



## Nushratt opens up

Actor Nushratt Bharuccha talks about her spiritual beliefs, religious freedom and how she handles online criticism

LEISURE | P2



## Blow to peace talks

Russian drones hit Odesa, bombs strike Zaporizhzhia, as Kremlin downplays chances of quick progress in Ukraine peace talks

INTERNATIONAL | P10



## IMF cuts growth forecast

The International Monetary Fund cuts its economic growth forecast for India for the current fiscal year

BUSINESS | P11



## India end third in Peru

Indian shooting team end third in the standings as International Shooting Sport Federation World Cup wraps up

SPORTS | P12

## PM Modi cuts short visit to Saudi Arabia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 22: Prime Minister Narendra Modi abruptly ended his two-day visit to Saudi Arabia and decided to return to New Delhi Tuesday night following a deadly terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir, government sources said. Modi, who held bilateral talks with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Jeddah, skipped an official dinner hosted Tuesday to address the crisis, they added. He was originally scheduled to return to India Wednesday night. Modi, who arrived in Jeddah Tuesday afternoon, delayed a scheduled meeting with the Saudi Crown Prince by at least two hours Tuesday evening to assess the situation in Kashmir. The attack prompted an urgent internal meeting at the Ritz Carlton hotel in Jeddah, attended by Modi, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, and other senior officials. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Adviser Doval visited the Royal Palace earlier to brief the Saudi leadership on the sudden change in plans, sources said.

## GOLD BREACHES ₹1 LAKH-MARK

New Delhi: Gold prices surged by ₹1,800 to zoom past the crucial ₹1 lakh-mark for 10 grams in the national capital Tuesday amid buying rush by local jewellers and stockists in anticipation of increased demand during Akshaya Tritiya and wedding season even as global macroeconomic uncertainties continued to fuel safe-haven chase. According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity climbed ₹1,800 to hit the lifetime peak of ₹1,01,600 per 10 grams from Monday's closing level of ₹99,800 per 10 grams. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also jumped by ₹2,800 to hit a record high of ₹1,02,100 per 10 grams in the local markets on Tuesday. It had settled at ₹99,300 per 10 grams in the preceding session.

P11

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



The tourists may survive this cowardly attack—but we've already become a casualty

# 26 tourists dead in J&K terror strike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pahalgam, April 22: Terrorists opened fire at a famed meadow here at Baisaran in J&K Tuesday afternoon, killing 26 people, mostly tourists, in what is the deadliest attack in the Valley since the Pulwama strike in 2019. The 26 dead included two foreigners and two locals, a high ranking official said. The toll is still being ascertained, J&K CM Omar Abdullah said while describing the terror attack as "much larger than anything we've seen directed at civilians in recent years". Baisaran, about six kilometres from the resort town of Pahalgam, is an expansive meadow ringed by dense pine forests and mountains and a favourite with visitors from across the country and the world. Armed terrorists came into the grassland, dubbed 'mini Switzerland', and started firing at tourists milling around eateries, officials and eyewitnesses said. As news of the terror attack targeting tourists in Kashmir spread, The Resistance Front (TRF), shadow group of the banned Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror group, claimed responsibility. Officials said it was possible the terror group could have crossed over from Kishtwar in Jammu and reached Baisaran through Kokernag in south Kashmir. Union Home Minister Amit Shah briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is on a



MANHUNT: Security personnel rush to the spot after terrorists attacked a group of tourists at Pahalgam, in Anantnag district, Jammu & Kashmir, Tuesday

visit to Saudi Arabia, and left for Srinagar soon after to hold an urgent security review meeting with all agencies. "I strongly condemn the terror attack in Pahalgam, Jammu and Kashmir. Condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. I pray that the injured recover at the earliest. All possible assistance is being provided to those affected," the PM said on X. "Those behind this heinous act will be brought to justice...

they will not be spared! Their evil agenda will never succeed. Our resolve to fight terrorism is unshakable and it will get even stronger," he added. Pune businessman Santosh Jagdale, 54, was asked to come out of his tent and recite an Islamic verse. When he couldn't, he was shot thrice: once in the head, then behind the ear and then his back, his daughter Asavari Jagdale told this agency. After her father fell

to the ground, the gunmen turned on her uncle who was lying next to her and shot him several times in the back. The terrorists blamed them for supporting PM Modi, after which they made some statements to deny that Kashmiri militants kill innocent people, women and children, she said. A massive anti-terrorist operation has been launched to hunt down the assailants and security forces have fanned out

in all directions, they said. Pahalgam town, which was teeming with tourists this morning, went into complete silence. Tourists began leaving in droves. The incident comes when Kashmir is witnessing a surge in tourist arrivals after reeling under militancy for years. Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi strongly condemned the terrorist attack condoling the death of tourists. He also directs the Chief Resident Officer

## ODIA AMONG VICTIMS

Bhubaneswar: Prashant Satpathy, a tourist from Odisha, was reportedly killed in the militant attack Tuesday. Prashant, a resident of Balasore district, was in the region enjoying a holiday with his wife, Priyadarshini Satpathy, and their eight-year-old son. While the family was enjoying their holiday, Prashant was shot unexpectedly, according to sources.

in New Delhi to arrange for the transportation of the body of Odisha tourist to his residence.

MORE P8

## Summer vacations start today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 22: In view of the prevailing heatwave situation in Odisha, the state government Tuesday announced summer vacation for schools and Anganwadi centres from Wednesday. Both government and private-run colleges will also be closed from Wednesday till further orders. These decisions were taken by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi after taking stock of the prevailing heatwave situation in the state Tuesday. "Summer vacation for schoolchildren will begin tomorrow. All government and private educational institutions in the state, beginning from Anganwadi, Sishubatika to Class XII, will be closed from April 23," a statement issued by the CMO said. Noting that normal life is getting disrupted due to intense heatwave and excessive increase in daytime temperature in the state, Majhi announced the closure of schools and stat-



ed that dry food will be provided to the Anganwadi children at their homes, it said. Besides, the state government also declared holiday for both government and private college students from April 23 till further orders. However, previously scheduled exams will be held on the specified dates and the officials concerned have been instructed to take care of this, it added. Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo, who also holds charge of the Energy Department, has stepped forward with a promise to the people: no power cuts during the day, regardless of how high the demand climbs.

# India under pressure to give market access to US retailers

US Vice President JD Vance was all praise for India at Jaipur during his ongoing family trip. He narrated how the two democratic nations can accomplish much more together. But the good will is not without riders. Though Vance continues to heap praise on PM Modi as talks over a trade deal progress, the White House reportedly intends to press India to give online retailers such as Amazon and Walmart full access to its e-commerce market. Though the two US retail giants operate in India through local units, they face restrictions on holding inventory and directly selling to consumers, unlike domestic firm Reliance, which can open physical stores and leverage its vast retail network to reach customers across the country. The US also wants to sell more energy and defence equipment to India to build closer ties

REUTERS

London, April 22: US President Donald Trump's administration intends to press India to give online retailers such as Amazon and Walmart full access to its \$125 billion e-commerce market, the Financial Times reported Tuesday, citing industry executives, lobbyists and US government officials. The US plans to push Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government for a level playing field

on e-commerce in wide-ranging talks on a US-India trade agreement set to also cover sectors from food to cars, the newspaper reported. It did not mention what measures the Trump administration expects from the Indian government. Amazon and Walmart operate in India through local units but face restrictions on holding inventory and directly selling to consumers, unlike domestic firm Reliance, which can open physical stores and leverage

its vast retail network to reach customers across the country. Amazon and Walmart did not immediately respond to Reuters' requests for comment. India and US are in the middle of chalking out a trade deal as part of New Delhi's efforts to avoid US tariffs. Meanwhile, in an address at an event at Jaipur in India, US Vice President JD Vance said there is much that the US and India can accomplish together in diverse areas. The future of the 21st century will be determined by the strength of India and the US, he said. However, Vance asked India to give greater access to its markets, buy more American energy and defence hardware as he outlined the vision for stronger ties between the two countries. Both India and US are working towards a bilateral trade agreement based on shared priorities, he said.

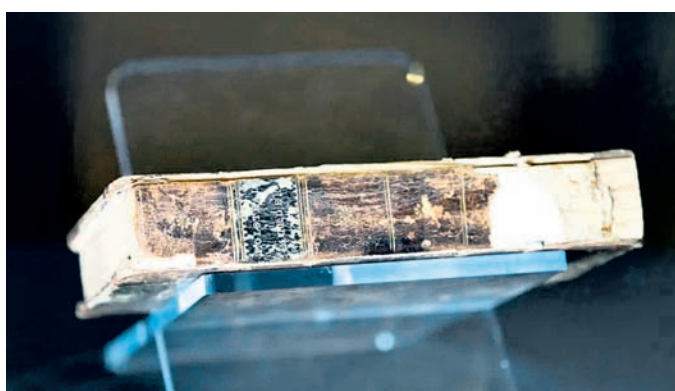
## Two OAPF jawans crushed to death

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 22: Two policemen were killed after a dumper rammed into a PCR van near Cuttack in the early hours of Tuesday, officials said. The incident happened near Gatiroutpatna on the Cuttack-Paradip highway around 4.30 am, they said. Odisha Auxiliary Police Force (OAPF) constable Lokanath Sabar and home guard Jagannath Mahalik were killed on the spot, while home guard Pabitra Mohan Sethi, who was driving the PCR van, was injured, they added. The dumper, which was transporting sand, hit the PCR van of the CRRI police station, and after the collision, both vehicles overturned and fell into a roadside pit, said Deputy Commissioner of Police Khilari Rishikesh Dnyandeo. "We have arrested the truck driver, and an investigation has been started," he said. The truck was speeding on a narrow road and hit the police vehicle in the front, he added.

# The murderer whose skin binds a book

The cover of a book held at a Suffolk museum was recently found to be made from the skin of a man hanged for a notorious murder almost 200 years ago. William Corder was convicted of killing a woman in 1827, which shocked Georgian Britain and became known as the Red Barn Murder. Curators at Moyse's Hall Museum in Bury St Edmunds realised the book, which was on a bookshelf in an office, had been overlooked but it has now gone on display. It had been donated decades ago by a family with close connections to the surgeon who anatomised Corder's body. William was from a middle-class family of tenant farmers in the village of Polstead,



between Ipswich and Sudbury, at the turn of the 19th Century. At the age of 22, when he and Maria Marten became lovers, he was the head of the Corder family and had a reputation as a ladies' man. Maria, who was 24 and lived at home with her

mole-catcher father, a step-mother, sister, and her young son, may have seen young William as a means of escape. In 1827, William came up with a plan to elope, telling Maria to meet him at the Red Barn on the Corder's farm, then run

off to Ipswich to get the banns for their wedding. Maria was not seen again and William disappeared. William eventually left Suffolk and wrote to the Marten family to say he had eloped with Maria to the Isle of Wight. In reality, he was holed up just outside London and Maria was buried at the lovers' rendezvous, having been shot in the neck. Eventually, he was caught and found guilty after a two-day trial, and in a final confession said he had accidentally shot Maria during an argument. Public intrigue in the Red Barn Murder sparked books, plays and music, and it permeates the true crime culture to this day. After two centuries, it has become a ripping yarn, the

true story clouded in legend. It is probably fuelled, in part, by being able to stand face-to-face with Corder's image, his eyes shut and his nostrils flared. His death mask is held at Moyse Hall and Norwich Castle. For many years, until it eventually began to fall apart, his skeleton was used to teach medical students at West Suffolk Hospital. Disturbingly, two books were covered in his skin and part of the man's scalp, with ear included, was kept as a gruesome ornament. All are at Moyse Hall. Moyse's Hall said it would redress the focus on Corder with a future exhibition which will shine a light on woman victims in Suffolk history, including Maria.

## Shakti Dubey tops UPSC exam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 22: Shakti Dubey has topped the civil services examination 2024, results of which were declared on Tuesday by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). Dubey has done her graduation (Bachelor of Science) in Biochemistry from the University of Allahabad. She qualified for the examination with political science and international relations as her optional subject, a statement issued by the commission said. Harshita Goyal, a B.Com graduate from MS University of Baroda, secured the second rank with political science and international relations as her optional subject. Dongre Archit Parag, who has a Bachelor of Technology

## RITIKA RATH ODISHA TOPPER

Bhubaneswar: Ritika Rath, hailing from this City, emerged state topper securing an impressive All India Rank of 48. Ritika, a former student of SAI International School in Bhubaneswar, completed her Class X in 2017 and has now achieved a significant milestone by qualifying for the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). (B.Tech) in electrical and electronics engineering from VIT, Vellore, stood third in the rank with philosophy as his optional subject. A total of 14,627 candidates qualified for appearance in the written (main) examination, which was held in September 2024. Out of these, 2,845 candidates qualified for the personality test or interview.



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Are you a science and technology geek? Well, today you may have a chance to use your knowledge and zoom ahead of everyone! Ganesha says even students will excel in their studies. Housewives, try your own new recipe, the oven will not blast!

**TAURUS**  
Today, passionate and possessive are the two words that will define your relationship with the people you love, predicts Ganesha. You may choose to take pains for the sake of others, which seems to be highly fulfilling. Your good spirit will sky-rocket by evening. Make sure to change your disadvantage into your advantage, says Ganesha.

**GEMINI**  
Putting things in order will be your top priority, says Ganesha. You will possibly have a romantic dinner with your sweetheart. Seductive conversations may culminate in sensuous consummation. Your personal feelings will stir up your partner's private thoughts.

**CANCER**  
You will win over people with the gift of the gab. Your rhetoric will prove beneficial to you. You may get into an argument or have friction with someone in the in-laws' side. But keep your cool and face it bravely, so as to stave off mental depression.

**LEO**  
Traders and businessmen will face heightened competition today. Financial losses are possible. It is not a good day for investments and speculations. Avoid heated discussions with people. Be cautious in all your dealings today, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
Give people a word of encouragement and motivate them to achieve bigger things, advises Ganesha. Don the thinker's cap and you may find yourself in contemplation. Criticism will hurt you, but be as unflappable as you can and proceed to your target, says Ganesha.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says you will try to attain prestige in society today. This prestige will come to you via the field of communication or by your own thought processes. In your free time you will be able to learn about various topics of interest to you. Ganesha wishes you all the very best in life.

**SCORPIO**  
It is high time you diverted all your energies towards your object of love, advises Ganesha. Research-oriented work could well be an option too. Ganesha says you are likely to find someone special to talk about those good old times and have a great time.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Upholding all that is right and just will be the highpoint today. You will be in the right spirits to fight injustice and discrimination. The day promises to be as splendid as your will. Ganesha advises you to stand up and conquer all today.

**CAPRICORN**  
Lack of confidence may leave you glum in the first half of the day, and to add to it, you will be loaded with work that you may have taken up from company other than the one employing you full time, says Ganesha. The sullen mood will turn jovial by evening, and you can expect to have a good time socialising with friends and relatives.

**AQUARIUS**  
Your plate will be full with plenty of work, and you will have no clue about how to handle all the chaos. Patience and organisational skills, your best qualities will help you sail through these difficult times, assures Ganesha. You will successfully wind up the day at work and geared up to party later in the evening.

**PISCES**  
You would do well to make a to-do list today, if only to gain a realistic perspective of how much you want done and how much you can achieve in the time you have available. Making unreasonable demands from yourself will only lead to further delays, says Ganesha.



## ANDREW GARFIELD ON HIS RETURN AS SPIDER-MAN

Hollywood actor Andrew Garfield, who has openly expressed his desire to return as *Spider-Man*, has said that the idea has to be very novel. If the actor returns as the web-slinging superhero, it will be his fourth movie following *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *Amazing Spider-Man 2* and *Spider-Man: No Way Home*.

## DEADMAU5 TENDERS APOLOGY FOR PERFORMING DRUNK

Canadian DJ Deadmau5 returned to Coachella, performing at the Quasar stage, but had to leave stumbling after drinking too much. He later apologised on Instagram, admitting his behavior and hinting that Coachella 2025 would probably be his last, reports *Variety*.



# Nushrratt's spiritual stand

**Mumbai:** Actress Nushrratt Bharuccha recently opened up about the backlash she faced for visiting the Kedarnath and Badrinath temples, despite being a Muslim. In a heartfelt conversation, the Chhorii star shared her deeply personal perspective on faith, spirituality and criticism.

"For me, my faith is real. Unreal things happen, and that's what strengthens my belief," she said, explaining that her spiritual connection transcends religion. Nushrratt emphasised that her spirituality brings her peace, whether she's in a temple, church, or gurdwara. "I pray namaz. I carry my prayer mat while traveling. I find the same peace and calm. I've always believed there's one God, and different paths to connect with him. And I want to explore all those paths."

Despite frequent online trolling over her appearance and choices, she remains unaffected. "People comment on my clothes, question my faith. But it doesn't change me," she said. "I'll continue praying namaz and visiting temples, because that's my faith. When you're clear in your thoughts, spirit, and mind, no one in the world can shake you."

She credits her liberal upbringing for her grounded values, insisting that religion should be personal and practiced with sincerity. Nushrratt's words have resonated widely, promoting the ideals of spiritual freedom and mutual respect in a divided world.

AGENCIES

**Mumbai:** Global icon Priyanka Chopra Jonas is set to be honored with the inaugural Global Vanguard Award at Gold House's fourth annual Gold Gala, a premier celebration recognising the 2025 A100 List and First Lights.

Priyanka will receive the inaugural Global Vanguard Honor for her unprecedented 25-year career bridging Asian Pacific and Western cultures through acclaimed work across Hindi cinema and Hollywood, her continual elevation of underrepresented voices, and her unparalleled global platform—recognised by Time 100 and Forbes' "Most Powerful Women."

The prestigious event, which shines a spotlight on the most influential Asian Pacific leaders and changemakers, will mark a historic moment as Chopra becomes the first recipient of the newly established accolade, recognising her trailblazing global impact across entertainment, entrepreneurship and philanthropy. Gold House is set to host its much-anticipated fourth annual Gold Gala Saturday, May 10, 2025, at the renowned Music Center in the heart of downtown Los Angeles.

Touted as the premier and most-watched celebration of Asian Pacific and multicultural excellence, the Gold Gala will return with over 600 influential attendees to honour the 2025 A100 List—a handpicked lineup of the year's 100 most impactful Asian Pacific figures in culture, to be unveiled May 1, 2025.

IAN5

PeeCee to be honoured at Gold House Gala



## Dia raises alarm on climate crisis

**Mumbai:** Actress Dia Mirza has raised an urgent alarm about the growing climate crisis, referencing the latest findings from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The actor and environmental advocate took to social media to emphasise the alarming rise in global greenhouse gas emissions and the urgent need for immediate action. As per the UNEP's findings, 2022 saw record high emissions, and to keep global warming within the critical 1.5°C limit, emissions must be reduced by 42% by 2030.

Tuesday, the Sanju actress took to her Instagram and shared a video, emphasising that commitments are essential to protect the planet for future generations. Mirza, who has long been a champion for environmental causes, also reminded her followers that Earth Day should serve as a starting point for lasting change, not just a day of reflection.

For the caption, she wrote, "This Earth Day, let's move beyond conversation and into action. The latest UNEP findings are a wake-up call we can't afford to ignore: Global greenhouse gas emissions reached a record high in 2022. To stay within 1.5°C of warming, we must cut emissions by 42% by 2030. Urban areas contribute 70% of CO2, and yet, just 29% of our electricity comes from renewables. Fossil fuels still dominate our energy systems, while climate-fueled disasters rise year after year."

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## Big B's work mantra

**Mumbai:** Megastar Amitabh Bachchan, whose legendary career spans over five decades, said that work is the cure for all ailments—a mantra he continues to live by.

The cine icon, who made his Bollywood debut in 1969 with *Saat Hindustani*, took to his blog and wrote: "Work the cure for all ailments..I worked..(sic)."

The octogenarian is considered one of the greatest, most accomplished and commercially successful actors in the history of Indian cinema. With over 200 films in his filmography, first gained popularity in the early-1970s for films, such as *Anand*, *Zanjeer* and *Roti Kapada Aur Makana*.

The thespian made his Tamil debut in 2024 with *Vettaiyan* starring Rajinikanth as Athiyana, a senior police officer, who accidentally shoots an innocent person during an encounter killing, while investigating the murder of a teacher.

On the work front, his film *Piku*, released in 2015, is set to hit the theatre again May 9.

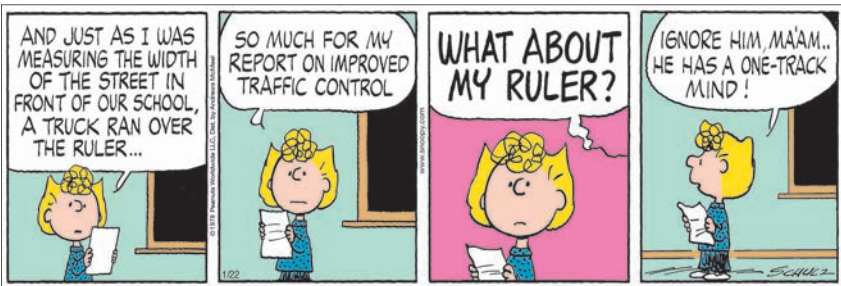
The comedy drama film is directed by Shoojit Sircar. The film also stars Padukone and Irrfan Khan.

He will next be seen in *Ramayana: Part 1*, which is being directed by Nitesh Tiwari. The megastar will reportedly play Jatayu in the film starring Ranbir Kapoor and Sai Pallavi.

IAN5



## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

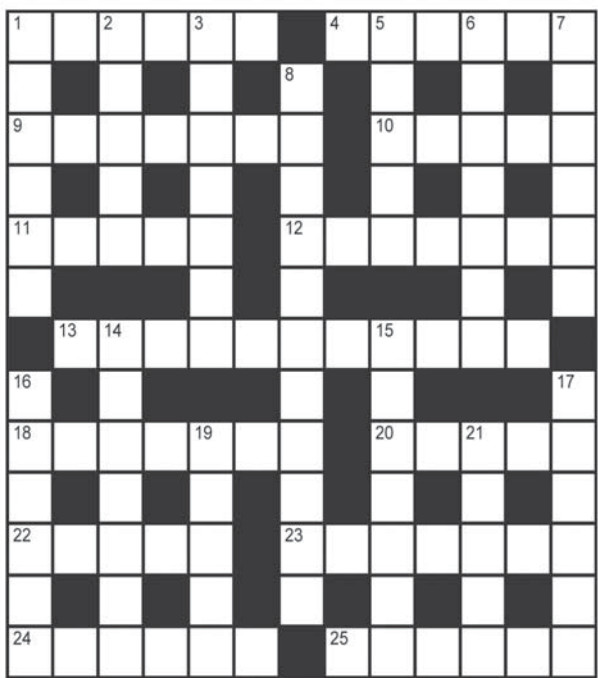


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD

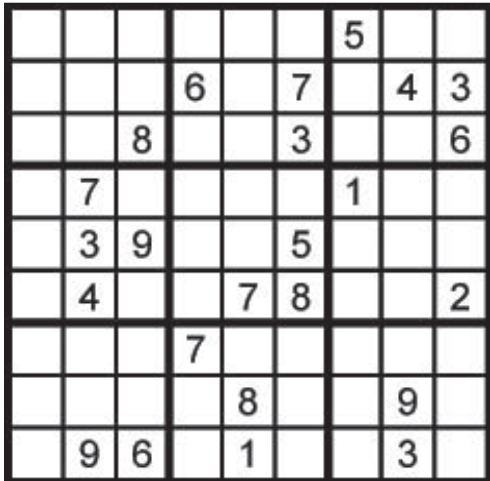


- Across**
- 1 Coral reefs
  - 4 Orbs
  - 9 Unpredictable
  - 10 Free-for-all
  - 11 Bridal path
  - 12 Sitting room
  - 13 Debate sides (4,3,4)
  - 18 Driveway type
  - 20 Happen again
  - 22 Discover
  - 23 Type of TV show
  - 24 Royal home
  - 25 Garment part
  - 6 Party favour
  - 7 Clippers
  - 8 A jab well done?
  - 14 Echoes
  - 15 Cut short
  - 16 Pungent seasoner
  - 17 Sock pattern
  - 19 Invalidate
  - 21 Doorbell sound
- Down**
- 1 Combat zones
  - 2 Cruel sorts
  - 3 Missives
  - 5 Large-eyed primate

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

## SUDOKU

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

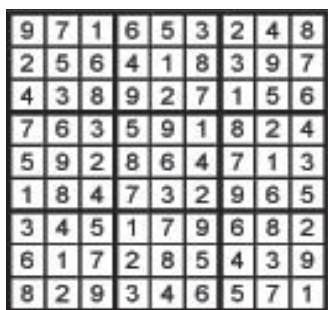


## SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU





MAHARASHTRA VOTER TURNOUT ROW

Rahul: Very clear  
EC is compromised

Sign of disrespect  
towards law: EC

AGENCIES

**Boston/New Delhi, April 22:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has once again criticised Indian democratic institutions abroad. The recent remarks came Sunday, when he delivered a speech at an event in Boston, United States (US). Congress' overseas president Sam Pitroda was seen accompanying him on stage.

The Election Commission (EC) is "compromised", said Gandhi, citing voter turnout figures in Maharashtra Assembly election. Gandhi noted that he had been raising the issue earlier also and alleged that "there is something wrong with the system".

However, the BJP linked his criticism to the Enforcement Directorate's action in the National Herald case, alleging he had not only "insulted" the country's institutions on foreign soil but had also indulged in corruption, and said he and his mother will be "sent to jail" for "embezzlement".

Gandhi arrived in the US Saturday and made the remarks at an event in Boston Sunday.

The Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha claimed that, in simple terms, more people voted in Maharashtra Assembly elections than there were adults in the state. "The EC gave us a voting figure for 5:30pm, and between 5:30pm and 7:30pm, 65 lakh voters voted. This is physically impossible to happen. For a voter to vote, it takes approximately three minutes, and if you do the math, it would mean that there were lines of voters till 2am, but this did not happen," he said.

"When we asked them for the videography, they not only refused but also changed the law so that now we are not allowed to ask for the videography," Gandhi said.

"It is very clear to us that the EC is compromised, and it is very clear that there is something wrong with the system. I have said this multiple times," he said.

The BJP-Shiv Sena-NCP coalition Mahayuti had trounced the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance of the Congress, NCP (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT) in Maharashtra polls in November last year. Taking exception to Gandhi's remarks against the EC, BJP MP and national spokesperson Sambit Patra alleged that Gandhi was venting his ire over the Enforcement Directorate's action in the National Herald case on the EC.



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 22:** Election Commission (EC) sources Tuesday refuted Rahul Gandhi's allegations of abnormal voter turnout in Maharashtra polls, asserting that any "misinformation" being spread was a sign of disrespect towards the law and hurt the efforts of political workers and polling personnel.

They also said such claims brought disrepute to the thousands of representatives appointed by political parties and demotivated lakhs of election staff working untiringly and transparently during elections. After any unfavourable verdict by voters, trying to defame the EC by saying that it had been compromised is completely absurd, the poll body sources said.

Rejecting the Gandhi's claims about alleged abnormal voter turnout, the EC sources underlined that 6,40,87,588 (6.40 crore) electors who reached the polling stations from 7am to 6pm voted in Maharashtra polls. About 58 lakh votes were polled per hour on an average, they said.

Going by the average trend, nearly 1.16 crore voters could have voted in the last two hours, they added.

"Therefore, casting of 65 lakh votes by electors in two hours is much below the average hourly voting trend," an EC functionary pointed out. The sources noted that voting progressed in the presence of polling agents formally appointed by candidates or political parties in every polling booth. The Congress' nominated candidates or their authorised agents had not raised "any substantiated allegations" regarding any kind of abnormal voting at the time of scrutiny before returning officers and election observers the next day.

On the issue of alleged fudging of electoral data, the sources said voter lists in India, including Maharashtra, were prepared according to the Representation of the People Act, 1950, and the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.

According to the law, either just before the elections or once every year, special summary revision of electoral rolls is conducted and its final copy handed over to all national or state political parties.

After the finalisation of electoral rolls for Maharashtra polls, as against 9,77,90,752 (9.72 crore) electors, only 89 appeals were filed before the first appellate authority -- the district magistrate concerned -- and only one before the second appellate authority -- the state chief electoral officer.



At 46.2°C, Jharsuguda hottest in country

Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo, who also holds the Energy portfolio, announced that there will be no power cut during peak hours of summer this year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** Odisha's industrial town of Jharsuguda Tuesday emerged as the hottest place in the country with mercury level reaching 46.2 degrees Celsius while 15 places in the state recorded maximum temperature at or above 40 degrees Celsius, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

Chandrapur in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra was the second hottest place in the country recording 45.8 degrees Celsius, followed by Brahmapuri of the same region boiling at 45.2 degrees Celsius, the IMD said.

Jharsuguda in the state's western region, recorded an all-time high April temperature of 46.2 degrees Celsius amid the severe heatwave warning prevailing across the region.

"The previous highest temperature since 1953 was 46.1 degrees Celsius, recorded on April 19, 2010," senior weather scientist Umashankar Dash said in a post on X.

Jharsuguda was followed



by Hirakud (44.7 degrees Celsius), Sambalpur (44.6 degrees Celsius), Boudh (44.5 degrees Celsius), Titlagarh (44 degrees Celsius), Bolangir (43.2 degrees Celsius), Angul (42.3 degrees Celsius), Nuapada (42 degrees Celsius), Talcher (40.6 degrees Celsius) and Paralakhemundi (40 degrees Celsius), the evening bulletin issued by the Meteorological Centre here said.

While Sundargarh and Sonapur recorded 43.8 degrees Celsius each, Bhawanipatna, Rourkela and Bargarh recorded 42.8 degrees Celsius each, it said.

The twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, on the other hand, recorded below-normal temperatures of 36.7 and 36.8 degrees Celsius, respectively. Bhubaneswar experienced sultry weather as the relative humidity was 78 per cent.

Meanwhile, the IMD issued an orange warning (be prepared to take action) of heatwave conditions for one or two places in Boudh, Bolangir, Sundargarh and Sambalpur districts till 8.30am Wednesday.

It also issued a yellow warning (be aware) for the districts

of Nuapada, Bargarh, Kalahandi and Subarnapur. Hot and humid conditions were forecast for one or two places in Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam and Gajapati and warm night at one or two places in Sambalpur, Sundargarh and Bolangir.

The IMD also said that the severe heatwave condition will continue in Jharsuguda till April 24.

Keeping in view the prevailing heatwave conditions, the district administration of Jharsuguda asked all industries to not allow any outdoor work between 10am and 4pm. Even workers engaged indoors have to be provided water breaks after an hour, and instructions have been given to create awareness among the workers regarding the importance of hydration.

Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo, who also holds the Energy portfolio, announced that there will be no power cut during peak hours of summer this year.

Debaprasad Dash  
new I&PR director



**Bhubaneswar:** Senior Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) officer Debaprasad Dash has been promoted as the Special Secretary in Odia Language, Literature and Culture (OLL&C) department and given additional charge of the director in Information and Public Relations (I&PR) department, according to a notification issued by the General Administration and Public Grievance (GA&PG) department Tuesday. The post of director in I&PR department was lying vacant ever since Saroj Samal superannuated February 28, 2025, it was learnt. Dash, who was previously serving as the OLL&C department Joint Secretary, will now assume the role of Special Secretary in the same department. Prior to this promotion, Dash has held various significant positions within the state government.

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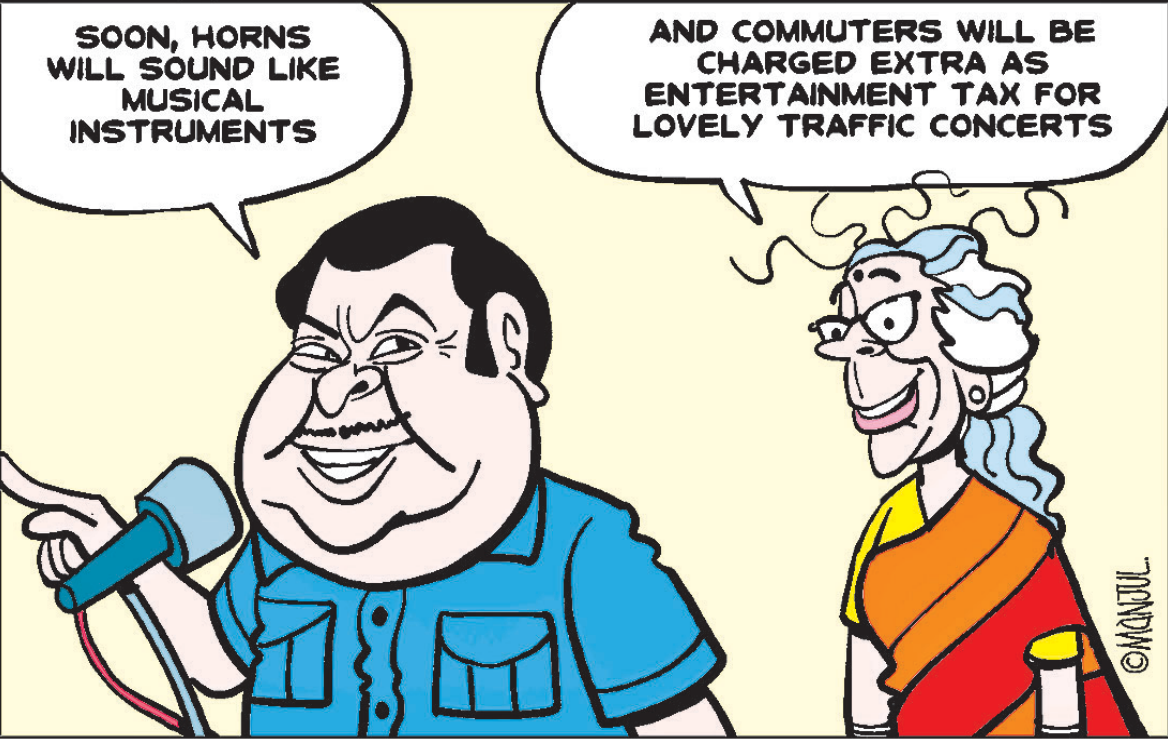
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POLITICKLE by MANJUL



CM to start distribution of  
new ration cards April 24

BJD seeks NCST intervention into  
eviction drive death in Rourkela

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will launch distribution of new ration cards among 5.90 lakh beneficiaries April 24, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare (FS&CW) Minister Krushna Chandra Patra said Tuesday.

Patra said 9 lakh people have applied for ration cards, and of them, nearly 5.90 lakh were found eligible to be covered under the food security scheme.

"The chief minister will launch the distribution of new ration cards on National Panchayati Raj Day (April 24) from Puri. After the event, the new ration cards will be distributed in other parts of the state," Patra told reporters.

The minister said new ration cards will be distributed among the beneficiaries at the block level.

Nearly 25 lakh ration card holders have not completed their e-KYC (electronic know your customer) process till now, he said, adding that a field-level verification of these beneficiaries is in progress.

PNN & PTI

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** The Opposition BJD Tuesday sought the intervention of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) into the death of a tribal man during a recent eviction drive conducted by the administration in Rourkela.

A 35-year-old tribal protester, identified as Ettua Ekka from Barkani village in Sundargarh district, died allegedly after coming under an excavator engaged in the construction of a railway line to the Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP).

The deceased was among the villagers who were protesting their eviction for the railway line construction.

As many as 19 people, including 16 policemen, were injured in stone pelting by the agitators.

A BJD delegation submitted a memorandum to the NCST, through its regional office in Bhubaneswar, and sought its intervention into Ekka's death.

The memorandum highlights the 'grave violation of tribal rights' and the 'alarming administrative apathy that led to Ekka's death' April 20.

"Ekka was crushed to death by an

excavator in the presence of the police, law enforcement and RSP officials who were trying to prevent the encroachment of community land. The incident has sparked grief, anger, and fear across the region, with serious concerns raised regarding police conduct, misuse of force, and criminalisation of peaceful protesters," the BJD memorandum said.

The regional party urged the NCST to direct an inquiry by an independent agency into Ekka's death and the role of local authorities, and demanded FIRs against officials responsible and RSP personnel, protection of tribal land rights and review of past acquisitions, withdrawal of FIRs lodged against tribal protesters and a structured process of dialogue and mediation between the administration and tribal communities.

"This is not merely a law and order issue but a matter of tribal dignity, justice, and constitutional protection," the BJD memorandum said and called upon the commission to act decisively to ensure accountability and prevent such 'state-sponsored injustices' to the common man in general and tribals in particular in future.

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WORLD EARTH DAY

# Focus on clean energy for sustainable future

Experts highlight the state’s renewable energy potential and the need for urgent climate action

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** On World Earth Day, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi urged citizens to take meaningful actions such as planting trees, conserving water, reducing waste, and adopting clean energy solutions to create a sustainable world where nature thrives and communities flourish.

Various government bodies, educational institutions, and civil-society organisations gathered in the Capital to mark the occasion under the theme “Our Power, Our Planet.”

The event emphasised the urgent need for transitioning



to clean and renewable energy sources, stressing collective responsibility in tackling climate change.

A panel discussion titled “Accelerating Odisha’s Renewable Energy Journey” was organised by RMD College, SWAR, SAI, Focus Odisha Foundation, and The Climate Reality Project. Experts at the discussion highlighted Odisha’s vast potential in renewable energy, especially in solar, wind, and tidal power. They noted that the state could play a significant role in meeting India’s national target of generating 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030. Sudarshan Chhotaray from Focus Odisha Foundation shared that Odisha’s

energy transition could create around one million green jobs, attracting substantial foreign and domestic investments that could boost the state’s GDP by 23 percent.

Prof Binaya Bhusan Jena from NIFT emphasised the state’s favourable geographical conditions, which make it ideal for harnessing renewable energy, while climate campaigner Dr Jyotiraj Patra stressed the importance of Odisha’s involvement in achieving India’s renewable energy goals.

In a separate event, Ouat vice-chancellor Pravat Kumar Roul, highlighted the need for global cooperation in addressing climate change, while other leaders called for accelerated adoption of sustainable practices and technologies.

Earth Day 2025’s theme reflects the growing recognition of the crucial role renewable energy plays in combating climate change and securing a sustainable future for all.

## Guv at Home & Decor Expo 2025



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** Governor Hari Babu Kamthampati toured the Credai Odisha Home & Decor Expo 2025 in Bhubaneswar on April 22, exploring stalls that showcased the latest innovations in housing, interiors, and lifestyle. Barabati Cuttack MLA Sofia Firdous was also in attendance.

Open until April 29, the expo gathers leading builders, banks, interior designers, electronics brands, and tile and sanitary ware manufacturers. Credai Odisha chairman DS Tripathy underscored the “Viksit Odisha” vision of achieving housing for all by 2036, calling for stronger partnerships between developers and government to deliver affordable homes.

Throughout the nine day event, visitors can engage with smart home technologies, eco friendly building materials, and contemporary design trends—making it a key destination for homeowners, investors, architects, and designers alike.

# Migration: State govt plans to promote cattle rearing, dairy

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** The Odisha government is planning to promote cattle rearing and the dairy sector in a bid to check migration of people, particularly labourers, from the state, Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo said Tuesday.

“The state government has several schemes for increasing milk production, which could be expanded to arrest the migration of people to other states and cities,” Singh Deo, also the chairman of a task force formed to reduce distressed migration, said during a high-level meeting at the Lok Seva Bhavan here.

Highlighting that the reasons for migration vary from district to district, Singh Deo asked officers to analyse thoroughly and take suitable steps.

“The government is serious about addressing the migration issue,” the deputy chief minister told reporters after a meeting on the matter.

During the meeting, SBM Advisors LLP gave a presentation to the members of the task force on the reduction of displacement of migrant workers through milk production in



Odisha. Labour and Employees’ State Insurance (ESI) Minister Ganesh Ram Singhkhuntia was also present in the meeting.

The livelihood of rural people can be strengthened by dairy farming and cattle rearing, a senior officer said.

“It was observed in the meeting that the problem of labourers’ migration can be reduced to a large extent by making women self-reliant and providing them with a permanent source of income throughout the year,” he said.

The representative of SBM Advisors LLP requested the state government to provide incentives to the private sector, along with the implementation of existing state

schemes, to make rural people employable in their villages, the official said.

Of the 30 districts, 14 have been identified as prone to migration.

To initiate interventions at the grassroots level, the Odisha government has been implementing a state action plan for the safety and welfare of inter-state migrant workers, the official said.

Senior officials of the Agriculture and Farmers’ Empowerment, Labour & ESI, Fisheries and Animal Resources’ Development and Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water departments attended the meeting and gave their opinions on ways to tackle the migration problem.

## KVIC posts record growth in FY’24-25



**Bhubaneswar:** The Khadi and Village Industries sector, which embodies India’s spirit of self-reliance, has soared to new heights over the last 11 years under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Ministry of MSME, bringing hope to millions of villagers. “Khadi, Pujya Bapu’s legacy, is now a symbol of ‘Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat,’” said KVIC Chairman Manoj Kumar as he released the provisional FY2024 25 data at Rajghat, New Delhi, recently.

He reported record production, sales and employment generation: sales jumped 447 per cent, from ₹31,154 crore in FY2013 14 to ₹170,551 crore in FY2024 25; production rose 347 per cent, from ₹26,109 crore to ₹116,600 crore; and employment climbed 49.23 per cent, from 1.30 crore to 1.94 crore workers. In FY2023 24, sales had grown 399.69 per cent and production 314.79 per cent over 2013 14 levels.

Chairman Kumar said KVIC’s achievements are pivotal for realising ‘Viksit Bharat’ by 2047 and making India the world’s third largest economy.

He noted Khadi and Village Industry production nearly quadrupled over 11 years, from ₹26,109.07 crore in FY2013 14 to ₹116,599.75 crore in FY2024 25, while sales almost quintupled, reaching ₹170,551.37 crore—the highest ever. Khadi clothing production surged 366 per cent, from ₹811.08 crore to ₹3,783.36 crore, and sales leapt 561 per cent to ₹7,145.61 crore, driven by strong national promotions.

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AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before Notary Public, Sonapur, dated 24.03.2025, I, Sidhant Sabetri, Address : Vill-Gatabandh, PO-Pupgaon, PS-Koksara, Dist.-Kalahandi declare that I have changed my surname from Sabetri Bemal to Sidhant Sabetri. Henceforth, I shall be known as Sidhant Sabetri for all purpose. Sidhant Sabetri

LOST

Abinas Mohapatra, Utkal University, Roll No.-82401UT01003 of OEC, has been lost BE Original Degree Certificate. If anybody found please call me-7606934314.

## State-level workshop on bamboo livelihoods

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** In a bid to promote sustainable rural livelihoods and empower women entrepreneurs, the Odisha Livelihoods Mission (OLM), under the department of Mission Shakti, kicked off a two-day state-level workshop on bamboo-based livelihoods at Mission Shakti Bhawan here Tuesday.

The workshop, titled “Bamboo and Thriving Demand: Regenerative Livelihoods for Lakhpati Didis”, was inaugurated by Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, who highlighted the growing importance of bamboo in Odisha’s rural economy and its potential to drive climate-resilient, women-led enterprises.

“Bamboo is now synonymous with women entrepreneurship,” Parida said during her address, adding that such regenerative models are not only boosting incomes but also advancing sustainable development goals in rural Odisha. She reaffirmed the state government’s commitment to scaling these initiatives through credit access, training, and convergence with flagship schemes.

Parida also launched key publications including a flip-

book, standard operating procedures (SOP), and a booklet on bamboo plantation techniques for grassroots workers.

The workshop brought together senior officials from OLM, subject matter experts, SHG leaders, master trainers, and national partners including the Indusree Foundation. It aimed to deepen the integration of bamboo-based livelihoods within the SHG and Producer Group (PG) ecosystem of the state.

As part of its Bamboo Sub-Sector Initiative, Odisha plans to engage 1,00,000 small-holder women farmers over the next four years. The initiative will begin with 5,000 women farmers across the districts of Kandhamal, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, and Sundargarh—areas known for their tribal and forest-based communities.

Sessions during the workshop covered a wide array of topics, from plantation and intercropping techniques to product diversification, market strategies, design innovation, and pricing. Participants also received insights into Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification processes, carbon credit monetization, and opportunities for convergence with schemes such as MGNREGS and the National Bamboo Mission.

# First 3D Cochlear Implant at City Manipal Hospitals

A three-year-old boy hearing loss receives new hope through the Advanced Bionics 3D cochlear implant, marking a significant medical milestone

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** Manipal Hospitals Bhubaneswar has achieved a regional first by performing Eastern India’s inaugural Advanced Bionics 3D Cochlear Implant on a three-year-old boy from Angul.

Born with over 90 dB hearing loss and developmental delays despite a normal IQ, the child underwent the complex procedure led by Dr Prity Sharma, Consultant-ENT. Radiological scans revealed cochlear deformities, making the advanced 3D implant—designed for challenging pediatric cases—an ideal choice to support early speech and language development.

After other centers recommended an Auditory Brainstem Implant, the family sought a second opinion at Manipal. Dr



**The Advanced Bionics 3D cochlear implant automatically adapts to various sound environments, enhancing the child’s communication and learning**

**The surgery, led by Dr Prity Sharma, involved precise electrode placement and neural response testing, allowing the child to hear for the first time**

Sharma confirmed the feasibility of a cochlear implant and introduced the Advanced Bionics 3D system, the world’s first pediatric processor that automatically adapts to different sound environments—no manual adjustments required—and pairs via Bluetooth with smart devices for seamless learning and communication.

The surgery, performed on the right ear, involved precise electrode placement and in-

traoperative neural response testing. Two weeks post op, activation of the external speech processor allowed the child to hear sound for the first time. “Each cochlear implant case is a journey of hope,” Dr Sharma said. “Through precise planning, technology adoption, and teamwork, we’ve given this child the gift of sound.”

Dr Saktimaya Mohapatra, Hospital Director, praised the milestone as proof of Manipal’s commitment to cutting edge pediatric ENT care in Eastern India. Audiologist Sanjay Kumar Behera added that the child will undergo two years of auditory verbal therapy to develop speech and language skills. This success reaffirms Manipal Hospitals Bhubaneswar’s leadership in bringing world class medical innovations to the region.

## ‘5 leaders calling the shots in BJD’

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** The internal rift within Biju Janata Dal (BJD) took a new turn Tuesday with party’s sitting BMC corporators Amaresh Jena and Biranchi Narayan Mahasupakar alleged that five leaders are taking all the decisions in BJD while the young leaders are being ignored.

The matter came to the fore when supporters of Jena reportedly gheraoed the residence of senior BJD leader Sanjay Das Burma late Monday night expressing dissatisfaction over rumours about his possible exclusion from the list of State Council members. Jena said, “We have not gheraoed Burma’s residence. I was just having a discussion regarding party’s organisational issues with him.”

Jena said, “Five leaders are calling the shots in the party. Naveen Babu had entrusted them with the responsibility of electing State Council members. However, they are resorting to favoritism.”

“These five leaders are blaming Pandian for BJD’s drubbing in last year’s elections and taking advantage of the situation to become the second in command of the party.” Jena added.

These so called leaders, who lost the elections, have degraded the party.

# Cops rescue kidnapped boy; 7 held

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** The police Tuesday rescued a kidnapped minor in a six-hour operation and arrested seven people, including the boy’s private tutor, in connection with the crime, an officer said.

The accused were identified as Subhkrant Mohapatra, 22 – the boy’s private tutor, Somnath Das, 21, Chinnmaya Kumar Nayak, 22, Sandip Routray, 22, Sagar nayak, 21, Sujata Jena, 19, and Nibedita Das, 20.

At around 10:30am, a complainant from Panchagaon village reported the kidnapping of his nine-year-old son at Airfield police station here, the officer of Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Police Commissionerate said.

The boy went to the school, where the miscreants kidnapped him and demanded the ransom, said police commis-

sioner S Dev Datta Singh.

“As there is a risk to the life of the kidnapped person in such an incident, we carried out a six-hour-long intense operation without registering the FIR and were able to rescue the victim safely from Nirakarpur area in Khurda,” the police commissioner said.

Seven people involved in the crime were arrested, he said.

The police teams conducted raids at various places within the limits of the Airfield police station in Bhubaneswar, Nirakarpur PS in Khurda and Ranpur police station area in Nayagarh to apprehend the culprits and rescue the kidnapped child, Singh said.

“The victim was in good health as he is a brave boy,” he added.

Bhubaneswar Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Jagmohan Meena said the boy’s

mother received a call from an unknown person, who told her that they had kidnapped her son. The kidnapper demanded a ransom to release the boy. The caller also instructed the parents not to inform the police about the kidnapping, the DCP said.

After getting information, four teams were formed to rescue the boy without waiting for the formal report. The kidnapped boy was rescued from a rented house at Nirakarpur, he said, adding that the boy’s private tutor is also a resident of the same village.

Recently, the complainant received a handsome amount of money after selling a patch of land. To get the money, Subhkrant orchestrated the plan with his associates, he said.

As per the plan, they executed the kidnapping for ransom. The car used in the incident has been seized, the DCP added.

## XIM varsity hosts 11th PG convocation



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 22:** XIM University celebrated its 11th postgraduate convocation Tuesday at the grand auditorium of its new campus, marking a significant academic milestone.

The ceremony awarded 769 postgraduate and 15 doctoral degrees, symbolising the culmination of rigorous scholarship and the beginning of a new professional chapter for the graduates.

The highlight of the event was the conferment of an honorary doctorate in Business Management to Rajiv Memani, chairman of the India Region

and Growth Markets Council at Ernst & Young LLP, who also served as chief guest.

In his address, Memani emphasised the enduring importance of values, identity, and purpose amidst technological transformation. “Technology will continue to redefine how we work and live but it cannot change who we are,” he noted.

He further added, “Tomorrow’s leaders will be team players—open, adaptable, and curious. In a complex world, sometimes simplicity is the ultimate sophistication. Boring is beautiful,” he said.

University VC Fr. Antony R. Uvari, S.J. delivered the annual report, outlining the university’s milestones, achievements, and expanding impact over the past year. He acknowledged the vital support of the Governments of India and Odisha in advancing higher education and nation-building.

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	36.0°	35.8°
Min Temp	27.9°	26.9°
Humidity	78%	80%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
<b>FORECAST</b> Dry weather likely		

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX	VARIATION	
<b>BOURCES</b> <b>CURRENCY</b> <b>BOURCES</b>	SENSEX	79,595.59 ▲ 187.09
	NIFTY	24,167.25 ▲ 41.70
	DOLLAR	85.172 ▲ 0.002
	EURO	97.7450 ▲ 0.6470
	GOLD	₹97,400 ▲ ₹600
<b>BOURCES</b> <b>CURRENCY</b> <b>BOURCES</b>	SILVER	₹95,634 ▲ ₹536

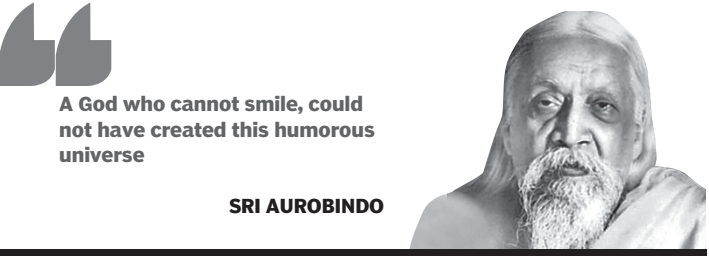
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## Peace Window

Good news is emerging from Moscow and Kyiv and US President Donald Trump’s new strategy of mixing diplomacy with threat seems to be paying off. For the first time since the Russian invasion of Ukraine three years ago, Russian President Vladimir Putin on 21 April announced he is open to the possibility of bilateral talks with Ukraine. This could be an outcome of the pressure from the US on both sides to agree to a quick peace deal. At the same time Putin’s climbdown from his earlier stated position setting conditions for the removal of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy before any talks for peace could be the outcome of an assurance from the US administration for a favourable deal.

US, European and Ukrainian officials are set to meet 23 April in London after Washington warned that it could abandon its efforts on ending the conflict if there were no signs of progress. Dramatically, 48 hours before the meeting Putin said it could be possible to discuss the halting of strikes against civilian infrastructure directly with Kyiv. As an evidence of his new gesture he also referred to Russia’s decision to implement a surprise 30-hour Easter truce – which both sides accused each other of violating. Putin had previously demanded Zelenskyy be replaced before any peace initiatives could be taken up. What comes as a relief is that Zelenskyy said Ukraine is prepared for any discussion to halt attacks on civilian targets. In his nightly video address he said his country was expecting a clear response from Moscow. “We are ready for any conversation about how to achieve this,” he insisted.

What is interesting is the tone both Putin and Zelenskyy are using to claim that they had all along “talked about” peace initiatives, even though Putin had previously stipulated that elections must be held in Ukraine to elect a new President. Obviously, Russia was calculating to install a puppet President in Ukraine to accept its terms for peace.

Drone attacks and other offensives by both parties are still continuing. However, the willingness being shown by Putin and Zelenskyy to begin a ceasefire leading to end of the conflict appears to be a response to Trump’s demand that they show the “enthusiasm” to end their hostilities so that the US does not have to walk away from the peace initiatives.

A Ukrainian delegation is to reach London 23 April for talks with Britain, France and the US. The talks are a follow-up to a Paris meeting last week where the US and European states discussed ways to end the war and the US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, reportedly presented Washington’s plan for ending the war. Putin is apparently trying not to push Trump further and make his task as a peacemaker too difficult. Leaks suggest the Trump administration is now working out a peace deal that heavily favours Russia which is why Putin has responded to the peace initiative with such alacrity as had never been shown before. There are indications that the deal would include a pause to the conflict along the existing 1,000-km frontline, recognition that Crimea belongs to Moscow and a veto on Ukraine’s NATO membership. There are also unconfirmed reports that the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station – which Russia seized in 2022 – would be part of a “neutral” zone. Russia has maintained that Ukraine cede all the land Putin claims to have annexed and accept permanent neutrality. Ukraine says that would amount to surrender and leave it undefended if Moscow attacks again.

Zelenskyy had a taste of bullying by both Trump and US Vice President JD Vance in Washington a few weeks back for not agreeing to US terms. He would certainly not provoke them further, but at the same time he would not be alone in defending his country’s interests as his European allies have rallied behind him through funds and arms since the humiliation Trump and Vance heaped on him. Peace does have a chance if Putin and Zelenskyy can find common grounds to safeguard their respective interests. However in the long term interest of peace, it is essential that the Trump administration does not bend over backwards to please Putin and instead keeps Europe and the rest of the world in view for a better future where no powerful nation bullies a smaller country for whatever reason.

### WISDOM CORNER

- Treat those who are good with goodness, and also treat those who are not good with goodness. Thus goodness is attained. Be honest to those who are honest, and be also honest to those who are not honest. Thus honesty is attained**

LAO TZU
- Wherever you are, be there totally. If you find your here and now intolerable and it makes you unhappy, you have three options: remove yourself from the situation, change it, or accept it totally. If you want to take responsibility for your life, you must choose one of those three options, and you must choose now. Then accept the consequences**

ECKHART TOLLE
- People sacrifice the present for the future. But life is available only in the present. That is why we should walk in such a way that every step can bring us to the here and the now**

THICH NHAT HANH

### THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1635:** The Boston Grammar School (later the Boston Latin School), open to all boys regardless of social class, was founded as the first public school in what would become the United States; it set a precedent for tax-supported public education.
- 1858:** German physicist Max Planck, who originated quantum theory, was born in Kiel.
- 1906:** Russian Tsar Nicholas II promulgated the Fundamental Laws, which marked the end of unlimited autocracy but fell short of the reforms promised in the October Manifesto.
- 1931:** The American film classic The Public Enemy was released in theatres, and James Cagney’s landmark performance as a gangster made him a star.
- 1971:** The Rolling Stones release Sticky Fingers. The album is often considered one of the British rock band’s best. It includes hits like “Brown Sugar” and “Wild Horses”.
- 1984:** U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Margaret Heckler announced that researchers had found what was believed to be the virus that causes AIDS; the infectious agent was later named HIV.
- 1985:** The Coca-Cola Company introduced New Coke, a reformulated soft drink meant to replace its flagship beverage; due to public outrage, however, the previous version of Coke was brought back as “Coca-Cola Classic” less than three months later.

# power post

FOCUS PUBLIC SERVICE

## GOVTS ARE NOT STARTUPS

Around the world, governments are trying to reinvent themselves in the image of business. Elon Musk’s DOGE crusade in the US is quite explicit on this point, as is Argentina’s chainsaw-wielding president, Javier Milei. But one also hears similar rhetoric in the UK, where Cabinet Office Minister Pat McFadden wants the government to foster a “test-and-learn” culture and move toward performance-based management.

The problem is that governments and businesses serve vastly different purposes. If public policymakers start mimicking business founders, they will undermine their own ability to address complex societal challenges. For startups, the highest priority is rapid iteration, technology-driven disruption, and financial returns for investors. Their success often hinges on solving a narrowly defined problem with a single product, or within a single organization. Governments, by contrast, must tackle complex, interconnected issues like poverty, public health, and national security. Each challenge calls for collaboration across multiple sectors, and careful long-term planning. The idea of securing short-term gains in any of these areas doesn’t even make sense.

Unlike startups, governments are supposed to uphold legal mandates, ensure the provision of essential services, and enforce equal treatment under the law – more important today than ever. Metrics like market share are irrelevant, because the government has no competitors. Rather than trying to “win,” it should focus on expanding opportunities and promoting the diffusion of best practices. It must be long-term minded, while achieving nimble and flexible structures that can adapt.

Introducing a new digital health app within a weak health-care system may offer incremental improvements, but it will not address underlying systemic issues, like a shortage of medical workers or geographic challenges. Worse, if startup logic is applied to public services, it could lead



Mariana Mazzucato & Rainer Kattel

IF STARTUP LOGIC IS APPLIED TO PUBLIC SERVICES, IT COULD LEAD TO PIECEMEAL SOLUTIONS THAT EXACERBATE EXISTING INEFFICIENCIES



Governments should not be run like startups, because they serve vastly different purposes, answer to different constituencies, and operate on entirely different timelines

to piecemeal solutions that exacerbate existing inefficiencies. For example, a city might create an app to report potholes, gaining quick wins in citizen engagement. However, this doesn’t help the city to consider more sustainable transportation systems and lower carbon emissions that impact citizens’ health.

The process by which governments learn to deliver better outcomes is profoundly different from that of a startup. Rather than blindly embracing startup culture, governments should examine past efforts to modernize and reform public services. There are several lessons to be learned.

First, the public sector needs a new foundation in economics. The prevailing model’s emphasis on “efficiency” too often confuses outputs with outcomes, and it rests on an overly simplified public-private dichotomy. The result is an overreliance on superficial heuristics like cost-benefit analysis, which does not necessarily measure progress toward desired systemic outcomes.

Governments also need to improve how they account for the long-term value of public investment. For example, UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves is right to shift the focus from the public sector’s net debt to its net financial liabilities, which better recognizes the return on public investments by including illiquid assets (government loans) and other financial li-

abilities (monetary gold). But Reeves’ scheme still does not reflect the value of non-financial assets (like government ownership of infrastructure and housing), and its short-term horizon prevents it from creating an incentive structure for longer-term investments.

A second lesson is that diversity is an asset, not an exercise in political correctness. Over the past century, the public sector strived for universality and uniformity: services should be as good and as accessible in small towns as they are in wealthier cities. But how those services are delivered also matters. Creating an adaptive, outcomes-focused public sector requires a more diverse workforce, ongoing training, multiple analytical perspectives, and a portfolio of interventions (since there are no silver bullets).

Third, the public sector needs to strike a balance between its political, policymaking, and implementation capabilities. Governments are more than administrative machines; they require political leadership, a sense of purpose, and the ability to adjust policies. Too often, public-sector reform focuses on technocratic efficiency, while neglecting the need to articulate and execute on a vision that will win public support.

Some municipal leaders have been pioneering new models. Rather than focusing on the politics of grievance, for example, mayors from Barcelona to Bogotá have been elected on platforms of urban transformation. Their success underscores the importance of balancing political vision with feasible implementation.

More broadly, to equip the public sector with the capacity it needs to address contemporary challenges, governments – and what one of us has called “entrepreneurial states” – must cultivate six capabilities that will enable them to learn, adapt, and adjust. The first is strategic awareness: an ability to identify emerging challenges and opportunities proactively. The second is agenda adaptability, so that priorities can be balanced while responding to crises. The third is coalition-building and partnerships, so that the public sector can foster collaboration across sectors and with communities.

The fourth capability is self-transformation: the continual updating of public agencies’ skill sets, organizational structures, and operational models. This presupposes a fifth capability: experimentation and iterative problem-solving in public-service delivery. And, lastly, the public sector needs outcomes-oriented tools and institutions.

Governments should not be run like startups, because they serve vastly different purposes, answer to different constituencies, and operate on entirely different timelines. Rather than chasing a Silicon Valley mirage, policymakers should focus on building the structures and capabilities that enable governments to be responsive, resilient, and effective. Reform must be rooted in a deep understanding of public-sector dynamics, rather than in the desire to mimic unicorns chasing the next big disruption – too little too late. And yes, we are learning in real time that disruption alone is a recipe for disaster.

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### IN JEST THIS

## Sitting in first class doesn’t make you classy

There are millions of affluent people in the world, but thankfully most of them do not feel the need to flaunt their wealth on social media or openly turn their noses up at ordinary people’s choices.

Few of them would do what an Australian man named Jake Bass did recently. Bass, who claims to be a CEO, posted photos of himself enjoying a luxurious first-class pod of an Emirates Airlines flight to Dubai. He wrote that he was taking his dad on the flight and had spent \$50,000 (Rs 42 lakh) on tickets, adding that the flight had 470 passengers, including “only 2 in First Class—us.”

“I sat there thinking—what made our journey so different from the 468 behind us?” he wrote on Instagram. “Then I saw the pilot adjust our course by just 1° to avoid turbulence. Barely noticeable... But hours later, we were far off the original path. That’s when it clicked: Just a slight change in direction ... changes everything.”



Melvin Durai

WHATEVER YOUR CHOICE, MAKE SURE YOU’RE GETTING SOMETHING SPECIAL OUT OF IT, NOT JUST TRYING TO IMPRESS OTHER PEOPLE OR FEEL SUPERIOR

If you’re confused about the point he was making, you’re not alone. Perhaps he was saying that he once made a slight change in his life and it has gradually led him to become, after many years, a first-class jackass. Bass told the New York Post that he used ChatGPT to write his post and help it go viral. “It’s the algorithm that makes me sound like a douche,” he said, as though he needed any help.

He doesn’t regret his post, despite receiving an avalanche of criticism online. “To be completely honest, I don’t think what I said was wrong at all,” he said. “I shared a perspective—one that challenges people to reflect on their own choices, and that makes a lot of people uncomfortable. That’s really what this is about: most people don’t want to be reminded that they’ve settled.”

Most people, he implies, settle for economy seats when they should be aspiring to fly

first-class. But even people who can afford first-class tickets often choose to fly economy. As one person responded to Bass: “The difference between you and the 468 behind you is that they didn’t waste \$50,000 on something as temporary as a seat on a plane.”

Other people responded far more harshly to Bass, calling him “insufferable” and “greedy.” What’s obvious to me is this: Sitting in first class does not make you a first-class person. You may actually be totally lacking in class.

When Bass uses the word “perspective,” I wonder if he realizes that flying itself is a privilege. Many people take it for granted, but there’s a large segment of the world’s population who have never been on a plane. If you tell Bass that, he’ll be absolutely stunned and ask, “But how do they go on vacation?”

Many people do not go on vacations at all, and if they do, they go somewhere nearby that doesn’t require the purchase of

a plane ticket. I’m an infrequent flier myself, partly because of the cost. Whenever I board a plane, I’m not thinking, “I wish I could sit near the front in first-class.” No, this is what I’m thinking: “It’s safer in the back.” Mostly, I’m thrilled to be flying with my family, enjoying their company and not Bass’s.

Even if I could afford a first-class ticket, I wouldn’t do it. If I’m going to spend that much on a ticket, I’d rather get a front-row seat at a Rihanna concert. Spending \$50,000 might even get me a backstage pass to meet her.

Most of us aren’t privileged enough to throw our money at everything. We have to make choices. Some people choose to live frugally, but donate generously to charity. Others drive fancy cars, but live in tiny apartments.

Whatever your choice, make sure you’re getting something special out of it, not just trying to impress other people or feel superior. Don’t make a Bass out of yourself.

### Letters TO THE EDITOR

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

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### World rendered poorer

Sir, This refers to “Pope Francis dies at 88,” **Orissa Post**, April 22. The passing of the head of the Catholic Church marks the end of an era in which an institution made all-out efforts to renew itself to meet the exacting ideals of its founder. The Argentine-born Francis with an Italian ancestry was deeply rooted in the essentials a Pope should have been: deep faith in god and a firm connect with the realities of an inequitable world. In every given occasion, Francis would remind the world of the uncomfortable comparisons about the fate of the poor and the indulgences of the rich. The Pope consistently questioned the logic of capitalism and its promise of trickle-down economics. He demolished the excuses of its apologists by showing them the mirror of reality: “The promise was that when the glass was full, it would overflow, benefiting the poor. But what happens, instead, is that when the glass is full, it magically gets bigger; nothing ever comes out for the poor.” The Pope embraced the refugees and asked the West, where most of his faithful lived, to give them shelter at a time when they were growing suspicious of the influx. The world has been, for sure, rendered much poorer by the passing of Pope Francis..

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

### Immature remarks

Sir, Rahul Gandhi’s remarks in the US alleging the Election Commission is “compromised” cross a dangerous red line—transforming political dissent into diplomatic self-sabotage. Criticism of domestic institutions, however legitimate, should be anchored in home soil, not paraded on foreign stages before audiences far removed from India’s electoral realities. To claim, without hard evidence, that 65 lakh votes were magically cast in two hours may stir headlines, but it offers more heat than light. Worse, it plays into a troubling pattern where the Opposition leader appears more comfortable indicting Indian democracy abroad than engaging constructively within it. Such conduct reflects a startling lack of political maturity and constitutional responsibility. If the EC is flawed, challenge it in court or through Parliament—not in Boston ballrooms.

Gopalaswamy J, CHENNAI







of the day quote

We assure that your jobs are safe for now and you will get your salaries. Please return to your schools and resume classes. I have spoken about this several times since last night. We are with you



MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

Vice President of the United States coming to India is a very welcome and a very important step. I think it takes that level of dialogue and communication one step further



JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | UNION MINISTER

Congratulations to all the candidates who have successfully cleared the UPSC Civil Services Examination 2024



RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

3 fresh Covid cases reported in Chennai

**Chennai:** Three people, including a woman, tested positive for Covid-19 here and they are undergoing treatment, a health official said Tuesday. This should not be alarming and they were being closely monitored, he said. "This is not at all an issue. There is nothing to panic now." The three including two males had tested positive April 21. About 32 people were subjected to RT-PCR test. There have been no active cases in the state as of April 20.

Former intelligence chief Anjaneyulu held

**Amaravati:** Andhra Pradesh Home Minister Vangalapudi Anitha Tuesday said former intelligence chief PSR Anjaneyulu has been arrested in connection with a case involving the alleged harassment of Mumbai-based actor-model Kadambari Narendra Kumar Jethwani. Anjaneyulu is one of the three IPS officers who are under suspension for allegedly "hastily arresting" and "harassing" Jethwani without proper investigation in a case filed against her during the erstwhile YSRCP regime.

Man stabbed to death over 'beedi'

**New Delhi:** A youth was stabbed to death after he refused to give a beedi to two men in the Pul Prahladpur area of southeast Delhi, police said Tuesday. The youth's elder brother and a friend were injured in the incident that took place late Monday night. Three people have been arrested in connection with the incident, police said. On Monday, Sohaib was stabbed in a park by two local men, Munna and Sunny, after he refused to give them a beedi, officials said.

UP govt transfers 33 IAS officers

**Lucknow:** In a major administrative reshuffle, the Uttar Pradesh government transferred 33 IAS officers, including district magistrates of 11 districts and three IPS officers, officials said here Tuesday. Among those transferred included Director Information, Shishir, who has been made special secretary MSME, export promotion and CEO, Khadi board, while Varanasi Divisional Commissioner Kaushal Raj Sharma has been appointed as the new secretary to the chief minister, they said. DM, Bhadohi, Vishal Singh will be the new Director, Information and Culture, while District Magistrate, Varanasi, S Rajalingam has been made Divisional Commissioner Varanasi.



I will not allow Hindi imposition. If the Centre tries to impose it then we will not accept it. That is our state government's stand

SIDDARAMAIAH | KARNATAKA CM

CAMPBELL WILSON TO STEP DOWN AS AI EXPRESS CHAIRMAN

In a significant board-level change in Tata Group's consolidated airline business, Air India CEO Campbell Wilson will step down as the Chairman of budget airline Air India Express and will be replaced by Tata Group veteran and Air India Chief Commercial Officer Nipun Aggarwal



# Terror returns to Valley

## World leaders condemn terror attack in J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

### Armed terrorists came into the grassland, dubbed 'mini Switzerland', and started firing at tourists milling around eateries, taking pony rides or just picnicking

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Pahalgam (J&K), April 22:** Shrieks for help pierced the skies of Baisaran meadows in this south Kashmir resort as more than a dozen tourists lay motionless in pools of blood following one of the deadliest terror attacks on civilians in recent years in J&K.

Heavily armed terrorists walked out of the woods of Baisaran, a meadow atop a hill here, and surrounded a group of around 40 tourists. The terrorists started firing on the tourists indiscriminately, leaving 26 people dead and injuring at least 20.

Eyewitnesses claimed that as soon as the bullets started flying, the handful of locals who earn a livelihood from tourism ran for safety, leaving the tourists as sitting ducks.

"My husband was shot in the head... he was shot for not being a Muslim. Seven others are injured in the attack," a woman survivor told PTI over phone. The woman, who did not identify herself, pleaded for help in evacuating the injured to the hospital.

"Bhaiyya please mere husband ko bacha lo (Brother, please save my husband)," the woman pleaded frantically with this reporter. As the famed meadows are only accessible by foot or ponies, authorities had to summon choppers for the evacuation of the injured, officials said.

However, before the helicopter arrived at the scene, some of the injured were brought down by local people on their ponies.

The local tourist guides and ponywallahs consoled the survivors even as they summoned more people to evacuate the injured tourists on their shoulders to the nearest motorable point.



Security personnel move towards the site

locals.

"I'm shocked beyond belief. This attack on our visitors is an abomination. The perpetrators of this attack are animals, inhuman and worthy of contempt. No words of condemnation are enough. I send my sympathies to the families of the deceased," CM Abdullah said. The incident comes when Kashmir is witnessing a

The terrorist attack on tourists in Pahalgam of Jammu and Kashmir is shocking and painful. It is a dastardly and inhuman act which must be condemned unequivocally. Attacking innocent citizens, in this case tourists, is utterly appalling and unpardonable. My heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost their dear ones and my prayers for the quick recovery of the injured

DROUPADI MURMU | PRESIDENT

#### Emergency helpline for tourists

**Srinagar:** Jammu and Kashmir government Tuesday set up a round-the-clock emergency helpline to assist tourists in the wake of the Pahalgam terrorist attack. "A 24x7 emergency help desk has been established by Anantnag district administration for tourists requiring assistance or information. Tourists can contact 01932222337, 7780885759, 9697982527 or 6006365245 for information or assistance," an official spokesperson said. Tourists can contact 01942457543, 01942483651 or 7006058623 for assistance on the Pahalgam terror incident, he said.

As soon as the news of the attack broke out, the roads and streets of Pahalgam wore a deserted look as the tourists, who had come in numbers, left the resort town to safer places.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said the death toll is still being ascertained.

"This attack is much larger than anything we've seen

#### Political parties support call for shutdown today

**Srinagar:** Various organisations called for a shutdown in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday to protest the terror attack. Supporting the bandh call, the ruling National Conference said, "On the instruction of the Party President, JKNC joins the collective call for a bandh in strong condemnation of the Pahalgam terror attack. We appeal to the people of J&K to ensure the 'hartal' called by religious and social leaders is a complete success." Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti and Peoples' Conference president Sajad Lone announced support for the bandh call given by Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Jammu Bar Association, while Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq also called for a shutdown Wednesday.



An injured receives treatment at a hospital, after the attack

directed at civilians in recent years," he said on X. A video of the Pahalgam attack site emerged showing several people bleeding and lying motionless on the ground while women tourists were wailing and looking for their near and dear ones. Some were too stunned to react and were being helped by

surge in tourist arrivals after reeling under militancy for years. Also, the 38-day Amarnath pilgrimage is scheduled to begin July 3. Lakhs of pilgrims from across the country travel to the Amarnath cave shrine from the twin routes -- the traditional 48-km Pahalgam route in south Kashmir's Anantnag

## Security beefed up

AGENCIES

**Jammu, April 22:** Security has been beefed up across Jammu as various parties, including Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC), have called for a general strike and protests Wednesday to condemn a deadly terror attack on tourists in south Kashmir's Pahalgam tourist resort.

The Jammu and Kashmir unit of the Congress, Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Jammu bar association, Vishva Hindu Parishad and Rashtriya Bajrang Dal have separately called for a day-long 'Jammu bandh' Wednesday as a mark of protest against the innocent killings in the gruesome attack. They have also announced separate protests to denounce the Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

Officials said a high-level security meeting, jointly

chaired by Jammu Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar and Inspector General of Police, Jammu, Bhim Sen Tuti, was held at the Police Control Room here late this evening to chalk out a strategy to deal with the situation.

The meeting reviewed the situation and decided to further strengthen the security grid to maintain peace and law order, the officials said. They said additional police and paramilitary forces have already been deployed in sensitive areas across Jammu as a precautionary measure.

Appealing to people of Jammu to observe a complete strike Wednesday, PCC chief spokesperson Ravinder Sharma said the killing of innocents by terrorists is not acceptable. "A complete bandh will be observed to send a strong message that terrorism on our soil is not tolerable.



A woman sits next to a man lying on the ground after terrorists attacked tourists



Youth Congress members hold a candlelight march in Jammu



A tourist being brought to a medical facility in Anantnag district

PTI PHOTOS

# Govt vows 'harshest consequences' for perpetrators

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 22:** The deadly terror attack targeting tourists in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam Tuesday drew strong condemnation and outrage with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that the perpetrators will not be spared and their evil agenda will never succeed.

The Opposition, at the same time, demanded accountability claiming the government's claims of normalcy in Kashmir have fallen flat, with the Congress seeking an immediate all-party meeting and stressing that the attack "must not go unanswered effectively".

President Droupadi Murmu, Vice President Jagdeep

Dhankhar and Speaker Om Birla were among the leaders who said the attack on innocent citizens is utterly unpardonable and condoled the loss of lives. Home Minister Amit Shah briefed Prime Minister Modi, who is in Saudi Arabia, and rushed to Srinagar to take stock of the situation after one of the biggest terror attacks in recent times.

Terrorists struck in the picturesque Baisaran in Pahalgam which is the favourite hotspot of tourists from across the country, gunning down 26 people and injuring several others.

Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha, who was in the national capital, Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan, Director of Intelligence



Bureau Tapan Deka and a few senior officials accompanied the home minister. Union Tourism Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said the perpetrators of the terror attack will face the "harshest consequences".

The Congress said the terror attack on innocent tourists in Pahalgam is a blot on humanity and the government should ensure accountability instead of making hollow claims about normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir.

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi said the news of the cowardly terrorist attack in Pahalgam is extremely condemnable and heart-breaking. Expressing his condolences to the bereaved families, he said the whole country is united against terrorism. BJP chief J P Nadda said the brutal targeting of innocent civilians in this cowardly attack is highly reprehensible.

CPI(M) general secretary M A Baby termed the terror attack on tourists near Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir as "extremely unfortunate".

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said two teams — one of senior officers and another of police personnel — have been dispatched to

J&K The people from the state were among the victims. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said the horrific images of the terrorist attack are heart-breaking.

The central government needs to ensure an environment of security in Jammu and Kashmir with the highest level of priority, only then can the lives of local residents and tourists remain safe, he said.

BSP chief Mayawati said the government should take this incident with utmost seriousness and take strict action.

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini and his Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann condemned the terror attack on tourists in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam on Tuesday.



# SC to examine if TN verdict covers issues raised by Kerala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 22:** The Supreme Court Tuesday said it would examine whether the recent judgement on a plea of Tamil Nadu, fixing timelines for the grant of assent to Bills, covered the issues raised by the Kerala government in its pleas.

A bench comprising Justices P S Narasimha and Joymalya Bagchi agreed to hear May 6 the pleas of the Kerala government against Governor over the delay in approving Bills passed by the state assembly.

“We will look into that judgement and see whether issues raised here are covered,” the bench said when Attorney General R Venkataramani and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and the Governor’s office, said the recent judgement delivered by a bench headed by Justice J B Pardiwala did not cover the issues raised by the Kerala government.

A bench comprising Justices Padiwala and R Mahadevan April 8 delivered a significant verdict on the plea of Tamil Nadu and set aside the reservation of the 10 Bills for President's consideration in the second round holding it as illegal, erroneous in law. The bench, for the first time, also prescribed that President should decide on the bills reserved for her consideration by Governor within a

## ROW OVER BILLS



period of three months from the date  
on which such reference is received

Kerala seeks similar directions in its case. On Tuesday, senior advocate K K Venugopal, appearing for Kerala, said the pleas of the state were covered by the recent judgement. "What is the timeline for making a reference to the President by the Governor and this issue is dealt with by that judgement and there are

no other questions," he said.

He urged the bench to allow the pleas of the Kerala government in terms of the Tamil Nadu judgement. Mehta, however, insisted on making submissions saying the case of Kerala was not covered by the Tamil Nadu judgement. The bench asked Venugopal to mention the third and subsequent plea of the state government, challenging the withholding of assent by President, before the CJI so that it can also be referred to it.

Venugopal said the Chief Justice of India directed listing of the petition May 13. The bench said a mention had to be made before the CJI for tagging the other petition with the present one.

In 2023, the top court expressed displeasure over the then Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan "sitting" for two years on Bills passed by the state legislature. Khan is currently Governor of Bihar.

The top court, July 26, last year, agreed to consider the plea of opposition-ruled Kerala alleging the denial of assent to bills passed by the legislative Assembly.

The Kerala government alleged that Khan referred certain bills to President Droupadi Murmu and those were yet to be cleared.

**“ Our brave soldiers will definitely give a befitting reply to the cowardice of the terrorists. As long as the brave sons of Mother India are there, the designs of those who want to disturb peace in Jammu and Kashmir will never succeed**

**SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | UNION MINISTER**

## REDDY MEETS TOP OFFICIALS OF HIROSHIMA PREFECTURE

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, who is on a visit to Japan, met Hiroshima Prefectural Assembly Speaker Takashi Nakamoto and a team of legislators on Tuesday and discussed opportunities for cooperation and collaboration



# Bihar all set to receive Amrit Bharat Express and Nammo Bharat Rapid Rail




toilets, and ergonomic seating, it is designed for comfort and safety. Route map indicators in every coach will help passengers track upcoming stations, similar

to metro systems.

The new Amrit Bharat Express, India's third, will run at up to 130 km/h and offer push-pull technology for bidirectional travel. Although a non-AC express, it features several modern amenities like foldable tables, spring berths, mobile holders, fire detection systems, and onboard condition monitoring—offering Vande Bharat-like experience in sleeper and unreserved coaches.

## AGENCIES



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**PUBLIC NOTICE OF E-AUCTION OF GOLD ORNAMENTS**

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**District Centre: SAMBALPUR-GOLE BAZAR GL - IIFL FINANCE LTD, 1ST FLOOR, SHOP NO-201, SAHEJ PLAZA, GOLE BAZAR, SAMBALPUR-768001, ODISHA.**

**Branch Name: SAMBALPUR-BUDHARAJA GL, Taluka - Sambalpur**  
**Gold Loan A/C No.:** GL25457918, GL26930854, GL29889714, GL32516139, GL32582584, GL32876421, GL32895030, GL33102060, GL33218996, GL34181822, GL34481905, GL33487753, GL33515871, GL34212202.


**Branch Name: SAMBALPUR-GOLE BAZAR GL, Taluka - Sadar**  
**Gold Loan A/C No.:** GL24751588, GL31205515, GL31226395, GL31616336, GL31861880, GL32070983, GL32154844, GL32173539, GL32291772, GL32311906, GL33626326, GL33982367, GL33995001, GL34033158, GL34080233, GL34285870.

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**For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.**



Sd/


**CIN: L67100H1995PL039797**  
**Regd. Office:** IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park,  
 Road No. 16V, Plot No.8-23, Thane Industrial Area,  
 Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604  
**Tel: (91-22) 41035000 • Fax: (91-22) 25806654**  
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**District Centre: CHANDIKHOL-CHANDIKHOL GL - IIFL FINANCE LTD, CHANDIKHOL PO-SUNDUGA, PS-BADACHANA, NEAR ODISHA GRAMYA BANK ODISHA, PIN-754296.**

**Branch Name: CHANDIKHOL-CHANDIKHOL GL, Taluka - Darpan**  
**Gold Loan A/C No. :** GL25393320.


**Branch Name: JAIPUR-JAIPUR ROAD JENA COMPLEX, Taluka - Jaipur Road**  
**Gold Loan A/C No. :** GL25057346, GL27907338, GL28031546, GL30874552, GL30904301, GL32151475, GL32152510, GL32171373, GL32266426, GL32314942, GL32812399, GL32833908, GL32849312, GL32861016, GL32882097, GL32894284, GL32947481, GL32956953, GL33043619, GL33058883, GL33065113, GL33088721, GL33169004, GL33177882, GL33269453, GL33294894, GL33298930, GL33304432, GL33321299, GL33324135, GL33342275, GL33350903, GL33369736, GL33374748, GL33819477, GL33826627, GL34052117, GL34077363, GL34088936, GL34091883, GL34199222, GL34210788.

**Branch Name: JAIPUR-MANGALPUR SOHO GL, Taluka - Jaipur**  
**Gold Loan A/C No. :** GL30774162, GL30801749, GL31972294, GL31993627, GL32522541, GL32605870, GL32612080, GL32889286, GL33156983, GL33168617, GL33177335, GL33520279, GL33521166, GL33542357, GL33879841, GL34273824.

**Branch Name: JAIPUR-TOWN GL, Taluka - Jaipur**  
**Gold Loan A/C No. :** GL22707778, GL33818607, GL32020971, GL32928277, GL32343699, GL33260334.

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**For detailed information, terms and conditions, contact the concerned branch office of IIFL Finance Limited.**



**Date: 23.04.2025**  
**Place: JAIPUR**

**Sd/-**  
**AUTHORISED SIGNATORY**  
**IIFL FINANCE LIMITED**

Date: 23.04.2025  
Place: SAMBALPUR

**AUTHORISED SIGNATORY**  
**IIFL FINANCE LIMITED**

**CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797**  
**Regd. Office:** IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park,  
 Road No. 16V, Plot No.8-23, Thane Industrial Area,  
 Wagle Estate, Thane - 400604  
**Tel:** (91-22) 41035000 • **Fax:** (91-22) 25806654  
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**District Centre: KENDRAPARA-COLLEGE CHAK GL - IIFL FINANCE LTD, AT-BHOPMADISTA PATNA, COLLEGE CHAK, NEAR BPCL PETROL PUMP, PO+PS+DIRA - KENDRAPARA, ODISHA, PIN - 754211**

**Branch Name: KENDRAPARA-KAKAT CHHAK GL, Taluka - Kendrapara**  
**Gold Loan A/C No.:** GL25263045, GL25080178, GL32024517, GL32718286, GL32743777, GL32968737, GL33245429, GL33300311, GL33321579, GL33424647, GL33455784, GL33471711, GL334830407, GL33534411, GL33545153, GL34078607, GL34149785, GL34177607.

**Branch Name: KENDRAPARA-COLLEGE CHAK GL, Taluka - Kendrapara**  
**Gold Loan A/C No.:** GL30842924, GL30849109, GL32318400, GL32343744, GL32615933.

**Branch Name: PATTAMUNDAL-Gl - Taluka - Pattamundal**  
**Gold Loan A/C No.:** GL30827249, GL32062929, GL32590091, GL32608964, GL32686411, GL32733718, GL32743901, GL32942204, GL32953888, GL32969057, GL32985086, GL33303051, GL33352084, GL33438555, GL33499837, GL34022731, GL34124963, GL34141009, GL34235321, GL34332898, GL34335594, GL34340981.

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Date: 23.04.2025  
Place: KENDRAPARA

**Sd/-**  
**AUTHORISED SIGNATORY**  
**IIFL FINANCE LIMITED**



**IIFL  
FINANCE**

**CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797**  
**Regd. Office:** IIFL House, Sun Infotech Park,  
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**District Centre: BHADRAK-GUPTA COMPLEX - IIFL FINANCE LTD, 1ST FLOOR, GUPTA COMPLEX, SALANDI BYPASS, BHADRAK-756100.**

**Branch Name: BHADRAK-BASUDEVPUR GL, Taluka - Basudebpur**  
**Gold Loan A/C No. :** GL3223658, GL33766570, GL33816820, GL33867252, GL33867913, GL33882485, GL33891078, GL33901205, GL33920379.

**Branch Name: BHADRAK-DHAMNAGAR SOHO GL, Taluka - Dhamnagar**  
**Gold Loan A/C No. :** GL30832804, GL30847478, GL31750246, GL32009426, GL32109624, GL32125136, GL32131110, GL32351030, GL33195922, GL33198991, GL33225485, GL33317261, GL33486688, GL33517421, GL34116779, GL34139082, GL34173993, GL34254136.

**Branch Name: BHADRAK-GUPTA COMPLEX, Taluka - Bhadrak Rural**  
**Gold Loan A/C No. :** GL25557780, GL31997968, GL32015989, GL33183610, GL33197888.

**Branch Name: BHADRAK-KACHERI BAZAAR GL, Taluka - Bhadrak Rural**  
**Gold Loan A/C No. :** GL31826085, GL32605992, GL32024446, GL33153586, GL33158141, GL33586730, GL33595006, GL33631854, GL33681177.

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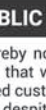
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**Sd/-**  
**AUTHORISED SIGNATORY**  
**IIFL FINANCE LIMITED**

**Date:** 23.04.2025

**Place:** BHADRAK



**IIFL**  
FINANCE

CIN: L67100MH1995PLC093797  
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**District Centre: BALASORE-POLICE LINE SQUARE, IIFL FINANCE LTD, GROUND FLOOR, PLOT NO 388, POLICE LINE SQUARE, OT ROAD, BALASORE-756001**

**Branch Name: BALASORE-JANUGANJ GL, Taluka - Balasore**  
**Gold Loan A/C No.:** GL31220232, GL32420913, GL32799301, GL32801209.

**Branch Name: BALASORE-POLICE LINE SQUARE Taluka - Balasore**  
**Gold Loan A/C No.:** GL23940124, GL23954757, GL30869394, GL32414896, GL32430889, GL32677676, GL32899914, GL33270312, GL33305452, GL33322869, GL33775601, GL33800969, GL34147099, GL34271809, GL34292377.


**Branch Name: BALASORE-SORO GL, Taluka - Soro**  
**Gold Loan A/C No.:** GL25017485, GL31283668, GL332732840.

**Branch Name: BALIAPAL-BALIAPAL SOHO GL, Taluka - BALIAPAL**  
**Gold Loan A/C No.:** GL33587957.

**Branch Name: JALESWAR-BADABAZAR GL, Taluka - Jaleswar**  
**Gold Loan A/C No.:** GL31526160, GL33268565, GL33294784.

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Sd/-  
**AUTHORISED SIGNATORY**  
**IIFL FINANCE LIMITED**

Date: 23.04.2025  
Place: BALESWAR



of the day

quote

The country had been turned into a “banana republic” to crush the party, and that institutions including the judiciary, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and police had been damaged in the process

IMRAN KHAN | JAILED EX-PM, PAKISTAN

If you asked me years go about my government's investment priorities in security and defence, it's obvious my response would have been different

PEDRO SÁNCHEZ | PRIME MINISTER, SPAIN

CAPTURED: HARPREET SINGH, part of an alleged foreign terrorist gang here illegally in the United States, who we believe was involved in planning multiple attacks on police stations both in India and the United States

KASH PATEL | FBI DIRECTOR

SHORT TAKES

Nepal's education minister resigns

**Kathmandu:** Nepal's Education Minister Bidya Bhattarai has tendered her resignation from the post amid pressure from agitating teachers over their demands, including salary hike. However, Education Minister Bhattarai cited health reasons for her decision to resign, a sentiment that Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli echoed Tuesday. Bhattarai's decision to resign Monday came the 20th day of the agitation by tens of thousands of school teachers whose demands mainly include introduction and passing of the School Education Bill and hiking their salary and perks.

16 killed as van plunges into ravine

**Karachi:** A speeding van fell into a ravine in southern Pakistan, killing at least 16 people, including women and children, and injuring 30 others, authorities said. The accident took place in Jamshoro district in the Sindh province Monday. According to details, the accident took place in the hilly region when the driver of the van lost control of the vehicle due to over speeding and the van fell into a ditch, killing 16 persons on the spot and injuring 30 other, Dunya News reported.

Indian charged for molesting cabin crew

**Singapore:** An Indian national was charged Tuesday in a Singapore court for allegedly molesting a 28-year-old cabin crew member on a flight to the city state. Rajat, who goes by a single name, allegedly grasped her from behind and pushed her into a lavatory with him during a Singapore Airlines (SIA) flight at around 11.20 am February 28. He was arrested once the plane arrived at Changi Airport. Appearing in court Tuesday, Rajat, 20, said he intended to plead guilty. Rajat's case will be heard again May 14, according to the Channel report. For each count of molestation, an offender can be jailed up to three years, fined and caned.

Trump envoy to visit Moscow

**Moscow:** US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff is to arrive here this week to continue talks on the Ukraine peace package, Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov was quoted as saying by Russian news agency TASS. However, Ushakov, one of Russia's Ukraine negotiators, did not divulge any details.



We discussed the progress of negotiations between Iranian and American representatives. We will see what the result will be. We maintain close contact with our Iranian colleagues. Where we can, we help

YURY USHAKOV | KREMLIN FOREIGN POLICY ADVISER

NEPAL'S SNOW LEOPARD NUMBER REACHES 397

The first-ever national estimation of snow leopards in Nepal has determined the population of the elusive mountain cat at 397 based on an assessment spanning seven key habitats across the Himalayan nation. This marks a major milestone in the conservation of this iconic Himalayan species



China urges UK, EU to uphold multilateral trade in face of US tariffs

REUTERS

**Beijing, April 22:** Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi urged Britain and the European Union Tuesday to safeguard multilateral trading systems, as Beijing seeks to rally support from trading partners to counter US tariff measures.

China and the United States have remained locked in a deepening trade war, with tit-for-tat tariff hikes that have significantly disrupted bilateral commerce.

“The United States has weaponised tariffs to launch indiscriminate attacks on countries, openly violating WTO rules and undermining the legitimate rights and interests of others,” China’s foreign ministry cited Wang as saying in a phone call with British Foreign Secretary David Lammy.

China and Britain had a responsibility to uphold international order in the face of “rampant unilateral bullying”, Wang told Lammy.

China was ready to work with Britain to “eliminate all distractions”, Wang said, adding that the onus was on both countries to safeguard multilateral trading systems.

In a separate call with Austrian Foreign Minister Beate Meisl-Reisinger, Wang called on the EU to defend multilateral trade and said China was willing to further strengthen high-level exchanges with the bloc.

Washington has raised tariffs to 145% on Chinese goods, prompting Beijing to retaliate by slapping duties of 125% on items imported from the US.

Wang’s phone calls came after Beijing Monday warned countries against striking a broader economic deal with the US at its expense, and threatened countermeasures if they did so.

Bangladesh denies India’s claim over Hindu leader’s death

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dhaka, April 22:** Bangladesh has rejected New Delhi’s charge that the recent killing of a Hindu leader was part of a “pattern of systematic persecution” of minorities in that country.

Body of Hindu community leader Bhabesh Chandra Roy, 58, a resident of Basudebpur village of Dinajpur district in north Bangladesh, was recovered Thursday night. His son has claimed Roy was allegedly abducted from his home in the village, about 330 kilometres northwest of Dhaka, and beaten to death.

“It is unfortunate that the death of Mr Bhabesh Chandra Roy has been described as part of a ‘pattern of systematic persecution’ of Hindu minorities under the interim government,” interim government chief Muhammad Yunus’ press secretary Shafiqul Alam told the state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) news agency late Monday.

Alam, who is currently accompanying Yunus to an international conference in Qatar, said Bangladesh is not a country where one would find government-sponsored systematic discrimination against minorities. Rather, he claimed, the Bangladesh government protects the rights of all of its citizens irrespective of religious denominations.

The Bangladesh reaction came days after India condemned the alleged abduction and killing of the Hindu minority leader in Bangladesh and called on the interim government in Dhaka to live up to its responsibility of protecting the minorities.

“This killing follows a pat-



Body of Hindu community leader Bhabesh Chandra Roy, 58, a resident of Basudebpur village of Dinajpur district in north Bangladesh, was recovered Thursday night

tern of systematic persecution of Hindu minorities under the interim government even as the perpetrators of previous such events roam with impunity,” External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X Saturday.

Roy’s family had lodged a case with Dinajpur police after his murder against four named suspects and several unnamed individuals.

“The accused took my father to an unknown location and beat him to death in a premeditated manner,” Roy’s son 28-year-old Swapan Chandra Roy, alleged in his written complaint. Swapan Chandra Roy named Atikur Rahman as accused number one, who according to media reports, runs an informal money lending business.

SNIPPETS

Israel steps up Gaza strikes

**Cairo:** The Israeli military launched one of the biggest waves of strikes in Gaza for weeks Tuesday, residents said, and health officials issued a new warning that healthcare faced total collapse from Israel's blockade of all supplies. Gaza's health ministry said a UN-backed polio vaccination campaign meant to target over 600,000 children had been suspended, putting the enclave at risk of the revival of a crippling disease that once had been all-but eradicated. In diplomacy to end the conflict, a Hamas delegation was expected to arrive in Cairo for talks. Two sources familiar with the mediation effort said the delegation would discuss a new offer which would include a truce for 5 to 7 years following the release of all hostages and an end to fighting.



A view shows an explosion during an Israeli strike at a tent camp sheltering displaced people, in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip

Australians start voting in general elections



**Melbourne:** Australians began voting Tuesday at general elections as campaigning was overshadowed by the death of Pope Francis. Polling stations opened to voters who for a variety of reasons will be unable to vote May 3. Around half the votes are expected to be cast before the election date. Both Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and opposition leader Peter Dutton cancelled campaign events planned for Tuesday out of respect for the late pontiff. Flags were flown at half staff from government buildings across the country where a 2021 census found 20% of the population were Catholics. Albanese was raised as a Catholic but chose to be sworn in as prime minister when he was elected in 2022 by making a secular affirmation rather than by taking an oath on a Bible.

Pope Francis’ funeral to be held Saturday

Francis, 88, died Monday after suffering a stroke and cardiac arrest, ending an often turbulent reign in which he repeatedly clashed with traditionalists and championed the poor and marginalised

REUTERS

**Vatican City, April 22:** Pope Francis’ funeral will be held Saturday in St Peter’s Square, Roman Catholic cardinals decided Tuesday, setting the stage for a solemn ceremony that will draw leaders from around the world.

Francis, 88, died Monday after suffering a stroke and cardiac arrest, ending an often turbulent reign in which he repeatedly clashed with traditionalists and championed the poor and marginalised.

The pontiff spent five weeks in hospital earlier this year suffering from double pneumonia and had appeared to be slowly recovering, but the Vatican Tuesday recounted his last moments, saying death came



quickly and he had not suffered. He started to feel unwell at around 5:30 am Monday and was promptly attended to by his team. More than an hour later he made a gesture of farewell to his ever-present nurse, Massimiliano Strappetti, and slipped

into a coma, the Vatican’s official media channel said. His time of death was given as 7:35 am.

The Vatican released photographs of Francis dressed in his vestments and laid in a wooden coffin in the chapel of the San-

Francis championed the poor, clashed with traditionalists

Funeral to be held Saturday in St. Peter’s Square

US President Trump, Ukraine president set to attend

ta Marta residence, where he lived during his 12-year papacy. Swiss Guards stand on either side of the casket.

His body will be taken into the adjacent St Peter’s Basilica Wednesday morning at 9:00 am, in a procession led by cardinals, allowing the faithful to pay their last respects to the first Latin American pope.

His funeral service will be held in St Peter’s Square, in the shadow of the Basilica, Saturday at 10:00 am and will

be presided over by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, the 91-year-old dean of the College of Cardinals.

US President Donald Trump, who clashed repeatedly with the pope about immigration, said he and his wife would fly to Rome for the service.

Among other heads of state set to attend were Javier Milei, president of Francis’ native Argentina, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, according to a source in his office.

ANCIENT RITUALS

In a break from tradition, Francis confirmed in his final testament released Monday that he wished to be buried in

Rome’s Basilica of Saint Mary Major and not St Peter’s, where many of his predecessors were laid to rest.

Francis’ death has set in motion ancient rituals, as the 1.4-billion-member Church started the transition from one pope to another, including the breaking of the pope’s “Fisherman’s Ring” and lead seal, used in his lifetime to seal documents, so they cannot be used by anyone else.

As Catholics worldwide mourned Francis, all cardinals in Rome were summoned to a meeting Tuesday to decide on the sequencing of events in the coming days and review the day-to-day running of the Church in the period before a new pope is elected.



# Shooters shine in ISSF WC

## India end third in Peru, take a lot of positives from South American leg

INDO ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, April 22:** The Indian shooting team ended third in the standings as the Peru International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup wrapped up proceedings, with Australia taking the final gold on offer in the mixed team trap event.

Two Indian pairs Prithviraj Tondaiman/Pragati Dubey and Lakshay Sheoran/Neeru finished eighth and 12th respectively with scores of 134 and 128 out of 150 targets, in qualification respectively. As China topped the tally with four gold, three silver, and six bronze medals, USA came in second with a silver and five bronze medals less than the first-placed. India's final tally read two gold, four silver and a lone bronze won by Saurabh Chaudhary in the men's air pistol.

Earlier in the day, Simranpreet Kaur Brar had won silver in the women's 25m pistol, to give India their seventh medal and a fourth silver of the competition.

India will take a lot of positives from the double-legged South American World Cup leg, which kickstarted the new international season. In the previous Argentina World Cup, India had finished second to China with a haul of four gold, two silver, and two bronze medals.

"A lot of young and talented shooters like Suruchi, Arya, and Bhavtogh, played their first senior world cups on this tour. Overall, as well, it was a young squad, and the exposure of going halfway around the world into alien conditions, adapting to the surroundings, and the ranges, and then bringing out



**Shooters reached a total of 32 finals, including medal matches in the mixed events, and returned with 15 medals including six gold. The 18-year-old Suruchi was the most successful, bringing home three gold and one bronze medal**

your best for India, will be an experience that will hold them in good stead.

"Remember, the next LA Olympics will be a similar experience. Having said that, given the quality of competition, the squad as they have been doing generally over the years, performed splendidly. We heartily congratulate the entire squad, including the hard-working coaches and support staff, for flying the country's flag high once again on the global stage," said an elated K. Sultan Singh, Secretary General, National Rifle Association of India (NRAI).

Indian shooters reached a total of 32 finals, including medal matches in the mixed events,

and returned with 15 medals including six gold. The 18-year-old Suruchi was the most successful, bringing home three gold and one bronze medal, the NRAI said in a release.

Along with Chinese teenager and rifle shooter Wang Zifei of China, Suruchi was undoubtedly the star of the two World Cup legs. Arya Borse was the other World Cup debutant to shine, making it to three finals and returning with two silver medals in the mixed-team rifle event.

Besides the debutants, the seasoned Chain Singh and Simranpreet also won their first individual World Cup medals and Paris Olympians Shriyanka Sadangi and Raiza Dhillon picked up the valuable first-ever experience of competing in an individual World Cup final.

Some shooters like former world champion Rudranksh Patil (one gold, two silver), Vijayveer Sidhu (gold in rapid-fire pistol in Argentina), Sift Kaur Samra (gold in 50m rifle 3 positions in Argentina), Arjun Babuta (silver in men's air rifle in Peru) and Esha Singh (silver in women's 25m pistol

in Argentina), besides double Olympic medalist Manu Bhaker (silver in women's air pistol in Lima-her sixth individual World Cup medal), further enhanced their stature as accomplished and world-class internationals and will take a lot of confidence away from the tour.

The most heartening aspect of the tour for fans of the sport in India however, was the return to the podium at the international level by Saurabh Chaudhary, a former youth Olympic and Asian Games champion and a former world record holder, and world number one. He won a fifth mixed team World Cup gold in Lima alongside new partner Suruchi and a seventh individual World Cup medal as well.

"It gives us immense pleasure to look at the depth we have developed in the sport. There are so many accomplished international shooters who were back home and not part of this tour and still, we have produced such results. This shows that Indian Shooting is moving in the right direction," Sultan Singh concluded.

# DC outclass listless LSG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, April 22:** Delhi Capitals slowly but surely inched closer towards play-off qualification, annihilating Lucknow Super Giants by eight wickets in an IPL match here Tuesday.

The win was powered by a near-perfect performance from their pace unit, aided by inexplicable tactics from rival captain Rishabh Pant.

The trio of Mukesh Kumar (4/33), Mitchell Starc (1/25) and Dushmantha Chameera (1/25 in 3 overs) used slower deliveries smartly as LSG could only manage a below-par 159/6 after being 87/1 at the halfway mark.

In the back-10, LSG could manage only 72 runs recording their lowest team total of the tournament so far.

It made matters only worse that Pant, with his bandaged right palm, came in at No. 7 and was dismissed for a two ball duck, while Abdul Samad wasted deliveries like a million-aire up the order.

The match as a contest was over at half-time only.

Young opener Abhishek Porel (51 off 36) set the tone before KL Rahul (57 not out off 42) and Axar Patel (34 not out off 20) saw DC home with 13 balls to spare, sealing their sixth win in eight games.

With Sanjiv Goenka in the stands, it couldn't have been sweeter for Rahul, whose third fifty of the season, was a nice little statement with willow, having endured the LSG owner's public wrath during a game last season.

Pant's bowling changes were unimaginative and persisted with Ravi Bishnoi, who has become a one-trick pony with only googly as his wicket-taking delivery isn't helping his cause either.



A couple of more wins in the next six games will take DC to 16 points, considered magic figure for play-off qualifications.

The wicket didn't have any demons but LSG, in terms of strategy, execution and intent, had their worst game of the season and skipper Pant, the record Rs 27-crore, recruit didn't seem to be there.

There were misfields, sitters being dropped with LSG and its skipper cutting a sorry picture.

At the toss, he said his injury isn't really serious but sending Samad and Ayush Badoni before himself left everyone perplexed whether he is playing at a fitness level below 100 percent.

Despite the palm injury, he also kept wickets.

The ball was coming nicely onto the bat during the first 10 overs and the bounce was even as Aiden Markram (52 off 33 balls) attacked well and Mitchell Marsh (45 off 36 balls) for once played second fiddle, allowing the South African to dominate.

Sensing the nature of the track, the DC bowlers changed their tactic effortlessly and

started taking pace off the deliveries while altering the length.

Chameera got Markram with a fuller delivery, which he tried to slash but found the only fielder stationed at deep cover.

But it was Starc, who dealt a telling blow when he got the dangerous-looking Nicholas Pooran (9), who started with a couple of sweeps off Kuldeep Yadav.

Sensing that the West Indian would tonk the length balls bowled at anything above 135 clicks, Starc bowled a slow bouncer and forced him to rush into an ugly pull with both his feet off the ground. The result was an inside edge onto the stumps.

Samad (2 off 8 balls) and Marsh were out in quick succession as Mukesh Kumar varied the speed of his deliveries to get two wickets in a single over. He also got the prized wicket of Pant with the final ball of the LSG innings.

While Badoni played some cheeky strokes, LSG always looked like the team that would come second best in this encounter. Now DC have beaten LSG twice in this game.

## SHORT TAKES

### Dube announces ₹70K for budding athletes

**Chennai:** In a heart-warming gesture, India all-rounder Shivam Dube Tuesday promised to provide Rs 70,000 each to 10 budding athletes from Tamil Nadu. Dube, who plays for Chennai Super Kings, made the touching decision during the Tamil Nadu Sports Journalists' Association's awards and scholarships function here. Dube's reward was in addition to the scholarship of Rs 30,000 given by the TNSJA. "When I was travelling from the team hotel to this venue, Dr Baba (TNCA secretary), told me that it was an effort to help some of the youngsters over here. So, this is truly encouraging for all the young athletes," said Dube during the function which was also attended by CSK CEO Kasi Viswanathan.

### Siwach advances to Rd2

**Amman:** Indian boxer Aman Siwach eked out a hard-fought win over Abubakir Duishev of Kyrgyzstan in the opening round of the Asian U-15 and U-17 Boxing Championships here. Competing in the men's U-17 63kg category, Siwach put up an impressive display to defeat Duishev 4-1 on the third day of the continental tournament. Siwach's win was another solid victory for India tally at the continental event, after triumphant results for both the men's U-15 and U-17 contingents on the first two days. However, Anshul Khasa went down 0-5 to Kuanysh Urumbassar of Kazakhstan in the men's U-17 70kg weight class. This is the first event organised by Asian Boxing, endorsed by both the Olympic Council of Asia and the newly-formed World Boxing.

### Djoko returns to Madrid

**Madrid:** Former champion Novak Djokovic has returned to the Madrid Open for the first time in three years in hopes of achieving his 100th tour-level title. Djokovic is seeded fourth in the same half of the draw as second-seeded Carlos Alcaraz, the home favorite who arrives at the Caja Magica this week with fitness concerns after reaching consecutive clay-court finals. The 37-year-old Djokovic, a three-time champion in Madrid, hasn't played in the Spanish capital since losing to Alcaraz in the 2022 semifinals, their first meeting. Djokovic won his 99th title last August at the Paris Olympics. He has lost four finals since then, most recently last month in Miami. The 100-title club features only Jimmy Connors (109) and Roger Federer (103). Over the last two weekends, Alcaraz has won the Monte Carlo Masters and lost in the Barcelona Open final, where he needed treatment on his upper right leg Sunday.

# Slater gets 4-year jail for domestic violence

*The Australian cricketer-turned commentator, however, walks free due to time served*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Sydney, April 22:** Australian cricketer-turned-commentator Michael Slater was Tuesday sentenced to four years in prison after pleading guilty to multiple charges, including domestic violence, but will be allowed to walk free immediately after having served over a year in custody.

According to a report in ABC Sport, his sentence was 'partly suspended' due to the time served.

The 55-year-old was charged with more than a dozen offenses including domestic violence, unlawful stalking or intimidation, breaking into a dwelling with intent at night, common assault, assault occasioning bodily harm and choking or suffocation. The prosecution told the Maroochydore District Court, that alcohol 'was a repeating feature with his offending as his behaviour becomes more erratic.'

"The court heard Slater made threats of self-harm as he warned the victim not to report harassment and she felt extremely fearful and exhausted by Slater's behaviour," the

report read.

The identity of the victim was not revealed in the report. It merely stated that she hailed from Noosa region (Queensland) and was being allegedly subjected to 'assault, strangulation, burglary and stalking' since late 2023.

Judge Glen Cash described Slater as an alcoholic and warned that his rehabilitation 'will not be easy.'

"Your rehabilitation will not be easy — alcoholism is part of your make up," Cash said.

While the prosecution sought a five-year sentence with parole after three, Slater's lawyer argued for a reduced term, stating that the choking incident was not of the most serious nature.

He added that Slater had been 'calm, lucid and insightful' during his 375 days in custody, having abstained from alcohol. He argued Slater should be given a three-year sentence with immediate parole.

Judge Cash noted Slater's early guilty plea showed 'cooperation and remorse'.

The former right-handed Australian opener played 74 Tests and 42 ODIs between 1993 and 2003.

# KUJUR: WILL MAKE THE MOST OF OPPORTUNITY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Perth, April 22:** Drafted into the senior national women's team following an impressive performance in the Hockey India League with JSW Soorma Club, young midfielder Ajmina Kujur is desperate to make the most of the opportunity in the upcoming five-match away series against Australia.

India are set to play two games against Australia A April 26 and 27, followed by three matches against the Australian senior team May 1, 3, and 4 at the Perth Hockey Stadium.

"I am grateful that they have given me a chance to play now so I have to give my 100 per cent. Two years ago, I was in the senior team camp but I didn't make it into the team. Now that I have been given this chance, I am going to ensure I make the most of it," Kujur said in a Hockey India release upon landing in Australia.

Kujur had been training in the senior national camp in SAI, Bengaluru, since March 23 in preparation for the tour.

"Training with the seniors has been a wonderful experience. I am learning a lot and I



am excited to play with them ahead. Everyone has enjoyed training with each other and now it is time for us to give it our best against Australia," she said.

"The senior players are really helpful, especially Sushila di (Sushila Chanu) who has supported me a lot during the camp. She tells me every time I make a mistake and has taught me how to play to my strengths. I also tend to think a lot when I make an error but the senior players have helped me cope with it and I am a lot more confident now."

At the start of the year, Kujur played a crucial role in the HIL (Women) as she featured in all the seven matches for

runners-up side JSW Soorma Hockey Club.

Next, she played the 15th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship for Odisha and, although her team was knocked out in the pool stage of Division A, dished out a stand-out performance in the midfield.

"I have been focusing on my fitness a lot more, which I think has really helped me improve my game," she said.

Kujur started playing hockey at the age of 11. Hailing from Sundargarh district in Odisha which is famous for its rich hockey culture, the sport has always been a part of her life.

She was first introduced to hockey when she saw her father and brothers play in their village.

Kujur's father was a big supporter in her pursuit of a career in hockey, but unfortunately, he passed away during Covid-19 pandemic in 2021.

"My father used to play and so did my brothers, so I watched them and my interest in the sport grew. Now that my father is no more, I am playing hockey for him, to make him proud. This is my biggest motivation," she said.

### Bumrah named Wisden's Leading Men's Cricketer

*Prolific batter Smriti Mandhana grabs the honour in the women's category*



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 22:** India's premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah was Tuesday named as Leading Men's Cricketer in the World while prolific batter Smriti Mandhana grabbed the honour in the women's category in the 2025 edition of Wisden Cricketers' Almanack.

The two Indian players were honoured for their stand-out performances last year.

The 31-year-old Bumrah picked up 71 Test wickets in season 2024 at an average of 14.92, the most by any bowler with such an economy in a single year. He became the first Test bowler to claim 200 wickets at an average of less than 20.

Likewise, Women's team senior batter Smriti Mandhana made it an India double as she was named as Wisden's Leading Women's Cricketer in the World. The 28-year-old Mandhana scored 1,659 runs across formats in 2024.

# Pope Francis loved soccer and the sport's power to unite

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Buenos Aires, April 22:** Pope Francis' passion for soccer was evident throughout his pontificate. A lifelong supporter of Argentine club San Lorenzo, he agreed with those who describe soccer as the most beautiful game in the world. But Francis, who died Monday at 88, also turned to the sport for anecdotes about camaraderie, fellowship and teamwork in an increasingly individualistic society.

"Soccer is a team sport. You can't have fun alone," the pope told a crowd of Italian youth, soccer players and coaches at the Vatican in 2019. "And if it's lived like that, it can do good for your mind and your heart in a society that is exasperated by subjectivism," he said.

Like most Argentine children, young Jorge Mario Bergoglio grew up with soccer. He played for hours with friends on sidewalks or dusty pitches known as "potreros" in his

native Flores neighborhood of Buenos Aires.

According to his own assessment, he was not that good.

In his recently published autobiography "Hope," Francis said his skills were so poor that he was nicknamed "hard foot."

Like many in his family, he became a supporter of San Lorenzo, a club founded by priest Lorenzo Massa in 1908. Its fans are nicknamed "the crows" due to the black cassock of its founder.

As a boy, he became fascinated by the colorful style of play of the team that won the local title in 1946. Until his death he remembered the entire lineup.

San Lorenzo won its first Copa Libertadores, the top club tournament in South America, in 2014 — a year after he became pope. The club's board of directors and a group of players took the trophy to the Vatican.

Later, club executives decided to name their planned future stadium after Pope Fran-



cis, who until the end paid his dues to the club as member No. 88,235.

**The greatest of all time?**

In an interview with Italy's RAI television in 2023, Francis weighed in on the debate about who is the greatest soccer player of all time. Asked to choose between his compatriots Diego Maradona and Lionel Messi, World Cup winners from different generations, Francis' answer was unexpected.

"I will add a third," he said. "Pelé."

He met the Brazilian great, a devout Catholic and three-time World Cup winner, before he was elected pope. Francis later met Messi and Maradona at the Vatican as pontiff.

"Maradona, as a player, was great. But as a man he failed," Francis said about the 1986 World Cup winner, who struggled with cocaine use and health issues and died in 2020

at 60. Maradona was celebrated by people who in the end didn't help him, the pope added.

He described Messi, who lifted the World Cup trophy in 2022, as "very correct" and a gentleman.

"But for me, among those three, the great gentleman is Pelé," the pope said.

In a message read during a tribute to Pelé in Rio de Janeiro a year after his death in 2022, Francis said "many of the necessary virtues to perform a sporting activity, such as perseverance, stability and temperance, are also part of Christian virtues. Pelé was undoubtedly an athlete who manifested these positive characteristics of sport in his life."

**The World Cup final he didn't watch**

Despite being a big soccer fan, Francis didn't watch any games on television. He said he avoided watching TV altogether because of a promise he had made to the Virgin of Carmen in 1990.

The radio became his means to stay informed and listen to soccer matches until he moved to Rome.

Once in the Vatican, members of the Swiss Guard, who took care of his security, informed him about San Lorenzo and Argentina match results.

That's how he found out that Argentina had won their third World Cup title in Qatar after a penalty shootout against France. While he was enthusiastic about the game, he spoke out against the fanaticism and violence that sometimes overshadow it. He called on top-level players to show humility and always remember their origins.

"Don't forget where you came from. Those pitches in the outskirts, that place for prayer, that small club," he said in his 2019 speech.

"I hope you can always feel the gratitude for your story, which is made of sacrifice, victories and battles," Francis added.



of the day

Quote

We are targeting 50 GW of RE capacity annually to meet the 500 GW target by 2030, which of course includes 292 GW of solar energy

PRALHAD JOSHI | UNION MINISTER

We are redefining the future of stainless steel manufacturing in India by integrating innovative renewable energy solutions and staying accountable to global sustainability standards

ABHYUDAY JINDAL | MANAGING DIRECTOR, JINDAL STAINLESS

What began as a modest experiment with just a few students has now evolved into a sought-after alternative to college for students across the country. We are seeing results of this effort, as our alumni contribute in various roles at Zoho from taking leadership positions to getting involved in deep-tech Research and Development projects

RAJENDRAN DANADAPANI | PRESIDENT, ZOHO SCHOOLS OF LEARNING

SHORT TAKES

RBI to banks: Migrate to 'bank.in'

**Mumbai:** The Reserve Bank Tuesday directed banks to start migration of their existing domains to the 'bank.in' domain and complete the process by October 31 this year, aimed at combating increasing instances of fraud in digital payments. In the wake of fraud in digital payments, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to introduce the 'bank.in' exclusive internet domain for Indian banks. The initiative aims to reduce cybersecurity threats and malicious activities like phishing; and, streamline secure financial services, thereby enhancing trust in digital banking and payment services. "It has now been decided to operationalise the 'bank.in' domain for banks through the Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT), which has been authorised by National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI), under the aegis of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), to serve as the exclusive registrar for this domain," it said in a statement. Banks may contact IDRBT at sahyog@idrbt.ac.in to initiate the registration process. IDRBT shall guide the banks on various aspects related to the application process and migration to the new domain.

HDFC Bank mcap tops ₹15L-cr-mark

**New Delhi:** Shares of HDFC Bank climbed nearly 2 per cent Tuesday, taking its market valuation to above the ₹15 lakh crore-mark, becoming the third firm in the country to achieve this milestone. The stock went up 1.78 per cent to settle at ₹1,961.90 on the BSE. During the day, it jumped 2.23 per cent to ₹1,970.65 -- the record high level. At the NSE, the stock rallied 1.70 per cent to ₹1,960. Since April 9, the stock jumped 11.12 per cent, adding ₹1,50,289.64 crore to its market valuation, which stands at ₹15,01,289.37 crore. So far, only Reliance Industries and Tata Consultancy Services have attained a market capitalisation (mcap) of ₹15 lakh crore. Reliance Industries commands a market valuation of ₹17,46,961.68 crore, while Tata Consultancy Services has a market cap of ₹12,00,499.53 crore.



Over the next two decades, sustaining India's growth momentum calls for a fresh approach grounded in bold reforms, stronger domestic capacities, renewed institutional partnerships and adaptive strategies suited for the evolving global landscape

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

ENROLMENT OF NEW NPS SUBSCRIBERS CROSSES 12L

The National Pension System (NPS) has achieved significant growth with private sector subscriber enrolment of over 12 lakh during 2024-25, taking the total subscriber number to over 165 lakh by March 2025.



IMF cuts India's growth forecast

Global economic outlook worsens due to Trump tariffs

AGENCIES

**Washington, April 22:** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Tuesday cut its economic growth forecast for India for the current fiscal year, citing increased trade tensions and global uncertainty.

The IMF lowered its forecast for the country to 6.2% from the 6.5% it had forecast in January for the fiscal year that started April 1.

"For India, the growth outlook is relatively more stable at 6.2% in 2025 supported by private consumption, particularly in rural areas," the IMF said in its World Economic Outlook report, where it slashed its forecasts for growth for most countries, citing the impact of U.S. tariffs.

For India, it said it was cutting its forecast due to "higher levels of trade tensions and global uncertainty."

The outlooks for the US and global economies have significantly worsened in the wake of President Donald Trump's tariffs and the uncertainty they have created, the IMF said.

The IMF said that the global economy will grow just 2.8 per cent this year, down from its forecast in January of 3.3 per cent. And in 2026, global growth will be 3 per cent, the fund predicts, also below its previous 3.3 per cent estimate.

US economic growth will come in at just 1.8 per cent this year, down sharply from its



previous forecast of 2.7 per cent and a full percentage point below its 2024 expansion. The IMF doesn't expect a US recession, though it has raised its odds of one this year from 25 per cent to 37 per cent.

The forecasts are largely in line with many private-sector economists' expectations, though some do fear a recession is increasingly likely. Economists at JPMorgan say the chances of a US recession are now 60 per cent.

The Federal Reserve has also forecast that growth will weaken this year, to 1.7 per cent.

"We are entering a new era," Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, chief economist at the IMF, said. "This global economic system that has operated for the last eighty years is being reset."

The IMF is a 191-nation lending

organisation that works to promote economic growth and financial stability and to reduce global poverty.

Gourinchas said that the heightened uncertainty around the import taxes led the IMF to take the unusual step of preparing several different scenarios for future growth. Its forecasts were finalised April 4, after the Trump administration announced sweeping tariffs on nearly 60 countries along with nearly-universal 10 per cent duties. Those duties were paused April 9 for 90 days.

Gourinchas said the pause didn't substantially change the IMF's forecasts because the US and China have imposed such steep tariffs on each other since then.

The uncertainty surrounding the Trump administration's

Women's Business Mela 2.0 from Apr 30 in Bhubaneswar

**Bhubaneswar:** Women's Business Mela 2.0 will be held at the Idco Exhibition Ground in Bhubaneswar from April 30. The five-day mela will be organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) National Women's Entrepreneurship Council (INWEC), a partner organization of the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in which hundreds of women entrepreneurs are expected to participate. While the first edition of the event in 2022 was a huge success and received high praise, it is hoped that the second edition will also create a milestone. Since its establishment in 2020, INWEC has been organising such melas and providing a huge platform for women entrepreneurs from Odisha and other states to grow. This innovative program will be organised under the leadership of the convener of INWEC, Preeti Pallavi Patnaik, and two co-conveners, Swati Kejriwal and Suma Devi Das. Completely run by women entrepreneurs, more than 200 stalls will be set up in this mela.



India's consistent strength in services exports and remittance inflows continues to provide a vital buffer for the current account, said RBI in its bulletin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 22:** India is poised to benefit from supply chain realignments, diversified FDI sources, and engagement with global investors seeking resilience and scale, given its already established trade linkages, said the RBI's April bulletin.

Moreover, India's consistent strength in services exports and remittance inflows continues to provide a vital buffer for the current account, said an article on 'State of the Economy' in the bulletin.

"Calibrated policy support can help India turn global

volatility into an opportunity and strengthen its position in the emerging world economic landscape," it said.

It also noted that escalation of trade and tariff tensions and the resultant financial market volatility have raised concerns regarding the weakening of global growth in the near term.

"Although the dampening global economic outlook could impact India's economic growth through weaker external demand, the domestic growth engines, viz., consumption and investment, are relatively less susceptible to external headwinds," the article said.

Prospects for the farm sector have been boosted by the forecast of an above normal south-west monsoon for 2025, which could augment farm incomes and keep food prices under check, it noted.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), however, said the views expressed in the bulletin article are of the authors and do not represent the views of the central bank.

The Indian economy continues to remain resilient on strong domestic growth im-

Sensex, Nifty rise for 6th day

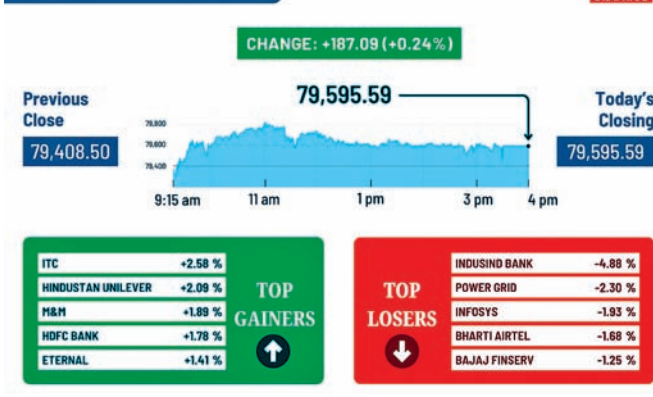
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 22:** Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty advanced Tuesday, marking their sixth straight day of rise helped by gains in banking and FMCG shares and foreign fund inflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 187.09 points or 0.24 per cent to settle at 79,595.59. During the day, it jumped 415.8 points or 0.52 per cent to 79,824.30. The NSE Nifty rose by 41.70 points or 0.17 per cent to 24,167.25. Barring IT and energy sectors, most indices ended in the green, with reality, FMCG, and banking emerging as the top gainers.

From the Sensex pack, ITC, Hindustan Unilever, Mahindra & Mahindra, HDFC Bank, Eternal, Kotak Mahindra Bank, State Bank of India and ICICI Bank were the major gainers.

On the other hand, IndusInd Bank fell the most by 4.88 per cent after reports claimed that the bank has hired EY for fo-



rensic audit into ₹600 crore microfinance discrepancy.

The bank after the market hours informed exchanges that it has not engaged EY for a forensic audit as reported in the news item but its Internal Audit Department (IAD) is conducting a review of the MFI business to examine certain concerns. Power Grid, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, and Bajaj Finserv were among the laggards.

"Despite negative global cues related to Trump-Fed ten-

GOLD BREACHES ₹1 LAKH-MARK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 22:** Gold prices surged by ₹1,800 to zoom past the crucial ₹1 lakh-mark for 10 grams in the national capital Tuesday amid buying rush by local jewellers and stockists in anticipation of increased demand during Akshaya Tritiya and wedding season even as global macroeconomic uncertainties continued to fuel safe-haven chase.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity climbed ₹1,800 to hit the lifetime peak of ₹1,01,600 per 10 grams from Monday's closing level of ₹99,800 per 10 grams.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity also jumped by ₹2,800 to hit a record high of ₹1,02,100 per 10 grams in the local markets on Tuesday. It had settled at ₹99,300 per 10 grams in the preceding session. Akshaya Tritiya, which is considered the most auspicious day to buy gold, falls on April 30. The ongoing wedding season will continue till May end. The yellow metal has spurred by ₹22,650 per 10 grams, or nearly 29 per cent, since December 2024. Meanwhile, silver prices remained flat at ₹98,500 per kg on Tuesday.

"The new all-time-high attained by the yellow metal is primarily influenced by the rising tensions between President Trump and US Fed Chair Jerome Powell regarding the interest rate cut. Additionally, weakness in the US dollar following the tensions between



Trump and Fed Chair Powell, and uncertainties around the US-China trade war are another crucial factors that has pushed gold price to a record high," Colin Shah, MD, Kama Jewelry, said.

While the gold price is on an upward trajectory, the fall in US dollar will make gold affordable in other currencies, keeping the demand-price dynamics balanced, Shah said.

"In the domestic markets, it is observed that gold price witnesses a slight rise around festive season like Akshaya Tritiya, in reflection to the spike in demand. The sentimental and cultural value attached towards investing in yellow metal on auspicious occasions like this will keep the demand upbeat, irrespective of the price trend," he added.

In the futures trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), the most-traded June contract of the precious metal surged by ₹2,079 or 2.14 per cent to reach a record high of ₹99,358 per 10 grams.

Later, it pulled back from the record level to trade at ₹98,450 per 10 grams, up by ₹1,171 or 1.2 per cent with a interest of 21,899 lots.

'Trade pact with India will help open new markets for US goods'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 22:** The proposed trade pact with India will help open new markets for American goods and create new opportunities for workers, farmers, and entrepreneurs in both countries, the USTR said Tuesday.

US Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer said that there is a "serious" lack of reciprocity in the trade relationship with India.

The USTR also welcomed Vice President J D Vance and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement reaffirming the importance of the India-US COMPACT (Catalyzing Opportunities for Military Partnership, Accelerated Commerce & Technology) initiative and highlighting the progress in the negotiations for a Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA), launched by both nations on February 13.

"These ongoing talks will help achieve balance and reciprocity by opening new markets for American goods and addressing unfair practices that harm American workers. India's constructive engagement so far has been welcomed and I look forward to creating new opportunities for workers, farmers, and entrepreneurs in both countries," he said.

Vance is in India on a four-day visit. The two countries are aiming to finalise the first phase of the pact by the fall (September-October) this year.

India and the US have finalised the terms of reference outlining the roadmap for negotiations of the proposed BTA, according to the USTR statement.

"I am pleased to confirm that USTR and India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry have finalised the Terms of Reference to lay down a roadmap for the negotiations on reciprocal trade," Ambassador Greer said.

According to the USTR, the United States is looking at increasing market access, reducing tariffs and non-tariff barriers, and negotiating a robust set of additional commitments to ensure long-term benefits.

The US has long recognised significant trade barriers with India and as a result, the US ran a USD 45.7 billion goods trade deficit with India in 2024, a 5.1 per cent (USD 2.2 billion) increase over 2023, the statement said.