relentless rain followed, leaving no scope for a resumption of play.

After nearly 90 minutes of waiting, with no let-up in the weather, the match was officially called off at 10.58pm.

As a result, both the teams shared one point each. KKR now have seven points from nine matches to stay at seventh spot, while Punjab Kings moved to 11 points from nine games.

Earlier, in-form Arya, who scored a maiden IPL century against Chennai Super Kings, continued his dream debut season with a classy 27-ball fifty.

He, along with the seasoned Prabhsimran, gave PBKS a blazing start with a 120-run opening stand in just 11.5 overs.

Arya was the early aggressor,



crafting a fluent 69 off 35 balls (8x4s, 4x6s), while Prabhsimran shifted gears after Arya's dismissal, finishing with a sparkling 83 off 49 deliveries (6x4s, 6x6s).

From a tentative 32 off 34 balls, Prabhsimran exploded by smashing 49 runs off his next 17 balls.

However, the momentum dipped after Prabhsimran's departure, with KKR conceding just 40 runs and picking up two wickets in the final five overs, a phase that could leave PBKS 20-30 runs short of a daunting total.

Vaibhav Arora (2/34) was the pick of KKR bowlers, dismissing Prabhsimran with a full toss.

Andre Russell, who broke the opening stand by removing Arya in the 12th over, finished

with 1/27 from three tidy overs.

Varun Chakravarthy (1/39) and Sunil Narine (0/35) also played key roles in slowing down the scoring rate in the second half.

In full flow, Prabhsimran had earlier unleashed an assault on Chakravarthy, smashing him for 4-6-4 in a 19-run over as PBKS looked set for a total in excess of 230.

Between overs 10 and 15, they hammered 71 runs and the run rate went past 11 runs per over.

It proved a good toss to win for Punjab Kings, who made merry on a batting paradise with the ball coming nicely on to the bat against a low-on-confidence KKR side.

Unlike previous matches where the pitch slowed down, Saturday's strip was perfect for batting, and Arya capital-

IPL STANDINGS					
TEAM	M	W	L	NRR	PTS
GT	8	6	2	1.104	12
DC	8	6	2	0.657	12
RCB	9	6	3	0.482	12
PBKS	9	5	3	0.177	11
MI	9	5	4	0.673	10
LSG	9	5	4	-0.054	10
KKR	9	3	5	0.212	7
SRH	9	3	6	-1.103	6
RR	9	2	7	-0.625	4
CSK	9	2	7	-1.302	4

ised with his array of elegant strokes.

He showed intent right from the start, cracking a cover drive off Arora and later lofting a stunning six over third man off a wide yorker from Harshit Rana.

The 23-year-old Delhi batter looked full of maturity, dominating KKR's attack with flair, while Prabhsimran overcame a slow start to launch a brutal assault once well-set.

Despite adding Chetan Sakariya and Rovman Powell to their lineup and employing a seven-bowler strategy, KKR once again struggled to master their home conditions at Eden Gardens.

Brief scores:
Punjab Kings: 201 for 4 in 20 overs (Priyansh Arya 69, Prabhsimran Singh 83, Shreyas Iyer 25 not out; Vaibhav Arora 2/34). Kolkata Knight Riders: 7 for no loss in 1 over.

SHORT TAKES

Women's tri-series

Colombo: Captain Harmanpreet Kaur would like to check the Indian women's team's pace-bowling resources, including rookie seamer Kashvee Gautam, when it takes on hosts Sri Lanka in the opening tri-series match here Sunday. The tournament kicks off the Women In Blue's preparations for the 50-over World Cup which will be held in India later this year and the bowling composition will be key. The batting department bears a settled look. Kashvee, a former India U-19 Women's T20 World Cup winner, was a revelation for Gujarat Giants in the Women's Premier League, in which she picked up 11 wickets in nine games at an economy rate of 6.45. India are coming into the tri-series having won their last six ODI games, albeit against inferior teams like West Indies and Ireland.

Theegala, Rai in top 10

Avondale: Sahith Theegala holed a 10-footer for an eagle and with his teammate Aaron Rai, he moved into top 10 with a second round 69 at the Zurich Classic of New Orleans. They were playing the alternate shot format. The Indian-origin pair had a birdie on the first, an eagle on the second and a birdie on the seventh. They dropped a shot on the fifth and parred the remaining holes, including all nine on the back stretch. Akshay Bhatia, who with Theegala, is signed up with Hero, missed the cut as he played with Carson Young. PGA TOUR rookies Isaiah Salinda and Kevin Vello shot a 3-under 69 in alternate-shot play to remain atop the leaderboard. Defending champions Rory McIlroy and Shane Lowry were six strokes back.

SNIPPETS

Shaili breaks Anju's 23-year-old record

New Delhi: After rewriting history with a strong jump of 6.64m to break Anju Bobby George's 23-year-old record at the Federation Cup, long jumper Shaili Singh said that it is just the beginning of her journey. The 21-year-old broke the record held by her coach and legendary Anju Bobby George at the National Federation Cup Athletics, held at Maharaja's College Ground in Ernakulam. Shaili leapt 6.64m, surpassing Anju's 2002 mark of 6.59m. "Breaking Anju ma'am's long-standing Federation Cup record is a moment of pride for me. Her achievements have always been my inspiration, and to follow in her footsteps means everything. This record has stood for 23 years because of how exceptional she was, and I'm honoured to now be part of this legacy. This is just the beginning of my journey, and I hope to continue making my country proud with many more milestones to come," Shaili said. Reflecting on the success of Shaili, the veteran Anju Bobby George lauded the youngster and said her historic performance shows the bright future of Indian women in sports. "Records are meant to be broken, and I'm thrilled to see Shaili accomplish this feat," said Anju.



India guaranteed 43 medals at Asian U-15, U-17 Boxing C'ships

Amman: Team India has confirmed 43 medals at the inaugural Asian U-15 & U-17 Boxing Championships, organised by the newly recognised Asian Boxing body under World Boxing, with four more pugilists punching their way into the semifinals on Day 7. India is now assured of at least 25 medals in the U-15 category and 18 in the U-17, as all semifinalists are guaranteed bronze. Aman Siwach (63kg) and Devansh (80kg) led the charge in the U-17 boys' section, both securing Referee Stopped Contest (RSC) wins over opponents from the Philippines and Jordan, respectively, in the last set of quarterfinal bouts. In the girls' division, Simranjeet Kaur (60kg) posted a commanding 5-0 win over Jordan's Aya Alhasanat, while Himanshi (70kg) ended her bout in the very first round with an RSC against Palestine's Farah Abou Layla, joining their cohorts in the penultimate round. Earlier, Nelson Khwairakpam (55 kg) secured an RSC win in the first round over Chinese Taipei's Wang Sheng-Yang, while Abhijeet (61 kg) and Lakshay Phogat (64 kg) cruised to 5-0 victories against opponents from Kyrgyzstan and Jordan, respectively in the men's U-15 category.



KALINGA SUPER CUP Mohun Bagan enter semifinals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 26: Indian Super League Shield and Cup winners Mohun Bagan Super Giant (MBSG) beat Kerala Blasters 2-1 to enter the Super Cup semifinals here Saturday.

MBSG, fielding an all-Indian squad except for Portuguese defender Nuno Reis, scored once in each half through Sahal Abdul Samad (22nd minute) and Suhail Ahmad Bhat (51st).

Sreekuttan MS (90+4) pulled one back for the Blasters, but it was too little, too late for the Kerala side.

The game began at a leisurely pace, with both teams not committing many bodies in the opposition half. After 20 minutes of no goal-mouth action, Mohun Bagan SG churned out the opener with their first meaningful attack of the match.

With some lightning-quick footwork, Salahudheen Adnan twisted and turned past left-back Naocha Singh and slipped a cross into the six-yard box. Getting on the end of it was Samad, who swiftly evaded Ruivah Hormipam's challenge and dinked the ball over goalkeeper Sachin Suresh to make it 1-0 in the 22nd minute.

From then on, it was all Kerala Blasters, who grew desperate for the equaliser. Noah Sadaoui cut in from the right and took a shot from distance, but he didn't get enough elevation, and the ball landed straight into the gloves of MBSG goalkeeper Dheeraj Singh.

The Blasters became increas-



ingly dangerous from corners. In the 30th minute, after playing a one-two with Vibin Mohanan, Sadaoui drilled a low cross that was cleared by Dipendu Biswas.

Later, from another corner, Hormipam's cross-turned-shot almost landed into the top corner, but Dheeraj did well to tip it over.

In the added time of first half, Mohammed Aimen was fed on the left wing by Vibin. The midfielder cut in from the left before seeing his right-footer swerve over the bar.

Before Kerala Blasters could even get into gear for the second half, Mohun Bagan SG struck another goal.

Ashique Kuruniyan created the second goal from the left flank. The India international skipped past Hormipam and squared an inch-perfect ball

into the six-yard box for Bhat to guide it into the net with ease.

Three minutes later, Dheeraj palmed over substitute Kwame Peprah's right-footed shot from a narrow angle.

With just five minutes to go, Peprah tried to set up Jimenez with a low cross into the six-yard box, but the Spaniard couldn't sort his feet out quickly enough and missed it completely.

Dheeraj again made himself big to deny Peprah from six yards before Ebindas's attempt on the rebound was cleared off the line by Amandeep.

The Mohun Bagan custodian was finally beaten in the 94th minute when Jimenez slipped a neat ball for Sreekuttan on the right. The substitute thrashed it over Dheeraj and into the back of the net, but it only turned out to be a consolation strike.

Shooter Shambhavi takes double gold

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 26: Shambhavi Kshirsagar of Maharashtra overcame world champion medalists, Olympic finalists, and national champions on her way to winning the women's 10m air rifle event of the 23rd Kumar Surendra Singh Memorial Shooting Championship (23rd KSSM), at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range here.

The 16-year-old, who was fifth in the Junior World Cup in Lima last year, topped the qualification stage with a high 633.5, before closing with a brilliant 10.8 for her last shot of the 24-shot final, to outgun Haryana's Ramita, a Paris Olympic finalist. World Championship bronze medallist Mehuli Ghosh of West Bengal won bronze.

She was in fact the star of Saturday at the Karni Singh Shooting Range, coming back later to take the silver in the junior women's event and a second gold in the youth women's competition.

The one to cherish would be the senior women's crown surely, where she found herself alongside Mehuli, Ramita, Ananya Naidu, the recently-crowned national champion, and Shreya Agrawal, a Junior World Championship medalist, among others.



COPA DEL REY FINAL

Referee in tears over Real Madrid TV attacks

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Madrid, April 26: The referee appointed for the upcoming Copa del Rey final between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid, Ricardo de Burgos Bengoetxea, became emotional Friday while discussing the intense pressure he faces ahead of the match.

He was questioned about a video released by Real Madrid's Club TV network, RMTV, which highlights his supposed mistakes in previous matches against them. This tactic is frequently employed by RMTV to influence referees before key games.

When asked about this latest video, de Burgos Bengoetxea could not hold back tears as he spoke about the impact on him and his family, reports Xinhua.



"When your son comes back from school and other kids have said to him that his father is a thief, it's really hard," he said. "They have no right to make us go through this, but it's not just something between profession-

als; a lot of families depend on this, and everyone should take some time to reflect on what they are doing."

Pablo Gonzalez Fuentes, who will serve as the VAR official for Saturday's match, also crit-

icised RMTV's actions. "They have to understand the consequences of these videos," he said, explaining that they lead to online campaigns against officials.

"We're seeing community managers on official social media platforms attacking the community for just one more like. We see actions by football players that suggest we're dishonest. When a journalist talks about 'thief', fans take that frustration out on the child who's about to referee a youth team. We must address these types of situations and return to a healthier and cleaner style of football," he commented.

Barcelona and Real Madrid meet in the Copa del Rey final Saturday with more than just the trophy on the line.

PSG's unbeaten run ends in Ligue 1

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, April 26: Paris Saint-Germain's bid to go unbeaten in Ligue 1 was ruined Friday when it lost to Nice 3-1.

PSG's first home defeat in almost a year was a shock reverse for a club which clinched the French league title three weeks ago and was shifting its focus to the Champions League semifinal first leg at Arsenal Tuesday.

Coach Luis Enrique rested several starters but it was still one-way traffic as PSG dominated the early stages.

However, profligate finishing and an inspired performance by Nice goalkeeper Marcin Bulka kept PSG scoreless.

Nice's Morgan Sanson broke the deadlock when Badredine Bouanani's elegant through ball left him with only Gianluigi Donnarumma to beat and he slipped the ball neatly under the keeper.



Nice's lead, however, lasted only five minutes. PSG's Fabian Ruiz turned inside the box and fired home a neat chip over the defense from Ousmane Dembélé.

Nice did the unlikely again a minute into the second half and once more it was Sanson who did the damage, scoring with a spectacular scissor kick volley. Even with the introduction

of Bradley Barcola, Gonçalo Ramos, Warren Zaire-Emery, and Lucas Beraldo, the home side failed to react and, incredibly, Nice scored again. An unmarked Youssouf Ndayishimiye headed home the third in the 70th.

The win lifted Nice into fourth place, equal on points with Monaco and a point behind second-placed Marseille.