

# AIADMK, BJP join hands for TN polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, April 11:** The BJP and AIADMK Friday sealed a poll alliance, with Union Minister Amit Shah declaring that the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly election will be fought under the leadership of AIADMK chief Edappadi K Palaniswami.

With the parties rekindling their alliance nearly two years after they parted ways, Shah said it will be Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s leadership at the Centre and Palaniswami at the state level.

“AIADMK and BJP have decided to fight next (year’s) polls...from 1998, AIADMK has been part of BJP alliance (at different points of time). PM Modi and late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa had worked together in national politics,” Shah told a press conference, flanked by Palaniswami and outgoing BJP TN chief K Annamalai, here.

“We will form a government together led by Edappadi Palaniswami,” he said, indicating it would be a coalition government should the NDA win.

He exuded confidence that

the NDA will get a solid mandate and form a government.

On AIADMK’s divergent stand on certain issues, Shah said they will sit and discuss. There will be a Common Minimum Programme if required.

He also slammed the ruling DMK in the state, alleging it was raking up issues like Sanatan Dharma, 3-language policy and delimitation with the sole intention to take attention away from key issues.

People were demanding answers from the ruling dispensation over a number of ‘scams,’ and they would vote on genuine

issues, Shah said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday hailed the AIADMK’s decision to join the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and asserted that it is important that the ‘corrupt and divisive’ DMK is uprooted at the earliest in Tamil Nadu.

“Stronger together, united towards Tamil Nadu’s progress! Glad that AIADMK joins the NDA family. Together, with our other NDA partners, we will take Tamil Nadu to new heights of progress and serve the state diligently. We will ensure a government that ful-

fills the vision of the great MGR and Jayalalithaa Ji,” Modi said in a post on X.

He said for the sake of Tamil Nadu’s progress and to preserve the uniqueness of Tamil culture, it is important that the ‘corrupt and divisive; DMK is uprooted at the earliest, which the alliance will ensure.

Palaniswami, also known as EPS, said the AIADMK was honoured to be welcomed into a partnership with NDA. “An alliance founded on a shared vision for Tamil Nadu’s progress and prosperity,” he said in a social media update.

# 2% DA hike for govt employees, pensioners

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 11:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday announced a two per cent hike in the dearness allowance (DA) for state government employees and pensioners.

With this hike, the ratio of DA for government employees and TI (temporary increase) for pensioners will rise from 53 per cent to 55 per cent, an official release issued by the CMO said.

It said the hike will be imple-

mented retrospectively from January 1, 2025. Employees will receive the increased DA as cash benefit along with their April salary. This decision will benefit around 8.5 lakh state government employees and pensioners, the release added.

Earlier, the state government had announced a 3 per cent hike in DA (from 50 per cent to 53 per cent) for its employees in October last year retrospectively. The pensioners also got a 3 per cent hike in dearness relief.

# Terrorist killed in encounter in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jammu, April 11:** One terrorist was killed in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir’s Kishtwar district Friday while a separate operation to track down a group of three terrorists is underway in Udhampur district, Army officials said.

The security agencies have expanded the scope of surveillance to the Bhaderwah area of Doda district to track the terrorists potentially moving between different locations in the hilly districts of the Jammu region. Deputy Inspector General (DIG), Kishtwar-Doda-Ramban Range, Shridhar Patil said the operations in the region have been going on for the past three days.

“One terrorist was eliminated this morning,” he told reporters in Kishtwar. Other terrorists in the region are trapped and the opera-

tion will continue until they are all eliminated, he added.

According to the officials, the encounter in Kishtwar broke out during an intelligence-based search-and-destroy operation launched jointly by Army and Jammu and Kashmir Police in the Chatru forest area of the district. During the operation, the forces established contact with the terrorists.

“The terrorists were effectively engaged, and a fire-fight ensued. One terrorist has been neutralised so far,” the Army’s White Knight Corps or 16 Corps, said in a post on X. “Despite hostile terrain and adverse weather, our brave soldiers continue relentless operations,” it said. Special forces braved high-snow areas and treacherous terrains to track down one terrorist, while a few others are still on the move under significant pressure from the security forces.

# Man killed, another hurt for opposing liquor trade

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Loisingha, April 11:** A violent outburst stemming from a long-standing family feud over illegal liquor trade has left one man dead and another critically injured in Sargada village under Loisingha block and Sadar police limits of Bolangir district. The incident unfolded Thursday night and has left the villagers shocked.

The deceased has been identified as Arun Sae Patel, a resident of the village, while the injured, Jogeswar Saraf, is currently undergoing treatment after suffering serious head injuries. Police and a forensic team arrived at the scene and launched an investigation Friday morning. The body was sent to Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital in Bolangir for post-mortem.

According to sources, Arun Sae Patel, son of Bijay Sae Patel of Sargada village, had a protracted dispute with one Prasadu Nayak and his son Uma over some local illicit liquor trade, which had created deep-seated conflicts between the families. A quarrel reportedly broke out Thursday afternoon between Prasadu, Arun and Jogeswar.

Following the altercation, Jogeswar returned home and told his wife that Prasadu assaulted him without provocation. Later, Jogeswar and his wife went to Prasadu’s

house to discuss the matter. However, in a fit of rage, Prasadu and his son allegedly attacked Jogeswar with wooden planks in front of his wife, leaving him severely injured. He received eight stitches on his head.

Jogeswar alleged that Arun too was attacked later, which resulted in his death.

In his statement to police, Bijay Sae Patel said that earlier in the day, Uma had visited their home and warned them to keep Arun under control. He said similar warnings had been issued before. In the fateful evening, Bijay and his wife had gone to nearby Bhadra village to attend a religious gathering. However, due to a thunderstorm, they were unable to return that night. Upon returning to the village at around 5 am Friday, they were informed about the death of Arun.

Meanwhile, Bijay demanded a fair investigation and strict action against the accused. The incident has sent shockwaves through the village. Local residents have demanded the district and police administrations to take strong steps to end illegal liquor trade in the area.

It is worth noting that Arun had unsuccessfully contested the 2022 panchayat elections for a Samiti member position.

Police have detained the father-son duo for questioning in connection with the incident.



DSPL-27

# ପଶୁପକ୍ଷୀଙ୍କୁ ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧାତରୁ ରକ୍ଷା ପାଇଁ ସଚକ୍ରିତା

## ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧାତ ନହେବା ପାଇଁ କ’ଣ କରିବେ:

ଦିନ ୧୧ଟାରୁ ଅପରାହ୍ନ ୩ଟା ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ଟାଣ ଖରାରେ ଗୃହପାଳିତ ପ୍ରାଣୀଙ୍କୁ ବାହାରକୁ ନଛାଡ଼ି ଗୁହାଳରେ କିମ୍ବା ଛାଇ ସ୍ଥାନରେ ରଖନ୍ତୁ ।

ପଶୁପକ୍ଷୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ସଜ୍ଜିତ ଥଣ୍ଡା ପାଣି ପିଇବାକୁ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ ଏବଂ ପ୍ରାଣୀଙ୍କ ବିଶ୍ରାମ ସ୍ଥାନ ବା ଗୋଠରେ ଜଳକୁଣ୍ଡର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ଗୁହାଳର ଆର୍ଦ୍ରବେଷ୍ଟ୍ୟ କିମ୍ବା ଟିଣ ଛପର ଉପରେ ନଡ଼ା ଓ ଡାଳପତ୍ର ବିଛାଇ ରଖନ୍ତୁ ଏବଂ ଗୃହପାଳିତ ପ୍ରାଣୀଙ୍କୁ ସବୁଜ ଘାସ, ନଡ଼ା, କୁଟା ଓ ପୁଷ୍ଟିକର ଖାଦ୍ୟ ଖାଇବାକୁ ଦିଅନ୍ତୁ ।

ଗୋରୁଗାଈଙ୍କୁ ପ୍ରତିଦିନ ଗାଧୋଇଦେବା ସହିତ ଗୁହାଳ କବାଟ ଓ ଝରକାରେ ଓଦା ଅଖା ଝୁଲାଇ ମଝି ମଝିରେ ପାଣି ସିଞ୍ଚନ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ବୁଲା ପଶୁ ଓ ପକ୍ଷୀଙ୍କୁ ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧାତରୁ ରକ୍ଷା କରିବା ପାଇଁ ଘର ଆଗରେ ଜଳକୁଣ୍ଡର ବ୍ୟବସ୍ଥା କରନ୍ତୁ ।

## ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧାତର ଲକ୍ଷଣ:

ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧାତ ହେଲେ ପଶୁପକ୍ଷୀମାନେ କିଛି ଖାଆନ୍ତି ନାହିଁ, ପାଟି ବାଟେ ନିଶ୍ୱାସ ନେବା ସହିତ ଧକେଇ ହୁଅନ୍ତି, ପାଟିରୁ ଓ ନାକପୁଡ଼ାରୁ ଫେଣ ବାହାରେ ଓ ସମୟେ ସମୟେ ଜିଭ ପଦାକୁ ବାହାରିଆସିଥାଏ, ପକ୍ଷୀଘାତ ହୁଏ ଓ ଶରୀରର ଉତ୍ତାପ କମିଯାଏ ।

ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧାତ ହେଲେ କ’ଣ କରିବେ:

ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧାତ ଆକ୍ରାନ୍ତ ପ୍ରାଣୀଙ୍କୁ ତୁରନ୍ତ ଥଣ୍ଡା ଛାଇ ସ୍ଥାନକୁ ସ୍ଥାନାନ୍ତରିତ କରନ୍ତୁ, ପ୍ରଚୁର ଥଣ୍ଡା ପାଣି ପିଇବାକୁ ଦେବା ସହିତ ନିକଟସ୍ଥ ପ୍ରାଣୀ ଚିକିତ୍ସକଙ୍କ ସହ ପରାମର୍ଶ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ଅଧିକ ଜାଣିବା ପାଇଁ ଟେଲି ଭେଟେରିନାରି ସର୍ଭିସର ଟୋଲ୍ ଫ୍ରି ନମ୍ବର 155333 କିମ୍ବା 7205598125 ରେ ଯୋଗାଯୋଗ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ଅଶୁଦ୍ଧାତରୁ ପଶୁପକ୍ଷୀଙ୍କୁ ରକ୍ଷା କରିବା ଆମର ନୈତିକ କର୍ତ୍ତବ୍ୟ ଓ ଦାୟିତ୍ୱ, ଏଥିରେ ଅବହେଳା କରିବା ନାହିଁ

ମୁହାଁ ଓ ପ୍ରାଣିସମ୍ପଦ ବିକାଶ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

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# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Ideas play havoc in your head today. The good thing is that you will execute them well. Here is a word of caution for you: avoid hasty decisions. Experienced people will help you find a firm footing. Ganesha advises you to pay heed to elders' counselling.

**TAURUS**  
Ganesha sees you being very planned and focuses, poised and practical in handling your affairs today. You'll be able to take identify the best strategy, course of action that the situations demand. This day you would be performing like a specialist, a real expert and will not fail to accomplish whatever you have set out to do.

**GEMINI**  
The idea of being with your family will keep you motivated throughout the day. In business, your inquisitive approach will do you a lot of good. In fact, you will have the proverbial Midas touch – whichever venture you put your hands on will turn into a glittering success.

**CANCER**  
Today, you will strictly follow your plan book. All Ganesha needs to do to predict your day is take a peep into the book. However, this is only one of those rare days when things go according to plan. You are likely to keep your views to yourself, and will hardly betray what's on your mind.

**LEO**  
Even slender shoulders gain the strength when the time comes to handle responsibilities. And so shall you, says Ganesha, as today brings with it an increased amount of responsibility. You may find yourself drained of all your energy by the end of it. After all, handling important tasks is a tough thing. But when you look back, the satisfaction of having done a job well shall wipe out all the stress, and rejuvenate you.

**VIRGO**  
A day to look inside and contemplate. Find peace and prosperity, says Ganesha. Clam up like those oysters and discover the pearl within you. A fine helping hand you shall lend today to those who need it, says Ganesha.

**LIBRA**  
"Efforts made are never in vain, even when they may seem otherwise". Let this be your motto for the day. Today may not seem to be the most productive day, especially when it comes to interviews. You may feel like the rook in the chess set – sometimes coming back to square one despite making many moves forward to the ultimate checkmate.

**SCORPIO**  
The day just went from bad to worse today, says Ganesha. Troubles are coming in faster and thicker than a locust swarm. But keep a leash on yourself, says Ganesha, and steer clear of it all. Take criticism in your stride today and pay attention to what is being said, not who is saying them.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Today, arranging meetings with customers and suppliers will eat into most of your time. Your patience will enable you to listen to suggestions and opinions offered by people. The result of all this, however, is slated to be most favourable and productive.

**CAPRICORN**  
Ganesha can hear the wedding bells. There is all the likelihood that you will find your perfect match today and will let him/her know about your feelings, says Ganesha. Your family means the world to you and you will be more expressive about this today than you have been in the past few years. In fact, your warm feelings will be reciprocated in equal measure and you will be showered with love – unconditional and unrestrained.

**AQUARIUS**  
Today, you work hard and party harder! The morning sees you sweating it out at work, as you do your best to implement your plans. In the evening, you will don your best attire and get ready to have a gala time with your beloved. Ganesha says, you receive as much as you give.

**PISCES**  
A highly productive day awaits you. You will be driven to succeed, and filled with energy and enthusiasm to achieve your goals. Meetings with your superiors ought to yield some much anticipated results, says Ganesha.

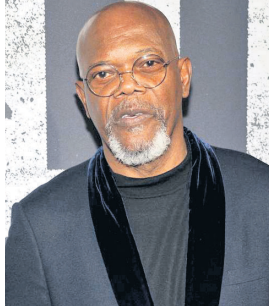


## ZACHARY LEVI, MAGGIE KEATING WELCOME THEIR FIRST CHILD

*Shazam!* star Zachary Levi welcomed his first child with girlfriend Maggie Keating. Sharing the news, Keating and Levi collaboratively posted a picture on the Instagram handle of their newborn baby boy. They named their child Henson Ezra Levi Pugh, who was born April 2.

## SAMUEL L JACKSON TO LEAD *MAN OF WAR*

Actor Samuel L Jackson is set to star in Paramount Pictures' film *Man Of War*. The film will have a screenplay by Sheldon Turner. It is directed by Tim Story, who is also producing the project alongside Turner and Jennifer Klein, according to the entertainment news outlet *Deadline*.



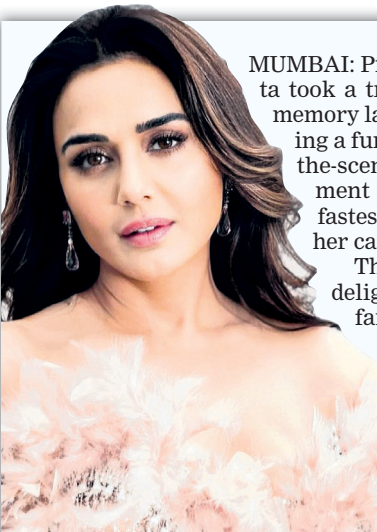
# ALAYA ON REJECTION

MUMBAI: Actress Alaya F has talked about how if something bad happens, her first instinct is to ask what it's trying to teach her and what she needs to learn from it. Alaya shared, "As an actor, when you face constant rejection, there are different ways to cope with it. It's not like you handle every rejection the same way. But when you look back, there's always a lesson to be

learned, always a reason why it happened." Alaya, who is the daughter of actress Pooja Bedi, added, "In fact, when something bad happens, my first instinct is to ask what it's trying to teach me, what I need to learn from it, and why it's happening." "Maybe it's a defense mechanism that protects me, but I think it's a very productive one—and it's my go-to. I've also noticed that certain projects I didn't get or was replaced in later didn't perform well. That reinforced my belief that everything happens for a reason."

She continued, "Especially before my first film (*Jawaani Jaaneman*), there were so many projects I was desperate to be a part of. I thought if I got them, my life would be made. But those films came out, and no one cared about them."

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## Preity's trip down memory lane

MUMBAI: Preity Zinta took a trip down memory lane, sharing a fun behind-the-scenes moment from the fastest shoot of her career. The actress delighted fans with a throw-back shoot that highlighted the whirlwind pace of one particular project — proving that some shoots really do wrap in the blink of an eye. Preity shared a couple of her gorgeous photos and captioned them, "The fastest shoot I ever did, thanks to the incredible team around me. Flashback Friday." In the stunning shots, the actress could be seen wearing a custom JoliPoli couture gown. Interestingly, Zinta's stunning photos are from her appearance at Cannes 2024, where she effortlessly turned heads with her style. Apart from her successful acting career, Preity is also the co-owner of the IPL franchise Punjab Kings.

Meanwhile, April 10, Punjab Kings co-owner Preity penned a heartfelt note for Priyansh Arya after his explosive performance against Chennai Super Kings.

On the work front, the actress is gearing up for the release of her upcoming action drama *Lahore 1947*, which also stars Sunny Deol, Shabana Azmi, Ali Fazal, and Karan Deol. IAN S



## Tamannaah embraces individuality

MUMBAI: Tamannaah Bhatia continues to shine as one of the most versatile actors in Indian cinema, making her mark across Tamil, Telugu, Hindi films, and OTT platforms. Recently, she opened up about her relationship with fashion, self-expression and wellness.

In an interview, Tamannaah emphasised the importance of individuality in a world shaped by fleeting trends and social media pressure.

She spoke about embracing her unique look and promoting body positivity, saying, "You can either be defined by others' standards or embrace what sets you apart. For me, accepting the best version of myself—however that looks—is key."

When it comes to fitness and skin-care, Tamannaah follows an intuitive, mindful routine. Rather than pushing through rigid regimens, she checks in with herself daily and prioritises what her body truly needs—be it rest or movement. "If I haven't slept well, I skip the gym. My lifestyle is driven by well-being," she shared.

Her self-care rituals—on a conversational show, the actor reflected on the superficial nature of relationships in the film industry and how success and failure reveal people's true intentions.

"When your chips are down, that's when you discover who your real friends are," Emraan shared. "The rest quietly disappear. What's left are the ones who genuinely care—and those are the relationships that matter." He also spoke about the illusion of camaraderie in the industry, noting that many

quals include meditation, spending time in her temple room and unplugging from technology to recharge. "Reflecting on what I've achieved gives me fulfillment," she added.

Up next, Tamannaah will be seen in the Telugu supernatural thriller *Odela* 2, among other exciting projects.

AGENCIES



## Emraan unmasks illusion of stardom



MUMBAI: Emraan Hashmi, currently promoting his upcoming film *Ground Zero*, recently opened up about the harsh realities behind the glamour of Bollywood. In a candid conversation, the actor reflected on the superficial nature of relationships in the film industry and how success and failure reveal people's true intentions.

"When things are good, everyone wants a piece of you. But when you're down, you're alone," he said. "You become a commodity, not a person." Meanwhile, Emraan is gearing up for the release of *Ground Zero*, produced by Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar's Excel Entertainment. The film is set to hit theatres April 25.

AGENCIES

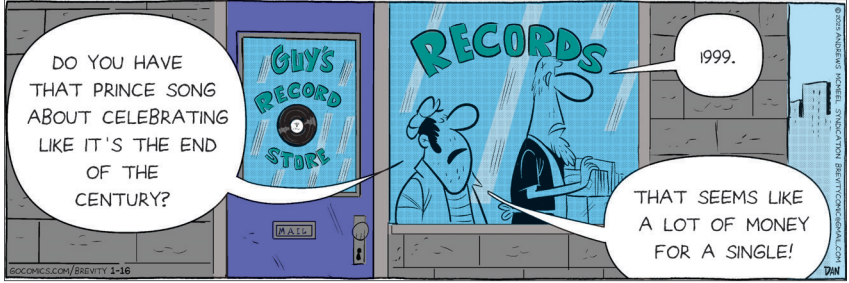
## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

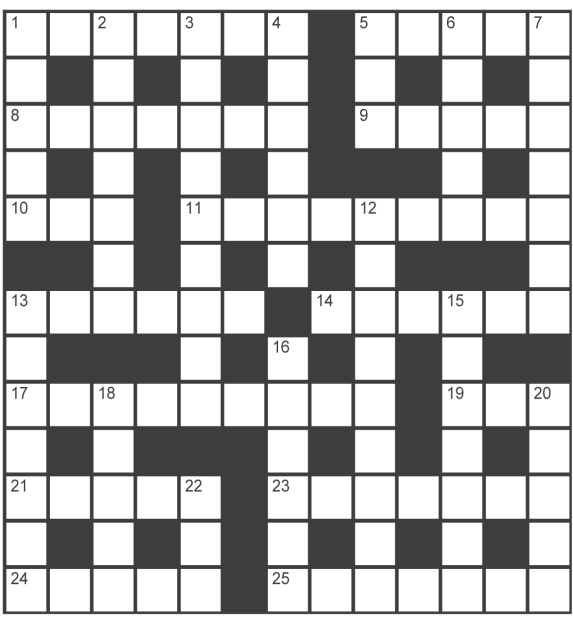


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD

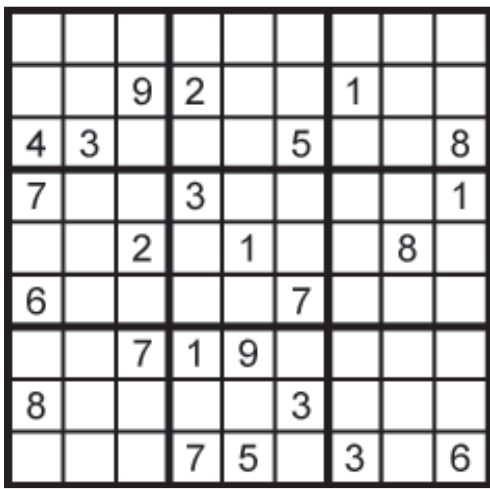


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- Across**
- 1 Carpet cleaner
  - 5 Channel markers
  - 8 Brass instrument
  - 9 Mother-of-pearl
  - 10 Arles assent
  - 11 Capital of Scotland
  - 13 One of the Seven Dwarfs
  - 14 Stamp with a raised design
  - 17 Abnormal
  - 19 Diaper wearer
  - 21 Cravat
  - 23 Drinking vessels
  - 24 Manicurist's board
  - 25 Fretwork
  - Down**
  - 1 Brief tussle (3-2)
  - 2 Slippery
  - 3 Spicy soup (6,3)
  - 4 Hold on to
  - 5 Prohibit
  - 6 Come to pass
  - 7 Roil, usu. internally
  - 12 Big stinger
  - 13 Blood pudding
  - 15 Porridge
  - 16 Dread
  - 18 Recess
  - 20 African poacher's target
  - 22 Attempt

## SUDOKU

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

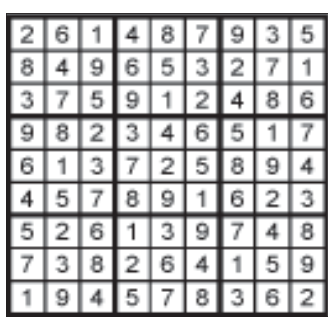


## SOLUTIONS

## CROSSWORD



## SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW





## Alaya's life lessons

Actor Alaya F opens up about facing rejections in life and the lessons she has learned along the way

LEISURE | **P2**



## 6 die in chopper crash

A tourist helicopter plummets upside down into New York City's Hudson River Thursday killing all six on board

INTERNATIONAL | **P10**



## Stocks bounce back

Sensex, Nifty surge nearly 2 pc Friday as US suspends additional 26 per cent tariffs on India till July 9

BUSINESS | **P11**



## Shooters shine

Indian team finish a creditable second in the year's first ISSF World Cup as shooters bag a total of eight medals

SPORTS | **P12**

# AYUSHMAN BHARAT YOJANA LAUNCHED IN STATE



**HEALTHCARE BOOST:** Union Health Minister JP Nadda and Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi hand over an Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana health card to a beneficiary during the launch of the scheme in Cuttack, Friday as Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram looks on

## Historic day for Odisha: Nadda

PNN & AGENCIES

**Cuttack, April 11:** Union Health Minister J P Nadda Friday launched the Ayushman Bharat Yojana in Odisha, and expressed hope that the central health insurance scheme will soon be implemented in neighbouring West Bengal - the only state where it is still not in force.

Billed as the world's largest government healthcare programme, the scheme aims to provide a coverage of ₹5 lakh per family annually.

Calling it a 'historic day' for Odisha, Nadda said as many as 3.51 crore people of 1.03 lakh families of the state will get the benefit from the schemes like Ayushman Bharat, Ayushman Vaya-Vandana Yojana, and the state-run Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana. The Union minister said each member of a family will get separate cards and they can avail the health services in 30,000 government and private hospitals across the country.

"I understand that many people from Odisha work in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and other places. They all can avail of this facility," Nadda said. Nadda launched the scheme in

the presence of Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and others. Addressing the gathering, Majhi said that the previous BJD government did not implement the Ayushman Bharat scheme due to political reasons, because of which the people suffered.

"However, after installation of the double engine government (in Odisha), the people are getting benefits earlier denied to them," he said. The CM said the BJP government has been filling vacant posts of doctors and para-medical staff. "Today our government completes 10 months and during this period, we have filled up 4000 posts including doctors in the healthcare facilities," he said adding that 5,374 doctors and dentists will be recruited very soon.

Majhi said the Odisha government is emphasising opening medical colleges. At present the state has 12 medical colleges and two others will start functioning soon, he said.

Budgetary allocations have been made for setting up new medical colleges in Bhadrak Jagatsinghpur, Nabarangpur and Dhenkanal districts along with four dental colleges.

**MORE P4**

## OVER 100 KILLED IN INDIA, NEPAL RAINS

**NEW DELHI:** More than 100 people have died since Wednesday after unseasonably heavy rain lashed parts of India and Nepal, officials said, as the weather department predicted more rain for the region. At least 82 people have died in rain-related incidents in Bihar over the last two days, while 18 people had died due to lightning and storm-related incidents in Uttar Pradesh. In Nepal, lightning strikes and heavy rain killed at least eight people, National Disaster Authority officials said.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Just to clarify—when I said 'We must get to the bottom of it,' I was talking about 26/11...not Pulwama

# Tariffs ring recession alarm

PNN & AGENCIES

**Beijing, April 11:** The global trade war further escalated Friday as China retaliated against the US by raising its tariffs on American imports to a whopping 125 per cent. The US has imposed 145 per cent tariffs on China. This reciprocal action poses a significant threat to global supply chains and could potentially push the world toward a recession. China's response has deepened the economic instability triggered by US President Donald Trump's tariffs, causing markets to decline further and leaving foreign leaders grappling with how to address the most significant disruption to the global trade system in decades. Analysts warn that these reciprocal tariff increases could render trade between the two largest economies in the world nearly impossible, a trade that was valued at over \$650 billion in 2024.



China Friday continued its tit-for-tat move against the Trump administration's tariffs by hiking its additional levies on imports from the US to 125 per cent against duties of 145 per cent by America even as it evinced interest in dialogue with Washington to resolve the impasse.

Announcing an additional 125 per cent tariff, China's Customs Tariff Commission said, "Even if the US imposes higher tariffs, it would no longer make economic sense and ultimately go down as a joke in world economic history."

"Given that it's already impossible for the Chinese

market to accept US imports at the current tariff level if the United States imposes further tariffs on Chinese products, China will ignore it," it said.

China's retaliation has intensified the economic turmoil unleashed by Trump's tariffs with analysts fearing a looming recession.

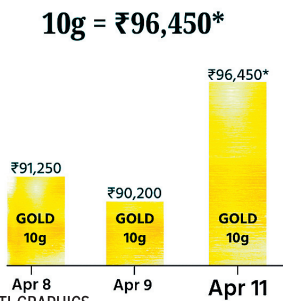
"Recession risk is much, much higher now than it was a couple weeks ago," said Adam Hetts, global head of multi-asset at Janus Henderson.

The brief reprieve for battered stocks seen after Trump decided to pause duties for dozens of countries for 90 days quickly dissipated, as attention returned to the escalating trade conflict between the US and China.

UBS analysts in a note called China's declaration that it would not retaliate to any further tariff increases "an acknowledgement that trade between the two countries has essentially been completely severed."

## GOLD SKYROCKETS ₹6,250

**NEW DELHI:** Gold prices surged by ₹6,250 to hit a record high of ₹96,450 per 10 grams in the national capital Friday due to heavy demand from local jewellers and retailers, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Analysts said the precious metal hitting lifetime high levels in the international markets on strong safe-haven demand amid escalating US-China trade tensions boosted the domestic prices. Wednesday, the yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at ₹90,200 per 10 grams. Rebounding after four days of sharp fall, gold of 99.5 per cent purity surged by ₹6,250 to touch an all-time high of ₹96,000 per 10 grams against the previous close of ₹89,750 per 10 grams. Silver prices also registered a steep rise of ₹2,300 to ₹95,500 per kg, largely in tandem with global trends. The white metal had closed at ₹93,200 per kg in the previous market close. Meanwhile, gold futures for June delivery climbed by ₹1,703 to hit yet another lifetime high of ₹93,736 per 10 grams on the Multi Commodity Exchange. "Gold extended its record-setting rally... to hit fresh lifetime highs near ₹93,500 on MCX, defying rupee strength as geopolitical tensions and tariff battles between the US and China escalated further," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 11:** The National Investigation Agency (NIA) Friday began an extensive interrogation of Mumbai terror attack mastermind Tahawwur Hussain Rana to uncover the "deeper layers of the conspiracy" as the probe agency told a Delhi court it suspects he had plans to target other Indian cities as well with similar large-scale strikes.

Rana, the 64-year-old Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman, was brought to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) headquarters here early this morning shortly after a Delhi court granted the agency his 18-day custody.

Escorted by NIA officials, Rana reached Delhi Thursday evening on a chartered aircraft after his extradition from the US ending a 16-year-long wait to prosecute one of the key accused in the deadly Mumbai attack.

**P9**

## Process begins for election to 1,134 vacant PRI posts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 11:** The State Election Commission has initiated the process for election to 1,134 vacant posts in three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in Odisha.

As per an official statement issued by the SEC, by-elections will be held for five zilla parishad (ZP) members, 41 panchayat samiti members, 45 sarpanches and 272 ward members, while fresh polls will be conducted in 771 wards in different panchayats.

In the last three-tier panchayat elections held in 2022, there were no nominations filed in these 771 wards meant for reserved category. Therefore, after de-reservation of

these wards by the concerned district collectors, the process for the fresh elections is being initiated, it said.

The SEC said splitting of electoral rolls of the concerned ward from the latest electoral rolls prepared by the Election Commission of India (ECI) will be conducted from April 17 and 22.

On April 24, ward-wise preliminary electoral rolls will be published at gram panchayat headquarters.

Thereafter, filing of objections and claims will be made by April 30 and the disposal of the same will take place between May 2 and May 5, the statement said.

The final publication of electoral rolls will be made May 6.

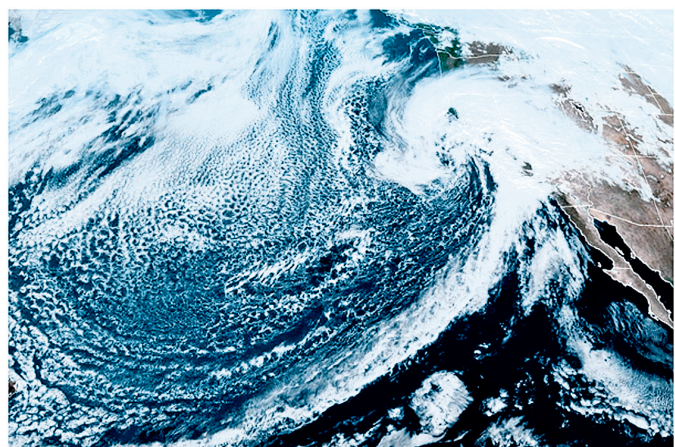
## How atmospheric rivers cause floods

REUTERS

**Washington, April 11:** Atmospheric rivers are storms akin to rivers in the sky that dump massive amounts of rain and can cause flooding, trigger mudslides and result in loss of life and enormous property damage.

The weather system occurs all over the world. It starts when a large amount of water vapour from tropical oceans is carried by a jet stream toward land. As the air rises, it cools and condenses, resulting in rain or snow. Atmospheric rivers most commonly form in mid-latitude oceans, roughly 30 and 60 degrees north and south, according to NASA.

They appear as a trail of wispy clouds that can stretch for hundreds of miles. Most atmospheric



rivers are weak and do not cause damage. In fact, they can provide much-needed rain or snow.

Atmospheric rivers can carry up to 15 times the volume of the Mississippi River, according to the National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration.

In drought-stricken California, such storms have triggered mudslides, toppled utility poles and blocked roadways, but also helped replenish depleted reservoirs and reduced the risk

of wildfires by saturating the state's parched vegetation.

In 2019, an atmospheric river nicknamed the 'Pineapple Express' hit California. The water vapour from near Hawaii brought rain and triggered mudslides that forced motorists to swim for their lives and sent homes sliding downhill.

In 2021, an atmospheric river dumped a month's worth of rain on British Columbia in two days, prompting deadly floods and landslides, devastating communities and severing access to Canada's largest port.

Atmospheric rivers of the kind that drenched California and flooded British Columbia in recent years will become larger - and possibly more destructive - because of climate change, according to scientists.

Columns in the atmosphere

THESE RIVERS IN THE SKY CAN CARRY UP TO 15 TIMES THE VOLUME OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

hundreds of miles (km) long carry water vapour over oceans from the tropics to more temperate regions in amounts more than double the flow of the Amazon River, according to the American Meteorological Society.

There are projected to be 10 per cent fewer atmospheric rivers in the future, but they are expected to be 25 per cent wider and longer and carry more water, according to a 2018 research paper.

This could make managing water supply much harder as moderate atmospheric rivers, which can be beneficial for water supplies, will be less frequent, and strong ones could become more calamitous.



ROW OVER MEETING IN HOTEL

BJD leaders decry Naveen’s criticism



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 11:** Two senior leaders of the BJD Friday disapproved of party president Naveen Patnaik’s statement criticising them for holding a meeting in a hotel, and not in the regional outfit’s office, two days ago.

Four-time MLA Prafulla Mallik and three-term legislator Nrushingha Sahu, both in their 70s, asserted that holding a ‘casual get-together’ in a hotel is not an anti-party activity and none can dictate where one person would meet another.

Altogether 13 senior leaders including Mallik and Sahu had met at a hotel Wednesday which was seen as ‘groupism’ within the party which lost power to BJP in June 2024 after ruling Odisha since 2000.

Patnaik, a former chief minister, had Wednesday said, “I would like to state here that I disapprove of any large meetings in hotels held by party members. They have the party office Sankha Bhawan which is

a large building where they’ve been told to hold their meetings and they should do so.”

Mallik, however, said he cannot accept what Patnaik said.

“It was not a meeting but a casual get-together. Patnaik was given misleading feedback by some people. Where and when we meet, is a personal choice. No one can dictate us on this,” he said adding that they used to attend official meetings at Sankha Bhawan, the headquarters of the BJD.

Claiming that they are not involved in the anti-party activities, Mallik said that he and other senior leaders are elderly persons having the liberty to meet at will. “There should not be a restriction on meeting friends in politics,” he said.

On the controversy over the voting flipflop on the Waqf Bill in Rajya Sabha by BJD MPs, Mallik said: “If so many people are suspecting hands of VK Pandian in the RS voting matter, he should come forward and deny the allegation. It will be appropriate and clear doubts.”

The BJD did not issue a whip when the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Bill came up for voting in Rajya Sabha and left it to the conscience of the MPs. Sasmit Patra, the leader of the BJD in the Upper House, had said in the previous day that the party would oppose the legislation.

A section of BJD leaders is seeing this as a way to help the BJP and they are accusing bureaucrat-turned-politician VK Pandian, considered close to the BJD president, of being responsible for the party’s change of stance.

Patnaik Wednesday came out in support of Pandian and clarified that the bureaucrat-turned-politician was not involved in any of the party activities. Like Mallik, Sahu also said that they are well-wishers of Patnaik and the BJD.

“We had gathered for a breakfast at a hotel. It is obvious that politics will be discussed when political leaders meet. There should be no restriction on meeting each other,” he said.

Sahu said Pandian may be a good officer, but not acceptable as a politician. BJD MLA Ashwini Patra, on the other hand, said that the senior leaders directly speak to the BJD president and clear their doubts, if any.

The prevailing confusion will be over soon and there is no need to discuss more on the matter, Patra said.



Union Health and Family Welfare Minister JP Nadda, along with Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, inaugurates a new building of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Post Graduate Institute of Paediatrics (Sishu Bhawan) in Cuttack, Friday. Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling, Cuttack MP Bhartruhari Mahtab and Barabati-Cuttack MLA Sofia Firdous are seen

Nadda to inaugurate Central Research Lab at City AIIMS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 11:** Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda will inaugurate the Central Research Laboratory and lay the foundation stone of Multi-utility (Gastronomy) Block at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Bhubaneswar Saturday, official sources said Friday.

The Central Research Laboratory is expected to elevate the research capabilities of

AIIMS-Bhubaneswar to new heights. The lab, with cutting-edge facilities, would significantly empower doctors, researchers, and scholars in developing innovative healthcare solutions and conducting impactful medical research.

The Multi-utility (Gastronomy) Block, on the other hand, is envisioned to cater to the growing needs of the institute’s students, faculty, employees, and the public. Its modern infrastructure will address space constraints and offer multiple

services under one roof, enhancing the operational efficiency and community engagement of AIIMS-Bhubaneswar.

Nadda will also launch the new AIIMS-Bhubaneswar website integrated with several public-friendly features and digital services. “These apart, the EHS Clinic and AMRIT Pharmacy will be officially inaugurated, improving accessibility to essential health services and affordable medicines,” an official of the premier health facility said.

Nadda’s visit will conclude

with a comprehensive review meeting, where he will assess the ongoing developments and inspect facilities, it was learnt.

Ahead of Nadda’s visit, AIIMS-Bhubaneswar Executive Director Ashutosh Biswas said, “AIIMS-Bhubaneswar continues to march ahead on the path of excellence under the visionary guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and dynamic leadership of Nadda Ji. His (Nadda’s) support has been instrumental in shaping the growth trajectory of this national institute.”

VEDANTA UNIVERSITY LAND SAGA

A landmark victory for people's rights and judicial accountability

UMABALLAV RATH

**A David vs. Goliath battle**

April 12th marks a significant date in the annals of Odisha’s long history of people’s movements against land acquisition. For the farmers, fisherfolk, and countless residents of the 22 mouzas nestled along the scenic Puri-Konark Marine Drive, April 12, 2023, is etched as ‘Victory Day’. On this day, the Supreme Court of India delivered a resounding judgment, putting a definitive end to the controversial land acquisition process initiated nearly two decades prior for the proposed, grandiose Vedanta University project promoted by the Anil Agarwal Foundation (AAF). This verdict was not just a legal pronouncement; it was the culmination of a protracted, arduous struggle – a classic David vs. Goliath battle – pitting ordinary citizens, activists, and pro-bono lawyers against the might of a corporate giant and the state machinery. It stands as a powerful testament to the resilience of grassroots movements, the crucial role of judicial oversight, and the enduring spirit of democracy.

**The grand vision and the deepening controversy**

**“land scam” narrative included:**

Gross violation of land acquisition norms: Critics argued that the acquisition process flouted established laws and procedures under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894. Proper notifications were allegedly not served, consent was questionable, and the principle of acquiring land only for a clear ‘public purpose’ was debated, especially given the land was being transferred to a private foundation (even if ostensibly for education).

Acquisition of ecologically sensitive and government land: A significant portion of the land identified included environmentally fragile coastal land, forest areas, agricultural fields providing livelihoods, and crucially, government land (Gochar, village commons) and even land belonging historically to the Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee. Acquiring such lands, especially temple lands held in reverence, deeply hurt local sentiments and raised legal red flags.

Lack of transparency and undue favouritism: The entire process was perceived as being conducted with undue haste and opacity, allegedly favouring AAF. Questions were raised about the valuation of land and the terms under which public resources (including government and temple lands) were being handed over to a private entity. The creation of specific legislation, like the Vedanta University Act, 2009 (later challenged and deemed invalid), was seen as an attempt to bypass standard procedures and grant unprecedented autonomy to the foundation.

**Coercion and disregard for livelihoods:**

Farmers and local residents reported facing pressure and intimidation to part with their lands, which were often their sole source of income and sustenance. The project threatened traditional agricultural practices and the livelihoods of fisherfolk dependent on coastal access.

**The people rise: Resilience from the grassroots**

The government’s push for the project met with immediate and sustained resistance from the ground. The heart of this movement lay within the 22 affected Mouzas. Ordinary villagers, recognizing the threat to their lands, livelihoods, and cultural heritage, organised themselves. A pivotal role, as highlighted by participants and ob-

servers, was played by the women and youth of these villages. Women often stood at the forefront of protests, articulating the impact on families and communities, while youth brought energy and helped mobilise wider support.

They faced hardships, police action, and uncertainty, yet their resolve remained unbroken for years.

Leading figures emerged from the community, providing direction and spearheading the legal and public campaign. Benudhar Pradhan, an activist and President of Sangharsh Samiti, became a prominent face of the movement, tirelessly pursuing the cause through various forums, embodying the spirit of local resistance against overwhelming odds.

Crucially, the movement garnered significant external support. All major political parties in Odisha, except the ruling BJD, lent their voice and support to the farmers’ cause, raising the issue in the state Assembly and public forums. This cross-party opposition underscored the widespread public concern and skepticism surrounding the project and the acquisition process.

The media, both regional and national print and television channels, played an indispensable role. Consistent coverage highlighted the irregularities, amplified the voices of the affected people, and ensured the issue remained in the public consciousness, preventing it from being swept under the carpet.

**The long road through the courts: Seeking justice**

Faced with an unresponsive administration, the affected people and activists turned to the judiciary. Multiple Public Interest Litigations (PILs) were filed challenging the legality and propriety of the land acquisition.

The Odisha Lokpal also reportedly investigated the matter, with findings likely critical of the procedural lapses and potential administrative misconduct involved in the land deal, adding weight to the petitioners’ case.

A major turning point came in November 2010 when the Odisha High Court, acting on PILs, delivered a landmark judgment. The High Court quashed the entire land acquisition process, citing blatant illegalities, violation of the Land Acquisition Act, disregard for environmental norms,

and undue favour shown to the Anil Agarwal Foundation. The court found fault with the acquisition of government and temple lands and questioned the very definition of ‘public purpose’ in this context.

Undeterred, the Anil Agarwal Foundation and the Odisha government appealed the High Court’s decision before the Supreme Court of India. This set the stage for the final, decisive legal battle that spanned over a decade.

**Victory Day: The Supreme Court judgment of April 12, 2023**

On April 12, 2023, a Supreme Court bench comprising Justices MR Shah and Krishna Murari delivered the much-awaited verdict. The apex court upheld the Odisha High Court’s 2010 judgment in its entirety, dismissing the appeals filed by AAF and the state government.

**The Supreme Court’s judgment was scathing in its assessment of the acquisition process. Key take-aways included:**

Confirmation that the acquisition suffered from serious illegalities and violated multiple provisions of the Land Acquisition Act. Strong disapproval of the attempt to acquire government and temple lands for a private entity.

Criticism of the undue favour and benefits extended to the foundation by the state government, terming the actions ‘illegal and invalid.’

The judgment effectively ruled that the land acquired must be returned to its original owners, including the farmers and the state/temple authorities. This judgment was hailed across the country as a victory for land rights, environmental justice, and the rule of law. For the people of the affected mouzas, April 12th became their hard-earned ‘Victory Day’.

**The unsung heroes: Pro-bono advocates**

A crucial, often overlooked, aspect of this long fight was the role played by dedicated advocates who fought the case without taking any fees, or for nominal amounts. Facing powerful legal teams representing the corporation and the state, these lawyers dedicated their time and expertise out of a commitment to public interest and justice for the marginalised. Their contribution was invaluable in navigating the complex legal terrain and ensuring the voices of the affected communities were effectively presented before the

High Court and the Supreme Court. Their pro-bono service stands as a shining example of legal activism upholding constitutional rights.

**The aftermath: Implementation, compensation, and accountability**

The Supreme Court’s verdict provided immense relief and validation, but the struggle isn’t entirely over. The focus now shifts to the meticulous implementation of the judgment:

Return of Land: Ensuring the acquired land is promptly returned to the rightful owners – the farmers, the government, and the Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee – is the primary task. This involves complex administrative processes to restore land records and physical possession.

Compensation and restitution: Many farmers had accepted compensation under duress or misinformation years ago. The judgment implies this land must be returned. Mechanisms need to be established for the fair return of any compensation received by farmers, possibly adjusted for the loss of livelihood and hardship endured over nearly two decades. The emotional and economic cost borne by the farmers needs acknowledgment beyond mere land return.

Action against public servants: The Supreme Court’s strong indictment of the acquisition process raises serious questions about the conduct of the public servants involved at the time. While the April 2023 judgment focused on quashing the acquisition, accountability remains a key demand. There is a need for the government to initiate inquiries and take appropriate action against officials found responsible for the illegalities and undue favouritism, sending a clear message against administrative misconduct in land dealings.

**Conclusion: A beacon of hope**

The Vedanta University land acquisition saga serves as a critical case study in contemporary India. It underscores the potential conflicts arising from large-scale development projects, the imperative of adhering strictly to legal procedures and environmental safeguards, and the fundamental importance of community consultation and consent.

The victory achieved on April 12,

2023, belongs to the resilient people of the 22 mouzas, particularly the women and youth who formed the movement’s backbone. It belongs to activists like Benudhar Pradhan, the supportive opposition parties, the vigilant media, and the committed pro-bono advocates. Above all, it reaffirms the vital role of an independent judiciary as a guardian of citizens’ rights against arbitrary state action and powerful corporate interests.

As Odisha continues its development journey, the lessons from Puri-Konark must not be forgotten. April 12th stands not just as a day of victory for a specific group of farmers, but as a beacon of hope for communities across India fighting for their land, livelihoods, and dignity, demonstrating that even the most formidable opponents can be challenged and overcome through perseverance, unity, and faith in justice.

*Ex-MLA, Puri & Convenor, Vedanta Viswabidyalaya Birodhi Sangharsh Samiti, Beladala, Puri*

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	35.0°	33.8°
Min Temp	20.4°	19.0°
Humidity	72%	75%
Rainfall	22.8	13.8
<b>FORECAST</b> Partly cloudy sky with possibility of development of thunderstorm		

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX		VARIATION	
BBSR CURRENCY BOURSES	SENSEX	75157.26	▲ 1.310
	NIFTY	22828.55	▲ 429.40
	DOLLAR	86.19	▼ 0.65
	EURO	97.89	▲ 1.99
	GOLD	₹93,789	▲ ₹1,756
BBSR CURRENCY BOURSES	SILVER	₹94,650	▲ ₹3,055

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# NCST seeks ATR on school dropouts in mining belts



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, April 11:** The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has sought an action-taken report (ATR) within 30 days on the alarming rate of school dropouts, particularly among SC/ST students, in the industrial and mining belts of Jajpur district—specifically in Sukinda and Danagadi blocks. Social activist Mantu Das had drawn the attention of the NCST Chairperson towards the state of affairs through a formal complaint September 7 last year. Acting on the complaint, NCST Director P Kalyan Reddy April 5 this year directed the Principal Secretary of the ST/SC Development, Minorities and Backward Classes Welfare Department, the Commissioner of School and Mass Education department, and the Jajpur Collector to submit a factual report on the issue within 30 days of receiving the letter. Failure to comply may result in a summons being issued to the concerned

labour, and garages, adversely impacting their physical and mental well-being, reports said. Highlighting the gravity of the issue, Mantu Das had earlier filed a public interest litigation (PIL, No. 1729/2023) in the Orissa High Court, citing that these children were being denied their fundamental rights to education, nutritious food, and healthcare. The High Court had directed the Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights to investigate and appropriately rehabilitate the affected children January 24, 2023. However, over two years have passed since the issuance of the directive no substantial progress has reportedly been made.

Allegations have also surfaced that the failure of the Education department is forcing these children to seek alternatives like job placements under TSF's rehabilitation schemes. Despite investing over ₹168.64 crore in upgrading 249 high schools across the district - and a second phase of transformation currently underway - dropout numbers have not decreased, raising questions about the effectiveness of the Education department's initiatives.

It is further alleged that many ST/SC children have not been brought under the purview of the Right to Education Act, 2009. As part of his complaint, Mantu Das submitted a list of 22 dropout students to the NCST, including information that four underage girls had already married and given birth to children.

Given the sensitivity and scale of the issue, the NCST has taken the matter seriously and instructed concerned authorities to file a detailed ATR.

officials, the NCST warned.

As per data provided recently by Tata Steel Foundation (TSF) operating in the Kalinganagar industrial zone, a total of 56,166 dropout students were identified between 2015 and 2024 in the mining and industrial belts of Sukinda and Danagadi blocks. These figures were compiled from 331 government schools across 462 villages in 48 gram panchayats. These dropout students have been rehabilitated under TSF scheme.

Further, the January 2024 Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) report by the Samagra Shiksha division of Jajpur recorded 13,010 dropout students.

However, despite various initiatives by the Education department to reintegrate these children into mainstream education, the efforts have largely been ineffective. Most of the dropouts, who belong to SC/ST communities, are now engaged in menial jobs such as working in liquor shops, agricultural fields, hotels, contract-based

# Elephant calf under treatment dies

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, April 11:** An 18-months-old elephant calf who was under treatment in Chamakpur area of Joda section after it was rescued April 7 with internal injuries died at around 3.30am Friday.

Prima Facie accidental fall and injury due to male aggression resulting into bone fracture and septicemia was suspected when the calf was rescued. "It's a case of chronic infection," said Divisional Forest Officer, Keonjhar Dhanraj HD. "Its tarsal joints (legs) were damaged and bones were broken due to ac-



cidental fall," he said.

According to the DFO, the male calf, around 18-months-old, was noticed by field staff 7th April in Chamakpur area of Joda section while it was

moving slowly and limping in hind legs. "As the calf was in a herd, the staff could not go near it but observed it through drone," he said.

On April 10, the calf was slowly moving in the morning hours. But around 11am, it was found lying down due to weakness. The mother elephant and herd kept their eyes on it from a distance to notice its activity. However, the calf could not get up and walk. The wildlife treatment team went near it and found swelling in both hind legs and apprehended injuries to its bones. The team removed huge quantity of pus from swelling organs.

"Depression mark without external injury was observed adjacent to left side of tail. Left side neck had a skin growth resembling that of a tusk injury. It might be a case of other male aggression," the DFO further said.

Septicaemia was suspected and ceftriaxone was given in consultation with experts from Centre for Wildlife Health Bhubaneswar, and Wildlife Institute of India. "We also coordinated with Joint Task Force of PCCF Wild Life office during treatment," the DFO added. After post mortem the calf's body was buried in the ground Friday.

# PROBE INTO SDCCB RECRUITMENT SCAM BEGINS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, April 11:** A major recruitment scam has come to light at the Sambalpur District Central Cooperative Bank (SDCCB) in the district, with allegations that several employees secured jobs using fake educational certificates. The issue gained attention after Attabira MLA Nihar Ranjan Mahanand raised the matter in the state

Assembly, prompting the initiation of an official probe.

According to reports, numerous employees submitted forged academic documents and degree certificates from various universities to secure employment at the bank. Notably, some of the individuals allegedly involved in the scam have already been promoted within the organisation.

As part of the investigation,

Kamakhya Prasad Mahananda, a Class IV (supporting staff) employee, has already been suspended. The educational qualifications of other employees are currently under verification, and it is believed that more dismissals may follow based on the findings.

A special investigation team (SIT) has been constituted to verify the credentials of all 174 bank employees. The team has reportedly contacted universi-

ties within Odisha and outside the state to cross-check the submitted academic documents.

Bank CEO Bhakteshwar Mallik confirmed that the verification process was launched after receiving complaints regarding fraudulent educational certificates. "Out of the 174 employees, the documents of 93 have been verified so far. The rest will be completed by the end of this month," said Mallik.

## Man gets life imprisonment for murder

**SONEPUR:** A local court here found the accused in the sensational Pabana murder case (of 2020) guilty of the crime and sentenced him to life imprisonment, Friday. Sessions Judge Rashmi Mohan Acharya also imposed a cash fine of ₹10,000 on the convict, Himanshu Sethi, 43. In the event of non-payment of the fine, the convict will have to undergo an additional six months rigorous imprisonment, the order stated. According to the case details, June 10, 2020, a longstanding enmity over fishing rights on a pond in Ghamandiapali village under Birmaharajpur police limits in Subarnapur district led to a fatal altercation. Himanshu, who is related to fellow villager Pabana Sethi attacked the latter with an axe, resulting in his death. Pabana's wife, Mithali, was a witness to the crime. Following a complaint filed by the deceased's son, Sachidananda Sethi, Birmaharajpur police registered a case under various legal provisions and launched an investigation. Police arrested Himanshu and latter submitted a charge sheet in the court. The case was registered as Sessions Case No. 30/20 in the Subarnapur District and Sessions Court. During the trial, which was based on the testimony of 20 witnesses and supporting documents submitted by the police, the judge found Himanshu Sethi guilty. Public prosecutor Kanheyalal Pradhan appeared on behalf of the state.

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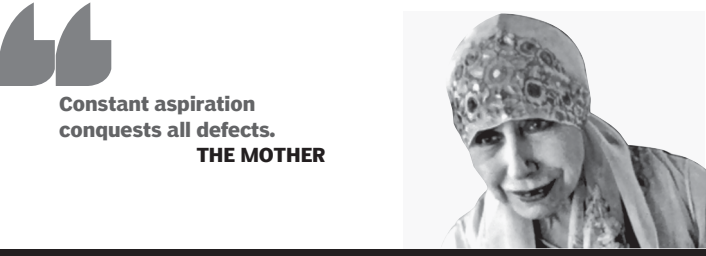
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Constant aspiration  
conquests all defects.  
THE MOTHER

## Silver Lining

The way babus handle crises has a distinct rhythm, and the recent events at Vanijya Bhawan exemplify this perfectly.

The Ministry of Commerce was abuzz with activity as the tariff threats from the Trump administration regained public attention. Negotiators put in hours that would make investment bankers blush, and files were moving at breakneck speed—well, by government standards.

Then—bam! Formally, the tariffs were announced. It dropped from the White House like a policy hammer, unaltered and unmodified. What followed? A collective sigh. It was nearly Zen-like – no panic, simply acceptance.

Observers noted that this was evident in their body language. That Que Sera, Sera” gleam surfaced in the eyes of the overworked officers who hadn’t seen daylight in weeks. As if someone had pressed the pause button on the bureaucratic treadmill, even the support staff appeared to move a bit more slowly. One senior babu, evidently exhausted, was overheard saying, “We worked until the last minute, gave it our best—but the Americans just went ahead with their playbook.” So be it. The response blends stoic realism with classic fatigue. The system is saturated after months of frantic drafting, quiet diplomacy, and backchannel discussions. The engines have cooled, for now.

But there’s always a bright side to a crisis, and it seems the babus have found theirs. The general outlook in the Commerce Ministry is that the time is ripe for Indian exporters to look beyond their usual suspects. It won’t be a cakewalk. New markets mean new rules, new risks, and a lot of handholding for Indian traders. Essentially, our babus are gearing up to play guide and cheerleader. Furthermore, it’s not just Delhi that’s in action; reportedly, state governments are joining in too. Gujarat, with its flashy Vibrant Gujarat show, is likely to lead the charge. But Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh aren’t sitting back either—they possess serious export muscle and are eager to flex. So, next year, don’t be surprised if your local babu starts racking up air miles!

### Diplomatic reshuffle signals strategic moves

At the highest levels of India’s diplomatic establishment, a subtle but important shuffle is taking place. Nidhi Tewari’s appointment as Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s new private secretary (reported earlier by DKB) means that her predecessor, Vivek Kumar (IFS: 2004) is expected to make way—and perhaps move west.



BABUDOM  
BYTES  
Dilip Cherian

According to rumours circulating in the corridors, Kumar will probably be assigned to the Indian High Commission in London as the Deputy High Commissioner. For the seasoned diplomat, whose professional path has been closely linked to the Prime Minister’s Office, it would be a natural next step. He began in the PMO as Deputy Secretary in 2014, the same year Tewari joined the foreign service, and worked his way up to Director before becoming the PM’s Private Secretary in 2022. Kumar brings with him both technical and diplomatic heft. His previous postings in Russia and Australia add to his well-rounded global experience—credentials that will serve him well if he indeed takes charge in London. Meanwhile, Tewari’s elevation marks a generational shift. Known for her work in disarmament and international security, her entry as PS to the PM signals not just a new face in the PMO, but also a fresh approach to navigating India’s external engagements.

This reshuffle is more than a routine personnel change. It’s a strategic recalibration—one that reflects India’s growing diplomatic ambitions and the quiet churn beneath the surface of South Block.

### When babus ignore rules, governance suffers

What happens to senior babus who disregard the regulations they are supposed to uphold? We now know the answer: In 2024, 91 IAS officers, in addition to the 73 who did so in 2023, failed to file their Immovable Property Returns (IPRs). Not amused, a parliamentary panel has demanded harsher punishments.

This goes beyond paperwork. IPR filings serve as a fundamental accountability check, guarantee transparency, and avoid conflicts of interest. These officers cannot be considered for important postings because they lack vigilance clearance. Nevertheless, a portion of the privileged babu class conveniently disregards the rulebook year after year. Reminders are obviously insufficient, so the panel has correctly recommended a centralised compliance tracking system.

But the larger governance issue is the shortage of 1,316 IAS officers. Several important parts are missing from India’s so-called steel frame, which has an authorised cadre strength of 6,858. Only 3,987 of the 4,781 direct recruits are in place, a worrying statistic. With only 1,555 officers meeting the 2,077 quota, the situation for promotees is worse, leading to the obvious impact on administration – inefficiency, overworked officers, and delayed decision-making.

While the suggested online tracking system for IAS vacancies is a good place to start, states must also take action. The panel’s suggestion to penalise those who fail to fill promotion vacancies promptly may be the final push that’s required.

Share a babu experience! Follow  
dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let’s multiply the effect

## WISDOM CORNER

- I am optimistic globally. So many scientists are working frantically on the reparation of our planet.

STEVE IRWIN
- People must feel that the natural world is important and valuable and beautiful and wonderful and an amazement and a pleasure.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH
- Change happens by listening and then starting a dialogue with the people who are doing something you don't believe is right.

JANE GOODALL

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1606:** The Union Flag, precursor to the Union Jack, was adopted as the national flag of Great Britain.
- 1861:** Fort Sumter, one of the few military installations in the South still in Federal hands, came under fire from Confederate guns in Charleston, South Carolina, thus initiating the American Civil War.
- 1947:** American comedian David Letterman, best known as the host of his long-running late-night talk show, was born.



DK Giri  
INDIAN  
ECONOMY HAD  
BEEN DUBBED A  
PROTECTIONIST  
ECONOMY  
BORDERING  
ON DIRIGISME  
FROM 1947 TO  
89. IT OPENED  
UP ONLY IN 1991

The unilateral and universal tariff imposed by Donald Trump had shaken the world. It has disrupted the global economy-- supply chains, export regimes and employment. What is worse, it threatens a global war on trade. Some observers are talking about ensuing depression as well as recession. My purpose in this piece is to assess the possibility of a global trade war, and to examine India’s response to the emerging economic scenario.

First of all, what is the casus belli of this prognosis of a global war caused by Trump’s action? There are divided opinions on it. One school of thought says that Trump’s tariff is an instrument to meet his political objectives. Second, it is to prevent China from overtaking America on trade and later, on GDP. Third, it is Trump’s one figment of thinking to fix the American economy in the line of MAGA– Making America Great Again. These three perspectives merit some discussion.

Coming to the reasons for the Trumpian tariff, the politics of the action may be that Trump wants to geo-politicise trade to bargain with each country. By imposing tariffs universally, he sought to disrupt the alliances, integrations, regionalisation and so on and then, bargain with each country to secure their political and economic allegiance.

The competition by China is a more plausible argument. The Chinese world market share of manufacturing goods is about 32 per cent whereas that of America is around 16 per cent. The Chinese GDP is 19 trillion compared to 29 trillion of USA. Trump would not want China to catch up or



Trump is known for changing his mind. If he finds the going is tough, he will change the course. He is testing the waters. He had made a tariff hike his poll promise

overtake. The American trade deficit with China is about 1 trillion. By levying high tariffs on China, Trump perhaps wants to make up the trade deficit and revive its own manufacturing sector.

The third reason follows from the second, which is fixing the American economy. Manufacturing in any country creates jobs and generates growth. Unemployment in America has been rising. Hence, Trump wants to rejuvenate the domestic manufacturing sector by reducing competition from foreign countries. It is another matter that consumers will be forced to buy foreign goods at a higher price in the absence of domestic production. This will lead to inflation.

Are the tariffs reciprocal as claimed by the Trump Administration? No, they are protectionist. By any calculation, they are not reciprocal. One formula used for levying tariffs is to take the total trade deficit with a country and take half of that and levy it as a tariff. But that is not the case

with each country.

Will the tariffs lead to a trade war? It seems a remote possibility. Remember, the total imports of America from the World are 13 per cent. So, the rest 87 per cent is immune to the Trumpian tariff. So, if the countries create alternative markets and make alliances, they can withstand the tariff tension on their economies. For instance, it is reported that the trade ministers of Japan, South Korea and China met a few days ago to curate a trade alliance of some kind to counter American action.

Also, Trump is known for changing his mind. If he finds the going is tough, he will change the course. He is testing the waters. He had made a tariff hike his poll promise. This is to perhaps fulfil that. He will roll it back if it boomerangs on America. At the time of writing, he has declared 90 days pause on the tariff except on China.

How is India responding to it? One strategy is keeping quiet in view of the strategic proximity between two countries.

Second is to negotiate a bilateral trade agreement quite soon. New Delhi is aiming to sign it when Trump arrives in Delhi for Quad Summit later this year. And the third, which it may perforce do, is to carry out the much-needed trade reforms and revisit some of the tariffs in a few sectors. For instance, according to the White-house factsheet, India imposes 50 per cent tariff on apples from the USA. Is it necessary?

As per the same factsheet, New Delhi has NTBs like quality control and certification against certain American items on telecom, chemicals and medical devices. Those can go, Trump says India is the tariff king of the world. Indian economy had been dubbed a protectionist economy bordering on dirigisme from 1947 to 89. It opened up only in 1991. After that momentous period, reforms stalled.

That said, the loss of India’s revenue from exports to USA is calculated at 3.6 billion dollars which is 0.1 or 0.2 per cent of India’s GDP. Should the negotiations fail, India can live with that. But the larger point is that India should treat this as ironic opportunity like it did in 1991 foreign currency crisis and 1998 Pokhran-II consequences and fix its own economy especially the trade regime. Each crisis could be a blessing in disguise. India could negotiate with America, not for years on end as it has been with EU, but it must put its house in order. There is a deepening dichotomy between political rhetoric and economic reality. That must end sooner than later.

The writer is Professor  
of Practice, NIIS Group,  
Bhubaneswar  
INFRA

## SPECTRUM GLOBAL WARMING

# Wake-up call for a grim climate

NASA confirmed that the bygone year 2024 was the warmest year ever recorded in human history. The year saw an extreme and prolonged heat wave condition sweeping across the whole world starting from Japan in the east to the USA and Canada in the west encompassing Southern Europe, and North Africa breaking all previous temperature records. The heat wave brought widespread temperatures above 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 deg Celsius) in the Mediterranean region over the beginning three weeks of July.

In the far-east, authorities in Japan issued heatstroke alerts for tens of millions of people in 20 of its 47 prefectures. In the United States, widespread and oppressive heat wave ravaged in the Southern and Western states encompassing Florida to California to Washington as wildfires raged in southern California. The Death Valley of Arizona desert (one of the hottest places on Earth) recorded a temperature as high as 54 deg C. China also recorded its highest-ever temperature with a remote township in its north-western Xinjiang region boiling at 52.2 deg C.

The heat wave also continued its ravage across Spain with temperatures reaching 44 deg Celsius in the Guadalquivir Valley near Seville. There



Nikunja Bihari Sahu

ELEVEN OF  
THE WARMEST  
YEARS OF  
THE PAST  
125 YEARS  
OCCURRED  
ONLY AFTER  
1990

have been frequent power cuts in some parts of Europe due to the surging demand for air conditioners. The foreign office of Britain issued extreme weather adversaries to its citizens traveling to Italy, Greece and Spain with advice to stay indoors during the daytime. The heat wave has triggered evacuations of nearly 20,000 people from several towns near large wildfires areas around Athens in southern Greece.

Back home, several Indian cities recorded 40 plus degree Celsius temperatures with Delhi’s Mungeshpur weather station recording a temperature as high as 52.9 deg C. The IMD has forecast that the summers in 2025 from March to May would experience warmest temperatures breaking last year’s record. On March 15, 2025 Odisha’s Boudh district recorded the highest temperature in India reaching 43.6 deg Celsius.

According to IPCC, our planet has been warmed by 0.6 deg Celsius over the last century and it is projected that the Earth’s mean temperature is likely to rise by 2.4 to 4.8 deg Celsius by the year 2100. The consequences are catastrophic some of which are already becoming visible: melting of glaciers and rising of sea level, climate change and its manifold impacts like change in precipitation patterns, untimely

monsoon onsets, increase in extreme weather conditions of floods, droughts, heat waves, hurricanes and long term effects like lowering of agricultural yields, species extinction, increase of vector-borne diseases of dengue and malaria, social conflicts over issues like water etc. The fact that 11 of the warmest years of the past 125 years occurred only after 1990 with 2024 being the warmest year on record tells amply the extent of nature’s fury in recent days.

Global warming has proved to be very harsh to our state Odisha also. Atmospheric temperature is consistently surging with summer seasons turning out to be painfully unbearable. Low-pressure weather conditions and depressions are becoming regular incidents causing unpredictable rainfall patterns across the state much to the woes of farmers.

Frequent floods and famines in the following years battered the lives of the people and shattered the economy of the state. The sea has also posed a serious threat to the state. The Bay of Bengal is expanding towards the coastal landscape at an alarming rate taking many villages and fertile farmlands into its grip thereby seriously threatening the livelihood of the native villagers. Many dev-

astating cyclones, triggered by the climate change, have originated from the Bay of Bengal and ravaged coastal Odisha in past. These were: Super Cyclones of 1971 and 1999, Phailin of 2023, Hudhud of 2014, Titli of 2018, Fani and Bulbul of 2019, Amphan of 2020, Yaas, Gulab and Jawad of 2021 and Dana of 2024.

Keeping these grave consequences in mind, world leaders have met at several forums in the past to find a solution to greenhouse gas emissions of nations with the Rio Summit in 1992 serving as the launching pad. The Paris Agreement signed in 2015 by 196 parties of the world at the COP 21 summit was a landmark event as it, for the first time, put a legally binding international obligation on nations to combat climate change by limiting global warming to well below 2 deg Celsius. However, the subsequent climate summits like the Glasgow Summit (2021) and Dubai Summit (2024) have failed to deliver any tangible result to realize the zero carbon emission goal. Under the circumstances, the humanity has no alternative but to embrace a nature-friendly lifestyle for a green and sustainable future.

The writer is Education  
Officer at Regional Science  
Centre, Bhopal

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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

## A cruel decision

Sir, despite the continuous reduction in the price of oil in the international arena, the BJP government’s decision to increase the unit price of LPG cylinders by Rs 25 is nothing but daylight robbery. Ever since the saffron government came to power, it has only been interested in fleecing the consumers instead of passing on the benefit of the reduction in the international price of oil. They have surreptitiously reduced the subsidy on cylinders from Rs 499.52 in 2014 to a pittance of Rs 24.95. The irony is that the subsidy remains the same, but the cost of the cylinder has been raised multifold. This government is not ready to reduce the cost of gas cylinders, a day-to-day requirement of the middle and low-income groups of people, but it had the audacity to write off amounts to the tune of Rs 16.35 lakh crores as Non-Performing Assets of crony capitalists and willful defaulters, most of whom are alleged to be close to the ruling dispensation, in public sector banks during their 10-year rule. Why else can we expect from a cruel government that appears to be in existence only for the rich and other crony capitalists, read crooks?

Tharcus S. Fernando, CHENNAI

## Deteriorating ties

Sir, India has terminated the transshipment facility for Bangladesh, citing congestion at its ports and airports. However, the true reasons seem to be different. India’s recent decision appears to be significantly shaped by the deteriorating diplomatic relations with Bangladesh. The situation has become increasingly tense following the collapse of Sheikh Hasina’s government in Bangladesh last year. Since August 5, Sheikh Hasina has been seeking asylum in India, which has further complicated the bilateral relationship. The interim government in Bangladesh has consistently urged India to extradite Hasina, a request that India has firmly rejected. Concurrently, Bangladesh has been actively enhancing its diplomatic and economic ties with both Pakistan and China, indicating a shift in its foreign policy. During his trip to China, the leader of the interim government of Bangladesh, Yunus, made provocative statements regarding the northeastern states of India. These developments have provoked India’s ire. Consequently, it is apparent that India has conveyed a stern warning to Bangladesh.

Abhijit Roy, JAMSHEDPUR












of the day


quote

AIADMK and BJP have decided to fight next (year's) polls...from 1998, AIADMK has been part of BJP alliance (at different points of time). PM Modi and late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa had worked for Centre-state ties



AMIT SHAH | UNION MINISTER

There is discrimination. That's why there is SC/ST Atrocities Act and in the coming days, to protect backward classes from insults, this government will take the responsibility of bringing a BC Protection Act




N CHANDRABABU NAIDU | ANDHRA PRADESH CM

The Global City project to be developed in Gurugram with an investment of ₹1 lakh crore will generate five lakh employment opportunities after its completion



NAYAB SINGH SAINI | HARYANA CM

POST OF THE DAY



In the last 5 years, 93% of actively managed large cap equity funds underperformed the Index. If you are a believer in the theory: that Money Managers have some deep insights on beating the markets; their performance speaks otherwise. Their job is to collect money and keep investing at whatever levels. Too many podcasts have elevated them to God level. Ask them to show their personal portfolios, most of them will get pissed off.  
Solution for you:-  
- Learn to manage your own money.  
- Learn the basics of selling stocks.  
- When to buy stocks.  
- How exactly to assess a stock quality etc.  
It does not take you insane amount of time to learn all these things. You just need a bit of effort.  
The commissions you'd save is massive. Example:-  
25K monthly investments, invested for 40 years (at 11% CAGR; assume 1% commissions)= 18.5Cr  
25K monthly investments, invested for 40 years (at 12% CAGR)=24.5Cr  
@Akshat\_World

SHORT TAKES

**Terrorist killed in encounter**

Jammu: One terrorist was killed Friday in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district, while a separate operation to track down a group of three militants is underway in Udhampur district, Army officials said. The security agencies have expanded the scope of surveillance to the Bhaderwah area of Doda district to keep a track on terrorists potentially moving between different locations in the hilly districts of the Jammu region.

**Property dealer shot dead in SUV**

New Delhi: A 50-year-old property dealer was allegedly shot dead inside his car by unidentified assailants in outer Delhi's Paschim Vihar East Friday morning, a police officer said. The deceased, identified as Rajkumar, was allegedly driving his SUV when the assailants surrounded him in different vehicles and fired at him, the officer said.

**4 women drown**

Garwah (Jharkhand): Four women, including two minors, drowned in a pond in Garwah district Friday, a senior official said. The incident took place when they had gone to the pond for bath, and one of them slipped in a deeper portion of the waterbody, Sub-Divisional Officer (Garwah) Sanjay Kumar Pandey said.



Vellappally has a remarkable ability to articulate matters effectively. As the old saying goes, his tongue carries the grace of Saraswati Devi

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CM

Indians deserved it, Rana told Headley after 26/11



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington/ New York, April 11: Mumbai terror attack accused Tahawwur Rana allegedly said the Indians “deserved it” and commended the nine LeT terrorists killed during the attack, suggesting that they should be given “Nishan-e-Haider”, Pakistan’s highest gallantry award, according to the US Department of Justice.

The US Wednesday extradited Tahawwur Hussain Rana, a Canadian citizen and native of Pakistan, to stand trial in India on 10 criminal charges stemming from his alleged role in the 2008 terrorist attack in Mumbai that killed 166 people, including six Americans. “Rana’s extradition is a critical step toward seeking justice for the six Americans and scores of other victims who were killed in the heinous attacks,” the Department of Justice said.

India alleges that Rana facilitated a fraudulent cover so that his childhood friend Headley, a US citizen born Daood Gilani, could freely travel to Mumbai to conduct surveillance of potential attack sites for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). After the attack, Rana allegedly told Headley, one of the main conspirators of the assault, that the Indians “deserved it”, the

statement said. “In an intercepted conversation with Headley, Rana allegedly commended the nine LeT terrorists who had been killed committing the attacks, saying that “they should be given Nishan-e-Haider”-Pakistan’s highest award for gallantry in battle, which is reserved for fallen soldiers,” the statement said.

India alleges that Headley received training from LeT members in Pakistan and was in direct communication with the terrorist outfit about plans to attack Mumbai. Rana agreed to open a Mumbai branch of his immigration business and appoint Headley as the manager of the office, despite the latter having no immigration experience, it said. On two separate occasions, Rana allegedly helped Headley prepare and submit visa applications to Indian authorities that contained information the former knew to be false.

Between November 26 and 29, 2008, ten LeT terrorists carried out a series of 12 coordinated shooting and bombing attacks in Mumbai.

LeT terrorists infiltrated the city by sea, dispersing to multiple locations in teams. They attacked a train station, two restaurants, the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel and a Jewish community centre.

ANJI KHAD BRIDGE

Bridging heights for a prosperous Kashmir

Rising gracefully above the deep gorge of the Anji River, the Anji Khad Bridge marks a historic milestone as India’s first cable-stayed railway bridge. Located approximately 80 km from Jammu city, just south of the iconic Chenab Bridge, it is a marvel of modern engineering and a symbol of ambition realised.

Nestled amidst the majestic Himalayas, this extraordinary structure is part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project, connecting the vital Katra-Banihal section. More than a bridge, it is a bold response to nature’s formidable challenges—built to endure seismic activity, high-velocity winds, and the unpredictable geology of young fold mountains.

Soaring 331 metres above the riverbed and stretching 725 metres across, the bridge



is supported by 96 high-tensile cables, anchored by an elegant inverted Y-shaped pylon rising 193 metres from its foundation. With over 8,215 metric tonnes of structural steel, it is a fusion of strength and sophistication.

Once inaugurated, the Anji Khad Bridge will revolutionise connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir—reducing travel

AGENCIES

Patna, April 11: While a sudden change in weather brought respite from the scorching heat in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh Friday, lightning strikes and hailstorms in Bihar claimed 61 lives in the last 24 hours, officials said.

In Bihar, 39 people died due to hailstorms and rain-related incidents, while lightning strikes claimed 22 lives.

Twenty-five deaths were reported Thursday evening, and following collation of data from various districts, the toll mounted to 61, they said.

Nalanda reported the highest number of fatalities at 23, followed by Bhojpur (six), Siwan, Gaya, Patna and Sheikhpura (four each), Jamui (three) and Jehanabad (two). Gopalganj, Muzaffarpur, Arwal, Darbhanga, Begusarai, Saharsa, Kati-



An artisan gives final touches to an idol of Lord Hanuman on the eve of Hanuman Jayanti, in Nagpur, Maharashtra

PTI PHOTO

CASTE CENSUS REPORT TABLED IN K'TAKA CABINET

The much-awaited Socio-Economic and Education Survey report, popularly known as the “caste census,” was presented before the Karnataka cabinet Friday. Speaking to reporters here, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said, “Some ministers said they want to go through the recommendations first. For this reason, there will be a cabinet meeting April 17”.



Toll due to lightning strikes climbs to 61



While 39 people died due to hailstorms and rain-related incidents, 22 people died due to lightning strikes Thursday

Twenty-five deaths were reported Thursday evening, and following collation of data from various districts, the toll mounted to 61, they said

har, Lakhisarai, Nawada and Bhagalpur districts reported one death each.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expressed condolences over the deaths and announced an ex-gratia of ₹4 lakh each for the next of kin of the deceased. In the national capital, the maximum temperature settled at 35.8 degrees Celsius, marking a dip of 3.8 notches from Thursday’s high of 39.6 degrees Celsius. Strong dust storms and gusty winds hit

Delhi this evening, prompt ing the MeT department to warn of adverse weather conditions in the coming hours and issue an “orange” alert for Delhi-NCR.

More than 15 flights were diverted at the Indira Gandhi International Airport due to inclement weather conditions.

"Due to inclement weather conditions in Delhi, some of the flights at Delhi Airport are impacted. Passengers are advised to contact their respective airlines for the latest

flight updates," airport operator DIAL said in a post on X at 1915 hours. IndiGo said Delhi and Jaipur are experiencing a dust storm, affecting takeoffs and landings and potentially causing air traffic congestion. This may lead to delays or diversions, the operator said in the post. While two weather stations – Ridge and Ayanagar – in Delhi Thursday recorded heatwave conditions with temperatures settling above 40 degrees Celsius, Friday all monitoring stations in the city recorded a high below the 40-degree mark.

The IMD has predicted thunderstorms with rain in Delhi Saturday. In Uttar Pradesh, light rain accompanied by strong winds in several districts of the western part of the state on Friday evening brought a much-needed relief from the recent spell of intense heat.

Ambulance driver gets life sentence for raping Covid patient in Kerala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pathanamthitta (Kerala), April 11: A court here Friday sentenced a man to life imprisonment for brutally raping and physically assaulting a 19-year-old COVID-19 patient, who belongs to a Dalit community, while she was being transported to a first-line treatment centre near here in 2020.

The sentence was pronounced by Judge N Harikumar, who also ordered the convict, Noufal (29), who hails from Kayamkulam, to pay a fine of ₹2.12,000.

The court had found the accused guilty Thursday, following the conclusion of arguments, and deferred sentencing to Friday.

The shocking incident took place at midnight September 5, 2020, at a time when the country was gripped by fear due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Instead of taking the patient to the COVID treatment centre in Pandalam, the accused diverted the vehicle and transported her to a deserted area within the land allocated for the Aranmula airport project. After entering the back of the ambulance and shutting the door, the accused forcefully restrained the woman and assaulted her.

The survivor, who was menstruating at the time, was raped after the accused covered her mouth. He also slapped her on the cheek and kicked her in the stomach. During the struggle, the woman fell and sustained an injury to her left knee.

After the assault, the accused dropped the semi-conscious woman in front of a private hospital in Pandalam and proceeded towards Adoor. The hospital staff, upon learning of the incident from the survivor, immediately informed the police.

Acting swiftly on her statement, the police apprehended Noufal and placed him under arrest.

BENGAL TEACHERS WHO LOST JOBS HOLD MARCH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 11: The familiar scenes of mass agitation returned to the streets of Kolkata Friday — echoes of the protests over the ghastly rape-murder at RG Kar Hospital — this time led by thousands of teachers and non-teaching staff who lost their jobs following a Supreme Court verdict that invalidated their appointments.

Chants of 'We want justice' shattered the sultry afternoon air, accompanied by visible outrage and frustration as demonstrators marched along the Salt Lake route. Their march from Karunamoyee to Acharya Sadan, the office of the West Bengal School Service Commission (SSC), was held in demand for the release of the 22 lakh Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) sheets to identify the genuine candidates who appeared for

the 2016 SSC exams and whose entire panel was annulled by the top court after it found the selection process "vitiated and tainted" beyond redemption.

Carrying placards demanding reinstatement, the protesters were joined by members of various civil society organisations in a show of solidarity. "SSC should release the copies of the OMR sheets to help segregate the eligible teachers," a demonstrator said.

The commission had earlier told both the Calcutta High Court and the Supreme Court that it no longer has the OMR sheets or their digital copies, as they were destroyed. Protestors squatted on the road and eagerly awaited the outcome of the crucial meeting scheduled to be held between representatives of the teachers who lost their jobs and the state education minister Bratya Basu later in the day.

NHF urges Centre to issue guidelines to protect vendors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 11: The National Hawkers' Federation (NHF) Friday urged the Centre to issue national-level guidelines to protect street vendors from the rising threat of heatwaves.

The increasing temperatures are putting the lives and livelihoods of over two crore vendors at risk, it said. In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, the federation said the frequency and intensity of heatwaves have increased alarmingly, with 2023 witnessing around 30 days of extreme heat conditions, and demanded that heatwaves be included in notified disasters under the Disaster Management Act.

The federation said vendors are facing a “double impact” in the form of health risks due to

prolonged exposure and loss of income due to reduced customer footfall.

“Vendors report heat exhaustion, dehydration, dizziness and even heat strokes. Heatwaves also impact perishable goods, increasing financial losses. Vendors selling fresh produce, dairy and other heat-sensitive items suffer particularly heavy economic setbacks,” the federation said.

It said despite the growing risks, street vendors often lack basic infrastructure like shade, drinking water and first-aid support. The NHF demanded that the government integrate vendor protection measures into the National Disaster Management Authority's (NDMA) guidelines and ensure state and urban bodies implement them.

The hawkers' body proposed several measures including advance planning by local au-

HEATWAVE



thorities, installation of public hydration stations, provision of umbrellas and temporary shade structures and distribution of oral rehydration salts, cooling towels and caps.

It also recommended the creation of shaded rest areas near markets and the formation of

vendor-led response teams trained to handle heat stress emergencies. The letter called for street vending zones to be developed with green cover and heat-resistant materials as part of long-term urban planning.

"With rising temperatures and increasing heatwave days,

The increasing temperatures are putting the lives and livelihoods of over two crore vendors at risk

it is imperative that street vendors who form a critical part of India's informal economy are given adequate protection. The central government must provide clear guidelines to states and urban local bodies on ensuring street vendors' safety during heatwaves. These guidelines should be officially integrated into the NDMA framework, making them a part of broader climate resilience and urban planning measures," NHF general secretary Saktiman Ghosh said in the letter.

Mecanzy Dabre, deputy gen-

eral secretary of the federation, said the government must provide adequate funding to heat action plans, notify heatwaves as a national disaster and provide necessary support to street vendors.

Currently, the notified list of disasters eligible for National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) assistance includes cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, fires, floods, tsunamis, hailstorms, landslides, avalanches, cloud bursts, pest attacks, frost and cold waves.

However, state governments can use up to 10 per cent of their annual SDRF allocation, subject to certain conditions, to provide immediate relief for natural disasters they consider significant within the local context, even if they are not included in the centrally notified list.



Keeping the wall is a rare example of memory preservation in Lebanon, where other landmarks of the civil war have remained abandoned or were covered up by the rapid construction of high-rises once the conflict ended.



# Business

## Quote of the day

**India's real estate sector continues to demonstrate resilience and attract sustained investor interest despite global headwinds**

ANSHUMAN MAGAZINE | CHAIRMAN & CEO (INDIA, SOUTH-EAST ASIA, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA), CBRE

**EVs are constituting more than 60 per cent of sales in our M-o-M (month-on-month) sales in CY25. We will carry this momentum throughout the year and are confident that our EVs will drive 60-65 per cent of our total sales by year end**

RAKESH SEN | DIRECTOR SALES & MARKETING, JSW MG MOTOR INDIA

**India's entrepreneurial talent pool is unmatched. But challenges remain, especially in cross-border capital access, international mentorship, and go-to-market expansion**

ASHUTOSH KUMAR JHA | GENERAL PARTNER, EXPERT DOJO

## SHORT TAKES

### Forex kitty swells to \$676.27 billion

**Mumbai:** India's forex reserves jumped \$10.872 billion to \$676.268 billion during the week ended April 4, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said Friday. The overall kitty had jumped \$6.596 billion to \$665.396 billion in the previous reporting week. This is the fifth consecutive week of an increase in the kitty, which had seen some decline recently due to revaluation, along with forex market interventions by the RBI, to help reduce volatilities in the rupee. The forex reserves had touched an all-time high of \$704.885 billion in end-September 2024. For the week ended April 4, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased \$9.074 billion to \$574.088 billion, the data released Friday showed.

### Vegetable oil import down 16% in March

**New Delhi:** India's vegetable oil imports fell 16 per cent to 9.98 lakh tonne in March mainly due to sharp decline in shipments of crude sunflower oil, according to industry data. In a statement Friday, Solvent Extractors' Association of India (SEA) said import of vegetable oils (edible & non-edible) declined to 9,98,344 tonne in March last year from 11,82,152 tonne in the same month last year. Edible oil imports in March 2025 fell to 9,70,602 tonne from 11,49,681 tonne in the year-ago period. Crude sunflower oil imports plunged to 1,90,645 tonne last month from 4,45,723 tonne in March 2024.



**I highlighted emerging opportunities in new and emerging sectors such as green hydrogen, electric vehicles, digital public infrastructure and innovation. India is an excellent gateway to Asia and the global south**

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

## BHARAT MART IN DUBAI SOON

Logistics operator DP World Friday said it has commenced the construction of Bharat Mart, a global B2B and B2C marketplace in Dubai, designed to facilitate trade between Indian businesses and global markets. The company in a statement said it unveiled the virtual model of the project in the presence of HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the UAE, Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, along with HE Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Group Chairman and CEO, DP World



# India, US finalise terms of reference for first phase of trade deal

## Indian govt moves quickly to clinch a trade deal following Trump's tariff pause

REUTERS

**New Delhi, April 11:** India and the US have finalised terms of reference for talks over the first part of a bilateral trade deal, an Indian trade official said Friday, adding it was possible that a "win-win" deal could take shape in the next 90 days.

US President Donald Trump Wednesday announced a 90-day pause on most tariff hikes for major trading partners including India, while raising levies on China, providing temporary relief for Indian exporters.

**Bilateral trade with the US, India's largest trading partner, rose to around \$129bn in 2024, with a \$45.7bn surplus in favour of India**

India and the US agreed in February to work on the first phase of a trade deal to be concluded late this year, with a view to reaching bilateral trade worth \$500 billion by 2030. "We are far ahead in trade



talks with the US compared to other countries ... there are lots of possibilities in 90 days," said

- **India, US negotiators holding talks for bilateral trade deal**
- **Vice President JD Vance to visit India soon, says source**
- **India won't allow re-routing of goods to US, says source**

the official, who did not want to be named because of the sensitivity of the issue.

Trade discussions between the countries will continue virtually and regularly, the official said, adding there could be some delegation-level visits from both sides as part of the talks.

US Vice President JD Vance is also expected to visit India

soon, the official said.

Trump's administration had announced a 26% tariff on Indian goods earlier this month, and New Delhi had said it did not plan to retaliate.

India has asked its customs authorities to step up scrutiny of exports and imports of goods to ensure the country is not used as a conduit to re-

route goods to the US, the official said.

Trade analysts have said that, following Trump's huge increase in tariffs on China, some companies could use India to divert exports to the US market.

"Neither will India be the source of trade diversion for our products, nor will it become a safe haven for others to divert through India," the official said. "India wants to remain a trusted trading partner. This is the message of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to all government officials and industry."

# D-St defies global bearish trend

Sensex, Nifty surge nearly 2% as US suspends additional 26% tariffs on India till July 9

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

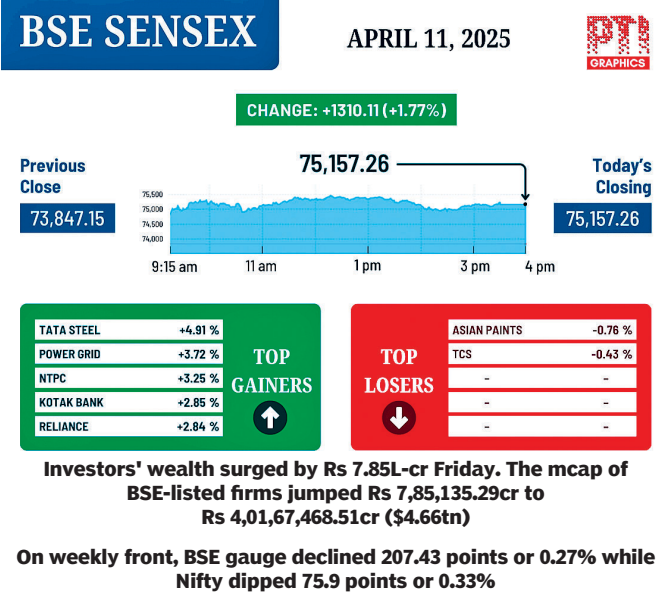
**Mumbai, April 11:** Benchmark Sensex surged by 1,310 points while Nifty closed above 22,900 level Friday on gains in banking, oil and metal shares as investors rejoiced the 90-day suspension of additional import duties by the US.

Defying a bearish trend in world markets, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex jumped 1,310.11 points or 1.77 per cent to settle at 75,157.26. During the day, it soared 1,620.18 points or 2.19 per cent to 75,467.33.

The NSE Nifty surged 429.40 points or 1.92 per cent to 22,828.55. In intra-day trade, the benchmark rallied 524.75 points or 2.34 per cent to 22,923.90.

The US announced suspension of additional tariffs on India for 90 days until July 9 this year, according to the White House executive orders. On April 2, US President Donald Trump slapped universal duties on about 60 countries exporting goods to America and additional steep levies on countries like India, potentially impacting sales of products from shrimp to steel in the world's biggest economy.

Tata Steel was the lead gainer among Sensex shares, rising by 4.91 per cent after the compa-



ny announced a transformation plan, including job cuts, for its Netherlands steel plant to improve efficiency and margins.

HDFC Bank rose by 2.33 per cent, emerging as the biggest contributor to the Sensex's rise. Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, Kotak Mahindra Bank, NTPC and Adani Ports were among the gainers.

IT behemoth TCS dropped 0.43 per cent after the company reported a 1.7 per cent decline

in the March quarter net profit due to lower margins. Asian Paints declined 0.76 per cent.

"An unexpected pause on reciprocal tariffs by the US provided relief in the midst of the uncertainty. Though the IT major's (TCS) result missed the street estimates, it opines optimism in the latter half of FY26 owing to growth in the order book," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

# IIP growth at 6-month low of 2.9%

Poor show by manufacturing, mining pulls down factory growth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 11:** India's industrial production growth decelerated to a six-month low of 2.9 per cent in February 2025, mainly due to poor performance of the manufacturing, mining and power sectors, according to official data released Friday.

The government also revised upward the industrial growth figure to 5.2 per cent for January 2025 from the provisional estimate of 5 per cent released in March.

The factory output, measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), rose by 5.6 per cent in February 2024.

The previous low was recorded in August last year when the growth remained flat at zero per cent. "As expected, the leap year base pulled down the YoY (year-on-year) growth of



the IIP to 2.9 per cent in February 2025 from 5.2 per cent in January 2025....the deceleration was broad-based, with all the use-based categories, as well as two of the three sectors barring electricity, witnessing a slower growth in February 2025 vis-a-vis the previous month. While the growth performance of mining is expected to deteriorate in March 2025 relative to February 2025, this is likely to be offset by an uptick in electricity

generation, amid steady manufacturing growth," Icra Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said.

The data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) showed that the manufacturing sector's output growth slowed to 2.9 per cent in February 2025, down from 4.9 per cent in the year-ago month.

Mining production growth dipped to 1.6 per cent from 8.1 per cent a year ago.

Power output growth also slowed to 3.6 per cent in February 2025 from 7.6 per cent in the year-ago period.

In the April-February FY25, the IIP grew 4.1 per cent, down from 6 per cent recorded in the corresponding period of the preceding fiscal.

As per use-based classification, the capital goods segment growth accelerated to 8.2 per cent in February 2025 against 1.7 per cent in the year-ago period.

## Sarangi new regional head of Union Bank of India, Cuttack region



**Bhubaneswar:** Bibekananda Sarangi has joined as the new regional head of Union Bank of India, Cuttack Region. Sarangi who is a gold medalist from OUAT started his career in 1999 in Corporation Bank and has worked as an Assistant General Manager in Kolkata, Bhubaneswar FGM Office in Odisha and Guwahati after the amalgamation of Corporation Bank with Union Bank of India. He has vast experience in credit and is likely to focus on RAM, Credit and CASA growth of the region.

# Ola Electric rolls out Roadster X bike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 11:** Ola Electric Mobility Friday said it has rolled out the first Roadster X motorcycle from its Futurefactory in Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu. The electric bike is set to hit the road this month.

The Roadster X Series comes with a mid-drive motor that boosts performance and safety. It also features a chain drive and an integrated MCU for efficient torque transfer, providing better acceleration, and improved range.

The Roadster X series also features flat cables in the motorcycles -- an industry-first in-



**The Roadster X series represents our commitment to taking the EV revolution to the next level. Today's rollout celebrates not just a new product, but a new era for us and the industry, as it represents the next phase of revolution in electric mobility**

BHAVISH AGGARWAL | CHAIRMAN AND MD, OLA ELECTRIC

novation. These cables improve packaging efficiency, reduce weight, and enhance thermal performance, improving overall durability and reliability.

The Roadster X series offers a breakthrough in motorcycle technology and comes with first-in-segment patented brake-by-wire technology with single ABS, and smart MoveOS 5 features such as advanced re-

generation, cruise control, and reverse mode.

Prices of Roadster X series are Rs 84,999, Rs 94,999 and Rs 1,04,999 for the Roadster X 2.5kWh, 3.5kWh, and 4.5 kWh, respectively. Roadster X+ 4.5kWh is priced at Rs 1,14,999, while Roadster X+ 9.1kWh (with 4680 Bharat Cell) that offers a range of 501 km/charge, is priced at Rs 1,84,999.

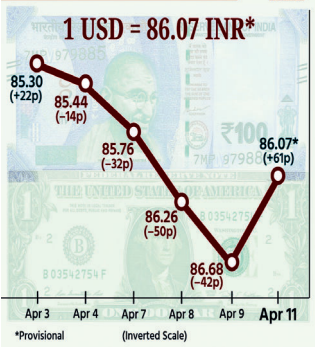
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 11:** The rupee surged 58 paise against the greenback to settle at 86.10 Friday due to a sharp correction in the US dollar and a strong rebound in the domestic equity markets.

The surge in the local unit came a day after US President Donald Trump suspended the 26 per cent tariffs on India till July 9.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 86.22, up 46 paise against the US dollar. During the intra-day trade, it rose to 85.95 before settling at 86.10, up

## RUPEE ₹ VS DOLLAR \$



58 paise against the greenback. The rupee had settled at 86.68 Wednesday.

Equity, forex, and com-

modity markets were closed Thursday on account of Shri Mahavir Jayanti.

"The rupee opened at 86.22 but the dollar was immediately sold off as the dollar index fell below 100 levels for the first time in three years," Anil Kumar Bhansali, Head of Treasury and Executive Director, Finrex Treasury Advisors LLP, said. "The rupee is expected to be in the range of 85.75-86.25 next week on Tuesday after the holiday on Monday," he said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, crashed 1.52 per cent to 99.335.





# CSK's new low at home

Dhoni-led Chennai Super Kings suffer humiliating 8-wicket loss to KKR, first time 3-in-a-row defeat at Chepauk

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, April 11:** Chennai Super Kings Friday suffered a humiliating eight-wicket defeat to Kolkata Knight Riders, as the MS Dhoni-led side, for the first time, lost three matches in a row at their hallowed home ground of Chepauk in their proud Indian Premier League history.

It was yet another dismal batting performance by the five-time champions, who were completely dismantled by a clinical KKR side, slumping to their fifth straight loss of the season.

The disappointing showing came in a match where the legendary Dhoni took charge of the team after regular skipper Ruturaj Gaikwad was ruled out of the remainder of the IPL due to injury.

Dhoni managed just one run off four balls before being dismissed in the 16th over, having come in to bat at number nine.

Invited to bat, a completely disoriented CSK could manage only a paltry 103 for nine, their lowest total at Chepauk, as KKR dished out a clinical bowling show.

It was CSK's third lowest total in the IPL and the lowest by any team in this edition so far.

Chasing a paltry 104 for a win, KKR cantered home in 10.1 overs with opener Sunil Narine bludgeoning his way to a 18-ball 44 studded with two fours and five sixes.

Captain Ajinkya Rahane also



IPL STANDINGS						
TEAM	M	W	L	NRR	PTS	
GT	5	4	1	1.413	8	
DC	4	4	0	1.278	8	
KKR	6	3	3	0.803	6	
RCB	5	3	2	0.539	6	
PBKS	4	3	1	0.289	6	
LSG	5	3	2	0.078	6	
RR	5	2	3	-0.733	4	
MI	5	1	4	-0.010	2	
CSK	6	1	5	-1.554	2	
SRH	5	1	4	-1.629	2	

just nine boundaries in the entire innings.

Shivam Dube top-scored with an unbeaten 31 off 29 balls, while Vijay Shankar made 29 after living a charmed life. Only two other CSK batters made runs in double-digit figures.

CSK's powerplay woes continued as they made 31 for the loss of two wickets, the second lowest by any team in six overs this season. It could have been much lower but for the 13 runs scored in the sixth over with back-to-back fours from Shankar off Chakravarthy.

Dhoni came out to bat with CSK at 72 for 7 in 14.2 overs. The writing was on the wall for CSK and the Chepauk crowd fell silent when Dhoni was adjudged LBW off Narine. Dhoni opted for a review, seemingly indicating there was bat involved, but the decision stood.

More than four overs were left after Dhoni's departure and CSK went past the 100-run mark, thanks mainly to Dube.

SCORECARD

**Chennai Super Kings:** Rachin Ravindra c Rahane b Harshit Rana 4, Devon Conway lbw b Ali 12, Rahul Tripathi b Narine 16, Vijay Shankar c Ali b Varun 29, Shivam Dube not out 31, Ravichandran Ashwin c Arora b Harshit Rana 1, Ravindra Jadeja c de Kock b Narine 0, Deepak Hooda c Arora b Varun 0, MS Dhoni lbw b Narine 1, Noor Ahmad c Varun b Arora 1, Anshul Kamboj not out 3.  
**Extras:** (LB-1, W-4) 5; **Total:** (For 9 wickets in 20 overs) 103; **Fall of wickets:** 1-16, 2-16, 3-59, 4-65, 5-70, 6-71, 7-72, 8-75, 9-79  
**Bowling:** Vaibhav Arora 4-0-31-1, Moeen Ali 4-1-20-1, Harshit Rana 4-0-16-2, Varun Chakravarthy 4-0-22-2, Sunil Narine 4-0-13-3.

**Kolkata Knight Riders:** Quinton de Kock b Kamboj 23, Sunil Narine b Noor Ahmad 44, Ajinkya Rahane not out 20, Rinku Singh not out 15.  
**Extras:** (LB-1, NB-2, W-2) 5; **Total:** (For 2 wickets in 10.1 overs) 107; **Fall of wickets:** 1-46, 2-85; **Bowling:** Khaleel Ahmed 3-0-40-0, Anshul Kamboj 2-0-19-1, Ravichandran Ashwin 3-0-30-0, Noor Ahmad 2-0-8-1, Ravindra Jadeja 0.1-0-9-0.

played his part with a solid 20 not out off 17 balls, while Quinton de Kock, the other opener, contributed 23. Rinku Singh also remained not out on 15 off 12 balls.

Earlier, Narine (3/13) grabbed three wickets, while Harshit Rana and Varun Chakravarthy got two each after CSK were invited to bat. Nothing went right for CSK in their home ground as they could hit

## SHORT TAKES

### Bopanna-Shelton lose

**Roquebrune-Cap-Martin:** Indian ace Rohan Bopanna and Ben Shelton's men's doubles campaign at the Monte Carlo Masters ended in the quarterfinals after losing to Monegasque Romain Arneodo and partner Manuel Guinard Friday. The Indo-American duo came back from a set down but lost in the super tiebreak with the scoreline 6-2, 4-6, 10-7. This was Bopanna's sixth quarterfinal appearance at the Monte-Carlo Masters, a title he famously lifted in 2017. Bopanna-Shelton rallied to a 2-6, 7-6(4), 10-7 second-round victory against third seeds Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassori that featured a topsy-turvy match tie-break to make it to the quarterfinals.

### Salah renews contract

**Liverpool:** Mohamed Salah's trophy-laden spell with Liverpool is set to extend to a decade after the prolific Egypt forward signed a new contract with the Premier League leader, ending months of uncertainty over his future. The 32-year-old Salah was one of three key senior players — with Trent Alexander-Arnold and Virgil van Dijk — who were due to be out of contract at the end of this season. He is the first to extend his stay, having already established himself as a club great with 243 goals in 394 appearances, placing him third in the list of Liverpool's all-time top scorers. "Of course I'm very excited," Salah said. "We have a great team now. Before also we had a great team. But I signed because I think we have a chance to win other trophies and enjoy my football."

## ISSF WORLD CUP

# Shooters hit the mark as India finish second

India's overall tally swelled to eight medals, including four gold, two silver and two bronze

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Buenos Aires, April 11:** The Indian team finished a creditable second in the year's first ISSF World Cup for rifle, pistol and shotgun shooters despite the young trap mixed team pair of Lakshay Sheoran and Neeru missing out on a medal by a point in the final event of the tournament here.

After the bronze picked up by the mixed team air pistol pair of Suruchi and Saurabh Chaudhary Thursday, India's overall tally swelled to eight medals, including four gold, two silver and two bronze, which put them in second position.

China finished on top of the standings with five gold, three silver and three bronze medals, thanks to a 1-2 in the mixed team air pistol event on the final day. The other gold of the day was picked up by Chinese Taipei in the mixed team trap.

The highlight of India's performance was the gold medals won by Sift Kaur Samra



Sidhu became the first Indian ever to win an ISSF World Cup gold

(women's 50m rifle 3 positions), Rudranksh Patil (men's 10m air rifle), Suruchi (women's 10m air pistol) and Vijayveer Sidhu (men's 25m rapid-fire pistol).

Sidhu became the first Indian ever to win an ISSF World Cup gold in his event. Also noteworthy was the silver winning performance in the women's 25m pistol by young Paris Olympian Esha Singh, a reigning mixed team world champion.

Heartwarming performances were also delivered by

the likes of Chain Singh, an Asian Games medalist in men's 3P from over a decade ago, winning his first individual ISSF World Cup medal, as well as former Asian Games and Youth Olympic Games champion Saurabh Chaudhary, making a return to the ISSF World Cup medals fold after a gap of two years.

The squad now moves to Lima, Peru where competitions in the second leg of the combined ISSF World Cup stage begin from April 15.

# SRH look to bounce back

The 'Orange Army' will take on power-packed Punjab Kings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hyderabad, April 11:** Desperate to arrest a worrying slide, Sunrisers Hyderabad will be eager to effect a turnaround when they host a power-packed Punjab Kings in their next IPL engagement here Saturday.

Last season's finalists, SRH began their 2025 campaign on a thunderous note, racking up a mammoth 286 to dismantle Rajasthan Royals by 44 runs.

With an explosive batting line-up at their disposal, the 'Orange Army' seemed poised to become the first team to breach the 300-run mark but their ultra-aggressive approach has since backfired spectacularly. In their last three matches, their attack-at-all-costs strategy with the bat yielded underwhelming totals of 163, 120, and 152 resulting in crushing defeats, and leaving them languishing at the bottom of the points table. They have worst Net-Run-Rate of -1.629 as of today.

With the bat, Sunrisers Hyderabad need far more from their big names like Travis Head, Abhishek Sharma, Ishan Kishan, and Heinrich Klaasen. Head and Sharma, who played a crucial role in delivering explosive starts last season, have failed to find their rhythm this year. In fact, SRH's best opening stand so far is a paltry 15.

Head's performance has tailed off dramatically, returning scores of 67, 47, 22, 4, and 8. Abhishek, too, has struggled for consistency, with a top score of just 24 across five innings.

Kishan, after his unbeaten ton in the opener, has looked a shadow of himself, while SRH's middle-order mainstay Klaasen is yet to set the stage on fire.

Yet, the team appears committed to sticking with their ag-



gressive blueprint. Head coach Daniel Vettori stressed on the need for better game awareness rather than a shift in philosophy after their last defeat.

"I think we know the style is going to work, but we have to respect conditions, and we have

to assess really well and that's probably something we haven't done," Vettori said.

While SRH's misfiring batting line-up has dominated post-match discussions, their bowling unit hasn't exactly lit up the tournament either.

## LSG vs GT: In-form Pooran will have Siraj riddle to solve

**Lucknow:** The prolific Nicholas Pooran will have his task cut out against a menacing Mohammed Siraj in a battle of equals as table toppers Gujarat Titans take on hosts Lucknow Super Giants in an IPL match here Saturday. In sapping Lucknow heat, an enticing battle is likely to ensue since there is not much to choose between the two teams. Titans have won four matches in a row to sit pretty on top of the table (8 points) by virtue of better net run-rate compared to Delhi Capitals, which also has four victories in its kitty. LSG are currently fifth in a mid-table muddle with six points but it is a side on upward curve at the moment. In all big battles, the important sub-plots hold the key and in this match, it would be a duel between tournament' top scorer Pooran and Siraj, the best fast bowler on view. With 288 runs, Pooran is on top of the leader-board of run-getters, with only one failure in five innings so far. The 24 sixes that he has smashed alongside 25 fours is a testimony to his dominance in the shortest format. A strike-rate of 225 will intimidate any rival captain. Slotted at No 3 by head coach Justin Langer and skipper Rishabh Pant has worked perfectly for him. But in Siraj, Pooran will face a crafty operator, who has been brilliant in Powerplay overs with 10 wickets in five games so far. An economy rate of 7.70 is more than decent if one factors in the pace at which the game is moving. The best part about Siraj's bowling is his ability to bowl the conventional Test-match length first up with movement off the surface. Hitting Siraj through the line during the Powerplay overs isn't always the easiest of propositions and not just Pooran but the two openers Aiden Markram and Mitchell Marsh will also have to be careful while playing him. Kagiso Rabada's absence hasn't really hurt Titans as was the case in the last game with an improved Prasad Krishna (8 wickets, ER 7.05) proving to be a revelation this season. Left-arm spinner R Sai Kishore (10 wickets, ER 7.25) has in fact overshadowed team's premier spinner Rashid Khan (3 wickets, ER 10).



# Badminton Asia Championships: Shuttlers' poor show continues

Dhruv-Tanisha exit in quarters as Indian challenge ends

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Ningbo (China), April 11:** Dhruv Kapila and Tanisha Crasto, India's last remaining players at the Badminton Asia Championships 2025, bowed out in the mixed doubles quarterfinals.

The Indian duo suffered a 22-20, 21-13 loss at the hands of Hong Kong's fifth-seeded Tang Chun Man and Tse Ying Suet Friday.

The duo registered a comeback 12-21, 21-16, 21-18 win over Chinese Taipei's Ye Hong Wei and Nicole Chan at the Ningbo Olympic Sports Centre Gymnasium Thursday. After dropping the opening game 12-21, the Indian duo fought back to take the second 21-16 and edged a tense decider 21-18. Meanwhile, India's campaign in the singles was ended Thursday when ace shuttler PV Sindhu, Priyanshu Rajawat and Kiran George lost their respective second-round matches.

Sindhu fought hard but ultimately lost to Akane Yamaguchi 11-21, 21-16, 16-21 after coming from behind in the second game to challenge the Japanese former world champion.

In men's singles, Kiran battled tough against world champion Kunlunvat Vitidsarn but was defeated 21-19, 13-21, 16-21, while Priyanshu lost 14-21, 17-21



to Kodai Naraoka.

In the men's doubles, Hariharan Amsakarunan and Ruban Kumar Rethinasabapathi, who moved into the second round after beating Sri Lanka's Madhuka Dulanjana and Lahiru Weerasinghe, lost to Paris Olympic bronze medalist Malaysian pair of Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik 15-21, 14-21 Thursday. On Day 1, Paris 2024 semifinalist Lakshya Sen, HS Prannoy and Malvika Bansod were knocked out in the first round. Sen was crashed out after a straight-game defeat against world No. 14 Lee Chia-hao of Chinese Taipei. Prannoy put up a fight but couldn't avoid a 21-16, 12-21, 21-11 defeat against China's Lu Guangzu, marking his fourth first-round exit in six tournaments this year.

Malvika, 22nd in the women's singles rankings, lost against world No. 15 Gao Fang Jie. She was beaten 21-14, 21-8 by the Asian Games silver medalist.

In the women's doubles, India's challenge ended after Priya Konjengbam and Shruti Mishra were ousted by Chinese Taipei's Sung Shuo-yun and Yu Chien-Hui following a 21-11, 21-13 defeat.

# India submits bid for 2031 AFC Asian Cup

The host country, which will be picked in 2026, will get automatic berth in the tournament

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 11:** India has submitted 'Expression of Interest (EOI)' to host the 2031 AFC Asian Cup, the continent's showcase football event, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) said Friday.

The AIFF was one of the seven national football bodies which submitted the EOI before the deadline of March 31.

"Yes, we have submitted the EOI to host the 2031 AFC Asian



Cup. Let us see how it goes," AIFF's deputy secretary general M Satyanarayan told PTI. India will face tough competition from established football powerhouses such as Australia, South Korea and United Arab Emirates to get the right to host the tournament. Indonesia and Kuwait have also submitted the

Eol while there is a joint bid of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The host country, which will be picked in 2026, will get automatic berth in the tournament. India finished runners-up in the 1964 edition and were eliminated in the group stage in 1984, 2011, 2019 and 2023. The tournament began

in 1956. Out of the seven bidding countries, Australia, UAE, South Korea and Kuwait have earlier hosted the tournament.

Chairing the Asian Football Confederation's Executive Committee meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on the eve of the 35th AFC Congress, president Shaikh Salman lauded "the highest ever number of EOIs received in modern history and attributed the exceptional reception to the growing prestige of Asia's crown jewel."

The AFC had sent out invitations November 27, 2024, for all member associations to express their interest in hosting Asia's most prestigious men's national team tournament. The deadline to submit the EOI was March 31, 2025.

## INDIAN WOMEN'S LEAGUE

# East Bengal claim maiden title over Odisha

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kalyani, April 11:** Almost 21 years since an East Bengal team last won a league title in Indian football, the club's women's team sealed the Indian Women's League (IWL) trophy with a careful and tight 1-0 victory over defending champions Odisha FC.

To add further salt to the wounds, Odisha are now placed to suffer relegation, their fate not entirely in their own hands with one game left. Soumya Guguloth scored the winning goal in the 67th minute.

In their third season in the women's top division, East Bengal halted all challenges with



ease. They have beaten all teams, bar one — Gokulam Kerala — in the league this season and will no doubt look to amend that statistic heading into the final game of the season on April 18, when they will also be officially handed the trophy in Kalyani.

Despite thoroughly dominat-

ing the first half, East Bengal's sudden freeze in front of the goal extended into this game, too. Their forward trio of Maurine Achieng, Soumya Guguloth, and Elshaddai Acheampong were guilty of not finishing good chances throughout the first half hour.