



Sam’s pragmatism

Actor Samantha Ruth Prabhu says it is crucial to break taboos and dated notions surrounding women’s period cycle

LEISURE | P2



Cheap arms loans

India ramps up efforts to become a global arms supplier, targeting countries that have traditionally relied on Russian weaponry

INTERNATIONAL | P10



Gold rush continues

Gold prices soar ₹1,650 to hit a fresh peak of ₹98,100 per 10 grams Wednesday amid a trade war between the US and China

BUSINESS | P11



Suruchi shines

Suruchi Inder Singh combines with Saurabh Chaudhary to win the 10m air pistol mixed team gold medal, adding to her individual triumph

SPORTS | P12

China faces up to 245% retaliatory tariff: White House

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, April 16: China now faces tariffs up to 245 per cent on imports to the United States due to its retaliatory actions, the White House has said, as the trade war escalated between the world’s two largest economies.

Separately in a post on Truth Social, President Donald Trump said Tuesday that China just reneged on the big Boeing deal, saying that they will “not take possession” of fully committed to aircraft. He appeared to be confirming reports that China has asked its airlines not to take deliveries of planes from American aircraft manufacturer Boeing.

In the post, he also vowed to protect the US and its farmers in a trade war with its adversaries, such as China.

In a fact sheet issued Tuesday, the White House said President Trump signed an executive order launching an investigation into the national security risks posed by US reliance on imported processed critical minerals and their derivative products.

On Day One, President Trump initiated his America First Trade Policy to make America’s economy great again, it said.

More than 75 countries have already reached out to discuss new trade deals. As a result, the individualised higher tariffs are currently paused amid these discussions, except for China, which retaliated, it said.



China now faces up to a 245% tariff on imports to the United States as a result of its retaliatory actions, the fact sheet said, without giving details. China is the only country to have retaliated with tit-for-tat levies.

China Friday raised its additional tariffs on imports from the US to 125 per cent in retaliation to the Trump administration’s 145 per cent levies on Chinese exports. China also filed a lawsuit with the WTO following the US tariff hikes.

China earlier retaliated with 84 per cent levies and imposed restrictions on imports of some US films, expressing its interest in holding dialogue with Washington to resolve the issue.

The fact sheet accused China of banning exports to the US of gallium, germanium, antimony, and other key high-tech materials with potential military applications.



VENTING IRE: Activists raise slogans after spraying an Enforcement Directorate (ED) signboard with black paint, amid nationwide protests by Congress members after the agency filed a chargesheet against Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi in the National Herald case, in Patna, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

Waqf Act: SC proposes stay on key provisions

The Supreme Court, while hearing pleas against the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, raised serious concerns over its constitutional validity. It questioned the exclusion of ‘waqf by user’, a long-standing and judicially recognised practice, warning that undoing such endowments would erase genuine religious history. The bench stated that the legislature cannot nullify past judicial decisions and emphasised the risk of rewriting history. It also questioned the Centre on whether Muslims would now be allowed in Hindu religious trusts, highlighting concerns of religious parity. The court criticised the provision requiring individuals to prove five years of Islamic practice to create a waqf, calling it arbitrary. The bench further expressed concerns on the wide-spread violence during protests terming it as “disturbing”

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 16: In a significant development, the Supreme Court Wednesday proposed to stay certain key provisions of the contentious Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, including the power to denotify properties declared as waqf by courts and inclusion of non-Muslims in central Waqf councils and boards.

The top court proposed to pass the order, which was opposed by the Centre as it sought a detailed hearing before any such interim order.

The hearing relating to 72 petitions against the constitutionality of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 took place before a bench of Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justices Sanjay Kumar and KV Viswanathan.

The bench, which will continue with the hearing Thursday, was miffed over the inclusion of non-Muslims in the central waqf councils and boards and asked the Centre whether it was willing to include Muslims in Hindu religious trusts.

After hearing solicitor general Tushar Mehta for the Centre and senior lawyers including



Kapil Sibal, Rajeev Dhavan, Abhishek Singhvi, CU Singh for Muslim bodies and individual petitioners, the CJI proposed to issue the notice and to pass an interim order, saying it will balance the equities.

Observing some provisions could have grave ramifications, particularly those that potentially undermine judicially recognised waqf properties, the CJI proposed the order.

The properties declared as waqfs by the courts should not be de-notified, whether they are by waqf-by-user or waqf by deed while the court is hearing the challenge to the Waqf Amendment Act 2025, the CJI proposed.

The bench also hinted to stay a provision of the amended law,

which says a waqf property will not be treated as waqf during the inquiry of the collector to decide if the property is a government land.

All members of waqf boards and the central waqf council must be Muslims, except the ex-officio members, the CJI said.

The bench took note of the provision-wise objections to the Act and expressed reservations on several aspects of the legislation, including the inclusion of non-Muslims in the central waqf council and state waqf boards.

It also objected to empowering district collectors to adjudicate disputes related to waqf properties and the provisions allowing de-notification of properties declared as waqf by competent courts.

Ordinarily, courts do not interfere at the admission stage when a law is passed. But this case may warrant an exception.

If a property declared as waqf by user is denotified, it can have grave ramifications, the CJI said.

Custodial death of UTP sparks outcry

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, April 16: Tension prevailed after an undertrial prisoner (UTP) in Rourkela Special Jail died under mysterious circumstances Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Rakesh Kujur, 45, of Dalki Dungaghat village under Raiboga police limits in Biramitrapur of Sundargarh district. Police registered a case of unnatural death over a complaint lodged by the jail authorities and started an investigation.

The incident triggered a protest as the deceased’s wife Amrita Kujur lodged a complaint with Raghunathpali police. She alleged that her husband was beaten to death in the custody. She demanded a high-level probe into the matter and justice for the bereaved family.

Hundreds of villagers and the deceased’s relatives staged a protest outside the RGH mortuary, refusing to receive the body until their demands are met.

Amrita alleged that Biramitrapur excise officials had picked up her husband from their house in a fake liquor case early Tuesday morning.

“He was in perfect health when he left home,” she stated.

It was around 10pm Tuesday when the jail authorities informed the family over phone that Rakesh had fallen ill. By Wednesday morning, the family reached RGH only to discover Rakesh dead.

His body reportedly bore multiple injury marks and blood stains. His torn clothes raised suspicions of custodial torture. Amrita, in her complaint, alleged that he was either beaten up brutally in the excise police station or inside the jail and demanded a high-level inquiry into the incident.

Rourkela Special Jail official Ratikant Shukla said Rakesh had been arrested by the Excise department and produced before a local court Tuesday. He was remanded to judicial custody after his bail plea was rejected.

Shukla stated that Rakesh was examined at the jail’s health centre at around 8:30pm Tuesday after he complained of uneasiness. As his health condition deteriorated, he was shifted to RGH, where he was declared dead at around 5:45am Wednesday.

SHORT TAKES

DARA SINGH AIDE FREED AFTER 25 YRS

Keonjhar: Mahendra Hembram, one of the convicts in the high-profile murder case of Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two minor sons, was released from Keonjhar jail Wednesday after serving 25 years. Now 50 years old, Hembram was released from prison on grounds of good behaviour during his incarceration. Hembram and Dara Singh, alias Rabindra Pal Singh, were convicted for the brutal murder of Staines and his sons, who were burnt alive by a mob allegedly led by Singh on the night of January 21, 1999. “I spent 25 years in jail after being falsely implicated in an incident related to religious conversion. Today, I have been released,” Hembram told reporters outside the jail. P4

CM UNVEILS ₹7K-CR INVESTMENT PLAN

Baripada: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi announced Wednesday that the state would be the recipient of a massive boost in industrial development with ₹7,000 crores set to be invested in 10 new industrial projects in Mayurbhanj. Speaking at the PM Vishwakarma – National SC-ST Hub Conclave held at Maharaja Sri Ram Chandra Bhanja Deo University in Baripada, Majhi also revealed that the PM Vishwakarma Scheme has already benefited 1,05,361 artisans from 18 traditional trades in Odisha, including blacksmiths, carpenters, potters, and weavers. artisans and small entrepreneurs from the SC/ST communities. P5

‘Historic’ WHO pact to tackle future pandemics

This is only the second time in the WHO’s 75-year history that member countries have reached a binding agreement - the last being a tobacco control accord in 2003

REUTERS

Geneva, April 16: Members of the World Health Organization reached a landmark agreement Wednesday on how to learn from COVID-19, which killed millions of people in 2020-22, and prepare the world for future pandemics. Sticking points on the road to the deal included how to share drugs and vac-

cines fairly between wealthy countries and poorer ones.

The legally binding pact is widely seen as a victory for the global health agency at a time when multilateral organisations like the WHO have been battered by sharp cuts in US foreign funding. “After more than three years of intensive negotiations, WHO member states took a major step forward in efforts to make the world safer from pandemics,” the health body said in a statement.

US negotiators left the discussions after President Donald Trump began a 12-month process of withdrawing the US - by far the WHO’s largest financial backer - from the agency when he took office in January. Given this, the US would not be bound by the pact.



“This is a historic moment and a show, that with or without the US, countries are committed to working together and to the power of multilateralism,” Nina Schwalbe, the founder of global health think tank Spark Street Advisors, told Reuters. The agreement,

still subject to adoption by the World Health Assembly in May and ratification by members, addresses structural inequities about how drugs or vaccines and health tools are developed.

Its article nine requires governments to establish national policies setting access condi-

tions in research and development agreements and to ensure that pandemic-related drugs, therapeutics and vaccines are globally accessible -- for the first time in an international health agreement.

“The deal essentially gives WHO members more teeth in terms of their preparedness, response and prevention of future pandemics,” Ricardo Matute, Policy Engagement Advisor with the Governing Pandemics Team at the Global Health Centre, Geneva Graduate Institute, told Reuters.

Measures include allowing the WHO to have an overview of global supply chains of medical materials such as masks and vaccines. It will also enable more local production of vaccines and other treatments during a pandemic.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES

You are a touchy one. People will rub you the wrong way today. But remember that getting needlessly annoyed will bring nothing but more complications. Contemplate in seclusion about the root cause of the problem. Ganesha's hint? It is closer than you imagine.

TAURUS

Your enthusiasm will be as contagious as your smile today, predicts Ganesha. People will stand charmed by your high spirits. There will be stressful moments, but things will look up later in the day. Take some time off if things get too hectic for you.

GEMINI

Today, you are likely to focus on self-improvement, predicts Ganesha. Self-employed people may expect huge profits in their businesses. You may end up spending more time at work and less time with family. You need to strike a balance between work and family.

CANCER

A quintessential Scorpio that you are, sex and passion will figure at the top of your priority list today. At work, you will have a tough time holding yourself back from making a pass at good-looking colleagues. However, as the day progresses, you may start thinking from your brains again, says Ganesha.

LEO

Call it the momentary re-ignition of the spark of brilliance and energy, this day finds you at the peak of your dynamism. Ganesha predicts a fantastic day for all, especially those in the freelancing business, as your imagination and inspiration reach new heights and motivate others to excel. Recall the legendary Swami Vivekananda's words, "Arise, awake and stop not till your goal is reached."

VIRGO

Today is the day when you'll be like the Iron Man: heart of gold, nerves of steel – minus the shiny body armour, though. Tolerance, optimism and exceedingly artistic talents will rule the roost. Pursue academics in the arts, advises Ganesha. Your understanding of life will help you serve society better. Yes, like Iron Man.

LIBRA

You never let a favour go unacknowledged, or let a ridicule pass by unanswered. So, it's time to settle those old accounts that are so important to you, feels Ganesha. This will increase chances of interesting developments that will continue to surprise you throughout the day. All in all, Ganesha wishes you a vibrant day today.

SCORPIO

Ganesha warns you of a long, dreary day today. Though not completely at a loss, you may feel lost and desire to spend some time alone with yourself. The empty nest syndrome is likely to invade and hold your mental peace at ransom, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Today, your superiors at work are going to trust you with many complicated assignments. But, after exerting yourself, you are sure to come out with flying colors and have your work appreciated. Do not be surprised if cash incentives come your way. Such may indeed be your fortune, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

If you are a sports person, you will enjoy both good health and fame, while engineers will mull investing money in new business ventures, foresees Ganesha. But make sure you know what you are doing, a minor slip can cost you a fortune, and you would have realised by now that repenting won't undo anything. Your social standing may get stronger; people may develop a high opinion about, and your reputation may get a boost too.

AQUARIUS

Money matters are very important, and your family will demand your presence in all financial dealings. At work, things will be more comfortable. You may also get new projects. Ganesha predicts a trip in the offing.

PISCES

Your inherent dynamism and energy will sparkle forth today. Freelancers will be struck with inspiration, and will conjure masterpieces. Pleasant surprises await you in the evening, says Ganesha.



FLORENCE PUGH ISN'T AN EASY PERSON TO DATE

Hollywood actress Florence Pugh says she wants to make changes because she knows she is not an 'easy' person to date. The *Thunderbolts* actress said that her hectic work schedule means it can be hard for her to "make dates," reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.

GADOT'S SNOW WHITE BANNED IN LEBANON

Amidst the global tariff wars, the tension in the Middle East is trickling down to Hollywood productions. The live-action film *Snow White* has been banned from playing in movie theaters in Lebanon due to the presence in the film of Israeli actress Gal Gadot.



48TH BAISHAKHI FESTIVAL- DAY II

A vibrant display of Odia culture, tradition

Bhubaneswar: The second evening of the 48th Baishakhi Festival, organised by Chinta O Chetana (COC) at Rabindra Mandap Wednesday, showcased the vibrant culture and traditions of the state.

Several dignitaries and culture enthusiasts attended the event.

Gracing the occasion as Chief Guest, **Orissa POST** and **Dharitri** Editor Tathagata Satpathy said, "I have traveled across the nation, but nowhere have I seen such a heartfelt gesture of devotion—the act of standing with hands up in complete surrender before Lord Jagannath. This posture isn't taught; it comes from within and is embedded in every Odia."

Emphasising the spiritual connection Odias have with Lord Jagannath, he added, "Odia people excel in every aspect—be it politics, literature, or art. Our strength comes from our deep-rooted faith in Lord Jagannath."

Adyasha Satpathy, the Chief Executive of the dailies, said, "I'm truly grateful to have witnessed the entire Dibypahandi ritual. I strongly felt the presence of Lord Jagannath here. I only wish I had brought more people with me to experience this. I congratulate the audience for being here and supporting such rich traditions. We stand with Chinta O Chetana and will continue to support their efforts."

COC's National General Secretary Surendra Das said, "We see people celebrating the New Year with cakes, hotel bookings, parties, and great excitement. In the midst of all this, we often forget our own traditions. For us, April 14 marks Pana Sank-



Orissa POST and **Dharitri** Chief Executive Adyasha Satpathy lighting the ceremonial lamp while among others the Editor of the dailies Tathagata Satpathy, Chinta O Chetana (COC)'s National General Secretary Surendra Das, COC President Sahadev Sahoo and former Commissioner-cum-Secretary of Culture department, Government of Odisha, Manoranjan Panigrahi are seen.

ranti, and we should cherish it. Our organisation is committed to celebrating this deeply rooted cultural occasion and reviving the spirit of our heritage."

Also present were Manoranjan Panigrahi, the former Commissioner-cum-Secretary of the Culture department, Government of Odisha, Kasturi Patnaik, wife of legendary Odia playback singer Pranab Patnaik, and COC President Sahadev Sahu.

Some stunning performances, including an Odissi dance based on the Ramayana by Bhubaneswar's Tridhara Dance Academy, a powerful Kali dance by Trinatre from Cuttack, and a vibrant Palli dance from Ganjam, were the highlights of the event. **Orissa POST** and **Dharitri** are the print media partners for the event.

RESHMI YADAV, OP

Sam breaks period taboos

Mumbai: Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu, also known as Sam among her fans, has talked about menstruation and said conversations around periods are still met with silence, whispers, and shame.

Talking about how periods are still considered to be a taboo subject, Samantha told this agency, "As women, we've come so far, yet conversations around periods are still met with silence, whispers, and shame."

The actress, in an episode of her podcast *Take20*, spoke to nutritionist Rashi Chowdhary about menstruation, cycle syncing, endometriosis, and the everyday (yet rarely acknowledged) health struggles that

women face.

She told *IANS*, "Speaking with Rashi Choudhary reminded me how crucial it is to break these taboos and dated notions. Our cycles are powerful and, most importantly, life-affirming. Definitely not something to be ashamed of or hide or, for that matter, even taken lightly."

In the podcast, Samantha said, "The menstrual cycle and how it affects our mind and body is something we need to consistently keep learning about with every passing year. Rashi, with her wealth of experience and the depth of her knowledge, has a very clear manner of explaining things, and I'm glad, together, we could have such a well-rounded chat dedicated to truly understanding & harnessing the power of this life force that we as women are blessed with."

IANS



Rashmika's new journey

Mumbai: Actress Rashmika Mandanna is set to narrate stories of joy, hope, and wholesomeness on social media through *Rashmika & Ru* (R&R), an all-new original IP.

For the same, the actress has teamed up with storytelling platform Terribly Tiny Tales (TTT) under Collective Artists Network. The IP is designed to spread joy, hope, and wholesome vibes in the social universe.

At the center of this uplifting initiative is Ru, an animated character

inspired by Rashmika's own spirit, the one that radiates warmth, kindness, and emotional connection. With R&R, the goal is simple yet powerful, to offer a refreshing break from the doomscrolling spiral and deliver a daily dose of lightness in an otherwise chaotic digital world.

The journey begins with a tender and deeply relatable comic series that celebrates everyday companionship, feeling your feelings, and showing up for your people.

Talking about the initiative, Rashmika said in a statement, "As a person, I believe in joy and kindness as pillars, and Ru is an extension of me to the audience to spread that message, for us to be kinder to ourselves as well as others."

With TTT's celebrated narrative sensibilities and Rashmika's uniquely uplifting presence, *Rashmika & Ru* is set to become a cultural touchstone for those seeking moments of light in the everyday.

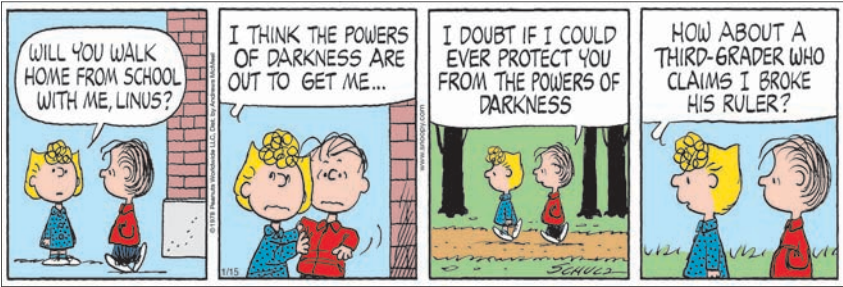
IANS



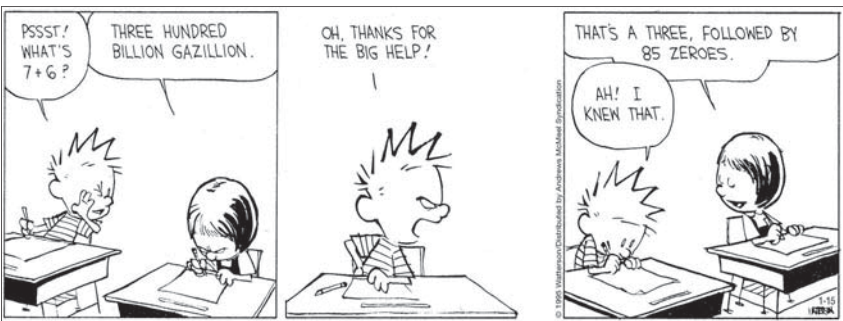
A stunning Goti Pua dance show at the event.

PICT: BIKASH NAYAK

PEANUTS



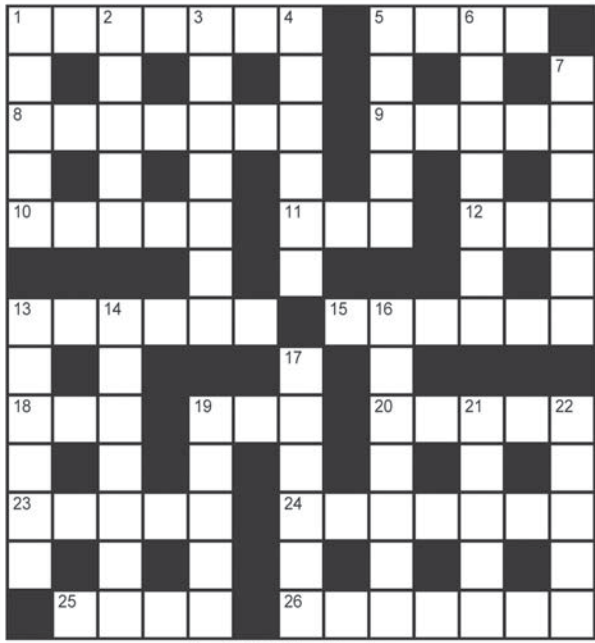
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CROSSWORD



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- Across**

1 Kind of cocktail

5 Vegetarian staple

8 Rust

9 Audacity

10 Scoundrels

11 Freudian topic

12 Paris assent

13 Tropical fruit

15 Sea horse

18 Quirky

19 Possess

20 Witch
- Down**

1 Sponge

2 River through Tours

3 In need of a drink

4 Took evasive action
- 5 Argentine dance

6 Passion

7 Brainiac

13 Fear

14 Pen for racehorses

16 Antediluvian

17 Escargot gastropods

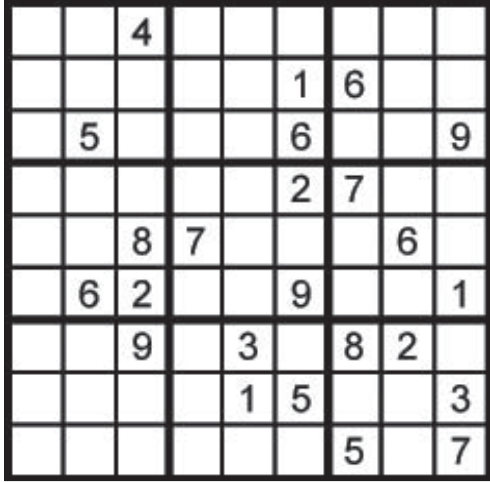
19 Desert sight

21 Bay window

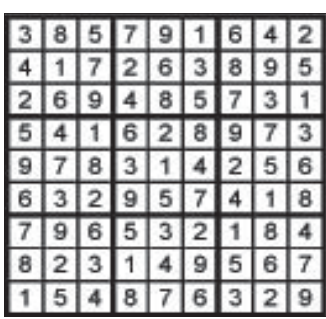
22 Fencing swords

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



Modi Government's dedication powers Odisha's new era of connectivity



21st century India is creating new and improved infrastructure. Better roads, rail network and airports are not just infrastructure projects but also change the fortunes of the region.

-Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India

Inauguration & Foundation Stone Laying of 19 Ground Breaking Road Projects of 154 Km. Length with an Investment of more than ₹4000 Cr

Foundation Stone Laying (Bhoomipujan)

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| 4 laning Banarpal - Godibandha (NH 53 and 149, Length -17 Km., Cost-₹973 Cr.) | 4 laning of Bangriposi Ghat inside Similipal Tiger Reserve (NH-49, Length - 10 Km., Cost- ₹135 Cr) | 05 nos. VUP and 01 Flyover (NH-16, Length - 7 Km., Cost - ₹115 Cr) | VUP at Nirgundi Square and LVUP at Chhatia (NH-16, Length - 2 Km., Cost - ₹35 Cr) |
| 4- Lane Viaduct in the Elephant Corridor of Singhara - Binjabahal section (NH-49, Length -2 Km., Cost - ₹48 Cr) | 03 nos. VUP and 01 Flyover (NH-16, Length - 5 Km., Cost - ₹80 Cr) | Additional 2L bridge at Palasuni over Gangua Nallah (NH-16, Length - 1 Km., Cost - ₹40 Cr) | Titilagarh Town Bypass (NH-59, Length - 9 Km., Cost- ₹145 Cr) |
| Bypass road to Dharmagarh town (NH-130C, Length - 8 Km. Cost - ₹170 Cr) | Bridge over Ret river on NH-26 in Kalahandi district (Length - 2 Km., Cost - ₹40 Cr) | Bridge over Sagada river on NH-26 in Kalahandi district (Length - 3 Km., Cost - ₹40 Cr) | Widening of NH-20 from Mangalpur to Kayangola including spur to Aradi (Length -17 Km., Cost - ₹375 Cr) |
| Widening of Daringbadi Ghat portion (NH-59, Length - 27 Km., Cost - ₹720Cr) | H.L. Bridge over River Mahanadi at Pujaripalli Ghat connecting to Jarimuli (Length - 3 Km., Cost - ₹275 Cr) | H.L. Bridge over River TEL on Boria Gudtula Kundabandh Road of Kalahandi district (Length- 1 Km., Cost - ₹60 Cr) | |
| H.L.Bridge over River TEL on Pourkela to Ghunsar road of Kalahandi district (Length - 1 Km., Cost - ₹72 Cr) | H.L.Bridge over Hati River on Khanidangiriguda-Bankapala Road of Kalahandi district (Length - 1 Km., Cost - ₹25 Cr) | | |

Dedication to Nation:

| | |
|---|--|
| 4 Laning of Talcher to Kamakhyanagar (NH 149 and 53, Length- 41 Km., Cost - ₹800 Cr) | VUPs at Balikuda, Sikharpur and Badachana (NH-16, Length - 3 Km.,Cost - ₹45 Cr) |
|---|--|

by
Nitin Gadkari
Minister of Road Transport & Highways
Govt. of India

Chairmanship of
Mohan Charan Majhi
Chief Minister of Odisha

Thursday, 17th April, 2025 at 04:30 PM, Venue: Baramunda Ground, Bhubaneswar

Advantages of the Projects

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>4 lane widening of Banarpal – Godibandha & Talcher – Kamakhyanagar sections improving connectivity to Angul, Talcher and Duburi</p> | <p>Six bridges over the Sand, Mahanadi, Tel, Hati, and Sagda rivers to enhance regional connectivity.</p> | <p>5 EUPs and 14 AUPs in the Bangriposi Ghat section of NH-49 aims to ensure smooth, safe travel and facilitate the safe crossing of wild animals</p> |
| <p>Permanent rectification of 15 black spots along the Cuttack–Ichhapuram section of NH-16 to enhance road safety and reduce accidents.</p> | <p>Titilagarh & Dharmagarh bypass will provide relief from traffic congestion within the city.</p> | <p>Additional two-lane bridge over Gangua Nallah at Palasuni aims to provide relief from traffic congestion and improve traffic flow.</p> |
| | <p>Enhanced connectivity to the Daringbadi tourist destination.</p> | |

In august presence of

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Dharmendra Pradhan Minister of Education, Govt. of India | Ashwini Vaishnaw Minister of Railways, Govt. of India | Jual Oram Minister of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India |
| Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo Deputy Chief Minister, Odisha | Smt. Pravati Parida Deputy Chief Minister, Odisha | Prithviraj Harichandan Minister of Excise, Law and Works Govt of Odisha |
| | Bibhuti Bhusan Jena Minister, Commerce and Transport, Steel & Mines, Govt of Odisha | Suresh Pujari Minister, Revenue and Disaster Managanemet Govt of Odisha |
| | | Ganesh Ram Singkhuntia Minister Forest, Environment & Climate Change, Govt. of Odisha |

MPs from the constituency covering Projects

| | | | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Rudra Narayan Pany | Bhartruhari Mahtab | Naba Charan Majhi | Mamata Mohanta | Pradeep Purohit | Dr. Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy |
| Smt. Aparajita Sarangi | Baijayant Panda | Ananta Nayak | Dr. Rabindra Narayan Behera | Malvika Devi | Sangita Kumari Singh Deo |
| Niranjan Bishi | Sujeet Kumar | Sambit Patra | Avimanyu Sethi | Sukanta Kumar Panigrahi | Anita Subhadarshini |

MLAs from the constituency covering Projects

| | | | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Braja Kishore Pradhan | Pratap Chandra Pradhan | Sanjali Murmu | Bhadav Hansdah | Tankadhar Tripathy | Krushna Chandra Nayak |
| Manoranjana Dyan Samantara | Kundala Anil Kumar | Ashok Bendalam | Dr. Fakir Mohan Naik | Prasanna Acharya | Nihar Ranjan Mahananda |
| Satrugan Jena | Sushanta Kumar Rout | Babu Singh | Sagar Charan Das | Manorama Mohanty | Sudhir Ranjan Pattajoshi |
| Nabin Kumar Jain | Laxman Kumar Bag | Dibya Shankar Mishra | Byomakesh Ray | Pramila Mallick | Sujata Sahoo |
| | | | | Nilamani Bisoyi | Chakramani Kanhar |

Committed to achieve green Odisha: Dy CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: Odisha is fully committed to realising the goal of Clean and Green India, and will provide all possible facilities and support to achieve the ambitious goal of green energy in Odisha, stated Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo during a meeting with Apollo Green Energy Limited (AGEL) at Lokseva Bhawan conference hall here Wednesday.

Singh Deo who also holds the portfolio of Agriculture, Farmers' Empowerment and Energy chaired the meeting where AGEL proposed for setting up 1000 MW green energy projects in the state.

AGEL is currently constructing a 54 MWP power project worth ₹151 crore at Ganjam district in EPC-ground solar mode. Similarly, it has taken keen interest to implement green energy projects in other parts of the state. It has proposed to invest ₹4,500 crore for a total of 1000 MW green energy proj-

Apollo Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) plans to invest ₹4,500 crore in 1,000 MW green energy projects, expected to create around 3,000 direct and indirect jobs

ects, with which 3,000 people will be directly and indirectly get the employment opportunity along with the generation of solar power. As per the requirement, the facility of storing the surplus electricity in batteries (battery energy storage system) after consumption will also be introduced.

The meeting was attended by Energy department principal secretary Vishal Dev, OPTCL CMD Bhaskar Jyoti Sharma, Gridco MD Trilochan Panda, AGEL CEO Sanjay Gupta and president Rakesh Gupta and other senior officers of department.



Milk prodn up in state, poor show in 13 dists

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, April 16: Livestock plays a crucial role in strengthening the national economy. Especially in rural areas, many families rely on milk production for their livelihood. India has established itself as the world's largest milk-producing country. According to the recently released data by Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, milk production in the country during the financial year 2023-24 stood at 239.3 million metric tonnes (MMT). Odisha - nestled on the eastern coast of India and which blends tradition with agriculture - contributed 1.1 per cent to it, placing the state at the 16th position nationally.

While milk production in Odisha had been steadily increasing since 2009-10, recent data reveals a decline in 13 districts during 2023-24 compared to 2022-23. A drop in milk output in 43 per cent of the districts reflects the fragile condition of the rural economy. However, the recently implemented Mukhyamantri Kamdhenu Yojana by the state government is expected to improve the situation.

In 2023-24, Uttar Pradesh had the highest milk production in the country with 38,780 thousand metric tonnes (TMT), whereas Odisha produced 2,636 TMT. These two states contributed 16.21 per cent and 1.1 per cent respectively to the national figure. Following Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan pro-



duced 34,733 TMT (14.51 per cent), Madhya Pradesh 21,326 TMT (8.91 per cent), Gujarat 18,312 TMT (7.65 per cent), and Maharashtra 16,045 TMT (6.71 per cent).

In the 2022-23 fiscal, Odisha's milk production was 2,476.42 TMT. It increased by 159.58 TMT in 2023-24. However, milk production decreased in 13 districts— Angul, Balasore, Bhadrak, Boudh, Gajapati, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Keonjhar, Koraput, Mayurbhanj, Nuapada, Sambalpur, and Subarnapur.

Cuttack district recorded the highest milk production of 391 TMT from 14,03,204 milch animals. On the other hand, Kandhamal recorded the lowest, producing only 11.11 TMT from 4,73,199 animals. In Mayurbhanj, despite having the highest number of milch animals at 3,761,128, milk produc-

Mahendra Hembram walks out of prison

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Keonjhar, April 16: Mahendra Hembram, one of the convicts in the 1999 high-profile triple murder case of Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two minor sons, was released from Keonjhar jail after 25 years Wednesday.

Hembram, now 50, was released from the prison on grounds of good behaviour during his incarceration.

"Hembram has been released following a decision by the State Sentence Review Board. The prison directorate informed about it in a letter Tuesday. He has been released after 25 years because of good behaviour in accordance with the rules," said Jailor Manaswini Naik.

Jail authorities gave Hembram a cordial farewell, garlanding him as a mark of recognition for his good conduct during his prison term.

An official said Hembram was handed over a bank passbook, where his earnings from prison labour has been deposited.

"I spent 25 years in jail after being falsely implicated in an incident related to religious conversion. Today, I have been released," Hembram told reporters outside the jail.

Hembram and Dara Singh, alias Rabindra Pal Singh, were convicted of the brutal murders of Staines and his sons — Philip, 10, and Timothy, 6, — who were burned alive by a mob allegedly led by Singh on the night of January 21, 1999.

The victims were sleeping in a station wagon parked in front of a church in Keonjhar district's Manoharpur village, when the incident took place, triggering national and international outrage.

It was alleged that the Staines had spread straw over the vehicle to shield themselves from the cold, and the straw caught fire.

When they tried to escape, the mob — armed with lathis — prevented them from getting out, leading to their deaths. Their skeletal remains were later recovered.

A total of 14 persons, including Singh and Hembram, were



accused in the case. However, 12 of them were acquitted, while Singh and Hembram were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Hembram, hailing from Manoharpur village, was arrested in 1999, while Dara Singh was picked up January 31, 2000 by then Mayurbhanj SP YB Khurania, who is now the DGP.

Initially kept as an undertrial prisoner at Jharpada Jail in Bhubaneswar, Hembram was sentenced to life imprisonment September 22, 2003.

Over the years, Hembram was incarcerated in several facilities, including Jharpada, Jamujhari Open Air Jail (Bhubaneswar), and jails in Cuttack, Berhampur, Baripada, Anandpur Sub-Jail, before being transferred to Keonjhar Jail September 28, 2011. He remained there until his release.

During the trial at the CBI court in Bhubaneswar Febru-

STAINES MURDER

KHURDA ROAD-BOLANGIR NEW RAIL LINE PROJECT

TUNNEL T-4 DAY LIGHTING MARKS MAJOR PROGRESS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: A major milestone in the Khurda Road-Bolangir new rail line project was achieved Wednesday, with the successful breakthrough (day lighting) of the 4,185-metre-long tunnel T-4 between Adenigarh and Charichhak stations in Boudh district.

This marks the completion of the longest tunnel not only in the entire project but also in the state of Odisha. In the ongoing project, so far 226km of the total 301km stretch has been commissioned—from Khurda Road up to Daspalla on one end and from Bolangir up to Purnakatak on the other. The remaining 75km stretch between Daspalla and Purnakatak, which includes seven tunnels are currently under construction and is progressing steadily.

The successful day lighting of Tunnel T-4 is a significant achievement that will bring the project closer to its goal of connecting Odisha's coastal region with its western hinterland.

CSIR-IMMT celebrates 62nd Foundation Day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: CSIR-Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (CSIR-IMMT) celebrated its 62nd Foundation Day with a series of commemorative events and a visionary lecture on leveraging science and technology for national development, here Wednesday.

Founded April 13, 1964 as the Regional Research Laboratory (RRL), the institute has played a key role in advancing India's capabilities in minerals and materials research. It was renamed CSIR-IMMT in 2007 to reflect its focused national mission. April 13 being a public holiday this year, the celebration was marked Wednesday.

Inaugurating the programme, CSIR-IMMT director Ramanuj Narayan reflected on the institute's six-decade-long journey and its growing contributions to sustainable technological solutions.

"Over the years, CSIR-IMMT has become a cornerstone of scientific excellence. We continue to innovate, evolve, and strengthen our impact in the minerals and materials sector," Narayan said in his welcome address.

Former director general of CSIR and DSIR secretary Sekhar C Mande delivered the Foundation Day lecture titled 'S&T Road Map for Making of Viksit Bharat'. Mande stressed the importance of integrating traditional knowledge systems with modern science and fostering innovation to make India a developed nation.

ary 1, 2002, Hembram reportedly lost mental composure and declared himself the sole culprit and claimed that others were innocent.

Trial started March 1, 2001 at the District and Sessions Court in Khurda, which was designated as a CBI court.

Evidence against Dara Singh was confirmed when one of the accused, Dayanidhi Patra, told the trial court that he was present when he (Dara Singh) set fire to the vehicle.

The trial concluded August 18, 2003, with Judge Mahendra Patnaik sentencing Dara Singh and 12 others, while acquitting Anirudha Dandapat, alias Andha Nayak, for lack of evidence.

On September 22, 2003, the court awarded Dara Singh the death penalty and sentenced 12 others to life imprisonment. However, in 2005, the Orissa High Court commuted Singh's death sentence to life imprisonment, a decision later upheld by the Supreme Court.

Dara Singh, currently serving a life sentence, filed a mercy petition in the Supreme Court in August 2024 seeking release. Another mercy plea was also submitted to the President of India.

Meanwhile, March 19, 2025, the Supreme Court directed the state government to take a decision on the remission plea of a 'repenting' Dara Singh, who continues to serve his sentence for the murders of Staines and his sons.

Fugitive husband held nine months after wife's murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

Gopalpur, April 16: Nine months after allegedly murdering his newly-wed wife, 32-year-old Lakshmikant Moharana, alias Laxmi, was arrested Wednesday by Golanthara police. The accused, a resident of ODRP Colony in Jagannathpur, Ganjam district, had been on the run since the incident. His arrest was confirmed by Berhampur SP Saravana Vivek M.

According to sources, Lakshmikant married Rani Moharana of Aruapalli village under Gopalpur police limits March 11, 2024. While the initial months were reportedly peaceful, Lakshmikant later began harassing Rani over dowry, both physically and mentally.

July 15, Rani was found hanging, and Lakshmikant claimed it was a suicide. He informed her family, who arrived to find her unresponsive on the bed. She was rushed to MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur, where she was declared dead.

Rani's brother, Rajesh Kumar Moharana, lodged a complaint at Golanthara police station, accusing Lakshmikant of murder. A case (No. 291/24) was registered, but Lakshmikant fled the hospital and went into hiding.

Despite continuous search operations, the accused remained untraceable. Meanwhile, Rajesh received threatening voice and video messages from Lakshmikant, urging him to withdraw the case. This led to a second complaint and the registration of a fresh case (No. 154/25) for criminal intimidation.

Acting on a tip-off, a special police team traced Lakshmikant to Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. He was arrested in a morning raid and produced in court the same evening.

Police also revealed that Lakshmikant has four prior cases against him.



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CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an Affidavit sworn before Executive Magistrate Bhadrak, I Gita Swain (52 yrs), W/o - Kalakar Swain, Vill/Po : Karanpohari, PS : Bansada, Dist : Bhadrak, declare that I have changed my name in my Lic policy bearing No. 598669506 from Sita Swain to Gita Swain for all purposes.

‘Education must prepare students for future’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 16: Education must go beyond textbooks and exams to truly prepare students for the future, Governor Hari Babu Kamthampati stated at the concluding ceremony of Diamond Jubilee celebrations of College of Basic Science and Humanities, Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) here Wednesday.

He emphasised that in today's fast-changing world, students need more than just



academic knowledge. "They must be able to think critically, solve problems creatively, and communicate effectively," he said. He praised the college for playing a key role in nurturing such qualities over the past 60 years.

Kamthampati also highlighted the National Education

Policy (NEP) 2020, calling it a timely and visionary step. "The NEP encourages flexible learning, interdisciplinary studies, and independent thinking—skills that are essential for innovation and personal growth," he said.

He urged educational institutions to keep evolving and align with global standards while staying rooted in Indian values. "We must shape young minds that are not only knowledgeable but also ethical, adaptable, and ready to face complex challenges," he added.

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Vain indeed is all overweening pride in the conquest even of the entire universe if one has not conquered one's own passions

SRI AUROBINDO



Resisting Techno-Fascism

Big Tech's massive encroachment upon the levers of state authority under US President Donald Trump is creating a dangerous new power structure – one not confined to its homeland. Trump's threats against countries – US allies and adversaries alike – that dare to regulate their digital markets and communications systems are not merely a case of economic bullying. Rather, they are an attempt to export this power structure and undermine the rule of law and democratic governance worldwide.

For example, America's European allies risk tariffs and retaliation for enforcing much-needed digital regulations, as do countries, like the United Kingdom and Brazil, that impose a digital-services tax. But these challenges also create strategic opportunities for democracies. If they collectively refuse to submit to US pressure, it is less likely that any one government will bear the brunt of retaliation. These countries must therefore unite against the tech giants that mine their citizens' data, control key information and commercial infrastructure, and refuse to pay taxes or even acknowledge the jurisdiction of national governments.

Of course, defending national interests while fostering genuine innovation is a difficult balancing act. But the unprecedented alliance forged between Big Tech and the Trump administration underscores the urgency of this task. As head of Trump's "Department of Government Efficiency," Elon Musk, the world's richest person, has gained access to government data systems, fired thousands of federal workers, and taken aim at regulatory agencies. Musk has also used the Federal Trade Commission as a cudgel against businesses that are reticent to advertise on his social-media platform X, which he has turned into a megaphone for right-wing extremists and a tool for disinformation and political interference.

Musk is not the only tech boss to have bent the knee. When Mark Zuckerberg announced in January that Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, would end its fact-checking programme, he repeated Trump's talking points. More recently, Instagram concealed results when users searched for "Democrats," and Facebook amplified posts from Trump and Vice President JD Vance.

These are only the most prominent examples of how the world's most powerful tech CEOs have aligned themselves with an authoritarian leader, shaping public discourse to his (and their own) benefit. When tech interests capture the US government to this extent, other countries must stand up to Trump's threats to avert a global slide into techno-fascism.

Some will argue that by taking a strong regulatory stance, these countries risk losing access to technological innovation. But this fundamentally misreads the situation. Given the extraordinary protections and privileges they have secured at home, US tech giants don't need more favourable treatment from other countries. They need access to these countries' markets. Advanced economies with skilled workforces, including the UK, Japan, and those in Europe, are highly valuable, as are middle-income and emerging economies like Brazil, Indonesia, and India.

The revelation that China's DeepSeek developed a large language model comparable to those of dominant American AI firms at a fraction of the cost has underscored this point. It belies the narrative that only the biggest tech companies with the most advanced chips and the least restrictive regulatory environment can develop the best AI, and shows that alternatives to the Silicon Valley model exist.

So far, Brazil is the only country with the courage and conviction to challenge Musk (albeit before he joined the Trump administration). It is less clear whether Europe, which has recourse to its digital markets and AI directives, will defend its right to regulate and rein in the "broligarchs" power.

Because enforcing competition policy has implications beyond traditional market concerns, more countries should regulate digital services, focusing not just on market dominance, but also on a corporation's ability to shape public discourse, control information flows, and leverage data advantages in order to entrench its power. Allowing Big Tech to pursue unfettered AI development that is environmentally and culturally destructive – or, worse, subsidising such innovation – could pave the way for techno-fascism on a global scale.

Clear rules for protecting competition and intellectual property are far more likely to foster innovation than would enabling dominant players to strengthen their monopoly power. For example, the EU's General Data Protection Regulation has, despite initial resistance, become a global standard, spurring privacy-enhancing innovation and acting as a safeguard against corporate overreach, especially with regard to data mining.

Similarly, requiring credit and compensation for the use of copyrighted materials for AI training is not just about protecting creative industries. It is about integrating the development of these transformative technologies into the fabric of our economies and societies, before a handful of US companies get a chance to "move fast and break things" – like democracy and the rule of law – that are not easily repaired.

Instead of accepting a false choice between innovation and regulation, the world's democracies have an opportunity to create the conditions for genuine innovation, not imitation, and show how democratic oversight can enable technological progress while preserving fundamental rights. But this requires recognising that tech policy has become integral to resisting authoritarian tendencies.

Such a stance is not anti-American. In fact, it reflects concerns about the fusion of Big Tech and political power in the US that many Americans share. That makes it all the more important for other governments to ensure that digital technologies serve democracy and protect human dignity.



Courtney C. Radsch

Allowing Big Tech to pursue unfettered AI development that is environmentally and culturally destructive – or, worse, subsidising such innovation – could pave the way for techno-fascism on a global scale

FOCUS SOCIAL SECURITY

DISABLED HEALTHCARE



While people are worried about grossly inadequate and inaccessible healthcare, the sector flourishes and provides the best facilities to those who can afford them

Eighty-two per cent of the persons with disabilities in the country do not have any healthcare protection despite the tall claims of the government to the contrary. Forty-two per cent of them are not even aware of the central government's flagship programme for people's health, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, according to a recent national survey by the Centre for the Promotion of Employment for Disabled People.

The number of persons with different kinds of disabilities in the country is enormous, 26.8 million or 2.21% of the population, as per 2011 Census. While the next census, which was due in 2021 but postponed to this year, can provide the most dependable update since it covers the entire population, other studies, which, too, cannot be ignored since they are based on scientific statistical sampling methods, have shown a marked increase in this number; the NFHS-5 (2019-21) reported it to be 63.28 million, equivalent to 4.52% of the population.

This is not to say that those already covered under some government-sponsored schemes are getting hassle-free healthcare. No. The overall health of the health sector is not well. The experience of the enrolled suggests that many of the empanelled hospitals refuse the treatment with great impunity; the needy have either to pay, if they can, out of pocket or go without treatment if they cannot, live or die with the disease.

Coming to healthcare in general, the pure commercial interest and market force's philosophy takes precedence over the public health responsibility of the government. The health infrastructure is neither adequate nor suitable for the masses. It encourages private profits and helps private insurance. It has a poor 1:15,000 doctor-to-patient ratio and 1.7 nurses to 1,000 people as per Indian Brand Equity Foundation's (IBEF) observation.

The dimensions of the health

sector neglect are multifold. The healthcare public spending in India as a percentage of GDP is set at 1.9% in 2026, whereas other countries are already spending between 5 to 12.5% of their GDP. The US, for instance, spent 16% in 2023, and OECD countries spent 9.2% in 2022.

The private sector in India dominates healthcare in many ways. It accounts for 58% of hospitals. The sector employs 81% of the medical professionals. By 2022-23, there were 43,186 private hospitals with 1.18 million beds and 29,631 ventilators.

The macro data doesn't reflect the true picture because there is a wide gap between rural and urban areas in availability of hospitals and doctors. Also, there are regional imbalances. For instance, Maharashtra has the highest number of allopathic doctors (2.10 lakh), followed by Tamil Nadu (1.49 lakh) and Karnataka (1.41 lakh), as per 2024 data; that means more than 38% of allopathic doctors in India are concentrated in three states.

The inefficient and inadequate healthcare is deepening and widening poverty in India. Due to heavy out-of-pocket spending, an estimated 7% of population – about 10 crore – falls below the poverty line every year, as a Niti Aayog report asserts.

Besides high medical costs, people have to put up with unethical medical practices by unscrupulous players in the system because there is no effective mechanism to prevent them.

Unscrupulous hospitals accept patients not based on their severity of disease and urgency for treatment but on their paying capacity; those with disease but no money are kicked out while those with sufficient money but no disease get unnecessary treatment.

Doctors prescribe tests lured more by the kickbacks the diagnostic centers offer than by the need for such tests. They write a battery of tests code-named "sink tests" with one or two 'marked tests.' Patients are charged for all the tests and blood samples, for instance, are collected for all of them. But the actual test is conducted only for the 'marked test,'; the fake normal results are given for rest of the tests. The excess blood collected is thrown in the sink, so the name 'sink' tests.

Patients are unnecessarily referred to other doctors just to get a cut from them; those who offer higher commissions get higher referrals. Prenatal sex determination tests are conducted defying the legal ban on it.

Unnecessary surgeries are conducted on gullible patients. The types of procedures to make money include hysterectomies, C-section, cataract, knee replacements, and lower back operations.

Pharmaceutical companies supply expensive gifts and medical equipment to entice doctors to prescribe their drugs. Not only gifts but they also offer foreign trips and five-star accommodations to doctors and their families. Poor and illiterate people are used as guinea

pigs for clinical trials.

The ambulance services are paid bribes for bringing emergency patients to private hospitals. Hospitals force doctors to generate a monthly targeted revenue to justify their high salaries, whereby doctors play mischief by subjecting innocent people to unnecessary tests and procedures.

The Medical Council of India prohibits all these unethical practices, but they have little impact on the errand doctors and hospitals. The National Health Policy 2017, too, commits itself "to the highest professional standards, integrity and ethics." These goals are not achievable without first halting the ongoing mindless commercialisation of the health sector.

While people are worried about grossly inadequate and inaccessible healthcare, the sector flourishes and provides the best facilities to those who can afford them. The IBEF says the Indian healthcare market, which was valued at \$110 billion in 2016, is poised to reach \$635 billion by end of this year.

Indian medical tourism is worth \$7.69 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach \$14.31 billion by 2029; about 6.34 lakh foreign tourists came for medical treatment in India in 2023.

All this suggests that India has a robust health sector and, given the will, that it can be further strengthened and reformed to meet the comprehensive needs of every Indian. What we need is universal healthcare. What we need is the de-commercialisation of the healthcare industry. What we need is to learn lessons from the damage market forces are causing to the health sector and public health. And what we need to do all this, to tell at the cost of repetition, is the will. Does our government have it? It has to prove it through its actions if it has it. The delay causes further damage, and that damage will be irreparable.

The writer is a development economist and commentator on economic and social affairs.

SPECTRUM

BENGAL

Boiling kettle & the price of ignored whistles



Sayan Chatterjee

BENGAL'S SOCIAL FABRIC HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN INCLUSIVE, LAYERED WITH RICH TRADITIONS OF SYNCRETISM. BUT IN RECENT YEARS, DIVISIVE NARRATIVES HAVE POLLUTED THAT SPACE

If you've ever watched a kettle come to boil, you know the sound—the shrill whistle that grows louder, sharper, more insistent until someone takes notice, turns off the heat, lifts the lid. But what if no one does?

West Bengal today is that kettle. For years, it has simmered with a complex brew of identity politics, economic stagnation, administrative decay, and ideological clashes. The recent surge in political violence, religious polarisation, and law-and-order breakdown is not a sudden phenomenon; it is the steam escaping from a vessel that's long been under pressure, ignored.

Like steam, unrest doesn't appear from nowhere—it builds. The rising communal tensions in places like Sandeshkhali, or the flare-ups between rival political groups in rural districts, aren't isolated sparks. They're symptoms. And they are linked inextricably to a deeper malaise—a governance model caught between populism and paralysis, between legacy politics and new-age opportunism.

Let's pull back. Bengal, once the cradle of the Renaissance and revolution, finds itself trapped in a cycle of reactive politics. The ruling regime positions itself as the custodian of secularism and cultural pride, while the Opposition, riding a wave of nationalistic fervour, taps into grievances and perceived cultural erosion. Caught in between are ordinary citizens who want jobs, education, safety—and silence from the kettle.

The analogy deepens. In a kitchen, the whistle of a kettle isn't just noise—it's a signal. It says, "Something's happening here. Pay attention." But what happens when those in the kitchen wear earplugs? When governance treats symptoms as sabotage, criticism as conspiracy, and protest as provocation?

Take the suppression of dissent. Activists, students, and even journalists who raise questions are branded as "anti-development" or "divisive." The chilling effect is palpable. But it's not silence that ensures peace. It's dialogue, reform, and accountability. A sealed kettle doesn't stop boiling; it explodes.

And there's another parallel: the quality of water in the kettle matters too. Bengal's social fabric has historically been inclusive, layered with rich traditions of syncretism. But in recent years, divisive narratives have polluted that space. Identity is now weaponised—either as a defence of culture or as a call for reclaiming it. When politics invades pujas, processions, and classrooms, the water turns murky. No tea can be brewed from that. Only bitterness.

The solution? First, acknowledgement. Recognise

the unrest not as isolated law-and-order issues but as the fallout of long-ignored systemic stress. Second, recalibrate. Bengal needs less theatrics and more therapy. Investment in jobs, education, decentralised decision-making, and transparent law enforcement isn't glamorous, but it's grounding.

Lastly, someone must lift the lid. Civil society, Opposition parties, the media, and responsible leaders must push for truth, not just triumph. Silence the kettle not by turning away but by turning down the heat. Because here's the thing about pressure cookers and democracies—they both need release valves. Without them, they don't just fail—they burst.

And when that happens, the spill burns everyone.

The writer is a Delhi-based independent contributor to print and online publications.

The writer is Director of the Center for Journalism and Liberty at the Open Markets Institute and a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

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- “Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope

MAYA ANGELOU
- “Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage

LAO TZU
- “Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope

MAYA ANGELOU

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



B-15, Rasulgarih Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

War on ideas

Sir, This refers to "Trump freezes about \$2.3 in funding to Harvard," Orissa POST, April 16. After triggering a global trade war with his whimsical tariff regime, US President Donald Trump has now declared a war on ideas; the ideas that form the very foundation of the country's core values of freedom and liberty. The Trump administration's latest decision to freeze \$2.2 billion in grants to Harvard University, as a punishment for refusing to toe the line and comply with a list of 'unlawful' demands from the federal government, reflects an authoritarian mindset that is anathema to the principles of academic freedom and independence. The ugly showdown with one of the highly reputed universities underscores a disturbing trend of targeting high-profile institutions on flimsy grounds dressed up as serious national issues. The extraordinary set of changes demanded by the government would have reshaped the university and ceded an unprecedented degree of control over Harvard's operations to the federal government. The changes would have violated principles that are held dear on college campuses, including academic freedom. No government – regardless of which party is in power – should dictate what private universities can teach, whom they can admit and hire, and which areas of study and inquiry they can pursue..

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Helping China rise

Sir, US President Donald Trump's trade war, marked by steep tariffs on several countries, has created unintended opportunities for China to expand its influence in Southeast Asia. Nations like Vietnam, Malaysia, Cambodia, and Indonesia—some of which were actively seeking closer ties with the US—have been hit with high tariffs ranging from 24% to 49%. This has strained their economic relationships with the US, even as they sought to diversify away from China by attracting Western manufacturing and investment. In contrast, China is stepping in to fill the gap. President Xi Jinping is touring the region, promoting an anti-tariff, pro-trade message and signing economic agreements with Southeast Asian nations. Trump's trade war, intended to strengthen the US, may instead be helping China rise.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH

of the day

quote

BJP tries to fear Congress leaders, but we won't fear or budge. We will always fight with your blessings and support. We will keep the country united, build the country and kick out the BJP government

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE

AICC PRESIDENT

I have tried to inform our legislators about the contents of the report to an extent. The legislators have shared their opinion. We have discussed on what has to be told to the cabinet in one voice and we will place it accordingly

D K SHIVAKUMAR

K TAKA DEPUTY CM

My question is being from a political family, from where have you earned these business tricks to convert ₹50 lakh to ₹2,000 crore? If you teach us the same formula, at least I can reverse the fate of Assam

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA

ASSAM CM

POST OF THE DAY

THIS IS HILARIOUS UP CM is not a Yogi; he is the biggest fraud. —WB CM Mamata Banerjee

No fear, no filter, just fact

@Politcx2029

SHORT TAKES

Palakkad RDO office receives bomb threat

Palakkad (Kerala): A bomb threat received via email at the Office of the Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) here Wednesday turned out to be a hoax, as no explosives were found during an inspection by the bomb and dog squads, police said. "Nothing was found during the inspection carried out by the bomb disposal and dog squads. So, it was a hoax," a senior police officer told PTI. He further said the Cyber Cell division of the police is trying to identify the source of the email.

Hyderabad: ED raids in money laundering case

Hyderabad: The Enforcement Directorate Wednesday carried out raids at multiple locations here as part of a money laundering investigation linked to alleged fraud with real estate investors, official sources said. The action is being taken against the Surana Group and Sai Surya Developers. The raids are being undertaken at premises located in Secunderabad, Jubilee Hills and Bowenpally, the sources said.

Stubble burning: 770 farmers booked

Indore: The Indore district administration in Madhya Pradesh has imposed fines of ₹16.7 lakh on 770 farmers for allegedly burning stubble, an official said Wednesday. Farmer organisations have objected to the action, demanding alternative arrangements. "We are taking strict action under the rules and regulations against those who burn stubble in the fields," Indore Collector Ashish Singh told reporters. He said that the burning of stubble in the surrounding villages is affecting the air quality of Indore, which has the status of the cleanest city in the country. Another administration official said that a total fine of ₹16.71 lakh has been imposed on 770 farmers within the last four days for burning stubble in the district.

Unemployment in Haryana is 37.04 per cent, in Rajasthan it's 28.5 per cent, in Bihar it's 19.1 per cent, and in Maharashtra it is three per cent. But in Karnataka, it's only 2.5 per cent. Compared to other states, Karnataka fares far better, while the national unemployment rate is above 18 per cent

SIDDARAMAIAH

KARNATAKA CM

TREE FELLING IN HYDERABAD

SC: Will go out of way for protection of environment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 16: The Supreme Court Wednesday questioned the Telangana government over its "tearing urgency" to fell trees on a land parcel next to the University of Hyderabad and said it would go "out of the way" for the protection of the environment.

Making it clear that the apex court's first concern was restoration of the environment, a bench of Justices B R Gavai and Augustine George Masih said not a single tree more should be felled on this land. "If you want your chief secretary or the secretaries to be saved from any severe action, you have to come out with a plan as to how you are going to restore that 100 acres," Justice Gavai told senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, who was appearing for Telangana.

The bench said it was surprised to see videos in which herbivore animals were running for shelter. It said it was also told that some of these animals were bitten by stray dogs. "We direct the wildlife warden of the state of Telangana to examine and put into effect immediate steps that are required to be undertaken for protecting the wildlife which has been affected on account of deforestation of 100 acres," the court said.

Justice Gavai said, "You can't have high rises in the company of the deer." The bench said rather than justifying it, the better course for the state would be to come up with a plan on restoring the tree cover. "What was the tearing urgency to do it in three days of holidays?" Justice Gavai asked. The bench said it was only bothered about the environment and how the state would restore



The bench said it was surprised to see videos in which herbivore animals were running for shelter

it. "For the protection of the environment and ecology, we will go out of the way," it said, adding that under Article 142 of the Constitution, the top court can "do anything". Article 142 of the Constitution provides broad powers to the apex court to pass any order to ensure "complete justice" in any matter before it. Singhvi said all activities in the area in question have been stopped.

He said fake images of elephants were being circulated. The bench observed it was only concerned with how a large number of trees were felled without the permission of the competent authority and how bulldozers were used for erasing the 100-acre area.

Highlighting the importance of sustainable development and protection of the environment, the bench said that even for important projects like the Chardham project in Uttarakhand, the Centre had to fight for years

in court. At the outset, Singhvi told the bench that the Central Empowered Committee (CEC) has filed a voluminous report in the matter and the state needed some time to respond to it.

The bench granted four weeks to Telangana to file its response to the CEC's report and posted the matter for next hearing May 15. The bench asked whether the state had the permission of the tree authority for the felling of trees.

When the bench was told that some of the trees were exempted by self-certification, the court referred to an order passed by it in December 1996, which dealt with the meaning of the word "forest", and asked, "Are they above the orders of the Supreme Court?"

Senior advocate K Parameshwar, assisting the court as an amicus curiae, said according to the CEC report, the state had mortgaged the land in the area to a private party for ₹10,000 crore. Singhvi said the state wanted both employment and development without any harm to the environment.

The apex court asked whether the bulldozers have been removed from the site. Singhvi said there were "unemployed bulldozers".

US VP Vance to visit India early next week



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 16: US Vice President JD Vance and his wife Usha, the first Indian-American Second Lady, are set to visit India early next week that will see him hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The US vice president will travel to Italy this week and then to India, a spokesperson of Vance told CBS News. The Vances are expected to bring their three young children -- Ewan, Vivek, and Mirabel -- to India and the family is expected to travel to Jaipur and Agra besides visiting New Delhi.

The US vice president is travelling to India against the backdrop of Trump's policy on tariffs that triggered massive trade disruptions and fears of a global economic recession. Days after his reciprocal tariff kicked in this month, Trump announced a 90-day pause on it on all countries, except China as countries around the world wilted under the impact of the seismic action.

US National Security Adviser Michael Waltz had also planned to visit India early next week but the trip has been postponed, people familiar with the matter said. Vance's visit is likely to be more of a private trip though it will have official components, the people cited above said.

It is learnt that the US Vice President will hold talks with Prime Minister Modi April 21 which will cover various aspects of India-US ties including the issue of tariff and the ongoing negotiations between the two sides for a bilateral trade agreement. CBS News said Vance is undertaking a seven-day visit to Italy and India that will begin Thursday.

Mizoram delegation to leave for Assam for boundary talks



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aizawl, April 16: A seven-member Mizoram delegation will leave for Guwahati April 24 to engage in official-level discussions with Assam to resolve the long-standing boundary dispute between the two northeastern states, a senior official said Wednesday.

The delegation will be headed by Home Secretary Vanlalmawia, while the Assam team is likely to be led by a principal secretary or secretary of the neighbouring state's Border Protection and Development Department, he said.

The meeting is scheduled to be held in Guwahati April 25. The official said the meeting will focus on preparing and finalising the groundwork and modalities for the next round of ministerial-level talks. It will also deal with technicalities related to the border issue, he said. The last and fourth round of ministerial-level talks was held in Aizawl August 9 last year. In the meeting, which was attended by Mizoram Home Minister K Sapdanga and Assam's Border Protection and Development Minister Atul Bora, the delegations agreed to

continue to observe conditions agreed in the previous parleys, including maintaining peace along the interstate border.

The two states had also agreed to hold the next round of ministerial-level meeting in Guwahati before March 31 this year, which, however, did not happen. Meanwhile, Sapdanga Wednesday chaired a meeting of the Mizoram boundary committee ahead of forthcoming official-level talks. It reviewed necessary documents to be tabled during the April 25 talks.

Sapdanga said the state government's top priority is to ensure that Mizoram's border is secure. He also said "massive efforts" are underway to ensure that Mizoram does not lose its territory.

Three Mizoram districts -- Aizawl, Kolaisib and Mamit -- share a 164.6-km border with Assam's Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi districts. Mizoram claims that 509 square miles of the Inner Line Reserved Forest (ILRF) delineated in 1875 under the BEFR as its legitimate area or boundary.

In contrast, Assam asserts the border defined by a 1933 map prepared by the Survey of India in 1933 as its constitutional boundary.

The meeting is scheduled to be held in Guwahati April 25

The official said the meeting will focus on preparing and finalising the groundwork and modalities for the next round of ministerial-level talks

ED grills Robert Vadra for 5 hrs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 16: Robert Vadra, the businessman brother-in-law of the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, was questioned by the Enforcement Directorate for the second consecutive day Wednesday for about five hours in a 2008 Haryana land deal-linked money laundering case.

The 56-year-old businessman termed the ED action a "political vendetta" and claimed the people of the country "do not trust the probe agencies".

He reached the ED office

around 11 am accompanied by his wife Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the Congress MP from Kerala's Wayanad. They hugged each other before Robert Vadra entered the office. Vadra went home briefly for lunch and re-joined the questioning session. He finally left the ED office after 6 pm. Priyanka Gandhi stayed in the visitors' room of the agency's office 'Pravartan Bhawan' at the APJ Abdul Kalam Road throughout the grilling session.

He has been called again Thursday for further questioning. Sources said Vadra has been confronted with about a dozen questions during the around 10 hours he spent at the ED office over two days. His statement was being recorded by the federal probe agency under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

People from the Nindar village stage a protest over the Nindar Residential Scheme, at the Jaipur Development Authority office in Jaipur

PTI PHOTO

Govt bans production of 35 combination drugs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 16: Apex drugs regulatory body CDSCO has directed drug controllers of all states and Union territories to stop manufacture, sale and distribution of unapproved 35 fixed-dose combination drugs that include painkillers, nutrition supplements and anti-diabetics.

They have also been asked to review their approval process for such fixed dose combination drugs (FDC) and ensure strict compliance of the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940 and rules.

FDC drugs are those which contain a combination of two or more active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) in a fixed ratio.

The regulator issued the directions after it found that certain FDC drugs have been licensed for manufacture, sale,

and distribution without prior evaluation of safety and efficacy, posing a serious risk to public health and safety.

In a communication sent April 11, Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) Dr Rajeev Raghuwanshi referred to the letter issued by his office January 2013 where concerns were raised regarding the grant of manufacturing licenses for sale of FDC drugs that fall under the definition of a

FDC drugs are those which contain a combination of two or more active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) in a fixed ratio

"New Drug" in the country without due approval from DCGI.

The same concern has been raised from time to time and multiple letters have been issued to the respective state licensing authorities that granted permission for manufacturing and marketing of unapproved FDCs. The most recent such letter was issued in February this year.

"It has come to the notice

underlined. Upon issuance of show cause notices to the manufacturers, they have stated that these licenses were granted by the respective drug licensing authorities and have not violated any rules, it said.

"In view of the above, all state and union territory drug controllers are requested to review their approval process for such FDCs and ensure strict compliance of the provisions of the act and rules," the letter said.

The letter also listed out 35 unapproved FDCs which were earlier licensed by state/ UT drug controllers for manufacture, sale, and distribution without evaluation of safety and efficacy by Central Drugs Standard Organisation (CDS-CO) and later on cancelled by Drug Licensing Authorities (SLAs) or voluntarily surrendered by manufacturers following the issuance of show cause notices for reference.

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YouTuber kills hubby with help of friend; dumps body in drain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 16: A 28-year-old YouTuber allegedly murdered her husband with the help of a male friend, also a content creator, after he objected to their "intimacy" and her social media activities. The duo carried the body on a motorcycle and dumped it in a drain in Haryana's Bhiwani, where it was found three days later, police said Wednesday.

"Both the accused -- Ravina and Suresh -- have been arrested and further investigations are on," the Station House Officer of Sadar Bhiwani, Inspector Narender, said. The police said that they found CCTV footage where the two accused were seen riding a motorcycle purportedly carrying the body on a deserted road late in the night.

The victim, identified as Praveen (32), was murdered March 25 after he had an argument with his wife Ravina in Suresh's presence at their home. "Ravina used her dupatta to strangle Praveen and he was also hit on the head by the two accused," the SHO said.

The woman returned to her home after the two threw the body in a drain. Concerned about Praveen's whereabouts, his family filed a complaint with the Bhiwani police March 26. A police official from Bhiwani said the couple got married eight years ago and have a six-year-old son.

It is claimed that arguments used to break out frequently between Ravina and Praveen, who objected to her posting videos on social media and devoting a lot of her time to such activities, the official said. The police said during the past few months their marriage had become strained over Ravina's "intimacy" with Suresh, whom she met on Instagram nearly two years ago.

international

of the day quote

Unlike in the past, the (Israeli military) is not evacuating areas that have been cleared and seized. The military will remain in the security zones as a buffer between the enemy and (Israeli) communities in any temporary or permanent situation in Gaza — as in Lebanon and Syria

ISRAEL KATZ | DEFENCE MINISTER, ISRAEL

China welcomes more high-quality agricultural products from Malaysia to enter the Chinese market and encourages Chinese companies to invest and start businesses in Malaysia

XI JINPING | PRESIDENT, CHINA

America and China are now locked in a fierce contest for global supremacy. Neither country wants an open conflict, but there is a deep mistrust and suspicion on both sides

LAWRENCE WONG | PRIME MINISTER, SINGAPORE

SHORT TAKES

Maldives bars Israeli passport holders

Male: The Maldives has changed its immigration law to bar Israeli passport holders from the country over the war in Gaza. The amendment was passed by Parliament Monday and approved by President Mohamed Muizzu Tuesday, according to a statement from the president's office. It was not immediately clear whether the law would apply to dual nationals who have passports from both Israel and another country. The Cabinet took the decision nearly a year ago but the government did not formalise it until this week. "The ratification reflects the government's firm stance in response to the continuing atrocities and ongoing acts of genocide committed by Israel against the Palestinian people," the statement said.

Plane with Indians makes emergency landing

Kathmandu: An aircraft with 12 Indians on board Wednesday made an emergency landing at the Kathmandu airport here after experiencing a hydraulic system failure. Private airline Sita Air plane from Lukla, the gateway to Mount Everest region, to Ramechhap, about 140 kilometres southeast of Kathmandu, was diverted to the Tribhuvan International Airport after the technical fault was detected, an airline official said. The Dornier aircraft with 12 Indians, two Nepalese, and three crew members on board was towed to the parking bay with the help of a tractor after it landed at the airport, the official said.

Indian-origin doctor elected UK RCP prez

London: Dr Mumtaz Patel has been elected as the 123rd president of the Royal College of Physicians (RCP), a high-profile role heading the UK's medical professional membership body representing 40,000 members around the world. Dr Patel, born in Lancashire, north-west England, to Indian migrant parents, is a consultant nephrologist based in Manchester. The RCP welcomed her as the "first Indo-Asian Muslim president" and the fifth woman to lead the physicians' group dating back to the 16th century. The voting in the presidential contest concluded Monday and the official start date for her four-year term is yet to be confirmed. "As president, I will lead the RCP to be the best organisation it can be, supporting our members throughout every career stage to deliver the best possible healthcare for our patients," said Patel.

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 16: India is ramping up efforts to become a global arms supplier, targeting countries that have traditionally relied on Russian weaponry. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is offering long-term, low-cost loans through the state-owned Export-Import Bank (EXIM) to attract new buyers, including nations considered too risky for traditional financing.

This push is part of a larger strategy to transform India into a defense manufacturing hub, adding helicopters, missiles, and battleships to the country's growing exports of iPhones, pharmaceuticals, and ammunition.

India, now the world's largest arms importer after Ukraine, is increasing its diplomatic footprint with more defense attachés posted in Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia. These officials will help identify potential buyers and promote Indian-made arms directly to foreign governments. Countries



like Algeria, Morocco, Guyana, and Cambodia are being targeted for their long-standing defense ties with Russia.

India's move comes amid a global rearming trend and changing geopolitical alliances. Russia's invasion of Ukraine disrupted traditional arms supply chains, pushing countries that relied on Moscow and Washington to seek alternatives. India, with its ex-

perience sourcing arms from both the West and Russia, has seen rising interest.

The government aims to double defense exports to \$6 billion by 2029. In 2023-24, India exported about \$2.4 billion worth of arms, a steep increase from just \$230 million a decade ago. Domestically, defense production surged to \$14.8 billion, up 62% since 2020.

Indian firms are positioning

India plans to expand cheap loans, including to countries with higher political or credit risks

Delhi sending more defense attachés abroad to help sell arms

Ukraine invasion's after-effects pushed some countries to consider Indian arms

Lack of track record selling higher-end wares has delayed some potential deals

themselves as cost-effective suppliers. For instance, they offer 155 mm artillery shells for \$300–400 each—well below the \$3,000 price tag for European versions. The country has also started brokering meetings between its arms producers and visiting foreign delegations, showcasing advanced equipment during military drills.

Private players like Adani Defence and SMPP are increasing production of large-caliber ammunition, with orders already coming in from abroad.

We're going to give them a stipend. We're going to give them some money and a plane ticket, and then we're going to work with them — if they're good — if we want them back in, we're going to work with them to get them back in as quickly as we can

DONALD TRUMP | PRESIDENT, US

PAK'S FOREIGN SECY ARRIVES IN B'DESH

Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch arrived in Bangladesh Wednesday to hold the Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) Thursday after a gap of 15 years. Baloch will hold talks with her Bangladesh counterpart M Jashim Uddin at the state guest house 'Padma' Thursday



US judge stops deportation of Indian student

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, April 16: A US federal judge has temporarily blocked the Trump administration from deporting a 21-year-old undergraduate Indian whose student visa was cancelled.

Krish Lal Isserdasani has been pursuing a bachelor's degree in computer engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with an F-1 student visa since 2021.

Court documents, as seen by PTI, said that "having maintained full-time enrollment and good academic standing, Isserdasani is now in the final semester of his senior year with less than 30 days remaining until an expected graduation May 10, 2025."

The documents filed in the US District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin said Tuesday that Isserdasani "acknowledges that he was arrested November 22, 2024, after he and his friends got into a verbal argument with another group while walking home late at night from a bar".

"Although Isserdasani was arrested for disorderly conduct, the District Attorney declined to pursue charges after reviewing the case. As a result, Isserdasani never had to appear in court and believed the matter was completely resolved with no possible immigration consequences," the court documents said adding that aside from this encounter, Isserdasani has had no other interactions with law enforcement.

However, April 4, 2025, the University of Wisconsin-Madison's International Student Services (ISS) office informed Isserdasani by email that his Student and Exchange Visitor System (SEVIS) record had been terminated.

The SEVIS has been terminated by the US Student and Exchange Visitor Programme operated by the Department of Homeland Security for "Otherwise failing to maintain status-Individual identified in criminal records check and/or has had their VISA revoked. SEVIS record has been terminated."

Xi to Asian nations: Reject conflict, protectionism

REUTERS

Kuala Lumpur, April 16: Chinese President Xi Jinping called Wednesday for Asian nations to unite in resisting geopolitical confrontation, unilateralism and protectionism, as he aims to consolidate ties with some of China's closest neighbours amid a deterioration of relations with the US.

Xi is in Malaysia as part of a three-nation Southeast Asian trip that includes Vietnam and Cambodia.

China and Malaysia reached a consensus on deepening cooperation in various fields, Xi said after witnessing the exchange of 31 agreements with Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, ranging from trade and tourism to railway transportation and agriculture. No details were provided for the agreements.

"In the face of shocks to the current international order and economic globalisation, our two nations will stand united with other countries in the region to jointly resist the undercurrents of geopolitical and camp-based confrontation, overcome the counter-currents of unilateralism and protectionism, and safeguard the promising prospects for development in our shared Asian home," Xi said at a function with Anwar.

Xi's comments come after US President Donald Trump, who took office in January, shocked markets by imposing sweeping tariffs on countries across the world. While some of the tariffs have since been delayed, Beijing faces 145% duties.

As part of his "America First" policy, Trump has also pulled the US out of the World Health Organization, hollowed out USAID and halted international aid.



Resist supply chain disruptions, excessive tariffs, Xi says

Beijing boosting ties with neighbours as US trade tensions rise

CHINA REMAINS MALAYSIA'S MOST SIGNIFICANT TRADE PARTNER, MALAYSIAN PM SAYS

CHINA, MALAYSIA EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS ON TRADE, TOURISM

China has said it is "tearing down walls" and expanding its circle of trading partners amid the trade war.

With an additional tariff of 24% on goods shipped to the US, Malaysia was among several Southeast Asian nations facing hefty US levies before Trump announced his 90-day pause. Malaysian officials have begun reaching out to the US for a reprieve.

Anwar said China remained Malaysia's most significant trading partner and continued to be a "rational, strong and reliable" ally during upheaval in global geopolitics.

"At a time when multilateralism is under tremendous strain, when some nations

abandon the principle of shared responsibility and others question long-standing commitments, China's global initiatives offer a new lease on hope," Anwar said.

China has been Malaysia's largest trading partner since 2009, with total trade valued at 484.1 billion ringgit (\$110 billion) last year, according to Malaysia's foreign ministry.

Xi urged Malaysia and other countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations regional bloc to jointly resist decoupling, supply chain disruptions and "excessive tariffs" with openness and greater cooperation, China's state-run CCTV reported.

Trump jumps in on tariff talks with Japanese officials

REUTERS

Washington/Tokyo, April 16: President Donald Trump said he will personally attend a meeting of Japanese and US trade officials Wednesday, a surprise move that underlines his eagerness to oversee negotiations triggered by his barrage of tariffs on global imports.

Tokyo sent its economic revitalisation minister Ryosei Akazawa to kick start the talks, expecting to face Trump's Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent in Washington, and had hoped to limit the scope of discussions to trade and investment matters.

But Trump weighed in early Wednesday, saying he would also be there to cover issues including the amount Tokyo pays towards the cost of hosting US troops in Japan, the biggest overseas deployment globally.

"Japan is coming in today to negotiate Tariffs, the cost of military support, and 'TRADE FAIRNESS'," he said in a post on Truth Social.

"I will attend the meeting, along with Treasury & Commerce Secretaries. Hopefully something can be worked out which is good (GREAT!) for Japan and the USA!"

Bessent also wants to discuss the thorny issue of exchange rates with Japan, one of the first countries to begin face-to-face negotiations since Trump announced sweeping duties on dozens of countries - both friend and foe - earlier this month.

Japan has been hit with 24% levies on its exports to the United States although these rates have, like most of Trump's tariffs, been paused for 90 days. But a 10% universal rate remains in place as does a 25% duty for cars, a mainstay of Japan's export-reliant economy. Bessent has said there is a "first mover advantage" given Washington has said more than 75 countries have requested talks. However, Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said Monday that his country, a close US ally, won't rush to reach a deal and does not plan to make big concessions.



An Indigenous spiritual leader performs a ritual song with ashes from the Amazon fires to pressure leaders to implement a just energy transition and to phase out fossil fuels, ahead of the country hosting the COP30 U.N. Climate Summit, in front of the Itamaraty Palace, in Brasilia, Brazil

Legal definition of woman based on biology, rules UK SC

The Supreme Court's judgment related to whether a trans woman with a gender recognition certificate, a formal document that gives legal recognition of someone's new gender, is protected from discrimination as a woman under Britain's Equality Act

REUTERS

London, April 16: The United Kingdom's highest court ruled Wednesday that the definition of a woman under equality legislation referred to "biological sex", but it said trans people would not be disadvantaged by its landmark decision.

The Supreme Court's judgment related to whether a trans woman with a gender recognition certificate, a formal document that gives legal

recognition of someone's new gender, is protected from discrimination as a woman under Britain's Equality Act.

The landmark case is the latest example of the wider debate around transgender rights ending up before the courts.

Campaign group For Women Scotland had argued rights under the Equality Act should only apply based on a person's biological sex. It had challenged guidance issued by the devolved Scottish government that ac-



company a 2018 law designed to increase the proportion of women on public sector boards. Scottish ministers' guidance

said a trans woman with a gender recognition certificate was legally a woman.

After For Women Scotland had lost in the Scottish courts, the Supreme Court ruled in the campaign group's favour after an appeal last November, a decision greeted by cheering outside the building.

"The unanimous decision of this court is that the terms 'women' and 'sex' in the Equality Act 2010 refer to a biological woman and biological sex," Deputy President of the Supreme Court Patrick Hodge said. "But we counsel against

reading this judgment as a triumph for one or more groups in our society at the expense of another - it is not," he added.

Critics of the Scottish law had said its definition could impact single-sex services for women such as refugees, hospital wards and sports.

But transgender campaigners had said if the court ruled in favour of For Women Scotland, it could lead to discrimination against those with gender recognition certificates, especially over employment issues.

"The correct interpretation of the EA (Equality Act) as referring to biological sex does not cause disadvantage to trans people, whether or not they possess a gender recognition certificate," Hodge said.

of the day

Quote

Five years from now, I definitely feel when you compare Indian aviation to the rest of the world we will be flying the youngest feet in the sky, which basically means, by math, that we will be actually emitting the least

ADITYA GHOSH | CO-FOUNDER, AKASA AIR

Domestic CV volume should grow 3-5 per cent this fiscal, rebounding from last fiscal's slowdown and aligning with the sector's long-term growth trend

ANUJ SETHI | SENIOR DIRECTOR, CRISIL RATINGS

The huge spike in prices had already started to show its adverse impact on sales. With a global trade war now bringing new uncertainty, it is only natural for buyers to adopt a cautious approach to investment, particularly in something so big as real estate

DHRUV AGARWALA | GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, HOUSING.COM

SHORT TAKES

Wipro Q4 PAT zooms

New Delhi: India's fourth-largest IT company Wipro Wednesday reported a 25.9 per cent increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 3,569.6 crore during the March quarter. It had reported a profit (attributable to equity holders of the company) of Rs 2,834.6 crore in the year-ago period. Revenues for the fourth quarter (Q4) of FY25 came in at Rs 22,504.2 crore, a marginal increase of 1.33 per cent from Rs 22,208.3 crore in Q4 FY24. Sequentially, profit and revenue rose 6.43 per cent and 0.83 per cent, respectively. For full FY25, profits saw an uptick of 18.9 per cent to Rs 13,135.4 crore, according to a regulatory filing.

Wheat stocks highest in 3 yrs, rice at peak

Mumbai: India's wheat stocks in government warehouses surged 57% to a three-year high at the start of the new crop year this month, official data showed, easing supply concerns that drove domestic prices to an all-time peak earlier this year. Higher opening stocks will help the federal government tame any price spikes later this year, even if the Food Corporation of India (FCI), the state stockpiler, struggles to meet its domestic wheat procurement target. Wheat reserves in state granaries stood at 11.8 million metric tons on April 1, well above the government's target of 7.46 million tons, the data showed. State reserves of rice, including unmilled paddy, totalled a record 63.09 million tons as of April 1, far exceeding the government's target of 13.6 million tons.

ICICI Bank cuts savings deposit rate by 0.25%

Mumbai: ICICI Bank has cut its savings account deposit interest rate by 0.25 per cent, according to the lender's website. The second largest private sector bank's move comes days after larger rival HDFC Bank announced similar move amid a spate of cuts in deposit offerings following RBI's two back-to-back rate decreases. ICICI Bank depositors will earn a 2.75 per cent interest on their savings bank balances of up to Rs 50 lakh, the same as HDFC Bank's offering, as per the website.



In India, 7 per cent of the Indian economy depends on travel and tourism. The global number is 10 per cent and I know the way India is growing at the moment that you will soon be getting to that sort of number

JULIA SIMPSON | PRESIDENT AND CEO, WORLD TRAVEL & TOURISM COUNCIL

RBI LAUNCHES QUARTERLY SERVICES, INFRASTRUCTURE OUTLOOK SURVEY

The Reserve Bank Wednesday announced the launch of a survey to assess the business situation for the first quarter of 2025-26 from selected companies in the services and infrastructure sectors and their expectations for the ensuing quarter. The survey will seek responses to a set of indicators pertaining to demand conditions, financial conditions, employment conditions and the price situation



TRADE TALKS

India eyes ending import tax on US ethane and LPG

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 16: India plans to end taxes on US ethane and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) imports under broader negotiations with Washington as it looks to reduce its trade surplus and ease its tariff burden, three sources familiar with the matter said.

The proposal to get rid of duties for the products used for cooking gas and petrochemical production comes as India mulls scrapping import tax for US liquefied natural gas (LNG) and boosting purchases of the fuel from the United States.

As President Donald Trump's sweeping duties rattle economies and markets, several Asian countries running trade surpluses with Washington are looking to import more US energy in hopes of avoiding heavier tariffs.

India levies import taxes of 2.5% on ethane, mainly used as a feedstock for producing petrochemicals, and propane and butane, which are used for LPG used mostly as cooking fuel.

In the 2023-24 fiscal year, India imported 18.5 million metric tons of LPG worth \$10.4 billion, according to Indian government data, mostly from the Middle East.

It is the No 2 buyer of US ethane after China, according to the US Energy Information Administration, importing 65,000 barrels per day last year, compared with 227,000 bpd for China. However, the US-China trade war has sent tariffs surging and is likely to curtail China's imports.

New Delhi and Washington agreed in February to work on the first phase of a trade deal to be concluded late this year, with a view to growing bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030 and reducing India's \$45.7 billion trade surplus.

Ferrari to unveil first fully-electric model in Oct

HYBRIDS MADE 51% OF FERRARI SALES IN 2024

REUTERS

Milan, April 16: Ferrari has been preparing for years for electrification, starting with Formula One powertrains, as it nears the launch of its first fully electric (EV) model in October, Chairman John Elkann said Wednesday.

Known globally for its roaring petrol engines, the luxury sportscar maker started selling hybrid models in 2019 and is scheduled to unveil its first EV at a capital markets day October 9.

"Electrification has been a path that we've been pursuing



now for decades, starting in Formula One and then from our race cars to our sports cars," Elkann said during the company's annual shareholders' meeting. "We are very excited about un-

veiling the Ferrari Elettrica (electric)".

In Formula One, hybrid powertrains were first introduced in 2014, while "KERS" systems to recover kinetic energy from

Electrification has been a path that we've been pursuing now for decades, starting in Formula One and then from our race cars to our sports cars. We are very excited about unveiling the Ferrari Elettrica (electric)"

JOHN ELKANN | CHAIRMAN, FERRARI

vehicles when braking have been in place since 2009.

Elkann said Ferrari was committed to "complete control" over key components of its sports cars.

He said the facility Ferrari inaugurated in June in its

TRADE WAR PUSHES SAFE-HAVEN DEMAND

Gold scales fresh peak of ₹98,100

So far this year, the yellow metal prices have risen by ₹18,710 or 23.56%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 16: Gold prices soared by Rs 1,650 to hit an all-time high of Rs 98,100 per 10 grams in the national capital Wednesday amid a global rush for the safe-haven asset triggered by an escalated trade war between the US and China.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had finished at Rs 96,450 per 10 grams Tuesday.

Gold prices logged the highest single-day gain since April 11 when the spot rates skyrocketed by Rs 6,250 per 10 grams -- the record steepest single day rise so far -- in the local markets.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also appreciated by Rs 1,650 to hit a fresh peak of Rs 97,650 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 96,000 per 10 grams.

Silver prices also climbed by Rs 1,900 to Rs 99,400 per kg. The white metal had closed at Rs 97,500 per kg Tuesday.



Gold surged to a record high, driven by growing trade war concerns after the US government tightened export rules to China

KAYNAT CHAINWALA | AVP (COMMODITY RESEARCH), KOTAK SECURITIES

On the Multi Commodity Exchange, gold futures for June delivery surged by Rs 1,984 or 2.12 per cent to touch a record high of Rs 95,435 per 10 grams. "Gold showed a solid rally

Sensex rallies for 3rd day to regain 77K-mark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 16: Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed higher for the third straight day Wednesday following buying in banking stocks and fresh foreign fund inflows as retail inflation slipping to near six-year lows raised hopes of further rate cuts.

Defying a weak global market trend, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 309.40 points or 0.40 per cent to settle at a two-week high of 77,044.29 in a volatile session. After a weak start, the index moved between gains and losses during the session. It hit a high of 77,110.23 and a low of 76,543.77, gyrating 566.46 points.

The NSE Nifty rallied 108.65 points or 0.47 per cent to 23,437.20.

Positive macro data and forecast of normal monsoon boosted investor sentiment, analysts



said. IndusInd Bank rose the most by 7.12 per cent among Sensex shares. The bank stated that external agency PwC has assessed a negative impact of Rs 1,979 crore on the bank's net-worth due to accounting lapses in the derivatives portfolio.

Axis Bank jumped 4.26 per cent while Adani Ports rose by 1.81 per cent. Asian Paints, HD-FC Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India and ITC were

among the gainers.

Maruti was the biggest loser, falling by 1.51 per cent. Infosys, Tata Motors, Larsen & Toubro, NTPC and Bajaj Finance were among the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers after days of selling as they bought equities worth Rs 6,065.78 crore Tuesday, according to exchange data. As many as 2,636 stocks advanced while 1,309 declined

From EVs to deceit: BluSmart-Gensol scandal shocks startup world

BLUSMART PROMOTERS DIVERTED EV LOANS, BOUGHT FLAT IN DLF CAMELLIAS, SAYS SEBI ORDER

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, April 16: In a shocking revelation, Gensol Engineering Limited (GEL) promoters Anmol Singh Jaggi and Puneet Singh Jaggi have been found to be diverting funds meant for electric vehicle (EV) procurement to buy a luxury apartment in Gurugram's upscale residential project -- The Camellias by DLF.

The findings were part of an interim order issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) April 15, which has led to a major crackdown against Gensol Engineering Limited (GEL) and its promoters.

The SEBI has barred both Jaggi brothers from holding any directorship in the company and restricted them from accessing the securities market.

According to the regulator,

loans taken to buy EVs for the ride-hailing service BluSmart were routed through multiple entities and ultimately used for personal gains.

"Funds availed by Gensol as loans for procuring EVs were, through layered transactions, partly utilised for buying a high-end apartment in The Camellias, Gurugram, in the name of a firm where the MD of Gensol and his brother are designated partners," the market regulator said in its interim order.

"It was separately noted that Rs 5 crore, which was initially paid as booking advance by Jas-minder Kaur, mother of Anmol Singh Jaggi, was also sourced from Gensol. Further, it was noted that once DLF returned the advance to Kaur, the funds did not go back to the Company but were instead credited to another related party of Gensol,"



the SEBI added.

The market regulator found that Gensol Engineering had taken loans worth Rs 978 crore between 2021 and 2024 from two public lenders -- the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) and the Power Finance Corporation (PFC).

Out of this, Rs 664 crore was

allocated specifically for buying 6,400 EVs, which were supposed to be leased to BluSmart.

However, the company revealed in a stock exchange filing in February 2025 that only 4,704 EVs had been procured so far.

Gensol's EV supplier, Go-Auto, also confirmed the same,

saying that the total cost of these vehicles was Rs 568 crore.

This left a gap of around Rs 262 crore, which, the SEBI noted, remains unaccounted for, even a year after the company received the last tranche of loan funds.

The SEBI's investigation showed that once the funds were transferred from Gensol to Go-Auto -- allegedly for purchasing EVs, the money was often routed back to Gensol or to entities closely connected to the Jaggi brothers.

In one such case, a large part of the loan amount received from the IREDA in 2022 was transferred to Capbridge, a related party.

Capbridge then sent Rs 42.94 crore to DLF for an apartment in The Camellias project. DLF confirmed that the money was used to buy the property in the name of a firm where both An-

mol and Puneet Singh Jaggi are designated partners.

Gensol Engineering's shares crashed 5 per cent on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) Wednesday and remained stuck at the lower circuit limit of Rs 122.68.

Meanwhile, BluSmart Mobility has reportedly delayed salary payments for the month of March as the electric cab-hailing startup faces a financial crunch. According to media reports, co-founder Anmol Singh Jaggi, in an email to employees, assured that all pending dues will be cleared by the end of April.

"Due to current cash flow constraints, there will be a short delay in processing salaries. However, we want to assure you that all dues will be cleared within the month of April itself," Jaggi reportedly said in the email.

Suruchi combines with Saurabh to win mixed team pistol gold after individual glory

Stellar Suruchi steals the show

Shooters' exploits in the women's 10m air pistol competition has taken India to the top of the standings with three medals, followed by China

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lima (Peru), April 16: It was double delight for Suruchi Inder Singh as the teenaged Indian shooter combined with Saurabh Chaudhary to win the 10m air pistol mixed team gold medal in the ISSF World Cup here Wednesday, adding to her triumph in the individual competition..

The duo of Suruchi and Saurabh shot 17 to finish ahead of China's Qianxun Yao and Kai Hu, who managed 9, in the gold medal match.

In the bronze medal contest, India's Manu Bhakar and Ravinder Singh (6) missed out on a podium finish after losing to Chines pair of Qianke Ma and Yifan Zhang (16)..

The duo of Suruchi and Saurabh made the gold medal match at the Las Palmas range with a combined 580 in qualification, with the former outscoring her more experienced partner by a couple of points. The Chinese pair of Yao Qianxun and Hu Ka topped the qualification with 585.

In the decider as well, the Chinese pair got a head-start, running off to a 2-6 and 4-8 advantage, before a time out called by coach Samarsh Jung brought a change in the momentum of the match.

Suruchi shot splendidly throughout and the couple of times she missed the 10-ring, her Tokyo Olympian partner made up with high 10s, including a 10.9 for his first hit of the match.

The pair regained the lead they had lost after the first series of single shots, in the 10th series, going ahead 11-9 after a tied eighth series had levelled the scores at 9-9. They did not



look back thereafter and needed just the next three series to wrap up the win as the Chinese misfired first under pressure.

They did it in style too, closing out with 10.6 (Suruchi) and 10.5 (Saurabh) with both the Chinese failing to hit the 10-ring.

Earlier Tuesday, Suruchi produced a sterling performance in the 10m air pistol event to clinch her second consecutive ISSF World Cup gold, while Paris Olympics medallist Manu Bhaker bagged the silver to ensure India's domination in the competition.

The Jhajjar-based Suruchi, 18, who had won her maiden

World Cup gold in the season's inaugural global event recently, tallied 243.6 in the 24-shot final, to leave Manu 1.3 points behind her. China's Yao Qianxun took the bronze.

Suruchi and Manu's podium finish meant that India collected one medal of each colour on the day, with men's 10m air pistol marksman Saurabh Chaudhary earlier winning a bronze.

There were clear indications during the 60-shot qualification round that the Indian duo would comfortably make it to the finals from a 28-strong field. Suruchi took the second spot with a regulation 582, while

Manu was fourth with 578.

Sainyam, the third Indian in the fray, was 11th with 571.

Suruchi was at a different level in the final, carrying on her superb form in the last few months to quickly move to second after the first series of five shots.

Yao had taken an early lead and Manu was fourth with Uruguay's Julieta Jimenez, who shot a good final, in third at that stage.

The teenager scored better on the last two shots to beat the more experienced Manu and extend a sensational run of form, which began with the nationals in December last year.

DC beat RR in thrilling Super Over

Axar-led team goes on top of points table

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 16: In a match that had its ebbs and flows, Delhi Capitals (DC) held their nerve to emerge victorious over Rajasthan Royals (RR) in a thrilling Super Over and climb atop the points table at the Arun Jaitley Stadium here Wednesday.

On a slow pitch, late cameos by captain Axar Patel and Tristan Stubbs rescued DC from a precarious position and enabled them to post a formidable 188/5. In reply, Yashasvi Jaiswal and Nitish Rana threatened to take RR to victory by smashing 51 runs each. But Mitchell Starc's defending nine



| IPL STANDINGS | | | | | |
|---------------|---|---|---|--------|-----|
| TEAM | M | W | L | NRR | PTS |
| DC | 6 | 5 | 1 | 0.744 | 10 |
| GT | 6 | 4 | 2 | 1.081 | 8 |
| RCB | 6 | 4 | 2 | 0.672 | 8 |
| PBKS | 6 | 4 | 2 | 0.172 | 8 |
| LSG | 7 | 4 | 3 | 0.086 | 8 |
| KKR | 7 | 3 | 4 | 0.547 | 6 |
| MI | 6 | 2 | 4 | 0.104 | 4 |
| RR | 7 | 2 | 5 | -0.714 | 4 |
| SRH | 6 | 2 | 4 | -1.245 | 4 |
| CSK | 7 | 2 | 5 | -1.276 | 4 |

runs in the final over meant the game went into a Super Over, happening for the first time in the IPL after 2022.

DC went ahead with Starc in the Super Over against Shimron Hetmyer and Riyan Parag. The duo hit a boundary each off Starc, including off a no-ball, before being run out on successive balls and setting a target of 12 runs to win for DC.

After taking two runs on the first ball, KL Rahul sliced Sandeep Sharma for four, before taking a single. Tristan Stubbs then pulled Sandeep over deep mid-wicket for six to seal a thrilling win for DC, who have now won a Super Over for the fourth time.

RR had a bright start to the chase as Sanju Samson and Jaiswal clubbed a six each off Mukesh Kumar. Jaiswal then brought out the slice, swivel pull, and across-the-line swipe to take two fours and a six off Mitchell Starc. Samson continued to be at his aggressive best by dispatching Mukesh over long-on for six while edging Mohit Sharma for four.

After being dropped on 20 by Ashutosh Sharma, Samson nailed two pulled shots off Vipraj Nigam for six and four, respectively. But after he missed playing a cut-off Nigam, Samson picked up a rib injury and walked off the field for 31. After RR ended the power-play at 63/0, Axar Patel struck by

Brief scores:
Delhi Capitals 188/5 in 20 overs (Abishek Porel 49, KL Rahul 38; Jofra Archer 2-32, Wanindu Hasaranga 1-38) tied with **Rajasthan Royals** 188/4 in 20 overs (Nitish Rana 51, Yashasvi Jaiswal 51; Axar Patel 1-23, Kuldeep Yadav 1-33)

Super Over:
RR 12/2 in five balls lost to **DC** 13/0 in four balls

castling Riyan Parag with a slower delivery for eight.

Jaiswal continued to be aggressive by lofting Kuldeep for six, before slog-sweeping Axar for four and hammering Stubbs over the long-on fence for another maximum, as he brought up his third IPL fifty in 34 balls.

Starc nailed a toe-crushing incoming yorker to trap Rana lbw for 51, giving DC some hope to make a late fightback. Dhruv Jurel and Shimron Hetmyer hit a couple of boundaries to ensure RR got home, but Starc bowling five pinpoint yorkers in the final over before Jurel was run out ensured the match went into a Super Over, which DC won in front of their jubilant home crowd.

TODAY'S MATCH

Indian Premier League

 VS 

Time: 07:30 pm

Telecast: Star Sports Network
Stream: JioHotstar

SHORT TAKES

Gupta bags silver

New Delhi: India's Nitin Gupta won the silver medal in the 5000m race walk competition of the sixth Asian Under-18 Athletics Championship in Dammam, Saudi Arabia Wednesday. Gupta clocked 20:21.51sec to finish second on the podium. The 17-year-old Gupta had broken his own national record last month during the National Youth Athletics Championship in Patna by clocking a personal best of 19:24.48 sec.

Deodorant drama: Harriet apologizes

Paris: British tennis player Harriet Dart has apologized after asking the chair umpire to tell her opponent to put on deodorant because "smells really bad." Dart lost 6-0, 6-3 to French player Lois Boisson in the first round of the clay-court Rouen Open, and was picked up by a microphone during a changeover telling the umpire: "Can you tell her (Boisson) to wear deodorant? ... Because she smells really bad." After the footage spread on social media, Dart posted an apology on Instagram and said "it was a heat-of-the-moment comment that I truly regret."

OFC relegated from IWL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, April 16: Sreebhumi FC ended the defending champions, Odisha FC's time in the Indian Women's League (IWL) with a 3-0 victory at the Kalinga Stadium that condemned the hosts to relegation.

Odisha needed to eke out a result to even stand a chance at staying up, and within the first half an hour their fate was sealed, courtesy of a Nongmeikapam Shibani Devi (10', 18', 32') hat-trick.

Despite the abjectly one-sided scoreline, it was Odisha who actually looked in the ascendency in the first 10 minutes of the game, marshalling the ball neatly in midfield.

In the 10th minute, though, Sreebhumi's scoring spree kicked off when Shibani picked up Anita Kumari's cross outside the box and unleashed a right-footer towards the goal. The shot took a deflection before nestling in the back of the net.

A double hammer-blow in the 18th and 32nd minute ef-

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME IN INDIAN FOOTBALL THAT THE DEFENDING CHAMPIONS OF A LEAGUE HAVE BEEN RELEGATED



fectively finished off the game and Odisha's chances of survival. For her second, Shibani displayed an unteachable poacher's instinct to sneak in at the back post and volley in Anita's cross from inside the six-yard box.

The third goal came off a massive error at the back for Odisha FC. The combination of the first defender and goalkeeper failed to deal with a routine cross from the right, the latter spilling it loose inside the six-yard box. Shibani duly tapped it in.

CALANCE OPEN

Kshitij sets course record, moves into one-shot lead

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 16: Delhi's Kshitij Naveed Kaul fired a sensational course record score of 10-under 60 to move into a one-shot lead at a total of 12-under 128 at the halfway stage of the Rs 1 crore Calance Open 2025 at the Qutab Golf Course here.

The 28-year-old Kaul (68-60), a winner of four titles, who was four shots off the lead in tied 23rd place after Round One, put together an eagle and eight birdies Wednesday, to rise 22 spots and claim the second-round lead.

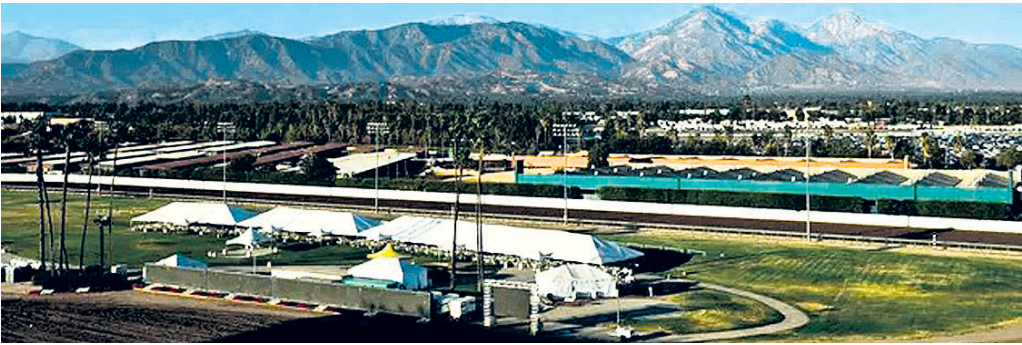
The legendary Mukesh Kumar of Mhow had registered an 11-under 59 at the DDA Open staged at the Qutab Golf Course back in 2005. However, the course was re-laid and changed in 2018. Kaul's extraordinary effort of 10-under 60 will thus count as the new course record.

Although cricket is a hugely popular sport, it will be a fantastic opportunity to expand traditional boundaries when it features in the Olympics in the fast-paced, exciting T20 format that should appeal to new audiences

JAY SHAH | CHAIRMAN, ICC

Pomona city to host cricket during LA 2028 Olympics

Cricket, which is returning to the Olympics after 128 years, will feature six teams each in the men's and women's competitions and will be held at the Fairgrounds in Pomona



titions and will be held at the Fairgrounds in Pomona.

The city is located 48km from Los Angeles, which is the main venue of the Games.

Fairgrounds or Fairplex, as it is more popularly known, is a facility that is used for conventions, and commercial, educational and sports (primarily motorsports) events through

the year. There is no designated cricket ground at the venue.

"We welcome the announcement of the venue for cricket at Los Angeles 2028 as it is a significant step towards the preparation for our sport's return to the Olympics," ICC chairman Jay Shah said in a release Tuesday night.

Cricket, which made its

only appearance in the Olympics at the Paris Games in 1900, was included in the Los Angeles Olympics programme after the International Olympic Committee's 141st Session at Mumbai in October 2023.

Cricket joined five new sports at LA28, including baseball/softball, flag football, lacrosse (sixes) and squash.

The T20 format, recognised as the vehicle for the growth of the game by the ICC, has also featured in other multi-sport events in recent years.

The Asian Games in 2010, 2014 and 2023 featured both men's and women's T20 competitions while the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games staged a women's competition.

