



FESTIVE SPIRIT: Children dressed in traditional attire perform at a field in Patiala, Saturday, ahead of Baisakhi festival

PTI PHOTO

Connect with people: Nadda to MPs, MLAs

With confusion and a sense of leadership vacuum prevailing among Biju Janata Dal (BJD) cadres following the unprecedented strife in the principal Opposition party in Odisha after the Waqf (Amendment) Bill fiasco in Parliament, the ruling BJP seems to have sensed the opportunity to cash in on the situation. The apparent attempt was noticed at the inaugural event of the saffron party's training camp for MPs and MLAs in Puri Saturday, when BJP president JP Nadda called upon the leaders to expand cadre base and connect with different sections, especially Dalits and women, by visiting villages. Experts say the timing of the training camp, or Nadda's appeal, may be a coincidence but there could not have been a better chance for the party - which assumed power in the state with a narrow vote share - to win over the traditional supporters of the over two-decade-old regional party, which is showing signs of disintegration at present

mally inaugurating a three-day training programme for party MPs and MLAs here. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Union Ministers Jual Oram, Dharmendra Pradhan and Ashwini Vaishnaw, state BJP president Manmohan Samal and most of the party MPs and MLAs attended the programme.

In his 90-minute address to the party's lawmakers, Nadda apprised them of their duties and responsibilities — to serve the BJP as well as the people.

“The party president focused on 14 points and asked the participants to get connected with the people of different sections, especially the elderly, Dalits and women, by visiting villages and becoming part of their lives,” Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi told reporters.

As the training programme was purely for the MPs and MLAs, media was not allowed inside the meeting other than taking pictures and videos of the inaugural ceremony.

Noting that BJP is the world's largest political party, Nadda told the party MPs and MLAs that of the 28 states and 7 union territories (UTs), NDA has government in 19 places. The BJP alone has formed government in 13 states and UTs, the party president told the gathering and added that the respective MPs and MLAs

should get connected to the people to win the confidence of the masses.

Nadda said in a span of 3.5 months, as many as 13.5 crore people have voluntarily become members of the BJP. “The BJP is a cadre-based party having its own principles and ideology which should be followed by the lawmakers,” he said, adding that all the leaders should shun their ego, if any, and come forward to work for the party in tandem. Nadda, in his address, also informed the lawmakers about the dos and don'ts for them.

Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram said that the BJP is the only party which conducts training programme for its workers and leaders from the booth level to the Prime Minister level. All the leaders irrespective of their positions get trained and reoriented to the party's principles and ideologies, Oram said.

The BJP president suggested the MPs and MLAs to spend some time in public places like hospitals so that they could ascertain the public mood and their difficulties.

The event, which began Friday evening, will continue till April 13. The participants of the training camp are being imparted skills on organisational functioning, governance, ideological clarity, and goal-oriented execution. **P4**

UPI down again

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 12: UPI users across the country experienced transaction failures Saturday as the popular payment system was down due to a technical glitch.

This is the third time in less than a fortnight that UPI witnessed outages impacting transactions. In the recent past, UPI outage was reported March 26 and April 2.

According to the outage tracking platform Downdetector, complaints about UPI failures were being received after 11:30am.

The UPI is an instant payment system developed and managed by the NPCI, an RBI-regulated entity.

NPCI acknowledged that users are facing partial transaction decline and it is working to resolve the issue.

“NPCI is currently facing intermittent technical issues, leading to partial UPI transaction declines. We are working to resolve the issue and will keep you updated. We regret the inconvenience caused,” NPCI said in a post on X.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Our regime has invoked tremendous confidence among citizens... especially the uninformed ones

TN brings laws into force based on SC order

AGENCIES

Chennai, April 12: In a historic development, 10 Bills — passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly but reserved by Governor RN Ravi for President's clearance — have now officially become laws even though neither the Governor nor the President gave approval to those. This follows the April 8 verdict of the Supreme Court on the issue.

While clearing the Bills, the SC pulled up the Tamil Nadu Governor, saying his

FIRST IN INDIA

decision to withhold assent to key Bills was ‘illegal’ and ‘arbitrary’. The SC also set a timeline for all Governors to act on the Bills passed by state Assemblies.

For the first time, the SC prescribed that the Presi-

dent should decide on the Bills reserved for her consideration by the Governor within a period of three months from the date on which such reference is received, according to the top court's 415-page judgement uploaded on its website at 10.54pm Friday.

It is for the first time in Indian history that a state government has operationalised laws based on court order

instead of Governor's assent.

“History is made as these are the first Acts of any legislature in India to have taken effect without the signature of the Governor/President but on the strength of the judgement of the Supreme Court,” senior advocate and DMK Rajya Sabha MP P Wilson posted on X.

Some of the laws replace Governor as the Chancellor of Universities. **P9**

AGENCIES

Puri, April 12: BJP president and Union Health Minister JP Nadda Saturday asked party MPs and MLAs to learn the technique of getting connected with people and to associate with the developmental works.

Nadda said this after for-

3 killed in anti-Waqf Act protests in West Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 12: Violent protests in Muslim-majority Murshidabad district of West Bengal against the Waqf (Amendment) Act left at least three people dead and several injured Saturday, with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announcing that the Act would not be implemented in the state.

Amidst growing unrest in pockets such as Suti and Samserganj, the Calcutta High Court, acting on a petition filed by Leader of Opposition Suvedu Adhikari, ordered the deployment of CAPF personnel in the affected areas.

At least three people, including a father-son duo, were killed, and over 138 arrested after protests turned violent in Suti and Samserganj blocks of Murshidabad.

A man and his son were found stabbed to death inside their home in Jafrabad, located in the violence-hit Samserganj area. Family

members alleged that miscreants looted their home and then fatally attacked the two before fleeing.

In a separate incident, a 21-year-old youth sustained bullet injuries during clashes at Sajur Friday and succumbed to his injuries at Murshidabad Medical College and Hospital Saturday evening.

HC ORDERS CAPF DEPLOYMENT

Meanwhile, two bidi factory workers, including a minor boy, sustained bullet injuries while on their way to work in Dhulian in Samserganj. Both are being treated at the Murshidabad Medical College and Hospital and are reportedly stable.

In a bid to pacify the agitated protesters, the CM clarified that the law in question was legislated by the Centre and not by her government.

“Remember, we did not make the law over which

many are agitated. The law was made by the Central government. So, the answer you want should be sought from the Central government,” Banerjee said in a post on X.

“We have made our position clear on this matter — we do not support this law. This law will not be implemented in our state. So, what is the riot about?” she asked.

In light of the escalating violence, Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan held a video conference with West Bengal Chief Secretary and DGP to review the situation.

ADGP (Law and Order) Jawed Shamim told reporters in Kolkata that 138 people have been arrested in connection with the unrest so far.

The violence, which erupted over the Waqf (Amendment) Act, led to massive disruptions. Protesters torched police vehicles, blocked roads and vandalised railway property.

Trump's missteps face scrutiny

President Donald Trump regained the White House in large part by trumpeting his ability to get things done accusing his opponents of ineptitude and senility and promising that on Day 1 he would restore basic competence to government.

And, he said, it wouldn't even be hard.

But 2.5 months in, agencies such as the Social Security Administration have struggled to provide basic services. Trump's team issues edicts, then reverses them. A leaked Signal chat suggests top security officials were unfamiliar with the basics of protecting military secrets.

Crucial government workers have been fired, then rehired. A much-ballyhooed immigration detention centre at Guantánamo Bay has faced

logistical problems. Trump's team told laid-off workers at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to contact a particular individual if they felt they were being discriminated against; she turned out to be dead.

These and other missteps are now being compounded in dramatic fashion by a roiling stock market and bond sell-off prompted by Trump's tariff policies, raising fears of a collapsing economy. Trump's formula for calculating the tariffs has been widely panned by economists. And Wednesday, he paused many of the levies just hours after they took effect, even while leaving a 10 percent blanket tariff in place and further hiking duties on imports from China.

Americans have long harshly judged leaders who seem, fairly or unfairly, to



lack competence, whether it was President Joe Biden's troubled withdrawal from Afghanistan, President George W. Bush's botched response to Hurricane Katrina or President Barack Obama's introduction of a vaunted health-care website that immediately crashed.

The question facing the White House is whether the Trump team's struggles with some of the basic functions of governing and

management are posing a political threat — or whether Americans, at heart, chose Trump for his ability to break things rather than run them and will accept missteps as the price of disruption.

“I really believe the American people understand that the president of the United States has to be competent and has to understand the world we live in,” said Leon Panetta, who served as chief of staff to President Bill Clinton and was known for his ability to put troubled agencies back on track.

“Any time you have a period of chaos and uncertainty about what the hell is going to happen, I don't think there is any question that the American people will hunger for stability and competence,” Panetta added.

Contd...P4

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leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you may just want to delve deep into yourself. You realise the importance of polishing the mirror of your soul and Ganesha approves. Spontaneity is important too, and spending time with children is an excellent way to keep in touch with it.

TAURUS
You are likely to remain unconquerable and unassailable throughout the day. Caution: Stay focussed and avoid frittering away your time and energy. You may face stress at work or in some ongoing project. Expect a relatively serene evening with your beloved, says Ganesha.

GEMINI
A great evening with your sweetheart will be the highlight of the day. It will be one of the better days in business; you will be able to earn enough money to save for the future. In the evening, you may have to spend a little extra, says Ganesha.

CANCER
You will remain watchful for most part of the day. There may be times when your colleagues may think that you are being overcautious and paranoid. So be it. Ganesha advises you to stick to this approach; soon, the same people will appreciate it at the end of the day. You may have to attend certain social engagements in the evening.

LEO
Today is one mushroom that may turn out to be unpalatable, says Ganesha. The stars indicate that this day shall be smeared with quite a few unsatisfactory moments, especially in the afternoon. A certain sense of wildness and volatility shall dominate your actions today. So, you would be wise to take valuable inputs and advice from your seniors at work today.

VIRGO
Today will be a creative and beneficial day for you at your workplace. In the afternoon, Ganesha says, you will be in your element. With your professional acumen, you will succeed in sharing your ideas with your boss and getting his approval.

LIBRA
Work is always unrelenting and today, it manages to catch up with you in a big way. Expect to be under some pressure to meet deadlines, says Ganesha. But all it takes is to remain level-headed and shrewd in your ways, and you can turn things around to make it a prosperous and flourishing day.

SCORPIO
Being gregarious may just catch your fancy today, says Ganesha. At work, you will remain fussy about assignments and deadlines. Socially, whom you choose to be with will decide who you are, suggests Ganesha. Evening will be spent in the pleasant company of loved ones.

SAGITTARIUS
The fire within you is set to flare – professionally and personally. It won't be difficult for you to convince people of your intentions. But Ganesha advises you to seek counsel from your superiors and predecessors before you dive into anything.

CAPRICORN
Many a time, we emulate others or get inspired by certain thought-provoking actions which explains most of the initiatives we undertake. Your actions today will be inspired too, says Ganesha. However, later in the day, you are likely to get into arguments that may drag you into legal disputes.

AQUARIUS
If you're thinking of doing some soul-searching today, the stars completely back you. And yes, remember to take a break – no one deserves it more. Go on a long drive with a buddy if you must. And if you get a chance to travel, grab it! Getting away from the humdrum will clear your mind, says Ganesha.

PISCES
A day wherein you will be busy socialising in the company of your near and dear ones, or childhood buddies. Refurbishing and re-furnishing your home is also likely to be on the agenda. You may find yourself visiting a holy place as well, says Ganesha.



LADY GAGA ALL PRAISE FOR BRUNO MARS

Pop star Lady Gaga has heaped praise on Bruno Mars, tagging the musician as a 'once-in-a-generation artist.' The 39-year-old singer-actress and Mars released *Die with a Smile*, their Grammy-winning collaboration in 2024.

BACON CONTENT WITH WHAT HE HAS ACHIEVED

Hollywood star Kevin Bacon shared that he feels as if he is racing the clock on mortality. Bacon has been a part of the industry for over decades and has no intentions of giving up now but said that if he 'died tomorrow' he will still be satisfied with what he has achieved.



SECRET BEHIND KRITIKA'S JOY

NEW DELHI: Actress Kritika Kamra has called herself a "realist" and said that for her, "happiness lies in the small things."

Asked if her life were a movie, what the title would be, Kritika told this agency, "Thoda hai Thode ki Zaroorat Hai." I think this is the story of my life. I'm a realist, and for me happiness lies in the small things. I'm grateful for what I have already and ambitious for more."

She added, "Life is a journey between what you have and what you want. And the pursuit so far has been very interesting."

Talking about what she finds harder to play—a character completely different from herself or one that closely resembles

her—Kritika said, "A perfect character is one that has qualities and emotions that are relatable but a life that's completely different from yours. I seek characters that push me to imagine situations I've never been in..."

She added, "This is the beauty and the challenge of a good character, and it's deeply satisfying."

The actress was recently seen in *Gyaarah Gyaarah*, a fantasy thriller series, which is an adaptation of the Korean drama *Signal*. She will next be seen in National Award-winning filmmaker Nagraj Manjule's *Matka King*.

IAN S



National Street Theatre Day celebration in City

BHUBANESWAR: The National Street Theatre Day was celebrated with grandeur here at Master Canteen Square, Saturday, under the aegis of Odisha Pathaprantata Nataka Mahasangha (OPNAM).

Led by the association's president, Shatrughna Samal, theatre artists conducted an awareness rally aimed at educating the public on the importance of street theatre. The programme was inaugurated by eminent dramatist and president of Kalinga Natya Sangha, Dharendra Nath Mallik.

Other top theatre personalities in attendance included Prasanna Mishra, Pradeep



Bishwal, Mukund Satpathy, Bhajakrushna Mohanty, Narendra Mishra, and Satya Jena. They emphasized the role

of street theatre in creating a healthy society and encouraged the artists to continue their efforts.

A special awareness drama, Bindu Bindu Jala, was performed by the artists of San-yoga Natya Anusthana on this occasion, highlighting the importance of water conservation.

Other artists who contributed to the success of the event included Ranjan Nayak, Nityaprakash Swain, Prashanta Mahapatra, Prahlad from Bandemataran Anusthana (Kantapada), Jayashree Das, Vibhu Dixit, Kalandi Charan Swain, Pabitra Mohan Nayak, Jagadananda Nayak, Mithun Malaya Pradhan, Minati Swain, Prashant Shadangi, Gupteswar Panigrahi, Sribasta Nayak, and Bulu Panda. PNN

I was born with gypsy blood: Lara

MUMBAI: Actress and former beauty queen Lara Dutta thinks she was born with gypsy blood as she juggles between living in Mumbai, Dubai and Goa.

Lara took to her Instagram, where she shared a string of pictures from her travels to different cities. It also included pictures with her daughter Saira, husband Mahesh Bhupathi, close friends and family members.

In the caption section, the actress wrote: "Already mid April (almost)!!! It was said - as one got older, you start settling down..... I think I was born with gypsy blood! Or atleast as my dad says, with wheels on my feet!"

"Living between home (Mumbai) and my adopted home (Dubai) seems almost seamless now (with a little goa thrown

in now and then)! Sometimes an even shorter flight than Mumbai-Delhi" she added.

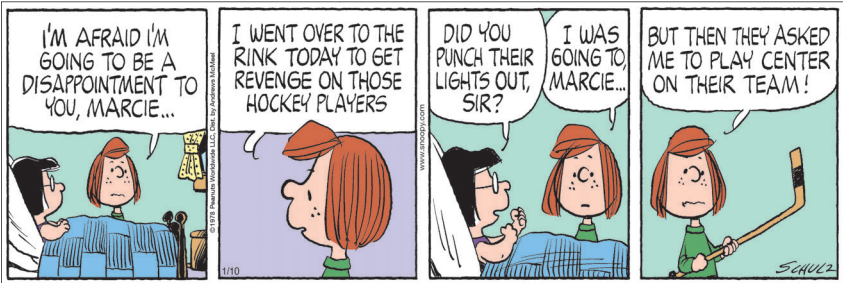
Lara revealed that the people she knows "are now choosing to live seasonally."

"They've put down roots in their home country but are using their financial means (and I don't mean just the uber wealthy) to experience life, with a fair amount of uncertainty, yet full of opportunity, in other environments and cultures..... I'd love to know your take.... is wanderlust getting the better of you? Or are you perfectly content just where you are?!" she added.

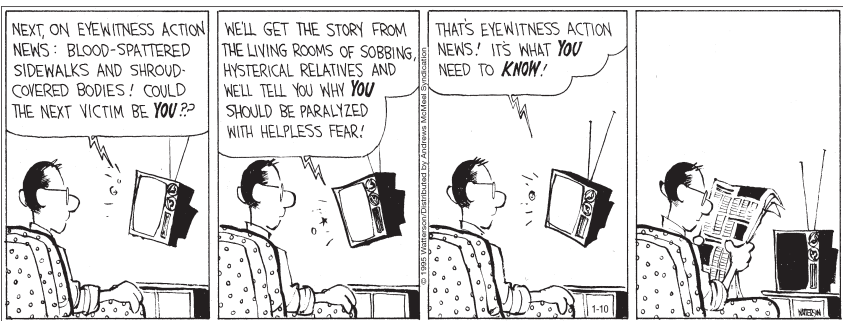
IAN S



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

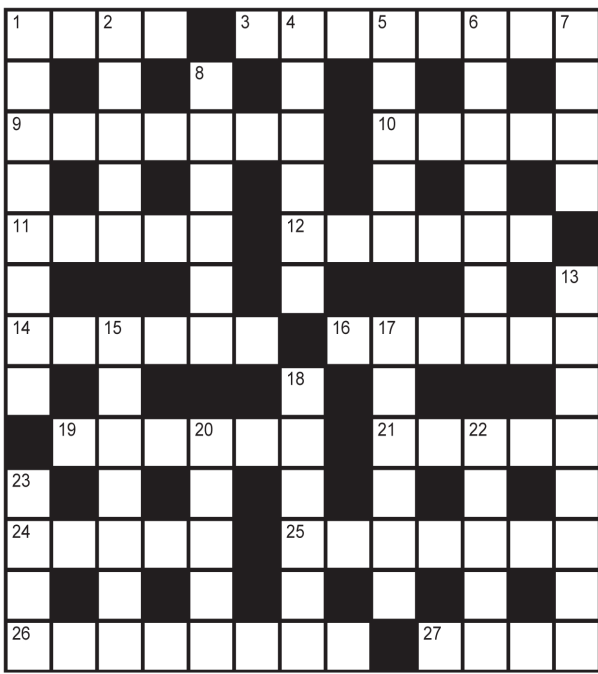


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- Cathedral recess
- Discourteous
- Stifled
- Errand runner
- Swagger
- Virgil's epic poem
- Crude stone tool
- Body art
- Brawn
- Rapids craft

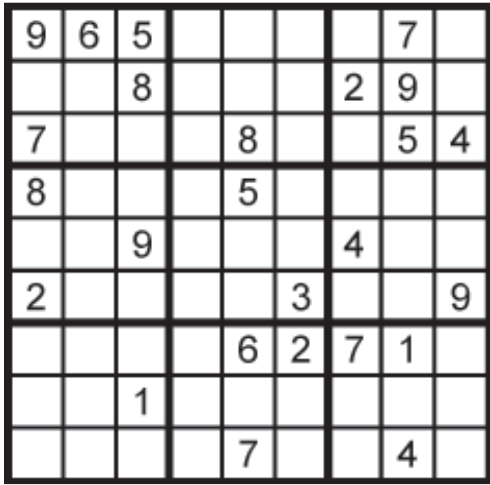
Down

- Aided
- Judicious
- Light patterned cotton cloth
- Body part

- Impose, as pain
- British peer
- Grandma's "For shame!" (3-3)
- Lopsided
- Wash
- Martial art
- Computer key
- Burial chamber
- Tall tales
- Rigging support

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.

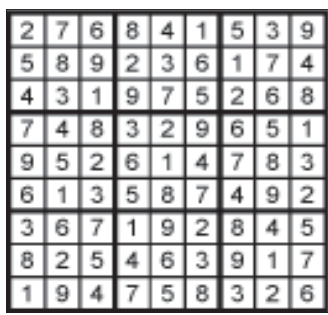


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

CRUT team reviews commute experience



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 12: As part of its continuous efforts to improve public transport services, Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) Saturday conducted a field visit this morning to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the City’s bus services.

CRUT managing director N Thirumala Naik, accompanied by the general manager Sanjay Kumar Biswal travelled in an Ama Bus along a regular commuter route. The objective of the visit was to gain first-hand insights into the daily travel experience of passengers.

During the journey, the officials interacted directly with commuters to understand their feedback and concerns. The team also reviewed the ticketing and payment systems to ensure smooth and transparent transactions.

Additionally, a thorough inspection of the onboard safety and security features was carried out to assess operational readiness and passenger safety standards.

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	36.3°	35.8°
Min Temp	25.2°	24.0°
Humidity	80%	84%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST		
Thunderstorm with rain		

CLASSIFIED LOST

I, Sushant Nayak, S/o-Radhu Nayak, At/P.O.-Badihi, P.S.- Tantipala, Dist.- Kendrapara, Odisha, I am the owner of the Property of ROR No.- 201/153, dt- 06.11.2023, which was purchased from Pabitra Samal vide sale deed No.- 10962301531, dt- 18.10.2023 ROR No.- 201/38, Plot No.- 430/915, which is in the name of Dinabandhu Samantray and Daitari Samantray has been purchased Vide RSD No.- 493 dt- 26.03.2007, Area- 0.060 Dec. Under Mouza- Jasuapli, Tahasil- Mahakalpada, Dist.- Kendrapara. That Original ROR No.- 201/38, Plot No.- 430/915, RSD No.- 493, dt- 26.03.2007, which is link to my property Document ROR No.- 201/153, dt- 06.11.2023, RSD No.- 10962301531 dt- 18.10.2023, has been lost some where during travel from my own house to Kendrapara at Aurata Chowk on dt- 29.03.2025 and inspite of my best efforts the ROR and the sale deed was untraceable. Any person find this document please contact the above address or on this Mobile No.- 8144569711.

Capital to celebrate 77th Foundation Day today

Two-day celebration to honour Bhubaneswar’s legacy, cultural richness, and modern journey as a planned capital

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 12: The state government is all set to celebrate the 77th Foundation Day of Bhubaneswar April 13 and 14 with a grand two-day programme, paying tribute to the City’s cultural heritage, planned development, and its growing role as a modern urban hub.

The celebrations will begin on the morning of April 13 with a solemn garlanding of the Foundation Stone honouring the City’s historic inception. This will be followed by a ceremonial flag hoisting by Assembly Speaker Surama Padhy. A vibrant parade showcasing the diverse cultural identity of Bhubaneswar will then proceed from Rabindra Mandap Square to Soochana Bhawan.

At Soochana Bhawan, a specially curated photo exhibition chronicling Bhubaneswar’s



transformation over the decades will be inaugurated, offering citizens and visitors a glimpse into the City’s journey as an architecturally planned and evolving capital.

In the evening, Utkal Mandap will host the Rajadhani Gaurav Samman, where Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati will felicitate individuals who have made significant contributions to the City’s growth and development.

Winners of competitions held in the run-up to the Foundation Day will also be honoured, followed by a colourful cultural programme featuring dance, music, and local performances.

April 14, the celebrations will continue in collaboration with the Odia Pakhya initiative by the Odia Language, Literature and Culture department, focus-

ing on the promotion of Odia identity, art, and language — reinforcing the cultural soul of the Capital city.

Notably, the Bhubaneswar Foundation Day-cum-Rajadhani Mahotsav not only marks the City’s establishment in 1948 but also showcases its evolution as a beacon of Odisha’s aspirations and progress. Known as the “Temple City of India,” Bhubaneswar beautifully blends its ancient heritage with dynamic urban development. From its roots as the historic capital of Kalinga to its emergence as a thriving smart city, Bhubaneswar’s journey reflects resilience, vision, and transformation. The celebration honours the spirit, legacy, and dreams of its people who continue to shape the City’s vibrant identity.

BPUT hosts workshop on NEP 2020 implementation



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 12: The Biju Patnaik University of Technology (BPUT) organised a workshop on the implementation of NEP 2020 for technical & professional education at the Rail Auditorium here Saturday.

The event also hosted an award ceremony and distributed prizes to the winners of BPUT Tech Carnival 2024.

All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) chairman TG Sitharam attended as the chief guest. “NEP 2020 is a transformative roadmap for the Indian academic landscape. It emphasises flexibility, self-learning, experiential and multidisciplinary education, and digital integration,” said Sitharam.

He also underscored the importance of research, innovation, and collaboration in today’s learning ecosystem.

Distinguished guests included OUTR Bhubaneswar vice

chancellor Bibhuti Bhusan Biswal, and World Skill Center CEO Rashmita Panda.

BPUT vice chancellor Amiya Kumar Rath delivered the welcome address and presentation and stated, “NEP 2020 is built on key pillars such as holistic education, access, equity, inclusivity, and outcome-based learning. It promotes the use of regional languages, strengthening industry-academia linkages.”

The event concluded with the prize distribution for the BPUT Tech Carnival 2024, where 112 prizes were awarded to 250 students across 37 events. Additionally, 24 venue colleges were felicitated by AICTE. The university also launched BPUT News, BPUT e-News, BPUT O-Jobz, and the BPUT Multidisciplinary International Conference on the occasion.

Over 950 participants, including principals and faculty members from 135 affiliated colleges and other state technical universities, attended the programme.

TRUMP’S MISSTEPS FACE SCRUTINY

From P1

Many Americans who disliked Trump’s bluster and bombast, polls suggest, voted for him in 2024 in the belief that at least he could get results. They saw him as a highly successful businessman, and they remembered a booming economy in Trump’s first term before the coronavirus pandemic.

That image could be under threat. In a new Economist-YouGov poll, 43 percent of U.S. adults approved of Trump’s handling of his job — down from 48 percent two weeks ago and the lowest mark of his second term — while 51

percent disapproved.

During his campaign, Trump hammered home the notion that Biden was a doddering old fool who “has no idea what he’s even talking about,” as he put it at one rally. When Vice President Kamala Harris became the Democratic nominee, Trump’s supporters suggested she was a “diversity pick” whose chief qualifications were her gender and ethnicity rather than any actual abilities.

Now Trump holds the reins of power, and results have been uncertain on some of the key problems he promised voters he would fix, such as high prices.

“There is always a question about whether people pay at-

tention to the results of government and how much of it is performative. But the basic laws of politics haven’t changed a bit,” said Donald Kettl, professor emeritus at the University of Maryland School of Public Policy. “People seem to be screwing up government programs — people remember that, and it has an effect at the ballot box.”

White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly sharply disputed the notion that the administration’s competence is in question, saying such issues pale in comparison to Trump’s achievements.

“In less than 100 days, President Trump has secured our southern border, deported

Samir Mohanty assumes charge as OOA president



POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, April 12: The newly-elected president of Odisha Olympic Association (OOA) Samir Mohanty officially assumed office at the association’s headquarters here Saturday.

Mohanty interacted with all officials and staff members of the association

After taking charge, Mohanty interacted with all officials and staff members of the association and expressed his heartfelt gratitude for the trust and responsibility bestowed upon him.

Mohanty assured that he would make every possible effort to secure active support and cooperation from the state government.

“My focus will be on strengthening the sporting ecosystem of the state by creating better infrastructure, improving access to quality training, and ensuring that athletes across disciplines receive the best possible platform to showcase and enhance their talents,” he said.

Odisha Yatri app to aid public, tourists

Designed for both commuters and tourists, the app will offer seamless travel, digital bookings, and support for local drivers across Odisha



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 12: A high-level review meeting chaired by Housing and Urban Development Principal Secretary Usha Padhee was recently held to assess progress on the soon-to-be-launched “Odisha Yatri” super app, designed to benefit both the general public and tourists.

This integrated platform will combine services currently available through the state’s bus app and the OTDC’s tourist ticketing system. It will enable daily commuters to access local bus routes and allow tourists to book rides with ease. The app-based ride service will soon be operational statewide, ensuring better urban transport across all cities.

To increase visibility and build trust, the government will launch awareness campaigns and encourage engage-

ment in key urban areas.

Launched to enhance the state’s public transport system, Odisha Yatri also supports local cab and auto drivers. It follows a zero-commission model, enabling drivers to earn digitally through the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) platform.

To ensure inclusivity, especially for those without access to smartphones, the government will set up Odisha Yatri ticket booking kiosks at high-footfall locations.

With its all-in-one features, citizen-centric approach, and commitment to accessible mobility, the Odisha Yatri app is set to transform urban transport in the state. It not only promises convenience for commuters and tourists alike but also strengthens livelihoods for local drivers—setting a progressive example for digital public services in India.

Tourism devpt plan for Nandankanan, Chilika

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 12: A review meeting chaired by Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) Satyabrata Sahu recently focused on key initiatives of the Forest, Environment, and Climate Change department, including major tourism development plans for Nandankanan and Chilika.

Highlighting eco-tourism and conservation, Sahu unveiled projects for Nandankanan Biological Park, including a tunnel aquarium, botanical garden, animal exchange programme, rejuvenation of Kanjia Lake, and a ropeway and metro station near the park.

In a major tourism push, the Chilika Development Authority will introduce two large boats and a solar-powered boat for visitors to the iconic lake. Additionally, red sandalwood stock will be sold through global tenders under the Odisha Forest Development Corporation.



Sahu also addressed departmental operations, directing that retirement pensions be disbursed on the day of superannuation and urging prompt disposal of 432 applications under the Revised Assured Career Progression (RACP) and Modified Assured Career Progression (MACP) schemes.

Addressing public grievances, he stressed timely resolution of issues raised through the Chief Minister’s Grievance Cell and the Jana Sunani portal. He also emphasised swift handling of contempt of court cases to prevent senior officers’ court appearances.

On recruitment, the department has approached the Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC) to conduct exams for 45 Assistant Conservators of Forests and 131 Range Officers, and the Odisha Subordinate Staff Selection Commission (OSSC) for 1,677 Forest Guards. Recruitment is ongoing for 2 ACFs, 130 Range Officers, 160 Junior Assistants, and 890 Forest Guards.

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No night visit to Deomali hilltop

PNN & AGENCIES

Koraput, April 12: In a decisive move to safeguard ecological integrity and ensure public safety at Deomali Hilltop — Odisha's highest peak — the Koraput district administration has issued an order prohibiting tourist movement at the popular destination between 8 pm and 5 am daily.

The directive, issued Friday by Koraput Collector-cum-District Magistrate V Keerthi Vasan, invokes Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, and Section 15 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986.

The action comes in response to growing concerns over unregulated tourism, particularly during night hours, which has resulted in increased littering and safety risks.

According to the order, tourist movement to and from Deomali Hilltop is now prohibited between 8 pm and 5 am daily.

However, the restriction does not apply to tourists with prior bookings in government-run or



officially recognised eco-cottages and campsites.

“No individual or group will be allowed to stay overnight in the hilltop area unless explicitly permitted by the district administration,” the order stated.

In a bid to combat environmental degradation, single-use plastic at the site has also been banned. Violators will face penalties under the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016.

“All tourists must dispose of their waste in designated dustbins, while tour operators and

vendors are required to ensure proper waste management and cleanliness,” the order read.

It also mandates strict adherence to any additional instructions issued by the Pottangi block administration or local authorities.

Violations of the directive will attract legal action under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, the order said.

Local environmentalists have lauded the move.

“The initiative reflects a growing commitment by the district

Deomali, under Pottangi block, remains one of Odisha's most visited natural attractions, drawing 4,80,724 visitors in 2024 alone

authorities to promote sustainable tourism while safeguarding one of the region's most valued natural landmarks,” said Paresh Rath, an environmentalist.

Alongside the new restrictions, the district administration has launched the 'Clean Deomali, Green Deomali' campaign — an awareness initiative aimed at preserving the hilltop's natural beauty amidst a surge in tourist footfall and worsening waste management.

Deomali, under Pottangi block, remains one of Odisha's most visited natural attractions, drawing 4,80,724 visitors in 2024 alone, of-ficial sources said.

2 rape accused hurt in police firing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 12: Two persons allegedly involved in the rape of a minor girl were injured in police firing when they attempted to flee from the custody of the cops in Jharsuguda district Saturday, an officer said.

The incident took place in Belpahar area when the police were taking the two accused persons, identified as

Sheikh Asif and Abhishek Barik, to the court, the officer said.

“They snatched a revolver from police and attempted to flee by terrorising and attacking them. The police opened fire and they got injured,” IGP (Northern range) Himanshu Lal told reporters.

The police claimed that they were forced to open fire after the accused tried to escape despite being issued

warnings. Both the accused persons have sustained bullet injuries on their legs.

Both the injured accused persons were rushed to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) in Jharsuguda for treatment. Their condition was stated to be stable, police said.

The IGP said one of the accused, Sheikh, faces multiple charges, including making death threats to the minor's family.

Man approaches cops with uncle's head

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, April 12: In a shocking incident, a 35-year old man allegedly beheaded his 51-year old uncle with a sharp-edged weapon over a long-standing property dispute, and later walked into Suakati police outpost with the severed head, in a village in this district.

Police arrested the accused, identified as Kabi Dehury, who surrendered with the severed head of his uncle Hari Dehury and confessed to have killed him. The incident occurred at Talakinsari village under Banspal block of the district late Friday night. An investigation has been launched into the incident.

SDPO, Sadar, Sudershan Gangai said, “The accused has been arrested. The weapon was seized.”

Police said that Kabi had built a house on an encroached land near Hari's residence. This had led to a protracted dispute between the two. Hari had reportedly threatened Kabi multiple times, asking him to vacate the land, and allegedly warned he would kill him if he didn't comply. It is suspected that Kabi decided to act first fearing for his life.

The incident occurred when the villagers were busy watching a traditional folk performance during the ongoing Danda Nacha festival Friday night.

2 from Guj held for scamming ₹14L from VC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, April 12: Two cyber fraudsters from Gujarat have been arrested for allegedly defrauding ₹14 lakh from the Vice-Chancellor of Berhampur University, Prof Geetanjali Dash, by threatening her with digital arrest in February this year, police said Saturday.

Behrampur SP Sarvana Vivek M identified the accused as Bhooteya Jenil Jaysukhbhai, 23, and Bishwa-jet Sina Gohil, 21 - both residents of Bhavnagar under Nilambag police limits in Gujarat.

Police have seized multiple articles allegedly used in the crime, including electronic devices, mobile phones, SIM cards, and Aadhaar cards, Sarvana said in a press re-

lease issued Saturday.

He said the arrests were made with the assistance of local police in Gujarat. Following their arrest, the duo was produced before the Chief Judicial Magistrate's court in Bhavnagar and brought to Berhampur on a transit remand, he added. They were produced before the SDJM Court in Berhampur and subsequently remanded to judicial custody. The SP said the investigation is ongoing under case number 15/25. Police said the Dash received a phone call from an unknown number February 12. The caller identified himself as an officer of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and claimed that her name was linked to a case being investigated by the

agency. The caller further claimed that an account had been opened in her name in Canara Bank, where illegal transactions worth crores of rupees had been deposited.

The impersonator also told Dash that she had been “digitally arrested” in connection with the case. He then told her that she could be released from the situation by paying ₹14 lakh. Believing in the threats, Dash issued a cheque from her personal account and transferred the amount to an account provided by the gang. She later realised that she had been duped, and lodged a complaint with the police.

A special team had been formed to investigate the case under the direct supervision of Berhampur SP.

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ICG seizes betel nuts worth ₹1 crore from fishing boat

Paradip: The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) intercepted a fishing boat in the Bay of Bengal carrying betel nuts worth ₹1 crore without any valid documents, an official release said. The ICG intercepted an Indian fishing boat engaged in illegal activity in the Bay of Bengal April 10, it said. The ICG ship Varad intercepted the boat during a routine patrol on International Maritime Boundary in the Bay of Bengal. The fishing boat was found to be carrying around 450 bags of betel nut, with estimated market value of ₹1 crore, the release said. The apprehended Indian fishing boat 'IFB Maa Basanti' registered at Kakdwip fishing harbour, was operating without any valid registration documents. All 14 crew (all Indian) were not in possession of any valid biometric cards. No fishing gear or any fish catch was found onboard despite operating for five days at sea, Coast Guard officials said.

7 arrested for fishing in Gahirmatha

Kendrapara: Forest officials at Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary apprehended seven fishermen on the charges of catching fish inside the 'No Fishing Zone' of the sanctuary , in the wee hours of Saturday. Sanctuary Ranger Kapileendra Pradhan said the Forest personnel have seized a trawler along with three quintals of marine fish catch from the arrested fishermen. All the accused were booked under Sections 27,29,31 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act,1972, and later produced before the CJM court of Kendrapara, which remanded them into jail custody, ACF Manas Kumar Das, said.

Honeybees disappear from plateaus



POST NEWS NETWORK

Nandapur, April 12: Once a haven for honey production, the hilly regions of Koraput district are witnessing an alarming decline in honeybee populations allegedly due to a disease caused by the spread of the deadly 'Thai Sacbrood Virus (TSBV)'.

The region's climate has traditionally been considered ideal for beekeeping, producing high-quality honey that enjoys strong demand. However, farmers in Nandapur and other blocks have reported that honeybee colonies—whether kept in manmade hives or naturally found in tree hollows and rocky crevices—are vanishing at an unprecedented rate.

TSBV is a highly contagious viral disease and primarily affects Asiatic honeybees and can lead to significant colony losses.

Local beekeepers attribute the collapse in business to the TSBV which has spread across multiple villages. The disease causes rapid changes in the structure of brood cells, leading

to the death of bee larvae. Cells that once appeared white are turning yellow and eventually brown, indicating fatal infection. The impact is so severe that new bees are no longer being born in affected hives.

“Bees that do survive only live for a short time. Eventually, the boxes become empty,” said Nitai Dalai, a prominent beekeeper from Bisapur village in Nandapur block. Dalai, who manages over 400 hives across the region, is known for his premium 'Gomati' brand honey.

He expressed concern that if the disease continues unchecked, the region's beekeeping economy which supports many tribal families could collapse entirely.

Efforts are now underway by local cultivators to seek expert intervention and disease management support to prevent further losses.

A disease outbreak has been detected in beehives set up by nearly 1,000 womens' groups and more than 600 small and large-scale beekeepers across various blocks and villages in Koraput district.

Similar symptoms and infections were previously observed about six to seven months ago in the coastal regions of the state. According to sources, beehives from those coastal areas were transported by various organisations to Nandapur block and other parts of Koraput district. Farmers reportedly received some of these hives only a few days ago.

Experts fear the infection might now be spreading within the district. If immediate measures are not taken, the disease could severely affect both cultivated hives and wild forest bees. There is concern that the already declining bee population might begin attacking humans if their colonies collapse, specialists warned.

Dr Bishwanath Sahu, senior scientist from the KBK research institution, who studies bees and beekeeping in the district, has advised contacting Dr Prabhasini Behera, an expert under the state's AICRP-OIC program, for diagnosis and containment of the disease. Farmers have already called Dr Behera to inform her of the current condition of the beehives, and she has assured them of assistance.

Debashish Deshinayak, the agriculture officer of Nandapur block, stated that after consulting with the district's Chief Agriculture Officer, a training camp will soon be organised to raise awareness among local beekeepers.

District Collector V Keerthi Vasan has also discussed the matter with concerned departmental officials. He announced that restrictions will be placed on the supply of bees from infected coastal regions, and steps will be taken to spread awareness and contain the outbreak locally.

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“Yoga is a generic name for any discipline by which one attempts to pass out of the limits of one’s ordinary mental consciousness into a greater spiritual consciousness.”

SRI AUROBINDO



Lessons From China

Commerce ministries around the world are, according to Donald Trump, lining up to plead their case with the United States. Are we among them? Apparently we are not. A headline from the weekend quoted commerce minister Piyush Goyal saying: “We don’t negotiate at gunpoint.” This is the right way of looking at it, and I agree with it. Sovereign nations should insist that they be treated as equals and not vassals. China has retaliated firmly in a way that only Canada has so far, but in the absence of clarity from the Americans on what their endgame is, waiting is also appropriate.

There was something else, somewhat related to this, that Goyal said which got him into trouble. He said Indian new businesses were focussed on trade (dukandari was the word he used) rather than innovation. He compared the situation here to that in China, where start-ups were doing robotics and advanced manufacturing and artificial intelligence. Goyal received pushback from entrepreneurs who pointed to many fledgling firms in India doing the sort of work he said they should be doing.

The history of business in India will show that the mercantile communities primarily were traders and bankers till the 20th century. It was in 1919 that the Birlas came into manufacturing, and before that it was a few Gujaratis including Parsis — Tata Steel came up around 1910.

This historical association with trading rather than manufactured goods and its extension to things like delivery apps was likely what Goyal was referring to, and again I agree with his broad point. The question is: what would it take for India’s start-ups to look more like China’s? It is right to ask that question to businesses. It is equally right to ask it to the government.

How did China get to where it has? An analysis from last year framed the reality in this way: “China is now the world’s sole manufacturing superpower. Its production exceeds that of the nine next largest manufacturers combined.” A lot of this is down to what the government did, through industrial policy and statecraft.

It established relations with mineral-rich nations in Africa and Latin America, and it set up ports and railway lines in many of these nations. Its public sector companies, owned by the government, built commercial ships and commercial airplanes to not be dependent on anyone else. China managed to convince all its neighbours, including those it had fought wars with and those it has ongoing disputes with, to not let these issues get in the way of trading. China’s largest trading partner is not the United States or even the European Union, but the Association of South East Asian Nations, many of whom China has serious disputes with.

Against the US’ military alliances like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and the AUKUS and Quad and so on, China set up a development alliance strategy through the Belt and Road Initiative. Along with Western criticism of this initiative, we should also examine what the nations participating in it say and think of China.

Now consider that the whole world has been worrying about climate change for decades, but the Chinese government was the only one to build an industrial strategy to both tackle the problem and take advantage of it. Having concluded that its automobile sector could not compete against the experience of and patents held by Japanese and German firms in internal combustion engines, China decided to focus on electric cars. It produced 5 lakh new energy vehicles in 2016, 10 lakh in 2018 and last year it produced 1 crore. It exported 58 lakh cars last year.

A similar story is to be found in solar panels, where again China’s government looked into the future and saw opportunity. Today it produces more than 80 per cent of the solar cells used around the world and two-thirds of the planet’s electric vehicle batteries. The world’s supply chains from mining to refining to manufacturing and assembly run through China. It is dominant to the point of monopoly in entire sectors, and particularly those sectors which will be even more important in the future.

It is true that its entrepreneurs have done remarkable things, as we have seen most recently with Deep Seek. And it is also the case that Chinese entrepreneurs’ success in things generally seen to be America’s domain, such as social media and retail can be seen in the popularity in America of TikTok, Shein and Temu.

But it is the Chinese government that organised the strategy and industrial policy that produced these wins. It is the opposite of what is generally understood to be liberalisation, which is that the State largely does not intervene in the economy. The Chinese government’s interventions are precisely the reason why the country is where it is and why its entrepreneurs have been able to shine. This is the reason US stock and bond markets react violently to the impact of tariffs on only one nation in this war Trump has started and that is China.

China has the confidence to stand up to the US because it knows that what it has built through planning and work is difficult to replicate. And it has the comprehension that the world will depend on it no matter the decoupling fantasies of the people currently governing America.

WISDOM CORNER

“Hope is important because it can make the present moment less difficult to bear. If we believe that tomorrow will be better, we can bear a hardship today.”

THICH NHAT HANH

“Time and space always change, but there is something which is eternal and changeless. For example, the world and time, past or future, nothing exists for us in sleep. But we exist. Let us try to find out that which is changeless and which always exists.”

RAMANA MAHARSHI

“In oneself lies the whole world and if you know how to look and learn, the door is there and the key is in your hand. No-body on earth can give you either the key or the door to open, except yourself.”

JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- **1870:** The Metropolitan Museum of Art was founded in New York City, and it became one of the leading art museums in the world.
- **1895:** Accused of selling military secrets to Germany and convicted in an irregular trial against a backdrop of anti-Semitism, French officer Alfred Dreyfus was imprisoned this day in 1895 on Devils Island, off French Guiana.
- **1941:** Japan concluded a neutrality pact with the Soviet Union in World War II.

power post

FOCUS GEOPOLITICS

MYANMAR MUDDLE

Myanmar needs help. After more than four years of brutal civil war, the country has been hit by a 7.7-magnitude earthquake, the strongest it has suffered since 1946. The resulting humanitarian crisis is dire, and continues to escalate, but despite an extraordinary appeal for international aid from Myanmar’s military ruler, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, the United States has largely failed to deliver.

To be sure, President Donald Trump has said that the US is “going to be helping” with the crisis response. But while China, India, and Russia moved swiftly to provide emergency relief, including deploying rescuers and medical teams, the US has fallen far short. The Trump administration’s gutting of foreign-assistance programmes – including mass firings and contract terminations at the US Agency for International Development (USAID) – is one reason why. A more important reason is that stringent US sanctions against Myanmar remain in place.

Even before the recent US-AID cuts, the US was poorly positioned to deliver emergency aid to Myanmar. Since the military’s overthrow of a civilian government in February 2021, the US has taken a punitive approach to Myanmar. Trump’s predecessor, Joe Biden, implemented increasingly harsh sanctions, while providing “non-lethal” military aid to rebels seeking to overthrow the junta – policies that the Trump administration has so far upheld. Now several Democratic senators have urged sanctions waivers to allow quake relief to go to Myanmar.

In recent years, USAID assistance essentially has been channelled to rebel-controlled areas, where it has been used largely to establish local governance structures and provide emergency relief for internally displaced civilians. But the regions hardest hit by the earthquake remain under government control. America’s refusal to engage constructively with the junta



Myanmar has now surpassed Afghanistan as the world’s leading opium producer, and according to the Global Organized Crime Index, it has emerged as the ‘biggest nexus of organized crime,’ with destabilising spillover effects on neighbouring Bangladesh, India, and Thailand

has thus directly hampered efforts to deliver assistance where it is needed most.

More broadly, US policy toward Myanmar has done nothing to promote stability, let alone a democratic transition. On the contrary, while sanctions have done little damage to the military rulers, they have contributed to rampant lawlessness, enabling warlords, human traffickers, drug syndicates, arms dealers, and poachers to thrive. Myanmar has now surpassed Afghanistan as the world’s leading opium producer, and according to the Global Organized Crime Index, it has emerged as the “biggest nexus of organized crime,” with destabilising spillover effects on neighbouring Bangladesh, India, and Thailand.

US support for Myanmar’s fragmented resistance has compounded the human-rights catastrophe. Tellingly, the latest wave of Rohingya refugees are fleeing not from the military, which has historically committed all manner of atrocities against the minority, but from an anti-junta rebel group, the Arakan Army. So brutal are the rebels’ attacks that Rohingya militias now work with their former oppressors, the county’s armed forces.

Meanwhile, China’s strategic foothold in Myanmar is becoming stronger. Strangled by

broad-based US-led economic sanctions, Myanmar’s leadership has had little choice but to allow China to exploit its vast natural resources, from natural gas and mineral ores to precious stones and gems like rubies and jade.

The US has made this mistake before. During Myanmar’s previous military dictatorship, the US pursued a punitive, isolating, sanctions-based policy for more than 20 years – and nothing changed (other than China gaining influence). It was only when then-President Barack Obama embraced strategic engagement, encouraging democratic reform with the easing of sanctions, that the tide began to turn. In 2015, three years after Obama became the first US president to visit the country, Myanmar elected its first civilian-led government in more than 50 years.

The US applied this lesson in Thailand, where, as in Myanmar, the military has traditionally been the dominant political force, having seized power 12 times in the past 90 years. When Thailand’s army chief staged a coup in 2014, the US pursued diplomatic engagement with the regime – an approach that ultimately helped facilitate a return to civilian rule in 2023.

The Trump administration

should embrace a similar approach toward Myanmar today. This means, for starters, leveraging the earthquake as an opportunity to initiate limited engagement with the regime. Such engagement could allow for greater humanitarian access, improved de-escalation efforts, and enhanced security, particularly along Myanmar’s eastern border, where Chinese criminal networks operate cyber-scam centers that have stolen billions of dollars from overseas retirees and others (including in the US).

Moreover, the US should replace broad-based economic restrictions with targeted sanctions against individuals and entities directly responsible for human-rights violations. It should also roll back its military support for insurgents, which perpetuates violence, and increase direct humanitarian aid to foster stability. And it should work with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other key regional actors, such as India and Japan, to advance a diplomatic conclusion of the civil war, guided by the recognition that a sustainable peace can be achieved only through engagement with all relevant parties – starting with Myanmar’s military.

Treating regime change in Myanmar as a moral crusade can end only one way: with the country spiraling further into chaos, to the benefit of transnational crime syndicates, narcotics traffickers, and America’s geopolitical adversaries. With a more pragmatic policy approach, however, the Trump administration can mitigate Myanmar’s humanitarian crisis, facilitate dialogue between the junta and opposition forces, and counter China’s growing influence in a strategically important country. The choice could not be clearer.

The writer, Professor Emeritus of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research, is Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin.

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SPECTRUM STATE

BJD and the riddle of regional politics



Rajesh Mahapatra

REGIONAL POLITICS IN THE STATE OF ODISHA IS UNDERGOING A FRESH IDEOLOGICAL RECKONING

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) that has dominated Odisha’s political landscape for the past two and half decades is facing an existential crisis. The immediate trigger is the split vote in the Rajya Sabha on the Waqf Bill. Out of a total number of seven BJD parliamentarians, three voted for, another three voted against and one member chose to abstain. This was a political muddle, if there ever was one and clearly indicates more than a leadership failure.

While the buck for this fiasco definitely lands squarely on its supreme leader, Naveen Patnaik, what is of greater interest is whether the BJD ever had a plan B to survive any comprehensive political rout.

It is no secret that the party in recent months has been torn by internal frictions and beset by factionalism not only over the crushing loss in the simultaneous elections to the national Parliament and the state Assembly held around this time last year, but more profoundly

over the continuance of the role of VK Pandian. Many believe the bureaucrat-turned-politician still controls key aspects of the party’s functioning, even though he had announced leaving politics in the aftermath of BJD’s electoral loss.

In other words, the BJD leadership is now compelled to take a tough call over several matters, which needs to be done at the earliest. Time is not on their side, even as an old and somewhat ailing Naveen Patnaik continues to dither over what the BJD should be as an Opposition party in the state.

Should they be loud but toothless, will they allow their somewhat substantial base to be frittered away in non-issues, or can it re-imagine itself as a genuine regional party that will provide a robust challenge to the BJP?

As things stand, the BJD is showing no stomach for a fight even as the current state government has provided more than ample scope, thus far, for challenging the latter’s many

unfilled promises and poor administration. While, undoubtedly, the BJP seems set to gain from the current travails and trials of the BJD, there are many who also believe that the growing irrelevance of the BJD can potentially fire up the possibility for the emergence of another alternative regional formation within the state.

For various historical reasons, the people of Odisha have never been entirely comfortable with political parties whose main leadership is not from the state itself. Like Bengal, Bihar, the South and even in the state of Maharashtra (until very recently), the political vector for a regional pull remains inherent with Odisha’s peculiar caste and class arrangements.

At the moment it appears to be the case that the BJD’s fate is more akin to a range of parties with regional politics such as Mayawati’s Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh, the Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab, the Shiv Sena in Maharash-

tra or, for that matter, the YSR Congress in Andhra Pradesh. In all such cases, a political drift in the short run sowed the seeds for an alternative and perhaps even more vibrant regional political formation to begin emerging in the long run.

For careful and serious observers, the fracas and crisis over the Waqf bill within the BJD throws up one clear message. Regional politics in the state of Odisha is undergoing a fresh ideological reckoning. How to turn this regional potential into a political possibility, however, might no longer entirely rest on the shoulders of Naveen Patnaik nor his prodigy Pandian. The people of Odisha have an interesting time ahead and may expect many a surprise, even as the BJP is keenly set on staying in for the long run.

The writer, a New Delhi-based journalist, was the Editor of Press Trust India and Executive Editor of the Hindustan Times.

Letters TO THE EDITOR

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

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India’s best bet

Sir, This refers to “India, US finalise terms of reference for first phase of trade deal,” **Orissa POST**, April 12. Now that the trade, tariff, manufacturing, and jobs agenda is being implemented in the US, the signals are ominous for anyone and everyone to pick up and put their counteroffensive in place. Each country—big or small—will have to learn quickly to fend for itself and not depend on the so-called big brothers in the US, China, or the European Union. India’s ‘strategic autonomy’ in terms of foreign policy, and by extension, economic engagement, will hold strong. India may consider making new partners on equitable and respectable terms that are ‘mutually beneficial’ and ‘long-lasting’, as economic engagement takes on a new hue and different shade. Given that India is in ascent mode, wading through global economic uncertainties and achieving its objective of becoming a responsible economic powerhouse will have to be carefully crafted. Open, flexible, rules-and regulations-driven economic engagement with a human face, reaching out to the last man standing in the queue, should be the basis for India’s approach. Truth is that leadership cannot be played from a position of weakness, and India gaining economic muscle will enable it to play a larger role.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Judicial overreach?

Sir, The SC verdict delivered on TN Govt Vs the Governor of TN invoking Article 142, declared the pending bills would be treated as having received ‘deemed assent.’ While the decision aims to correct executive inaction, it raises important questions about the judiciary stepping into the role of the legislature. The Constitution is built on checks and balances—not one institution completing the work of another. Instead of invoking Article 142, the Court could have directed the Governor to act within a time limit, asked the Centre to clarify whether Presidential assent was needed (especially with potential conflict with the UGC Act), and left the rest to the legislative process. As seen in the Shah Bano case, judicial power is strongest when it stays within limits. This time, the Court may have gone too far.

Gopalaswamy J, CHENNAI

Vijayan faces heat

Allegations mount against Kerala CM's office from close aides, family members

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, April 12: As Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's tenure enters its ninth consecutive year, a series of allegations involving his close aides and even family members have placed him under intense political heat.

The controversy surrounding his daughter, Veena Vijayan, escalated Friday when the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SPIO) filed a charge sheet in connection with an alleged illegal financial deal between her now-defunct IT firm, Exalogic, and Kochi-based Cochin Minerals and Rutile Ltd (CMRL). The court, after a detailed examination, accepted the charge sheet and formally registered a case.

Simultaneously, another trouble brewed for Vijayan's office as the Kerala High Court ordered a CBI probe into allegations of disproportionate assets against his Chief Principal Secretary, KM Abraham.

The probe follows a petition by noted public activist Joemon Puthenpurackal, known for his persistent legal activism.

Abraham, a former Chief Secretary who retired in 2017, also serves as the CEO of the influential Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB), making him a key figure in the state's development apparatus.

Following the court order, retired DGP Jacob Thomas, once a close aide of Vijayan who later fell out of favour, launched a scathing attack.

"The Vigilance Court had ordered a probe against Abraham and me in 2016. I went ahead with it, but he used his power to stall the investiga-



The Vigilance Court had ordered a probe against Abraham and me in 2016. I went ahead with it, but he used his power to stall the investigation. The Chief Minister must explain why Abraham continues to hold such a powerful post. He will now become another Sivasankar

JACOB THOMAS | RETIRED DGP

tion. The Chief Minister must explain why Abraham continues to hold such a powerful post," Thomas said, adding, "He will now become another Sivasankar."

Sivasankar, a former Principal Secretary to Vijayan, was arrested twice in connection with the infamous Kerala gold smuggling case due to his ties with key accused Swapna Suresh. After serving time in jail, he returned to government service post suspension, only to be jailed again after retirement. He is currently out on bail.

In 2023, CM Vijayan's Additional Private Secretary, CM Raveendran, was questioned by the Enforcement Directorate in the Wadakkanchery Life

Mission money laundering case -- the same case linked to Sivasankar's second arrest.

Another aide under the spotlight is P Sasi, Vijayan's high-profile Political Secretary.

Former CPI(M)-backed independent MLA PV Anvar shocked many when he alleged that Sasi owns several petrol pumps through benami deals and leads a powerful syndicate operating across the state.

Despite submitting these allegations in writing to both Vijayan and the CPI(M) state secretary, no action was taken. Anvar later resigned as MLA and joined the Congress-led opposition. He is now set to campaign actively against Vijayan in the upcoming by-election for the seat he vacated.

The appointment of Kannur University Associate Professor, the wife of Vijayan's Private Secretary, KK Ragesh, has also sparked controversy. Allegations that her appointment violated UGC norms are now before the Supreme Court, with a verdict awaited.

Adding to the growing list of controversies, Vijayan's Press Secretary, PM Manoj, made headlines recently after a local court sentenced his brother to life imprisonment for the 2005 murder of BJP worker Suraj in Kannur.

With these multiple allegations converging, the Congress-led opposition and the BJP have dubbed Vijayan as one of Kerala's most corrupt chief ministers.

The CBI probe into Abraham's assets is expected to be a key talking point for the opposition during the upcoming Nilambur assembly by-election.



People during 'Arattu' procession, which marks the conclusion of the Painkuni festival, pass through the runway of the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport, in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

PTI PHOTO

RANA SANGA REMARKS

Amid tight security, Kshatriya groups meet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agra, April 12: Members of over 40 Kshatriya groups, including the Karni Sena, assembled here in the Garhi area on Saturday and demanded that Samajwadi Party MP Ramji Lal Suman apologise for his remarks against 16th century Rajput king Rana Sanga.

The Karni Sena has also threatened that if Suman did not apologise, Kshatriya organisations will "formulate a strategy" of action for the future.

In anticipation of the 'Rakt Swabhimman Sammelan' (pride of blood conference) Saturday, security around Suman's house was increased significantly.

The Rajya Sabha MP's residence was allegedly attacked on March 26 by Karni Sena members after he referred to Rana Sanga, a Rajput icon, as a "traitor".

Karni Sena's state president, Sandeep Singh, addressed the media following the gathering.

"A key decision was taken during the gathering. If MP Ramji Lal Suman's apology for his remarks does not come soon, the participating Kshatriya organisations will formulate a strategy of action," he said.

The controversy was triggered after Suman March 21 said in Parliament that Rana Sanga invited Mughal emperor Babur to India to defeat Ibrahim Lodi, the last sultan of the Delhi Sultanate.

The SP leader argued that if Indian Muslims are labelled as Babur's descendants, by the same logic, other communities can also be seen as descendants of a "traitor" like Rana Sanga.

The remarks, which questioned the Rajput legacy, drew an immediate backlash from Rajput bodies, including the Akhil Bharatiya Kshatriya Mahasabha and the Karni Sena.

Suman has moved the Allahabad High Court seeking summary after the attack on his house.

UP to train 10K 'Paryavaran Sakhis'

A comprehensive roadmap is laid out to position Uttar Pradesh as a hub of solar energy and women-led entrepreneurship over the next three years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 12: The Uttar Pradesh government Saturday said it has launched an initiative through the State Rural Livelihood Mission aimed at empowering rural women with economic independence.

This time, the focus is on fostering innovation in the solar energy sector, with a plan to train 10,000 'Paryavaran Sakhis' and connect them with sustainable livelihood opportunities, according to an official statement.

"This forward-looking step, envisioned by CM Yogi Adityanath, is a significant stride toward enhancing women's self-reliance while advancing the green energy movement. The initiative is expected to mark a new milestone in Uttar Pradesh's journey toward environmentally sustainable development," it said.

As part of this mission, Pre-rna Ojas Private Limited is actively engaged in promoting solar energy solutions, including solar product manufacturing, decentralized solar systems, clean cooking products, and solar retail outlets, the government said.

In FY2024-25, a solar manufacturing unit was established in Lucknow, and 414 solar shops were launched across 207 development blocks in 20 districts, directly benefiting 414 women entrepreneurs, it said.

"Additionally, 80 solar-based food processing units, including dryers and defridges, were installed, and 60 women were trained as 'Surya Sakhis'. This initiative is opening new pathways for women to participate in and contribute to the technical and renewable energy sectors," it said.

PM to 10 PM each evening.

Following that, the 102nd edition of the six-night-long Sankat Mochan Sangeet Samaroh will take place from April 16 to 21 on the temple premises.

"This grand musical festival is entirely dedicated to Indian classical music. This year, 11 Padma awardees and 16 emerging artistes will participate, representing both national and international acclaim," he said.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner of Police Gaurav Banswal said that various committees in the city are organising processions on the occasion.

"We have coordinated with these committees. Senior police officials are patrolling alongside the processions to ensure law and order," he said.

After dissent, Kerala adopts new strategy to tackle waste

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, April 12: Treading a new path, the Kerala government has made a major breakthrough in addressing public opposition to waste treatment plants through a combination of transparent communication, site visits, and community engagement.

The state's strategy was unveiled at the ongoing Vruthi 2025 Conclave, which has not only helped ease concerns but also opened the doors for intensified private sector participation and investment in the waste management ecosystem.

The conclave saw a two-pronged approach, public engagement to address resistance, and capital mobilisation to power innovation, which marks a paradigm shift in Kerala's waste management strategy.

Leading from the front was Local Self-Government Minister MB Rajesh, who took the lead and interacted with those who had objected to setting up waste treatment projects at a few places across the state.

He, during his interaction with a cross-section of the people, asked elected representatives to make field visits and reiterate the state's commitment to dialogue and technical excellence over confrontation.

'Kerala tourism's growth outpaces world average'

AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, April 12: Kerala's growth in the tourism sector is outpacing the global average, Tourism Minister PA Mohammed Riyas said.

The minister emphasised that Kerala is not competing with other states in the tourism arena but rather with countries around the world.

He was speaking during the launch of a digital event calendar prepared by the Tourism Department, which includes information on festivals and celebrations of the state to serve as a quickly accessible guide for visitors to Kerala.

The calendar features 101 selected festivals, fairs, and other events from April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026.

In addition to this comprehensive schedule, the calendar serves as guide for both domestic and international tourists before their arrival, opening a window into Kerala's fascinating cultural heritage.

It features an engaging assortment of 75 videos, images, and succinct descriptions that vividly portray each event, allowing potential visitors to immerse themselves in the festivities.

"Even when many major tourism markets in the world have not demonstrated consistent excellence, Kerala has



Even when many major tourism markets in the world have not demonstrated consistent excellence, Kerala has been able to record continuous growth through innovative projects and products, evident in the increase in domestic and foreign tourists visiting Kerala

PA MOHAMMED RIYAS | TOURISM MINISTER

been able to record continuous growth through innovative projects and products, evident in the increase in domestic and foreign tourists visiting Kerala," Riyas said.

"Kerala tourism's ability to identify tourists' tastes and formulate new ideas is also reflected in the design of the digital calendar of events. Through this, tourists can learn about the festivals and events in Kerala in advance and prepare travel plans accordingly, allowing more people to participate in the festivals in Kerala."

Hanuman Jayanti celebrated with grandeur in Varanasi

Special rituals, processions held across city

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Varanasi, April 12: Temples across Varanasi were colourful decorations, witnessed aartis, devotional songs and Ramcharitmanas recitals from early in the day to mark Hanuman Jayanti.

Several local committees organised processions to celebrate the day, while senior police officials patrolled the city to ensure peace and security.

At the renowned Sankat Mochan Temple, a major centre of celebrations, special arrangements were made.



Professor Vishambhar Nath Mishra, the mahant of Sankat

Mochan Temple, told PTI, "On the occasion of Hanuman Jayan-

ti, special adornment, tableaux, worship, and aarti of Lord Hanuman are being performed on the temple premises. The morning began with shehnai performances, Rudrabhishek by Brahmin priests, recitations of Ramcharitmanas, Sita-Ram kirtans, and the Sundarkand from the Valmiki Ramayan."

He added that devotional singing will continue in the evening. "At 5 PM, the Sankirtan Mandali from Ramakrishna Mission will perform, followed by uninterrupted Ramcharitmanas recitations by various city-based Ramayan Mandalis."

Mishra also announced that from April 13 to 15, many renowned Ramayan storytellers from Kashi and across the country will deliver discourses from 5

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER BHUBANESWAR (R&B) DIVISION NO. III BHUBANESWAR

bbsrrandb03@yahoo.com
No.2682, Date:10.04.2025
Government of Odisha

"e"-Procurement Notice No.(01) of 2025-26

No.B-21: Bid Identification No.:C.C.(R&B) 03

1	Name of the Work	Road E.I. Work
2	Total No. of Works	1 No. Work
3	Estimated Cost	i) Rs. 18,13,834/-
4	Class of Contractor	"HT" Class Contractor
5	Period of Completion	1 (One) Calendar Month
6	Type of Tender	Single Cover System (Online)
7	Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	From 15.04.2025 at 11.30 A.M. to 24.04.2025 upto 5.00 P.M.
8	Last date & Time for Receipt of bids in the Portal	24.04.2025, upto 5.00 P.M.
9	Name & Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Er. Narendra Kumar Ghadai, Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division, No.III, Bhubaneswar

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal https:// tendersorissa.gov.in

N.B.: Subsequent corrigendum/ addendum if required shall be available in the website as indicated above.

Sd./-

Superintending Engineer
BBSR (R&B) Division No.III, BBSR

It is time that the Election Commission should take accountability for the doubts raised when many states are about to go to polls

RANDEEP SURJEWALA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

The BJP passed the Waqf Bill in the dead of night in Parliament. And after that, they have been busy stoking fires of communalism across various states. This is the classic playbook of the BJP-RSS

DEREK O'BRIEN | TRINAMOOL CONGRESS LEADER

If the Constitution becomes weak, then our democracy will become weak. And, when democracy becomes weak, it will result in dictatorship. People who want to function as per their 'manvidhan, they want to take the country towards 'ektantra' (monopoly). That is why they are 'ek rangee' (uni-coloured)

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

XPOST OF THE DAY

TulsiGabbard is claiming they have evidence to prove that electronic voting systems are 'vulnerable to hackers', 'vulnerable to exploitation to manipulate the results'. But in India, the ECI is not even ready to share the EVM source code to find out whether the machine is vulnerable to any sort of exploitation. Not just this, ECI has till date not given any explanation on why EVM votes polled & counted data have not matched. Does the ECI really care about whether a voter has faith in the current electoral processes?

@poonamjourno

SHORT TAKES

2 killed, 21 hurt as college bus overturns

Srinagar: Two students died and 21 others were injured as a college bus turned turtle after the driver lost control of the vehicle in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district Saturday, officials said. The Jammu and Kashmir government has ordered a magisterial inquiry into the incident and also announced an ex gratia of ₹1 lakh for each of the deceased. The accident occurred near the Vodpora area of Handwara when the bus of Government Degree College Sogam was carrying 27 students to a picnic spot, officials said.

8 Naxalites surrender

Dantewada/Sukma: Eight Naxalites, two of them carrying a cumulative reward of ₹1 lakh, surrendered, and two others were arrested in the Bastar division of Chhattisgarh Saturday, police officials said. The eight Naxalites turned themselves in before senior officials in Dantewada district, citing disappointment with the "hollow" and "inhuman" Maoist ideology and growing rift within their banned outfit, Superintendent of Police Gaurav Rai said. The members of the Maoist organisation told officials that they were also impressed by the state government's 'Niyad Nellanar' (your good village) scheme, aimed at facilitating development works in remote villages around security camps.

TAMIL NADU GOVERNOR CASE

Governors must follow parliamentary norms: SC

A bench comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan ruled that governors, under Article 200 of the Constitution, must decide on bills — either by granting assent, withholding it, or reserving them for the President — within a reasonable timeframe of one to three months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: The Supreme Court has emphasized that while it is not undermining the office of the Governor, state governors must act within the framework of parliamentary democracy and in accordance with constitutional conventions. The remarks came in a significant judgment related to the conduct of Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi, who delayed action on several bills passed by the state legislature.

A bench comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and R Mahadevan ruled that governors, under Article 200 of the Constitution, must decide on bills — either by granting assent, withholding it, or reserving them for the

President — within a reasonable timeframe of one to three months. The court criticized the Governor for sitting on bills without action, thereby stalling the legislative process.

“We are in no way undermining the office of the Governor. All we say is that the Governor must act with due deference to the settled conventions of parliamentary democracy,” the bench said. It emphasized that governors should not allow political considerations to affect their constitutional responsibilities and must function as a “friend, philosopher and guide” to the state government.

In its 415-page verdict, pronounced April 8 but uploaded April 12, the court highlighted that the Governor should act as

a catalyst, not an inhibitor, in state governance. His actions must reflect the dignity and responsibility of the high constitutional office he holds.

Justice Pardiwala, writing for the bench, noted that a Governor takes an oath to preserve and protect the Constitution and the rule of law. Therefore, the Governor must respect the will of the people expressed through the elected legislature and not create roadblocks for political advantage.

The court further stated that constitutional authorities must act in alignment with constitutional values and should not be swayed by temporary political pressures. “They must reflect whether their actions further the ideals enshrined in the Constitution,” it said.

The verdict came in response to a petition filed by the Tamil Nadu government in 2023, seeking relief after the Governor delayed assent to 12 bills, one dating back to 2020. The Governor withheld assent to 10 of these bills November 13, 2023, prompting the Assembly to reconvene and re-enact them November 18. Later, some were reserved for Presidential assent.

In a landmark move, the Supreme Court set aside the reservation of the 10 bills as illegal and directed that the President must decide on bills reserved for her consideration within three months. Using its powers under Article 142, the court also deemed the re-enacted bills as having been passed.

The court concluded by urging the Governor and state government to work harmoniously in the interest of the people.

2 militants, 1 soldier killed in gunfights

by the security forces Friday morning.

Official sources said the slain terrorists were affiliated with the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit and included a top commander, Saifullah, who was active in the Chenab valley

region for the past year.

According to officials, Subedar Kuldeep Chand of 9-Punjab, a resident of Himachal Pradesh, was killed during a separate operation against terrorists who were trying to infiltrate from across the border in the Akhnoor sector in

NAINAR NAGENTHRAN ELECTED AS TAMIL NADU BJP CHIEF

BJP MLA Nainar Nagenthran was Saturday elected as president of the party's Tamil Nadu state unit, with outgoing chief K Annamalai declaring that the goal is to oust the ruling DMK from the corridors of power and the path, to be led by Nagenthran, in alliance with the AIADMK is clear

A man fetch water from a temporary well to irrigate his field, on the bank of the River Ganga, in Prayagraj, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

OBC artisans trapped in vicious circle of neglect: Rahul Gandhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Saturday claimed many skilled artisans from backward classes fail to make it big in the textile sector and asserted that he was fighting to break this “vicious circle of neglect and injustice”.

In a post on X, he shared a video of his visit to the workshop of a textile artisan trying to make his place in the fashion design sector. During the visit, Gandhi met the artisans in the workshop and tried his hands in the trade.

In a post in Hindi, he said, “I have never met an OBC at the top of the textile design industry”. This was told by Vicky, a youth who has built his business in this field based on his skills.”

“The artisans in his factory work hard for 12 hours a day, weaving magic with needle and thread. But the situation is the same, there is no appreciation for the skill,” Gandhi said in his post. He said like other indus-

tries, the Bahunians neither have representation in the textile and fashion sector, nor access to education or a place in the network.

“When I meet talented people like Vicky, I try to learn their work, so that the world can see the real talent of Indian youth. It should be known that despite being capable and hardworking, these youth are like Abhimanyu (of the Mahabharata) trapped in the vicious circle of neglect and injustice.

Kyiv claims Russia hit warehouse of Indian pharma firm

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: A Russian missile struck a warehouse of an Indian pharmaceutical company in Ukraine Saturday, the Ukrainian embassy in India said.

In a social media post, the mission alleged that though Russia claimed “special friendship” with India, it was deliberately targeting Indian businesses in Ukraine.

“Today, a Russian missile struck the warehouse of Indian pharmaceutical company Kusum in Ukraine,” the Ukrainian embassy said.

“While claiming ‘special friendship’ with India, Moscow deliberately targets Indian businesses – destroying medicines meant for children and the elderly,” it said in a post on X.

No further details on the strike were immediately available.

Earlier, the UK's ambassador to Ukraine Martin Harris said Russian strikes destroyed a major pharmaceuticals warehouse in Kyiv. He said the attack was carried out by Russian drones.

“This morning Russian drones completely destroyed a major pharmaceuticals warehouse in Kyiv, incinerating stocks of medicines needed by the elderly and children. Russia's campaign of terror against Ukrainian civilians continues,” Harris said on X.

On its website, Kusum Healthcare said it had a presence in 29 countries, including Ukraine, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan Kenya, Ivory Coast, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Niger, Cameroon, Mali and Tanzania.

In the last few days, Russia pounded several targets in Ukraine even as the US has been pushing for a ceasefire between Kyiv and Moscow.

US envoy Steve Witkoff met Russian President Vladimir Putin in St Petersburg Friday to discuss the ceasefire in Ukraine.

Saturday marks exactly a month since Russia refused to accept a full interim ceasefire proposed by the US.

OVER 450 FLIGHTS DELAYED

Flight operations hit at Delhi Airport after dust storm

Around 18 flights cancelled due to congestion at Delhi airport; long wait for passengers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: Hundreds of passengers waited for long hours at the Delhi airport Saturday as more than 450 flights were delayed and many flights were cancelled due to congestion, with the situation starting to ease from afternoon onwards.

Chaotic scenes were witnessed at the airport with many passengers standing at some places inside the airport and waiting for updates Friday evening and Saturday morning as the impact of flight disruptions due to inclement weather conditions persisted.

Many people took to social media to complain about the chaos and flight delays, and also shared pictures and videos of some places inside the airport being crowded.

Delhi airport operator DIAL put out multiple updates on social media platform X about flight operations, along with some pictures of waiting areas inside the airport.

In a post on X at 1919 hours, DIAL said flight operations at the airport are normal across all terminals.

At 1701 hours, it said flight operations at the airport are normal, but some airlines are still affected by last night's weather conditions. “Our teams are working hard to minimise inconvenience. Please check flight status on our website and airline websites for updates”.

In a post at 1153 hours, DIAL said that due to last night's inclement weather significantly impacting the flight operations across the country, “we want to assure you that all airlines and stakeholders are working

hard to minimise any inconvenience to passengers,” it said.

Over 450 flights were delayed and the average delay for departing flights was around 50 minutes. Around 18 flights were cancelled, as per data from flight tracking website Flightradar24.com.

IndiGo, in a post on X at 1332 hours, said please expect a wait while flying to/from Delhi due to the ongoing air traffic congestion. “Ongoing air traffic congestion in Delhi is causing flights to be held for takeoff and landing clearance. Due to the consequential impact, a few flights across the network are impacted too,” it said.

of the day

quote

The US alone has been the largest humanitarian donor for decades. OCHA will scale back our presence and operations in Cameroon, Colombia, Eritrea, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Gaziantep (in Turkey), and Zimbabwe

TOM FLETCHER | HUMANITARIAN CHIEF, UN

As we enter the decisive phase of the Digital Industrial Revolution, it is clear that AI is central to reshaping economies, governance, and daily life

MONDLI GUNGBULE | DEPUTY MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES, SOUTH AFRICA

Serbia has stood up against resistance against those who want to destroy Serbia and we will win

ALEKSANDAR VUCIC | PRESIDENT, SERBIA

SHORT TAKES

Russia's drone swarm

Kyiv: Russia launched a barrage of drones in an overnight attack on Ukraine, injuring four people and damaging residential and commercial buildings in Kyiv and other parts of the country, Ukrainian officials said Saturday. Ukraine's air defences shot down 56 of 88 Russian drones, its air force said. It added that 24 drones were "lost" as the military used electronic warfare to redirect them. Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko said that three people were injured in the capital as a result of the drone attacks. Drone debris also destroyed a private house and damaged several commercial buildings, causing large fires in different parts of Kyiv, city officials said.

1L rally against Israel

Dhaka: Tens of thousands of protesters rallied in Bangladesh's capital Saturday to condemn Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip. The protesters, estimated at some 100,000, gathered at the Suhrawardy Park in the Dhaka University area. They carried hundreds of Palestinian flags and chanted slogans such as "Free, Free Palestine." Many among them beat the images of US President Donald Trump, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing them of backing Israel. Symbolic coffins and effigies representing civilian casualties were carried during the rally. Bangladesh, a Muslim-majority nation of 170 million people, maintains no diplomatic relations with Israel and it officially supports an independent Palestine.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

EUROPE POURS IN BILLIONS

European countries vow billions in military support for Ukraine as US envoy meets Putin

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brussels, April 12: European countries have vowed to send billions of dollars in further funding to help Ukraine keep fighting Russia's invasion, as a US envoy pursued peace efforts in a trip to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin amid growing questions about the Kremlin's willingness to stop the more than three-year war. Russian forces hold the advantage in Ukraine, with the war now in its fourth year. Ukraine has endorsed a US ceasefire proposal, but Russia has effectively blocked it by imposing far-reaching conditions. European governments have accused Putin of dragging his feet.

"Russia has to get moving" on the road to ending the war, US President Donald Trump posted on social media. He said the war is "terrible and senseless".

In Russia, the Kremlin Friday said Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff met with Putin in St Petersburg. Witkoff, who has been pressing the Kremlin to accept a truce, initially met with Putin envoy Kirill Dmitriev, footage released by Russian media showed.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Witkoff during his visit to Russia was discussing efforts to end the war with Putin and other officials. "This is another step in the negotiating process towards a ceasefire and an ultimate peace deal," she said.

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti said Witkoff's meeting with Putin lasted 4 1/2 hours, and cited the Kremlin as



Ukrainian officials and military analysts believe Russia is preparing to launch a fresh military offensive in coming weeks to ramp up pressure and strengthen the Kremlin's hand in the negotiations

saying that the two discussed "aspects" of ending the war, without providing any details.

After chairing a meeting of Ukraine's Western backers in Brussels Friday, British Defence Secretary John Healey said that new pledges of military aid totalled over 21 billion euros (\$24 billion), "a record boost in military funding for Ukraine, and we are also surging that support to the frontline fight".

Healey gave no breakdown of that figure, and Ukraine has in the past complained that some countries repeat old offers at such pledging conferences or fail to deliver real arms and ammunition worth the money they promise.

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said last week that Ukraine's backers have provid-

ed around \$21 billion so far in the first three months of this year. European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said Friday that more than \$26 billion have been committed.

Ahead of the "contact group" meeting at NATO headquarters, Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov said a key issue was strengthening his country's air defences.

Standing alongside Healey at the end of it, Umerov described the meeting as "productive, effective and efficient," and said that it produced "one of the largest" packages of assistance Ukraine has received. "We're thankful to each nation that has provided this support," he said.

Britain said that in a joint effort with Norway just over \$580 million would be spent to

provide hundreds of thousands of military drones, radar systems and anti-tank mines, as well as repair and maintenance contracts to keep Ukrainian armoured vehicles on the battlefield.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has renewed his appeals for more Patriot systems since 20 people were killed a week ago, including nine children, when a Russian missile tore through apartment buildings and blasted a playground in his home town.

Zelenskyy joined Friday's meeting by video link.

Russia holds off agreeing to truce The Russian delay in accepting Washington's proposal has frustrated Trump and fuelled doubts about whether Putin really wants to stop the fighting while his bigger army has momentum on the battlefield.

"Russia continues to use bilateral talks with the United States to delay negotiations about the war in Ukraine, suggesting that the Kremlin remains uninterested in serious peace negotiations to end the war," the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank, said in an assessment late Thursday.

Washington remains committed to securing a peace deal, even though four weeks have passed since it made its ceasefire proposals, State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce said.

"It is a dynamic that will not be solved militarily. It is a meat grinder," Bruce said Thursday about the war, adding that "nothing else can be discussed... until the shooting and the killing stops."

NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

Iran, US agree on more talks

The rival nations hold first round of high-level talks in Oman under shadow of regional tensions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Muscat, April 12: Iran and the United States will hold more negotiations next week over Tehran's rapidly advancing nuclear programme, Iranian state television reported Saturday at the end of the first round of talks between the two countries since President Donald Trump returned to the White House.

Iranian state TV said US Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi "briefly spoke in the presence of the Omani foreign minister" at the end of the talks, marking a direct inter-



actions between the two nations locked in decades of tensions.

Aragachi later told Iranian state TV that the next round of talks will take place April 19.

He described the negotiations so far as constructive, telling state TV there were four rounds of messages exchanged indirectly between Iran and the US during the talks in Muscat, Oman.

American officials did not immediately acknowledge the Iranian reports, which Tehran likely speeded out to its public ahead of a possible Trump post on a social media. But declaring that the two sides spoke face-to-

face — even if briefly — suggests the negotiations went well.

The stakes of the negotiations couldn't be higher for the two nations closing in on half a century of enmity. Trump repeatedly has threatened to unleash airstrikes targeting Iran's nuclear programme if a deal isn't reached. Iranian officials increasingly warn that they could pursue a nuclear weapon with their stockpile of uranium enriched to near weapons-grade levels.

AP journalists saw a convoy believed to be carrying Witkoff leave the Omani Foreign Ministry Saturday afternoon and then speed off into the outskirts of Muscat. The convoy went into a compound and a few minutes later, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei wrote on the social platform X that the "indirect talks" had begun.

POLLS AFTER COUP

Voters in Gabon headed to polling stations Saturday in the first presidential election since a 2023 military coup ended a political dynasty that lasted over 50 years. Analysts have predicted an overwhelming victory for the interim president who led the coup



Israel severs Rafah from Gaza strip

Military forces says new security corridor completed



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tel Aviv, April 12: Israel announced Saturday it completed the construction of the new Morag corridor, essentially separating the southern city of Rafah from the rest of the Gaza Strip, further squeezing Palestinians into shrinking wedges of land, as airstrikes continued across the enclave.

The forces have "completed the encirclement of Rafah," a statement by the Israeli military said.

Israeli troops with the 36th Division were deployed last week to Morag, the name of a Jewish settlement that once stood between Rafah and Khan Yunis, after the army ordered sweeping evacuations covering most of Rafah, indicating it could soon launch another major ground operation.

This comes as Israel has vowed to seize large parts of the Palestinian territory to pressure Hamas to release the remaining 59 hostages, 24 of whom are believed to be alive. Prime Minister Benjamin Net-

anyahu's government has also imposed a monthlong blockade on food, fuel and humanitarian aid that has left the territory's roughly 2 million Palestinians facing acute shortages as supplies dwindle — a tactic that rights groups say is a war crime.

Netanyahu had said Morag would be "a second Philadelphia corridor," referring to the Gaza side of the border with Egypt farther south, which has been under Israeli control since May. Israel has also reasserted control of the Netzarim corridor, which cuts off the northern third of Gaza from the rest of the Strip.

Israel's defense minister Israel Katz Saturday warned Palestinians that the army was going to "vigorously" expand to other locations throughout Gaza, urging them to "remove Hamas" and release the hostages.

Meanwhile, Israeli strikes across Gaza continued Saturday, killing at least 21 people in the last 24 hours, according to Gaza's health ministry, which doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants.



People march during the 'Let's all be the same' protest, called by The Two-Tailed Dog Party, against Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban's moves to ban the annual Pride march, in Budapest, Hungary Saturday

REUTERS

HANUMAN JAYANTI CELEBRATION

Curfew imposed in Nepal's Birgunj after violent clashes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, April 12: A curfew was imposed in the Birgunj Municipality of Nepal's Parsa district Saturday following violent clashes during a Hanuman Jayanti procession, authorities said.

The incident left several policemen and residents injured after stones were reportedly pelted at the religious gathering, triggering a confrontation between groups.

The District Administration Office imposed a curfew from Saturday 6.30 pm till Sunday noon in the central part of Birgunj, located near the Indian border town of Raxaul.

"A curfew order has been issued in Ward No. 14, 15, 16 and 25 of Birgunj Metropolitan City from 6.30 pm Saturday to 12 pm on Sunday as the tension



erupted during the Hanuman Jayanti celebrations," the district administration office said in a notice. Some policemen and local people have been injured during the dispute that occurred when the procession started from (the) Ghantaghar area heading towards other major parts of the metropolis," said the police.

Police fired tear gas to restore order. With the eruption of tension, security has been beefed up in Birgunj.

The curfew order banned the movement of people, organising rallies, meetings, protests and gatherings in central Birgunj.

Business

of the day quote

Any self respecting, decent country cannot sign up on commitments which are irrational, beyond the realm of trade and where the rest of the world has been responsible for the problem in the first place, and have sought to be put on our head as if it's our responsibility to resolve you

PIYUSH GOYAL |
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

As India thinks about the next step in this area, I think there are many links on our supply chain that should be turned to. One of them is continuing the assembly test packaging piece of this. The other piece that's not talked about enough is India should look at printed circuit boards. That's an important part of our supply chain. Then, finally, critical minerals

JOHN NEUFFER | SEMICONDUCTOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT AND CEO

I think if you have to take advantage of the technology, it (setting up of data centres) is something which needs to be done now. Which means we have to figure out ways of doing it. There are solutions, technological solutions which can be worked out. And my ministry is in consultation with the Ministry of Power and other ministries to try and address this issue

S KRISHNAN | IT SECRETARY

SHORT TAKES

IOB reduces lending rate

Chennai: Public sector Indian Overseas Bank has reduced the Repo Linked Lending Rate of the Bank by 25 basis points with immediate effect, the bank said Saturday. Recently, the Reserve Bank of India in its latest Monetary Policy Committee meeting decided to reduce the Policy Repo Rate from 6.25 per cent to 6 per cent. The decision to slash the rates by the apex bank comes amid looming uncertainties after last week's announcement of 27 per cent tariffs on Indian imports to the US by President Donald Trump. Accordingly, the Asset Liability Management Committee in its meeting held on April 11 has decided to pass on the rate cut to the customers by reducing the Repo Linked Lending Rate of the Bank by 25 basis points from 9.10 per cent to 8.85 per cent with effect from April 12, 2025, the city-headquartered bank said in a press release Saturday.

PNB launches 34 new products

New Delhi: State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) Saturday launched 34 new products, including 12 customer-centric deposit schemes and 10 digital transformation products. These innovative products were launched on the occasion of its 131st foundation day in the presence of Financial Services Secretary M Nagaraju Among the deposit products rolled out are schemes for salaried professionals, women, defence personnel, farmers, NRIs, senior citizens, pensioners, students and youth, PNB said in a statement. The bank has also introduced a QR code-based customer feedback mechanism, a live-chat assistant "Pihu", and new internal banking functionalities for enhanced customer service, it said. .



Global trade could shrink by 3 per cent, with significant long-term shifts in trade patterns and economic integration

PAMELA COKE-HAMILTON |
INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTRE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TOP 7 INDIAN CITIES SEE 4-8% RISE IN OFFICE RENT

The rent for office spaces in India's seven major cities rose 4-8 per cent annually in 2024 while the eight big overseas markets saw a mixed trend in rental growth, according to Vestian.



SEBI warns of market fraud via social media

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 12: Alarmed at frauds related to securities market on various social media platforms, capital markets regulator SEBI has issued an advisory for investors to exercise caution and due diligence to verify the genuineness of social media handles of SEBI-registered entities while accessing them. SEBI noticed an increase in frauds related to securities market on various social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, X (previously Twitter), WhatsApp, Telegram, Google Play Store and Apple Store, etc.

"With increasing adoption of digital communication platforms, it is observed that scammers are enticing victims by giving trading calls in the name of providing education. They also provide misleading or deceptive testimonials, promise or guarantee of assured or risk-free return etc. through various social media platforms," according to a SEBI statement.

SEBI noticed unregistered investment advisory services being provided by entities that falsely claim to be registered intermediaries with SEBI or by showcasing fake certificates purportedly issued by the regulator.

It also observed impersonation of SEBI-registered entities by fraudulent trading platforms, WhatsApp, Telegram channels which deceptively claim or suggest affiliation with SEBI-registered entity claiming to provide assured or risk-free return.

US exempts computers, smartphones from tariffs



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, April 12: The Trump administration has exempted smartphones, computers and other electronics from its punishing "reciprocal" tariffs -- lessening the cost impact on American consumers for a host of popular high-tech products.

The exemptions, published late Friday in a notice by the US Customs and Border Protection office, cover various electronic goods, including smartphones and components entering the United States from China, which are currently subject to a staggering additional 145 percent tariff.

Semiconductors are also excluded from the "baseline" 10-percent tariff on most US trading partners and the added 125-percent levy on China.

The exclusions narrow the range of sweeping 10-percent levies announced by President Donald Trump earlier

this month and the punishing additional rate on goods from China.

Trump has targeted China especially with his "reciprocal tariffs" meant to address practices Washington deemed unfair, most recently introducing a new 125-percent tariff on goods from the world's second-biggest economy that took effect this week.

The rate piled atop an earlier 20-percent levy Trump imposed over China's alleged role in fentanyl supply chains and other existing tariffs from previous administrations -- taking the full figure to at least 145 percent for many products.

Many of the exempted products, including hard drives and computer processors, generally are not made in America.

While Trump has referred to tariffs as a way to bring manufacturing back to the United States, it will likely take years to ramp up domestic manufacturing.

Growth risks to nudge RBI towards deeper rate cuts

Growth in Asia's third-largest economy, which is under threat from slowing urban consumption and tepid private investment, could worsen because of the escalating US-China trade war

REUTERS



Mumbai, April 12: The Reserve Bank of India's rate-cutting cycle could be deeper than expected as downside risks to growth and a benign inflation outlook could prompt the central bank to be more accommodative, economists said.

Growth in Asia's third-largest economy, which is under threat from slowing urban consumption and tepid private investment, could worsen because of the escalating US-China trade war and the spectre of steep US tariffs.

India hopes to seal a trade deal with the United States after President Donald Trump paused 'reciprocal' tariffs on dozens of countries, including India, while hiking levies on China.

"With growth below potential, falling oil prices and inflation durably aligned to target, policy rates will need to move into the accommodative zone. Hence, we are lowering our

terminal rate forecast to 5.00% from 5.50% earlier," Nomura economists Sonal Varma and Aurodeep Nandi said.

On Wednesday, the RBI cut the key policy repo rate by 25 basis points to 6% and softened its policy stance to 'accommodative' from 'neutral'. The central bank also lowered its growth and inflation forecasts by 20 basis points each to 6.5% and 4%, respectively.

Analysts say the downside on growth and price rise could be larger. Nomura expects another 100 basis points of rate reductions this year with 25-bp cuts in June, August, October and December.

The tariffs have exacerbated uncertainties but quantifying the impact on growth is difficult, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said on Wednesday. Dhiraj Nim, an economist at ANZ, expects India's

Hiring outlook: 45% cos plan to recruit in FY26

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 12: The hiring outlook for this financial year remained positive as 45 per cent of employers interviewed said they plan to hire for new permanent positions, a report said Saturday.

A significant 45 per cent of employers plan to hire for new permanent positions, while 13 per cent plan to replace manpower in their existing positions, workforce solutions and HR services provider Genius Consultants said in a report - Hiring, Compensation & Attrition Management Outlook Survey for 2025-26.

The report is based on insights from 1,520 CXOs and senior-level dignitaries of organisations across various industries for the upcoming financial year. The report further revealed that the growth of the importance of temporary hiring is widely visible, as 26 per cent of the employers focus on temporary, contractual, or project-based roles. However, 16 per cent of organisations indicated no hiring plans for FY26, high-



lighting a cautious approach.

When asked about the primary focus of hiring, the report found that 37 per cent of employers said they aim to recruit mid-level professionals, while 26 per cent said they are shifting towards gig workers, contract-based roles, and advisory positions. This confirms the trend shift in industries towards flexible staffing.

Meanwhile, entry-level hiring accounts for 19 per cent, and senior leadership recruitment stands at 18 per cent, it said. Projected workforce growth reflects a balanced strategy with 53 per cent of organisations foreseeing moderate hiring growth between 5-10 per cent, while 33 per cent planning a substantial hiring increase exceeding 10-15 per cent, it added.

ASEAN accounts for 11% of India's global trade

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 12: ASEAN remains a pivotal trade partner for India, accounting for approximately 11 per cent of India's global trade, the government has said.

In the fiscal year 2023-24, bilateral trade between India and ASEAN reached \$121 billion, this was conveyed at the 8th meeting of the AITIGA Joint Committee (JC) to review the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) in the national capital from April 7-11.

The meeting was co-chaired by Rajesh Agrawal, Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce, and Deputy Co-Chair Dr. Sugumari S. Shanmugam Senior Director Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry, Malaysia. The meeting saw participation from delegates representing ASEAN countries, including Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, according to a statement by Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The committee's primary



objective was to advance the ongoing review of the AITIGA, aiming to modernise the agreement to be more effective, user-friendly, and conducive to trade. Five out of eight sub-committees (SCs) under the AITIGA JC also conducted hybrid meetings on the margins of the 8th AITIGA JC.

The next AITIGA JC meeting is scheduled for June 2025

particular emphasis on defence technology, defence industry, research, training, exchanges, exercises and capacity building including by establishing appropriate mechanisms.

The Joint Declaration on the establishment of India-Thailand Strategic Partnership, issued following discussions between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Thai counterpart Paetongtarn Shinawatra, details how the Strategic Partnership is based on mutual commitment to strengthen bilateral relations for the continuing peace, stability and prosperity of the two countries and their respective regions.

The development marks a new chapter of enhanced partnership for realising the full potential of cooperation between the two countries.

"In declaring this Strategic Partnership, the two leaders reaffirmed their shared interests in a free, open, transparent, rules-based, inclusive, prosperous and resilient Indo-Pacific region and reiterated their strong support for ASEAN Centrality," the Joint Declaration stated.

India votes in favour of first global carbon tax on shipping

The move marks the first time a global carbon tax has been imposed on an entire industry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: India and 62 other countries voted in favour of the world's first-ever global carbon tax imposed on the shipping industry by the United Nations' shipping agency.

The decision, taken at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) headquarters in London Friday after a week of intense negotiations, aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from ships and promote cleaner technologies.

The move marks the first time a global carbon tax has been imposed on an entire industry. Starting 2028, ships

will either have to shift to lower-emission fuels or pay a fee for the pollution they generate.

The tax could generate up to USD 40 billion by 2030.

While the agreement is being seen as a breakthrough for international climate policy, it has also drawn criticism for failing to address the climate finance needs of developing countries.

All revenues raised from the carbon tax will be ring fenced for decarbonising the maritime sector and will not be allocated to broader climate finance efforts, such as helping countries adapt to climate change or recover from its impacts.

Also, carbon pricing is expected to reduce shipping emissions by only 10 per cent by 2030, far short of the IMO's own target of at least 20 per cent.

The deal was supported by 63 countries, including India, China and Brazil, but opposed by oil-rich nations like Saudi



Arabia, the UAE, Russia and Venezuela. The US delegation did not participate in negotiations and was absent during voting.

A group of more than 60 countries, largely from the Pacific, Caribbean, Africa and Central America, had pushed for a share of the revenues to be directed towards broader

climate finance needs.

These countries, many of them highly vulnerable to climate change, expressed disappointment at the final outcome.

Tuvalu, speaking on behalf of the Pacific Island nations, criticised the lack of transparency in the negotiations and said the current design fails to promote a real shift to cleaner fuels.

Vanuatu's Minister for Climate Change Ralph Regenvanu said countries like Saudi Arabia, the US and other fossil fuel producers had "blocked progress at every turn" and weakened proposals that could have aligned the shipping sector with the 1.5 degrees Celsius temperature limit under the Paris Agreement.

Under the mechanism, ships will be charged based on the intensity of their emissions.

For example, vessels using conventional fuel in 2028 would pay USD 380 per tonne for the most polluting portion of their emissions and USD 100 per tonne for other emissions that exceed defined thresholds.

This pricing system will be applied in stages and is designed to gradually penalise the use of fossil fuels, including liquefied natural gas.

Although the basic framework has been agreed, key technical details, including how the revenue will be used and dis-

tributed, are yet to be finalised. The policy is expected to be formally adopted in October 2025.

Environmental groups and negotiators from smaller countries have said they will continue to push for a more ambitious and equitable outcome that includes support for those most affected by the climate crisis.

Laurence Tubiana, CEO of the European Climate Foundation and one of the key architects of the Paris Agreement, said the IMO's decision to introduce a global carbon pricing system for shipping is a positive step because it recognises that polluters must pay for the damage they cause to the climate.

However, she called the agreement insufficient, especially as it does not include a proper shipping levy. "This was a missed opportunity," she said, adding that there is strong public support globally for taxing polluting industries and the super-rich.

Abhishek in history books

The SRH opener smashes 141 runs off 55 balls with the help of 14 fours and 10 sixes, becoming the first Indian player with the highest individual score in IPL history

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, April 12: In a match that will long be etched in the annals of the Indian Premier League (IPL) history, Sunrisers Hyderabad pulled off the second-highest successful run chase in the league's history, chasing down a mammoth 246 against Punjab Kings with eight wickets in hand, at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium here Saturday.

The architects of this record-shattering win were the explosive Abhishek Sharma, who slammed a career-best 141 off 55 balls, and the ever-dependable Travis Head, whose calculated aggression complemented the fire and flair at the other end. The encounter between SRH and PBKS had promised fireworks, but few could have predicted the sheer scale of the pyrotechnics that would follow.

After being sent in to bat, Punjab Kings posted an imposing 245/6, powered by Shreyas Iyer's commanding 82 and a blistering finish from Marcus Stoinis, who thumped four consecutive sixes in the final over to end unbeaten on 34 off just 11 balls.

The pitch had regained its batting-friendly character after a brief flirtation with turn during the previous game against the Gujarat Titans. And it was evident from the very first over of the second innings that this was not a surface where bowlers would have their say.

The SRH opening pair of Abhishek and Head charged out with intent, though Prabhsimran Singh's early boundaries in the first innings set the tone for an evening of brutality with the bat. But what followed in SRH's chase was nothing short of remarkable.

Abhishek, who hadn't hit a six in the tournament before this match, opened his account in stunning fashion. Facing



Marco Jansen, he launched into three successive boundaries and followed it up with an effortless six off Yash Thakur — a shot that was soon accompanied by a stroke of fortune as he was caught off a no-ball and then dispatched the free hit into the stands. The aggression was unrelenting.

Head, meanwhile, played the role of the ice to Abhishek's fire. While Abhishek flicked, pulled, and whipped deliveries over the ropes with non-chalance, Head anchored from the other end, picking gaps, rotating the strike, and occasionally punishing the errant deliveries. The duo brought up

IPL STANDINGS						
TEAM	M	W	L	NRR	PTS	
DC	4	4	0	1.278	8	
GT	6	4	2	1.081	8	
LSG	6	4	2	0.162	8	
KKR	6	3	3	0.803	6	
RCB	5	3	2	0.539	6	
PBKS	5	3	2	0.065	6	
RR	5	2	3	-0.733	4	
SRH	6	2	4	-1.245	4	
MI	5	1	4	-0.010	2	
CSK	6	1	5	-1.554	2	

their 100 partnership before the halfway mark, and by the time Head departed for a fluent 66, the match had already tilted heavily in Hyderabad's favour.

Abhishek's hundred was not only his first in IPL, but also came in just 40 deliveries, the fifth-fastest in the tournament's history. As he raised his bat and pulled out a folded piece of white paper from his pocket — bearing the message "This one is for the Orange Army" — the stadium erupted. It was the kind of innings that doesn't just win matches but galvanizes entire seasons.

Earlier in the day, PBKS had themselves delivered a batting masterclass. Shreyas Iyer's 82 off 36 was the backbone of their innings, stitched together with ferocious intent and deft touches. Nehal Wadhwa played a crucial supporting role, while Stoinis's explosive finish pushed them to a total that, in most contexts, would have been more than enough.

BRIEF SCORES

Punjab Kings: 245/6 in 20 overs (Shreyas Iyer 82, Prabhsimran Sing 42, Marcus Stoinis 34 not out; Marshal Patel 4-42, Eshan Malinga 2-45) lost to **Sunrisers Hyderabad** 247/2 in 18.3 overs (Abhishek Sharma 141, Travis Head 66; Arshdeep Singh 1-37, Yuzvendra Chahal 1-56) by eight wickets.

Pooran, Markram storm hits GT

Explosive Lucknow Super Giants beat Gujarat Titans by six wickets in their home

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, April 12: Nicholas Pooran's power-hitting and Aiden Markram's calm demeanour shaped Lucknow Super Giants' comfortable six-wicket win over Gujarat Titans in an IPL match here Saturday.

Pooran (61 off 34) and Markram (58 off 31) shared 58 runs off 29 balls for the second wicket to set the tone for the 181-run chase, which they managed in 19.3 overs.

Earlier, skipper Shubman Gill and Sai Sudharsan struck quick-fire half-centuries during their 120-run opening stand before LSG pulled things back brilliantly to restrict GT to 180 for six.

Sudharsan (56 off 37) struck his fourth fifty of the season and created a platform for a massive total with Gill (60 off 38) but the home team bowlers made a valiant comeback, picking up three quick wickets to put brakes on the scoring rate.

The visitors could manage just 60 in the last eight overs after raising the best opening wicket partnership of the season. Chasing the target, in Mitchell Marsh's absence, who is sitting out of the match because of his daughter's illness, home skipper Rishabh Pant (21 off 18) opened the innings.

Even after getting as reprieve from wicket-keeper Jos Buttler off Mohammed Siraj in the third over, Pant's (21 off 18) struggle continued as he departed while looking for a huge hit off Prasidh Krishna (2/26), caught by Washington Sundar at third man. But before LSG had got a flying start, scoring 61 runs in the powerplay.

Sai Kishore, probably GT's best spinner this season, was taken to task by Pooran and Markram, especially the West Indian who smashed three huge sixes to pick up 24 runs of his first over.

Markram departed in search of another big hit, caught by Gill of Prasidh in the 12th over.



He struck nine fours and one six during his knock.

Pooran was ferocious towards the square of the wicket on the leg side and decorated his knock with one four and seven huge hits over the fence. By the time Pooran got out, caught by Shahrukh Khan off Rashid Khan, the match was all but over. Earlier, sent in to bat, Sudharsan gave a flying start to GT, hitting Shardul Thakur's (2/34) short delivery to the backward point for a boundary in the first ball of the match.

Both Sudharsan and Gill collected boundaries in almost every over, punishing the home bowlers. The skipper brought up his half-century off just 31

balls with a single down the ground of Digvish Rathni (1/30) in the ninth over.

It was raining boundaries from both the batters to all parts of the ground as LSG bowlers appeared clueless.

BRIEF SCORES

Gujarat Titans: 180 for 6 in 20 overs (Shubman Gill 60, Sai Sudharsan 56, Sherfane Rutherford 22; Shardul Thakur 2/34, Ravi Bishnoi 2/36, Avesh Khan 1/32, Digvish Rathni 1/30) lost to **Lucknow Super Giants:** 186 for 4 in 19.3 overs (Aiden Markram 58, Rishabh Pant 21, Nicholas Pooran 61, Ayush Badoni 28 not out; Prasidh Krishna 2/26).

ARCHERY WC STAGE 1 Compound mixed team clinches gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Auburndale (USA), April 12: The Indian compound mixed team of Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Rishabh Yadav clinched the gold medal at the Archery World Cup Stage 1, defeating their Chinese Taipei opponents Huang I-Jou and Chen Chieh-Lun 153-151 in a tough final here Saturday.

The Indian mixed pair lost the first and second series 37-38 and 38-39 before they came back strongly in the third set winning 39-38 thanks to two 10s and an 'inner 10'.

They then easily won the fourth and decisive series 39-36 for an aggregate score of 153-151.

They had beaten Slovenia Friday to assure India of a third medal.

The Indian duo's gold-winning feat came close on the heels of the event's addition to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics programme.

India had already opened their account with a bronze medal from the compound men's team event Wednesday.

MBSG bag ISL crown



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, April 12: Mohun Bagan Super Giant on Saturday secured a memorable Indian Super League double, lifting the ISL Cup after beating Bengaluru FC 2-1 in a tense final here to add to the League Winners' Shield it had won earlier in the season.

After a goal-less first half, Mohun Bagan's Alberto Rodriguez scored an own goal in the 49th minute to give Bengaluru FC the lead. Mohun Bagan striker Jason Cummings then struck from the penalty spot to restore parity in the 72nd minute.

The match went into the extra time and Jamie Maclaren scored the decisive goal after six minutes (96th) to the wild celebrations of the vociferous Mohun Bagan supporters at the Salt Lake Stadium.

Mohun Bagan thus became only the second team in the ISL history to clinch the League Winners' Shield as well as the ISL Cup in the same season, after Mumbai City did the same in the 2020-21.

The top team in the points table after home and away league matches among the 13 participating clubs wins the League Winners' Shield. Mohun Bagan had finished on top with 56 points after 24 gruelling matches to lift the Shield and also qualify for the AFC Champions League 2, the second tier club competition in Asia.

After the league phase, a knock-out round is played involving the top six teams on the points table. Mohun Bagan and Bengaluru FC won their respective semifinals to set up Saturday's summit clash to decide the ISL Cup winners.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: Addressing the long-standing concern that ODI cricket is heavily tilted in favour of batters, the International Cricket Council (ICC) may tweak the use of two-ball rule in the 50-over format, it has been learnt.

The ICC Cricket Committee, headed by former India skipper Sourav Ganguly, has made the recommendation to use one ball in ODIs.

The recommendation needs to be ratified by the ICC Board of Directors before being included in revised playing conditions.

The ICC Board will discuss the issue Sunday in Harare. As of today, two new white Kookaburra balls are used in ODIs. With bowlers operating with separate new balls from each end, the ball remains hard, giving advantage to the batters to score freely.

With field restrictions in place (only four fielders outside 30 yard circle), batters enjoy unfair advantages over bowlers.

Even the iconic Sachin Ten-

Respect for an athlete's hard work—that is the real victory. The public has given me so much love, respect, trust, courage, and strength. Now it's time to repay all of that.

VINESH PHOGAT | FORMER WRESTLER

of athletes. That time has now come. I will always be grateful for the honor and recognition given to me by the people and the Government of Haryana for my performance in the Olympics. The prize money granted by the government is not just a reward—it is an opportunity, a means to realize the dream I have nurtured for years. That is why this prize money will be used to establish an international-level sports academy,



longer just as an athlete, but also towards the thousands of dreams that aim to build a future through sports in a safe and supportive environment, Vinesh wrote in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

"It has always been my dream to provide better facilities and a positive sports environment for the next generation

three options between land, job and money with compensation varying from Rs 6 crore to Olympic gold medalists, Rs 4 crore to silver medalists, and Rs 2.5 crore to bronze medalists.

Though Phogat was disqualified from the women's 50kg category for being marginally heavier than the prescribed weight limit before the final, the Haryana Government decided to award her the amount equal to a silver medalist. Phogat opted for cash remuneration for her performances and has promised to open an international-level sports academy for budding athletes.

As a public representative and someone who has been through the struggles I have, my responsibilities are no

Vinesh's contribution for the game she loves

Disqualified from Olympics for being overweight, wrestler Vinesh Phogat opts for Rs 4 crore over government job

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 12: Former wrestler Vinesh Phogat has revealed she plans to open a world-class institute to train youngsters using the Rs 4 crore prize money she has received from the Haryana Government for her exceptional, yet heart-breaking, performance at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Haryana's sports policy is top tier and it offers the athletes

where young athletes can take their talent to new heights with world-class resources," posted Phogat on X.

"An academy where young players are not held back by a lack of facilities, and where they receive the respect and inspiration that every hard-working athlete rightfully deserves. For this reason, I will need your support—because this dream doesn't belong to just me, it belongs to all of us, and making it come true is a responsibility we all share," she wrote.

Vinesh became the first Indian women wrestler to reach the final at the Olympic Games, and was disqualified from her gold medal bout in the women's 50 kg category after failing her second weigh-in.

Advani bags silver in WBL World Matchplay Billiards Championship

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 12: Pankaj Advani, India's most decorated cueist, settled for a silver medal after a narrow defeat against David Causier in the final of the WBL World Matchplay Billiards Championship here.

In a best-of-15 contest, where fortunes swung from one side to another, Advani started off with a 2-0 lead but his opponent clawed his way back in the summit clash played at Carlow, Ireland.

Both the players fought intensely but the Briton clinched the decider to win the game 8-7 (19-100, 0-100, 100-47, 100-52, 19-100, 100-0, 49-100, 100-3, 34-100,



4-100, 100-85, 31-100, 100-53, 100-43, 100-28).

Advani will now look to defend his IBSF World Billiards title, which he has been winning since 2016, from Sunday here.

The upcoming world championship will be conducted in the timed format in which big breaks are expected from players from all over the world.