



Palak's stand

Actor Palak Tiwari opens up about why she chose to remain silent about her personal life

LEISURE | **P2**



China eases tariffs on US

China exempts select US imports from steep tariffs and seeks input from firms on essential goods, signaling concerns over impact of ongoing trade war

INTERNATIONAL | **P10**



Investor wealth erodes

Investors' wealth gets wiped out by ₹8.88 lakh crore in two days of market slump due to growing tensions along Indo-Pak border

BUSINESS | **P11**



Neeraj ends silence

Neeraj Chopra hits out at those trolling him for inviting Pakistan's javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem for Neeraj Chopra Classic

SPORTS | **P12**

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PANGS OF SEPARATION: Indian citizen Zakiya Firdous breaks down as she bids goodbye to her recently married husband and a Pakistan citizen, Sahibzada Munadi Ahmad, as the latter prepares to leave India at an Integrated Check Post, near the Attari-Wagah border, in Amritsar district, Punjab, Friday

PTI PHOTO

DOING WEST'S DIRTY WORK FOR DECADES: PAK DEFENCE MIN

LONDON: Pakistan Defence Minister Khwaja Asif has admitted the country's history of supporting, training and funding terrorist organisations as "dirty work" for the West, a mistake for which he said Pakistan had suffered. In an interview with Sky News aired overnight, news presenter Yalda Hakim questioned Asif on Pakistan's response and stance on terrorism in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Pahalgam that killed 26 people earlier this week.

"You do admit, sir, that Pakistan has had a long history of backing and supporting and training and funding these terrorist organisations," asked Hakim. "Well, we have been doing this dirty work for the United States for about three decades, you know, and the West, including Britain," replied Asif.

"That was a mistake, and we suffered from that, and that is why you are saying this to me. If we had not joined the war against the Soviet Union and later on the war after 9/11, Pakistan's track record... was an unimpeachable track record," he said.

"It is very convenient for... the big powers to blame Pakistan for whatever is happening in this region. When we were fighting the war on their side way back in the 80s against the Soviet Union, all these terrorists of today, they were winning and dining in Washington...," he said.

P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



We gave up selling poison years ago. These days, it comes free—with every speech.

Pakistan rushes military equipment towards LoC

AGENCIES

New Delhi, April 25: Pakistan has reportedly been moving its military equipment towards the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu & Kashmir in the wake of the escalating tensions with India. Residents in Rawalpindi, Punjab, say they saw large convoys of army trucks and tankers coming toward the area, RT, a Russian state-controlled media reported Friday.

Pakistan military has been put on high alert following India's assertion that it will hunt down the terrorists involved in Tuesday's Pahalgam strike that killed 26 people.

In another development, Indian Army has effectively responded to unprovoked firing by Pakistani military at some places along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir amid sharp escalation of tension between the two neighbours. Military sources said the Pakistan military resorted to the firing Thursday, adding there were no reports of any casualties. There is no official word from the Indian Army



on the Pakistani firing and the Indian response. "There were incidents of small arm firing at some places on LoC initiated by Pakistan," said a source.

"The firing was effectively responded to," the source added.

As tensions between India and Pakistan rose, Army Chief General Upendra Dwivedi reviewed the security situation in Srinagar with senior Army commanders.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Rangers refused to hand over a BSF jawan, who inadvertently strayed to the other side, for

the third straight day Friday and remained non-committal on his whereabouts, official sources said.

The jawan, Constable Purnam Sahu of the 182nd Border Security Force (BSF), was apprehended by the Rangers from a farming field along the Ferozepur district of Punjab Wednesday.

Sources told PTI that the BSF has made multiple contacts and sought flag meetings with the Rangers to secure the release of its jawan but the response has 'not been positive' till now.

CM invites steel industry leaders to invest in state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 25: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi Friday said Odisha was confident of achieving the target of producing 130 million tonne per annum of steel by 2030.

Addressing the Odisha State Roundtable at India Steel 2025 in Mumbai, Majhi said his state is the top producer of both iron ore and stainless steel in India, with 54 integrated steel plants, having a capacity of 41.21 mtpa at present.

"The state has set a target to produce 130 mtpa of steel by 2030, and it would require about 190 million tonne of iron ore. With our strong commitment, I am confident that Odisha is ready to realise this ambitious goal," he said.

Majhi said the state at present produces 58 per cent of the iron ore of the country, and is poised to take it to 70 per cent by 2030-31.

"By that time, India's iron ore consumption is anticipated to grow to 340 mtpa and Odisha is preparing to contribute about 240-245 mtpa," he said.

"I want to assure investors that the government will ensure the availability of suffi-

cient minerals -- iron ore, coal, and limestone -- for the growing steel industry. Fortunately, all these materials are available in the state, and you don't have to go shopping anywhere else. As the steel manufacturing capacity expands, we will facilitate more production from mines," he said, inviting them to invest in the state.

The CM said his government has undertaken various initiatives, including the formation of a high-level task force comprising top officers to ensure the smooth commissioning of projects.

"From securing raw materials and encumbrance-free land to ensuring connectivity through roadways and railways and providing utilities like electricity and water, the state is committed to meeting the specific needs of every industry operating in this vital sector," he said. Majhi said his government was now setting its sights on developing a comprehensive metal-based value chain, from raw materials to high-end engineering products.

The event was attended by more than 200 delegates, including those from Tata Steel, AMNS, JSW, JSL and SAIL.

SC raps Rahul for Savarkar remarks



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: The Supreme Court Friday censured Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for 'irresponsible' remarks on Vinayak Damodar Savarkar at a rally in Maharashtra but stayed the criminal proceedings against him.

A bench of Justices Dipankar Datta and Manmohan said, "Let's not mock our freedom fighters."

The bench further asked senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi, appearing for Gandhi, whether he knew that even Mahatma Gandhi used the words such as "your faithful servant" in his communications to the Britishers.

When Singhvi argued charges of promoting enmity and public mischief were not made out against Gandhi, the bench remarked, "You are most obedient... does your client know that Mahatma Gandhi also used 'your faithful servant' while addressing the viceroy? Can Mahatma Gandhi be called a 'servant of Britishers' merely because he addressed himself to the viceroy as 'your servant'.

In those days, even I have seen, our judges of the Calcutta High Court used to address Chief Justice as writing 'your servant'."

Justice Datta added, "Does your client know that his grandmother (Indira Gandhi), when she was the Prime Minister, also sent a letter praising this very gentleman (Savarkar)?"

The judge went on, "So, let's not make irresponsible statements about freedom fighters. You have made a good point on law, you are entitled to stay. We are not saying anything on that."

5,000-yr-old tomb of noblewoman found in Peru

The discovery reveals the important role played by women in the oldest centre of civilisation in the Americas

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Lima, April 25: Archaeologists in Peru said they found the 5,000-year-old remains of a noblewoman at the sacred city of Caral, revealing the important role played by women in the oldest centre of civilisation in the Americas.

"What has been discovered corresponds to a woman who apparently had elevated status, an elite woman," archaeologist David Palomino told AFP.

"This is an important burial because it has elements that correspond to a woman of high status," Palomino added, pointing to the way the corpse was wrapped and preservation of

her skin, hair and nails.

The mummy was found in Aspero, a sacred site within the city of Caral that was a garbage dump for over 30 years until becoming an archaeological site in the 1990s.

Palomino said the carefully preserved remains, dating to 3,000 years BC, contained skin, part of the nails and hair and was wrapped in a shroud made of several layers of fabric and a mantle of macaw feathers.

Macaws are colourful birds that belong to the parrot family.

The woman's funerary trousseau, which was presented to reporters at the culture ministry, included a toucan's beak, a



stone bowl and a straw basket. Preliminary analyses indicate that the remains found in December belong to a woman

between 20 and 35 years old who was 1.5 metres (5 feet) tall, and wearing a headdress that represented her elevated

social status.

Palomino told reporters the find showed that while "it was generally thought that rulers were men, or that they had more prominent roles in society" women had "played a very important role in the Caral civilisation."

Caral, located some 180 km up the Pacific coast from Lima, is considered the oldest city in the Americas and would have been inhabited at the same time as ancient Egyptian, Chinese and Sumerian civilizations - though unlike these, researchers say it developed in complete isolation.

It was declared a UN World Heritage Site in 2009.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181*

ARIES
Today even if you are alone, you may not really feel lonely. You will desire to listen to your inner self, so that you can express yourself more imaginatively. Ganesha says spend the evening with your beloved who can listen to your voice in your silence also.

TAURUS
Your romantic relationship will be working on an overdrive today, says Ganesha. You will discover answers to the finer aspects of your love life. Overall, you will have a refreshingly creative outlook all through the day. It is a favourable day for those who cherish unrequited love, says Ganesha.

GEMINI
Today, you are likely to rack your brains to get things done. But your modesty will not do you any good. You will have to show that you are the boss, even if you are not. Your extraordinary brilliance will translate into exceptional performance and will save the day.

CANCER
Today, you may focus your entire attention on your relationships – your ties with your parents, spouse, children, siblings and even neighbours. However, all that effort and energy may not get its due, and you may get a cold response from one or more of your relatives. Still there is no reason to lose heart.

LEO
The bourgeoisie feasted on cake, while the masses starved for want of a mere loaf of bread. Ganesha foresees something similar for you today, as you show the propensity to indulge in unwanted expenses. Whether it is impulsive decisions or compulsive buying, they shall not serve as an excuse on a later date when the milk is already spilt.

VIRGO
You may relieve all the tension and pressure inside you today, a day which will be full of light and relaxing moments. Ganesha foretells a beneficial and progressive day for you. You will receive many invitations to social gatherings and parties.

LIBRA
Today, you will be in a mishmash of emotions and feelings. Also, there are chances of accumulated feelings finding an outlet. Your capacity for emotional display may take people by surprise. However, you will also enjoy the higher responsibilities reposed on you, predicts Ganesha.

SCORPIO
While not the Trot, you shall, however, trot on the lines of radicalism today, predicts Ganesha. Learn to think as you would, and always have, but act as others would have you to, advises Ganesha. Be the maverick that you are only with those who are closest and dearest, cautions Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
The winds of fortune will usher in your dreams and make them come true. Be careful not to go overboard with your foresightedness, lest they be marked delusions, warns Ganesha. You must realise that the only thing permanent is change, and hence, you must overcome any disappointment with strong will and determination.

CAPRICORN
You will be overpowered with nostalgia and may long to get in touch with old pals. And as Ganesha says, chances are that you may take a liking to your ex-lover, while simultaneously strengthening your social standing. All in all, the day will be a productive one.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will iron out any trouble with ease. But you may choose to play martyr and shoulder a bit of blame. That's quite a lot to do for others, even if it is done out of compassion. You may think you are setting standards for others to follow, says Ganesha, but that may not be the case.

PISCES
Major expenses are coming your way, but the good news is a lot of them can be avoided simply by drawing a line between your needs and your wants. Exercising a little restraint now will go a long way in boosting your savings later on, says Ganesha.



HUGH GRANT CALLS FOR BAN ON LAPTOPS, TABLETS IN SCHOOL

Hugh Grant has blasted “pathetic” schools and called for a ban on laptops and tablets in the classroom. Grant joined the campaign group Close Screens, Open Minds at an event at a school in west London, where he aired his frustrations alongside social psychologist Dr Jonathan Haidt and actress Sophie Winkleman.

SELENA GOMEZ ON HER MEXICAN HERITAGE

Selena Gomez proudly embraces her Mexican heritage, saying, “My Mexican heritage is something that has influenced me my entire life.” She emphasises how representation matters and shares, “Some of the most supportive women in the entertainment business I have met have been other Latin women,” celebrating their bond.



Shruti's memory with Sri

Mumbai: In a heartfelt interview with a movie journal, Shruti Haasan reminisced about her cherished memories with the late Sridevi, recalling the legendary actress's warmth and grace. Shruti shared, “She was peculiarly innocent till the very end... pure from the inside, especially in the way she told stories.” She fondly recounted a touching moment during the filming of her Kamal sent pho- of Sri- with moth- him- two sec- was in tears the elaborate make-up for *Puli*. She said, “Can I talk to him? I want to talk about this memory.” Shruti recalled. She also described Sridevi's presence on set as regal, saying, “She was commanding and incredibly powerful—like the queen has entered.” Beyond memories, Shruti is forging ahead in her career. She stars in *Coolie*, directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj, alongside Rajinikanth, Nagarjuna, and Upendra—set to release August 14, 2025. She also makes her international debut in *The Eye*, a British psychological thriller where she plays Diana, a grieving widow caught in a mysterious ritual. With these roles, Shruti continues to showcase her depth and versatility across global cinema.



Puli, when father, Haasan, an old tograph devi her and self. “In onds, she despite the



AGENCIES

Palak prefers privacy

Mumbai: Actress Palak Tiwari, who will soon be seen in the horror-comedy *The Bhoothni*, is making waves not just for her films but also for her rumoured relationship with Ibrahim Ali Khan. While the two have been frequently spotted together, they've never officially confirmed their relationship.

In a recent conversation with an entertainment magazine, Palak opened up about why she

chooses to stay silent on her personal life, especially when it comes to dating. Without naming anyone, she explained that she's currently focused on building her career and doesn't want her romantic life to overshadow her professional journey.

“At this stage of my career, I don't want my romantic life or love life to be the topic of conversation when I'm trying to make a name for myself,” Palak

shared. “That just reduces you to a headline when you have so much more to offer.”

She added that she prefers privacy because she doesn't want people forming opinions on things close to her heart. “If I'm in a relationship, I obviously feel strongly about it, and I wouldn't want to read others' opinions on it,” she concluded.

AGENCIES

ALIA CLAPS BACK AT TROLLS

Mumbai: Alia Bhatt has finally addressed the trolling she received for her unconventional lipstick application style with her signature sass. The viral moment from 2023, where Alia applied lipstick by moving her mouth across the product and then dabbing it off, quickly became a meme on social media. In a new beauty collaboration with social media personality Chandni Bhabhda, Alia directly responded to the criticism. In the video, Chandni mimics Alia's technique, saying, “I like to put my mouth to my lipstick.” Alia, amused, quips, “That's so weird,” before adding, “Then you dab it off, nice,” clearly poking fun at the trolls.

In the original Vogue India video, Alia had explained her method, revealing that she preferred it after eating, as applying lipstick directly seemed more tedious. She also shared that she picked up the habit of dabbing it off from her husband, Ranbir Kapoor, who would often say, “Wipe that off,” because he preferred her natural lip color.

Despite facing widespread mockery, Alia has remained unfazed, using humour and self-awareness to turn the narrative around.

AGENCIES



Dharam's lost tale of love from partition era

Mumbai: Before he became Bollywood's beloved 'He-Man', Dharmendra was just a shy schoolboy with a heart full of dreams — and a silent crush. Long before Hema Malini entered his life, there was Hamida, the first girl to ever steal his heart.

This tender tale came to light when Dharmendra appeared on the game show *Dus Ka Dum*. Amid the dazzling lights and celebrity chatter, he took a nostalgic turn, revisiting his childhood in Punjab and the story of Hamida — a name unknown to tabloids but unforgettable to him. Hamida was older, his senior in

school, and the daughter of one of his teachers. Their interactions were innocent and brief — she'd help him with studies, and he, with trembling hands, would pass her his notebook. In those quiet exchanges, young Dharam Singh Deol discovered the meaning of first love.

In a moment straight out of a film, Dharmendra once proposed to Hamida with a heartfelt shayari — though he didn't reveal the lines, his expression said it all. But like many love stories of that era, theirs was cut short by history. The Partition of 1947



changed everything. Hamida and her family moved to Pakistan,

leaving behind only memories. Dharmendra never saw her again, but her presence lingered in his heart. As he rose to stardom, romancing leading ladies and making headlines, Hamida's name remained quietly tucked away — a symbol of pure, unspoken love.

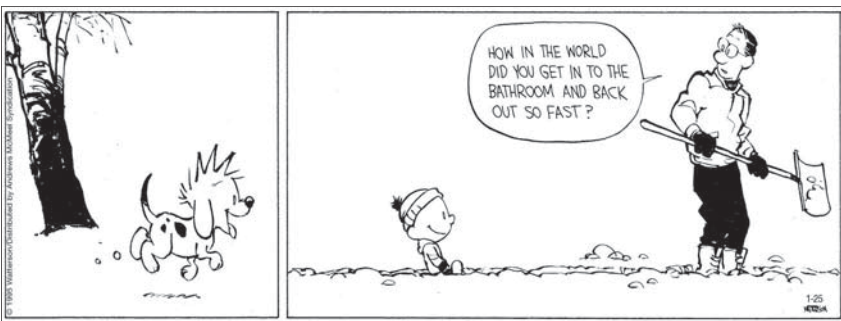
This forgotten story reminds us that behind the macho image lies a man who once loved and lost, not in the movies, but in real life. And sometimes, the most touching love stories are the ones the world never gets to see.

AGENCIES

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

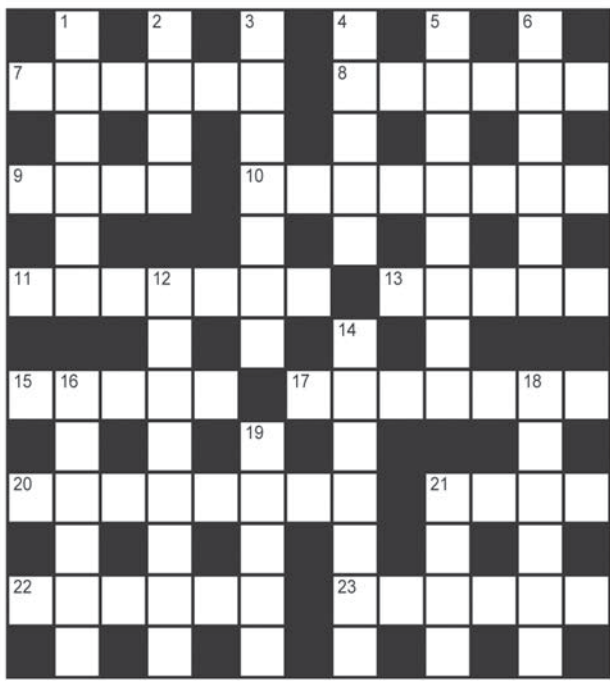


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



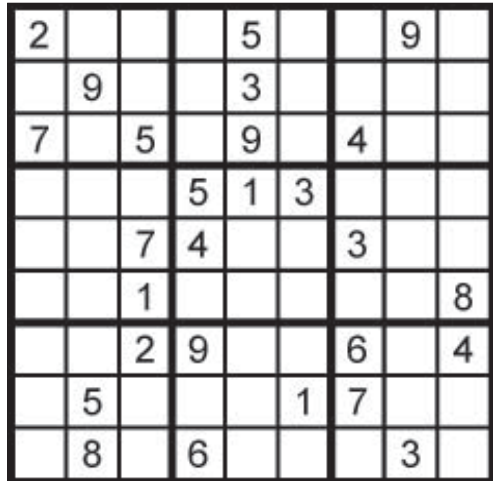
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|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Across | 20 Social butterfly | 4 Academy Award |
| 7 Mouselike jumping rodent | 21 Ceremony | 5 Deep-six |
| 8 Do a slow burn | 22 Cavort | 6 Hurled |
| 9 Terrarium plant | 23 Aare and Arno, e.g. | 12 Squid's appendage |
| 10 Driver's hope on ice | | 14 Eagles and hawks, e.g. |
| 11 In love | Down | 16 Stingy |
| 13 Applying | 1 Cash in, as a coupon | 18 Ripe |
| 15 Forebodings | 2 Shade of black | 19 Flashlight |
| 17 Wine bottle sizes | 3 Palaces | 21 Great review |

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.

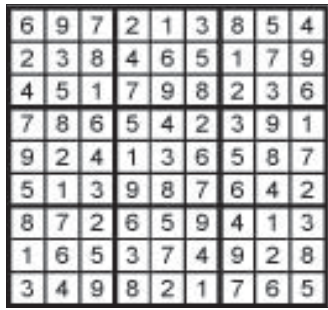


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



‘Subhadra’ to be enriched with skill training: Parida



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 25: Subhadra Yojana, the state government’s ambitious scheme aimed at empowering women financially, will now be enriched with skill training programmes. This was stated by Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida, who also holds the portfolio of Women and Child Development and Mission Shakti.

In a media interaction event held here Friday, Parida announced that Subhadra Yojana would further be enriched with skill training initiatives to empower women beneficiaries across the state.

She acknowledged the pivotal role played by journalists in disseminating accurate information and creating widespread awareness

The Deputy CM assured that any suggestions, concerns, or ideas from different quarters would be thoughtfully considered to improve the implementation of the scheme

government’s commitment to openness and feedback remained steadfast. She assured that any suggestions, concerns, or ideas from different quarters would be thoughtfully considered to improve the implementation of the scheme. This collaborative approach reflects the government’s commitment to transparency and adaptability.

Subhadra Yojana, launched as a key welfare initiative for women, has already shown remarkable success, connecting women with essential resources and benefits.

Parida also spoke about how these additional training programmes would give women new tools for economic participation, whether in rural agriculture, small-scale businesses, or urban sectors.

SUMUM doctors save preterm baby with congenital disorder

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 25: In a remarkable feat of neonatal and surgical care, doctors at SUM Ultimate Medicare (SUMUM) here have saved a preterm baby weighing 1,520 gram, born with complex congenital anomalies.

The baby, delivered at 33 weeks of gestation, was diagnosed with Pierre Robin Sequence, a rare condition occurring in approximately 1 in 14,000 live births.

The baby was born with a significantly underdeveloped lower jaw, which caused the tongue to be displaced downward, leading to a life-threatening upper airway obstruction. In addition, the baby had a cleft palate, further complicating both breathing and feeding.

Due to the extremely small oral opening, conventional methods of intubation and ventilation were not feasible. In a pioneering move—possibly the first of its kind in Odisha—the medical team performed a delicate tracheotomy, creating a small airway and inserting a tube through an incision in the neck to facilitate breathing.

“The team initially attempted a tracheotomy, but the smallest available tracheostomy tube (2.5 mm) could not be inserted due to the baby’s anatomy. In a critical on-table decision, the team performed a retrograde intubation through the tracheal port to secure the airway,” said Radhamadhab Sahu, Senior Consultant, ENT and Skull Base Surgery.

“Since a smaller-sized tube was not available in the vicinity, we used the 2.5 mm tube with a rare tracheal splitting technique, marking a first-of-its-kind intervention in Odisha,” Sahu added.

Despite a turbulent stay in the NICU, the baby responded well to intensive care. With improved nutrition and airway support using non-invasive ventilation techniques, the baby is now three and a half months old, gaining healthy weight and breathing independently.

CII, Odisha announces leadership for 2025-26

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 25: The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Odisha State Council Friday announced that Sunil Gupta, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Aluminum Buissness, Vedanta Limited, Jharsuguda has taken office as the Chairman for the year 2025-26. Similarly, Suresha G, Executive Director of Odisha Assets Operation, AM/NS India, has been elected as the Vice Chairman for the year.

Speaking on the priorities for the year ahead, Gupta emphasised CII’s strategic focus on driving state’s growth across critical sectors including MS-MEs, Metals & Mining, Healthcare, and Agri & Food Processing. “CII aims to catalyse inclusive economic progress across the state by expanding its operations, particularly in Western Odisha, and partnering closely with the Odisha government on departments such as Industries, MSME, Agricul-



ture, Environment, Tourism, and Skill Development.”

CII will also focus on strengthening Odisha’s industrial ecosystem by promoting Green Building Certification, enhancing export potential, and improving infrastructure through green projects. Key initiatives like the MSME Connect Series will link small enterprises with large industries and PSUs, ensuring inclusive and sustained industrial development.

Suresha G reiterated the Council’s commitment to leveraging CII’s Centres of Excellence to bring sectoral expertise to Odisha. “We will support job creation and productivity by providing training on GST, GEM, TQM, and export documentation while collaborating with the state departments,” he said.



SOLIDARITY RALLY: Actors Sabyasachi Mishra and Archita Sahu, and film director, writer and producer Sabyasachi Mohapatra join the NCC Cadets during a candlelight protest condemning the Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir, at Master Canteen in Bhubaneswar Friday

OP PHOTO

BJEM School hosts ToT certification course

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, April 25: Buxi Jagabandhu English Medium (BJEM) School is conducting a two-day Training of Trainers (ToT) certification programme, organised by the Institute of Secretariat Training and Management (ISTM) and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). Launched Friday, the initiative aims to train participants to become Recognised Resource Persons (RRPs) for leading capacity-building programs for CBSE teachers.

Around 100 educators, including principals, vice principals, and teachers from Odisha, West Bengal, and Chhattisgarh, are participating in the workshop, which concludes Saturday.

On day one, ISTM trainers Suman Singh Chauhan and Sanjeev Kumar Puri led sessions on effective teaching practices and training methodologies. Saturday’s session, facilitated by resource person Kakali Bagchi, will focus on the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020).

‘Save Constitution’ rallies by Congress from April 28

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, April 25: The Opposition Congress in Odisha Friday announced that it would organise ‘Samvidhan Bachao’ (Save the Constitution) rallies across the state from April 28 to May 30.

Addressing a press conference, state Congress in-charge Ajay Kumar Lallu said a series of rallies will be organised at the district, division and Assembly segment levels to seek “social, political and economic justice”.

The state-level ‘Samvidhan Bachao’ rally will be held in Bhubaneswar April 28, followed by district-level rallies from May 3 to 10, he said.

The campaign would then move to the Assembly level, between May 11 and 17, he added.

Lallu said the final phase will involve door-to-door campaigns from May 20 to 30.

He alleged that as Rahul



Gandhi has been demanding a caste census to ensure that the rights of SCs, STs and OBCs are protected, the Centre has framed him and his mother Sonia Gandhi in the “fabricated” National Herald case to divert people’s attention.

“Though the total OBC population of Odisha is 54 per cent, they are getting only 11.25 per cent reservation in government jobs and no reservation in education,” he claimed.

“Even though Union Education Minister Dharmendra

Pradhan belongs to Odisha and he is an OBC, the OBC students are not getting any reservation in education here,” he said.

Lallu said the rallies have been organised to make people aware of “threat to the Constitution” under the BJP-led government at the Centre.

Congress Legislature Party leader Rama Chandra Kadam slammed the BJP government for not implementing the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, 1996, in the state.

3 held for defrauding Agniveer aspirants

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, April 25: Odisha Police arrested three persons including two serving Navy personnel in Khurda district, on the charge of extorting money from Agniveer aspirants during a recruitment drive in November 2024, an officer said Friday.

The arrested were identified as Satyam Chahar, working at INS Kesari, Andaman and Nicobar, Vinay Kumar Ray, posted

at INS Chilika and retired Navy official Bhoosan, a resident of Uttar Pradesh, the officer said.

The trio was arrested based on a complaint lodged by Lt Commander Adwitiya Singh, a training correspondence officer at INS Chilka, at Balugaon police station April 19. The case was registered on charges of cheating and extortion.

In a statement, INS Chilka claimed that Indian Navy’s proactive approach foiled recruitment malpractice attempts. “During

routine surveillance operations coinciding with the ongoing Agniveer recruitment process, INS Chilka detected suspicious activity indicating a possible monetary demand from a candidate,” it said.

Based on the indication, actions were taken promptly and the Navy surveillance team identified a potential suspect and shared the intelligence with Balugaon police. “Based on this input, the police apprehended the accused. The Indian Navy is extending full coopera-

tion to the police in the ongoing investigation,” the Navy said.

Khurda SP Sagarika Nath said the arrested were accused of extorting a huge amount of money from Agniveer aspirants by promising them assistance in police verification, physical examination, and securing a job.

“As per intelligence inputs, two more persons are suspected to be involved in the racket. Police have so far frozen 12 bank accounts linked to the fraudulent activities,” the SP said.

Ill-effects of unhealthy habits start showing up at 36: Study

A study has suggested that age 36 is when the ill-effects of having unhealthy habits as a young adult – smoking, drinking and physical inactivity – start becoming apparent.

Researchers from the University of Jyväskylä tracked about 370 residents of the Finnish city for over 30 years. Data was collected via surveys and medical tests at ages 27, 36, 42, 50 and 61.

Three bad habits – smoking, heavy drinking and a lack of exercise – can lead to declines in health in people as young as 36, according to findings published in the journal Annals of Medicine.

The team said that unhealthy behaviours in mid-life – 40s and 50s – are known to increase chances of developing health disorders in old age.

However, their analysis showed that the ill-effects



of unhealthy behaviours remained similar through the ages 36 to 61, suggesting that the link exists already at age 36 and not only in the later phases of mid-life.

Crucially, the ill-effects were apparent by the time the participants were in their mid-30s, the researchers said.

“Our findings highlight the

importance of tackling risky health behaviours, such as smoking, heavy drinking and physical inactivity, as early as possible to prevent the damage they do from building up over the years, culminating in poor mental and physical health later in later life,” lead author Tiia Kekalainen, a health scientist at the University of Jyväskylä’s

KEY FINDINGS

Lack of exercise was particularly linked to a poor physical health, and smoking to a poor mental health

Heavy consumption of alcohol was, however, associated with declines in both mental and physical health

The three unhealthy behaviours were seen to produce stronger ill-effects over a longer term, through increasing depressive symptoms and metabolic risks

A lack of exercise was particularly linked to a poor physical health, and smoking to a poor mental health.

A heavy consumption of alcohol was, however, associated with declines in both mental and physical health.

The three unhealthy behaviours were seen to produce stronger ill-effects over a longer term, through increasing depressive symptoms and metabolic risks. “The findings of the present study suggest that the associations were mainly similar across time from age 36 to 61. Thus, the cumulative association of earlier risky behaviours exists already at age 36 and not only in the later phases of midlife,” the authors wrote.

The study’s participants were part of a larger long-term research, in which children born in Jyväskylä in 1959 were followed until their early 60s.

PTI

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	36.8°	36.6°
Min Temp	28.1°	26.6°
Humidity	80%	81%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
FORECAST Partly cloudy sky.		

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX		VARIATION	
BOURSES	SENSEX	79212.53	588.90
	NIFTY	24039.35	207.35
	DOLLAR	85.44	0.12
	EURO	97.10	0.07
	GOLD	₹94,682	₹1,230
CURRENCY	SILVER	₹96,265	₹1,246

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

MAKING IN ODISHA, GST FILING IN J'KHAND

Tax evasion in heavy vehicle carriage building unearthed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, April 25: A large-scale tax evasion racket in the construction of carriages of heavy cargo vehicles has come to light in and around Rourkela, sources said Friday. Though the vehicles are purchased and modified in Odisha, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) filings are being done in neighbouring Jharkhand, thereby resulting in significant revenue losses for the Odisha government.

According to sources, agencies building carriages for heavy vehicles like trailers, tankers, trucks, tippers, and tractors are required to obtain trade licenses. Additionally, certifications from the Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) in Pune are mandatory for ensuring structural safety and compliance.

However, in Rourkela and nearby areas, very few agencies are officially registered. More than 100 garages operate in localities such as Vedvyas, Kalunga, Kuanmunda, Rajgangpur and along the main road, offering heavy vehicle carriage-building and body modification services.

While the work demands skilled technicians, necessary infrastructure and compliance with safety norms such as the use of specified-grade iron and adherence to weight limits, many unlicensed garages with untrained workers are carrying out the work flouting regulations in place. Notably, GST is applicable on the fabrication of heavy vehicle carriages and bodies. Ideally, the state government



should receive this tax. But in practice, GST registrations for these operations are being carried out in Jharkhand. Despite the labour and raw materials being sourced from Odisha, the 28 per cent GST levied per vehicle body is benefiting neighbouring Jharkhand instead.

Owing to this ongoing cross-border GST filing loophole, Odisha is losing out on crores of rupees in tax revenue annually.

Despite being aware of the matter, the state Transport department has allegedly remained silent, according to sources. A truck buyer, speaking on condition of anonymity, claimed that a racket is operating across Odisha and Jharkhand, involving fraudulent individuals who are fabricating truck bodies and evading GST.

As per the allegation, truck bodies or carriages are manufactured in Rourkela and then sent to Jharkhand at lower prices. GST filings are then carried out in that state, using the prepared documents to register the heavy vehicles. These documents are later submitted at the Rourkela

Regional Transport Office (RTO) to obtain fitness certificates for the vehicles, the buyer said.

When contacted, Rourkela Regional Transport Officer Bibhav Bhanjan Samantsinghar stated that only four to five garages in the city are authorised to manufacture truck carriages and bodies. Additionally, a separate license has been granted to the private garages in Vedvyas. The Motor Vehicles Inspector (MVI) team issues fitness certificates only after proper inspections, he added.

Samantsinghar also noted that vehicle registration in other states leads to revenue loss for Odisha, but no formal complaint regarding such a racket has reached the department so far. "If any such complaint is received, appropriate action will be taken," he said.

Rourkela GST Enforcement department's Deputy Commissioner Jagdish Sa, when asked about the matter, said no such complaint has come to their notice. "If such tax fraud is occurring, it would be subject to investigation," he added.

2 looters injured in gunfight with police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Rourkela, April 25: Two miscreants, who were allegedly fleeing after looting an eatery, were injured in a gunfight with the police in Rourkela, an officer said Friday.

They were hospitalised and stated to be out of danger. The incident took place when four miscreants were fleeing after looting a roadside dhaba and firing at its owner Suman Xalxo injuring him Thursday night.

Personnel from Bisra police station chased the gang. While fleeing, they fired targeting the policemen who returned the fire in self-defence injuring two of them, the officer said. The other two managed to flee.

The two injured were admitted to a hospital in Rourkela where their health condition was stated to be out of danger.

The police have recovered one country-made handgun, four empty cases and Rs 4,800 in cash from them. The police have launched a manhunt to nab the two other looters.

2 die after tree falls on auto-rickshaw

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, April 25: Two people were killed Friday afternoon when a tree fell on a moving auto-rickshaw during a thunderstorm near Kasabahal village under Puintala block in Bolangir district.

The incident occurred during a Nor'wester storm, which brought strong winds and light rain. A large neem tree was uprooted and collapsed onto the auto-rickshaw, killing the driver and a passenger instantly.

The deceased were identified as Gulam Mustafa Mohammad, 24, from Jhilimunda village near Balikhamar under Tarbha police station in Subarnapur district, and Nadi Nanda, 55, from Tandamunda village under Puintala police limits.

According to sources, the storm began at around 4pm with heavy winds and scattered rain. Gulam Mustafa was driving his auto-rickshaw towards Bolangir, and Nadi Nanda, who



was travelling to a wedding celebration in Lirkipali from Atgaon, had boarded the vehicle. At a short distance from Kasabahal bridge, the neem tree fell on the moving vehicle.

The impact crushed the vehicle, killing both men on the spot. Fire brigade personnel and police reached the scene, cleared the fallen tree, and recovered the bodies. The bodies were sent to the mortuary at Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital. Puintala police station IIC Anita Pradhan visited the spot and initiated an investigation.

Local residents demanded immediate government assistance for the families of the deceased, citing their poor financial condition.

Red dump seized in Malkangiri

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, April 25: Security forces have seized a Maoist dump in the Chitrakonda block of Malkangiri district, officials confirmed Friday.

According to sources, personnel from the 177 Battalion of the Border Security Force (BSF), stationed at the Ghanabeda and Gurusetu camps in Swabhiman Anchal of Malkangiri, launched a search operation following intelligence inputs. The operation targeted forest areas near Ken-



duguda and Salganput villages under Panaspur and Jodamba panchayats.

During the operation, the BSF team discovered a Maoist

473 live turtles seized

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, April 25: A large number of live turtles were seized by the Motu Forest department in Kalimela block of Malkangiri district, officials said.



Based on a tip-off regarding interstate turtle smuggling, forest officials set up a vehicle checkpoint at the Motu outpost early Friday morning. After some time, a speeding Bolero vehicle approached the checkpoint. When officials tried to stop it, the two occupants fled under the cover of darkness upon noticing the forest personnel.

Upon searching the vehicle, officials found 473 live turtles packed in 13 crates. The vehicle and the turtles were seized. A case has been registered, and an investigation has been initiated, according to the Forest department officials.

5 awarded life sentence for student's death during ritual

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jharsuguda, April 25: A court in Jharsuguda Friday sentenced five people to life in prison for their involvement in the 2017 death of college student identified as Sanyukta Jayapuria, who died during a ritualistic practice falsely claimed to be a form of treatment.

The incident took place March 2, 2017, in Bijapali village under Rengali police limits. Jayapuria, who was reportedly ill, died after being subjected to a ritual known as the "Shiva Tandav" dance. The court found that the ritual, performed by two women and aided by three others, led to her death.

Following a lengthy trial, the Additional District Judge's Court convicted Soudamini Jayapuria, 22; Santoshini Jayapuria, 23; Naveen Bhoi, 22; Sahadev Jayapuria, 19; and Akshay Jayapuria, 19. The court acquitted the victim's parents due to lack of evidence linking them to the fatal act.

The case had triggered statewide outrage after it was revealed that the young woman was subjected to the superstitious practice instead of receiving medical treatment. A Crime Branch investigation confirmed the ritual as the cause of death, leading to the arrest of all involved.

The verdict underscores the judiciary's strong position against superstitious practices that endanger lives.

40 Royal Bengal tigers in Similipal, population may exceed 100 by '36

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, April 25: Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) and Chief Wildlife Warden Prem Kumar Jha announced on social media platform X that the number of Royal Bengal tigers in Similipal has increased to 40 — a development that has brought joy to wildlife enthusiasts. Efforts are under way to raise the tiger population to more than 100 by 2036, he added.

Similipal Wildlife Sanctuary in Mayurbhanj district, the largest forest area in Odisha, has officially been declared India's 107th national park. Renowned for its rich biodiversity, medicinal plants, orchids, elephant reserve, and tiger conservation efforts,




Similipal holds immense ecological significance.

Similipal has received national park status after a gap of 45 years. With 845.70 square kilometres designated as a protected area, no individual will have proprietary rights over this land. As there are no human settlements in the region, the tiger population is expected to grow, according to Jha.

Currently, besides the known tigresses 'Zeenat' and 'Jamuna', there are 40 Royal Bengal tigers in Similipal. These include eight cubs, 13 males, and 17 tigresses. The age classification of two adult Royal Bengal tigers is yet to be confirmed. Of the total population, 18 are melanistic tigers (commonly known as black tigers), comprising nine males and nine tigresses.

Over the next decade, the Forest department aims to push the tiger count past 100. Notably, the 2023 tiger census report released by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) recorded 27 Royal Bengal tigers in Similipal, including eight cubs. A subsequent survey conducted by the state government using trap cameras identified 12 additional cubs, raising the count to 39. The department also confirmed that a significant number of these are melanistic tigers.



बैंक ऑफ महाराष्ट्र
Bank of Maharashtra
भारत सरकार का उद्यम
एक परिवार एक बैंक

**BANK OF MAHARASHTRA
BHUBANESWAR BRANCH**
Plot No.: 426/2260, N.B. Tower, Nayapalli,
Bhubaneswar - 751012, Ph.: 0674-2564018,
E-mail: bom1182@mahabank.co.in

**POSSESSION
NOTICE**
[Rule – 8(1)]

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the **Bank of Maharashtra** under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of the powers conferred under Sub-Section (12) of Section 13 read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus interest and expenses thereon within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic possession** of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 of Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrower/Co-Borrower/Guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **Bank of Maharashtra** for an amount stated below with interest & expenses thereon. **The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.**

Name & Address of the Borrower / Co-Borrower / Guarantor	Description of the Security Interest taken over possession	Liabilities due on the specified date as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice / Date of Possession
1) Borrower: M/s. Sunanda Enterprises, Prop.: Mr. Nihar Ranjan Pattnaik , S/o: Mr. Satyananda Pattnaik / Guarantor: Mr. Nihar Ranjan Pattnaik , S/o: Mr. Satyananda Pattnaik, Both are Address: H. No.: L1-149, Phase-3, Dumduma H.B Colony, Bhubaneswar-751019, 2) Borrower: Mr. Nihar Ranjan Pattnaik , S/o: Mr. Satyananda Pattnaik / Co-Borrower: Mrs. Sunanda Pattnaik , W/o: Mr. Satyananda Pattnaik, Both are Address: H. No.: L1-149, Phase-3, Dumduma H.B Colony, Bhubaneswar-751019.	Equitable Mortgage of Residential Land and Building situated at Mouza: Dumduma, SRO: Khandagiri, Tahasil: Bhubaneswar, Khata No.: 519, Plot No.: 1100 (P), Area: 1125 Sqft., Drawing No.: L-1238/2001, Dumduma Housing Board, Phase-III, House No.: L1-149, Bhubaneswar, Dist.: Khurda, PIN - 751019, standing in the name of Mr. Nihar Ranjan Pattnaik , Bounded by North: Road, East: Road, West: Vacant Space, South: House No.: L1-150.	₹56,99,687.73 as on 13.02.2025 + interest & other charges thereon	13.02.2025 / 24.04.2025

Place: Bhubaneswar, **Date:** 26.04.2025 **Authorised Officer, Bank of Maharashtra**



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ADMISSION NOTIFICATION
C-DAC ADVANCED LEVEL DIPLOMA COURSE ON
HIGH PERFORMANCE COMPUTING AND ITS APPLICATION

For candidates belonging to SC/ST (Any Gender), Women (Any Category), EWS, General Category

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Duration: 6 Months**
- **Mode: Offline (Physical)**
- **No Registration Fee**
- **Course Fee: Rs.4,75,000 FREE**

BENEFITS

- **Industry expert guidance**
- **Mentoring by C-DAC experts**
- **A monthly stipend of 10,000/- will be provided to SC/ST/EWS/Women only**
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Last date to Apply
May 15, 2025

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to general public that, I Sri Bhakta Charan Sahoo has lost the original link ROR NO.-928/1428 of Mouza - Jharapada, Unit-33, Tahasil - Bhubaneswar, Dist. - Khordha in the name of Sri Bhakta Charan Sahoo along with other documents which was kept in my hand bag, some where around, Laxmisagar chhak, Bhubaneswar and inspite of my best efforts failed to trace the same.

Therefore, if any one has found the same, please contact Advocate Sri NC. Pattnaik, Mob : 9853311189, of Bajaj Finance Ltd. within 7 days from the date of the publication, failing which the document will lose its legal force, and any mis-use of the document will be punishable under law.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

(1) Tender Notice No.SBP-ELECT-2025-T-242
NAME OF WORK : 11KV RING MAIN SYSTEM AT TILAGARH.
Approx. cost of the work : ₹ 89,52,454.61, EMD: ₹ 1,79,100/-

(2) Tender Notice No.SBP-ELECT-2025-T-243
NAME OF WORK : ILLUMINATION OF STATION NAME BOARD OVER SAMBALPUR DIVISION.
Approx. cost of the work : ₹ 1,50,32,877.40, EMD: ₹ 2,25,200/-
Completion Period of the Work : 6 (Six) Months from the date of issue of LOA (for both SI. Nos.).
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1530 hrs. of 23.05.2025 (for SI. No.1) & At 1530 hrs. of 16.05.2025 (for SI. No.2).
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier/ Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tender is available in website : www.ireps.gov.in
Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website fifteen (15) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/ bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/ bidder can participate on e-tendering.
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G)/ PR-72/Q/25-26 Sambalpur

RAILWAY NOTIFICATION

Major memorandum No. – EL/C/AG/DAR/2024/01, Dated - 24/07/2024 was issued against Sri Jitendra Kumar Swain, Emp No - 124NP001511, Helper/C&W/Agartala under SSE/IC/C&W/Agartala due to unauthorizedly absenting from duty wef - 16/02/2024 to till on date. CO copy SF-5 could not handed over to CO due to absenting till on date. Accordingly undersigned has nominated Sri Paolenthang Singson, SSE/C&W/Agartala as Inquiry Officer to inquire the case and IO was fixed several inquiry date on - **20/02/2025, 03/03/2025, 19/03/2025 & 30/03/2025** and letters are sent to CO's permanent home address Sri Jitendra Kumar Swain, Emp No – 124NP001511, Helper/C&W/Agartala, PO - Bananai Badakhari, via Purushottampur, Dist - Ganjam, Pin - 761041, State - Odisha through registered post but out of above four letters of enquiry dates, only 1st letter of enquiry date (dated - 20/02/2025) was received by Sri Jitendra Kumar Swain on - 18/02/2025 (As per Speed post tracking) but he did not attend on that inquiry date and other letters of enquiry dates (dated - 03/03/25, 19/03/25 & 30/03/2025) are returned back to inquiry officer with postal remarks, "Addressee can't be located. Return to sender & Refused return to sender".

Sri Jitendra Kumar Swain is hereby advised to attend on **07-05-2025 at 11.00 hrs.** at Room No- 13, Demu Cum Sickline Shed, Coaching Depot Agartala without fail. Otherwise ex-Parte decision will be taken against him.

Coaching Depot, Officer Agartala
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

INDIAN RAILWAYS
INTRODUCTION OF 25 KV TRACTION “PUBLIC NOTIFICATION”

Notice is hereby given to all users of Railway lines and premises situated on the complete section of the under noted section of the East Coast Railway, Sambalpur Division that the 25,000 Volts, 50 hz, A.C. Over Head Traction Wires will be energized on or after the date specified against the section, on and from the same date the Over Head Traction Lines shall be treated as live at all times and no unauthorized person shall approach or work in the proximity of the said overhead Lines.

SECTION/YARD :- Electrification of Conventional OHE system for proposed GCT work at BXQ yard KTPL siding take off from Line-no.-2.

SN	Section/line	From Loc. (KM/Ch.)	To Loc. (km/Ch.)	TKM.
1	KTPL siding take off from Line-no.-2 at BXQ yard	KTPL-0/1 Ch-0/78.80	KTPL-1/4 KTPL-1/127.30	1,246

Date of energization :- 10.05.2025
Gati Shakti Multi-Model Cargo Terminal (GCT) Brundamal (BXQ) Station, for M/s Kalyani Tranco Pvt. Ltd.



Bureaucratic Yoga

If there's one thing India's babus do well, it's dressing up flexibility as policy. Case in point: the latest extensions given to Sonia Narang and Abhishek Goyal, both senior IPS officers on central deputation to the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Their tenures have been extended in "relaxation" of the IPS tenure policy. Now that's babu-speak for "Yes, we made rules. No, we're not always bound by them."

Take Narang. In early April, she was relieved from her ED post and sent back to the Karnataka cadre without explanation. And just like that, she's back in Delhi with a one-year extension. Whiplash, anyone? In her time at ED, she's handled a whole alphabet soup of high-profile cases — PFI, IFFCO, Vivo, Maoists, even the ever-glamorous Khan Market cash trail. Someone decided she's too valuable to let go just yet. But observers are wondering why the unceremonious exit earlier?

Goyal's extension is equally telling. Currently leading the HIU and also handling the Northern Region (including the recently held Maharashtra elections), he, too, gets a one-year bonus round. Perhaps it helps to be where the political action is.

Let's not forget: the post of Special Director is the second-highest rank in the ED hierarchy. There are nine of them. That's a lot of "special" and not a lot of clarity.

So here we are watching the rules bend, twist, and politely look the other way when power and convenience collide. The ACC may call it relaxation. For many others, it's a masterclass in bureaucratic yoga.

Kerala's 'civil war' goes public

Kerala's babudom seems to be experiencing its own version of a reality show, complete with public spats, social media drama, and allegations flying faster than monsoon winds.

At the centre of this storm is IAS officer N Prasanth, affectionately dubbed 'Collector Bro' for his social media savvy. Currently suspended, Prasanth has accused senior bureaucrats A. Jayathilak and K. Gopalakrishnan of corruption and conspiracy, even dragging a Malayalam daily into the fray. He claims his suspension is retaliation for whistleblowing against entrenched corruption and misuse of office—serious charges that can't just be brushed off.

Meanwhile, Gopalakrishnan was suspended for allegedly creating a religion-based WhatsApp group, seen as a violation of service rules. Prasanth's own suspension followed his very public criticism of Jayathilak on social media, which the government called a breach of conduct. The online slugfest has exposed the cracks within Kerala's famously disciplined administrative set-up.

This bureaucratic brawl isn't just about bruised egos; it reflects deeper dysfunction within the administrative framework. The public airing of such disputes, especially on social media, undermines the integrity of the civil services and erodes public trust. And let's not forget, it's also a massive distraction from governance.

In an era where transparency is paramount, perhaps it's time for the babus to embrace openness and address internal conflicts through proper institutional channels. After all, the public deserves a civil service that is as accountable as it is efficient and less prone to becoming an OTT-worthy drama.

Transparency burden

In the power corridors of Madhya Pradesh, a silent discontent brews among babus. While IAS, IPS, and IFS officers are mandated to disclose their immovable assets annually, ministers have sidestepped this transparency for over 15 years. The contrast is as stark as it is telling, and although no one dares say it out loud, the resentment is palpable.

The state's General Administration Department has reiterated that all state employees must submit detailed property disclosures. This includes information on ancestral and self-acquired properties, purchase dates, values, and current market valuations. Non-compliance could result in withheld salaries or stalled promotions — a stiff penalty for mere delay, let alone defiance.

In contrast, ministers have largely avoided such scrutiny. Despite previous commitments, including a 2016 announcement to declare assets online, many ministers have not consistently disclosed their property details. Successive governments have either quietly ignored the issue or kicked the can down the road, possibly to avoid ruffling political feathers.

This discrepancy fosters a sense of inequity among bureaucrats, who are held to stringent standards while political leaders operate with relative impunity. The whisper in government circles is not about whether this is unfair but how long this double standard will continue.

The lack of ministerial transparency undermines the principles of accountability and good governance. For a truly transparent administration, it's imperative that ministers lead by example, embracing the same disclosure standards imposed on bureaucrats.

Until then, babus will keep filing their disclosures under silent protest, watching their political bosses sail above the accountability tide, dry, untouched, and remarkably unbothered.

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

WISDOM CORNER

- The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart.

HELEN KELLER
- However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at.

STEPHEN HAWKING
- Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- 1933:** Hermann Göring formed the Gestapo, the political police of Nazi Germany that ruthlessly eliminated opposition and was involved in the roundup of Jews throughout Europe for deportation to extermination camps.
- 1937:** During the Spanish Civil War, the Condor Legion of the German air force, supporting the Nationalists, bombed the Basque city of Guernica, an event memorialized in Pablo Picasso's painting Guernica.
- 1964:** With the merger of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, the United Republic of Tanzania was founded, and Julius Nyerere served as its first president.
- 1986:** A devastating environmental catastrophe occurred early this morning in 1986 when an explosion and fire at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine released large amounts of radioactive material into the atmosphere.

FOCUS CLIMATE ACTION

ADDRESS DEBT DISTRESS

Today's global economic turmoil is not just about trade. As G20 finance ministers gather in Washington this week during the annual spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva has warned that growing economic uncertainty and financial market stress pose serious threats to developing countries.

The danger is particularly acute for highly indebted economies, which are now facing weaker growth prospects and reduced financial support from the United States and other donor countries. In February, the IMF estimated that nearly half of the lowest-income countries were at risk of debt distress, at which point they may no longer be able to meet their debt obligations. That number is expected to rise as conditions continue to deteriorate.

Compounding the crisis, the world's poorest countries—especially small island developing states—are highly vulnerable to climate change and biodiversity loss. Extreme weather events like hurricanes, droughts, and floods can wipe out critical infrastructure and cripple agricultural production in an instant, while slower-onset changes like rising temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns require continuous and costly adaptation measures.

The debt and climate crises are closely intertwined. As more public funds are diverted toward disaster relief and recovery, fewer resources are available for climate adaptation, nature conservation, and long-term investment. This, in turn, increases vulnerability, weakens growth prospects, and drives up borrowing costs, shrinking fiscal space even further. The result is a self-reinforcing, vicious circle.

But it doesn't have to be this way. Over the past year, we



Vera Songwe and Moritz Kraemer

AS THE PRIMARY BENEFICIARIES, INSURANCE COMPANIES MUST WORK TOGETHER WITH MDBs TO DEVELOP AN INSTRUMENT CAPABLE OF TRANSLATING THESE SAVINGS INTO RETURNS FOR INVESTORS



Making debt management both fiscally and environmentally sustainable is not only feasible but also essential to safeguarding global growth, which is in the interest of all countries—not just the poorest

have co-chaired the Expert Review on Debt, Nature, and Climate—an initiative launched by the governments of Colombia, Kenya, France, and Germany. In our final report, "Healthy Debt on a Healthy Planet," we outline several steps that emerging and developing economies can take to break free from the debt-climate trap and move toward a virtuous cycle of low-carbon, climate-resilient, and nature-positive growth.

First, climate and nature considerations must be integrated into macroeconomic and fiscal analyses. This is especially critical in the debt sustainability frameworks used by the IMF and World Bank to assess developing countries' fiscal health. Although both institutions have made some progress in recent years, much more needs to be done to ensure that these frameworks fully account for climate-related risks.

Equally important, such assessments must recognize not only the risks posed by climate change but also the economic benefits of investing in resilience. Their value—especially their potential to fuel medium-term growth and reduce a country's financial risks—must be properly reflected in economic and financial models to

encourage governments to act.

Second, many developing countries need assistance in reducing their debt burdens. Some are already in debt distress, while others suffer from liquidity problems. Our report proposes new mechanisms for restructuring and refinancing debt in return for investments in climate adaptation and conservation projects that promote sustainable growth. Borrower countries, major global creditors, the IMF, and multilateral development banks (MDBs) must all champion such solutions.

Third, proven approaches to addressing debt, nature, and climate risks must be scaled up. These include contingency clauses in debt contracts that suspend repayments during natural disasters and various forms of sustainability-linked finance. While debt-for-climate and debt-for-nature swaps are not yet scalable due to a lack of standardization, they have already delivered vital funding for environmental initiatives, demonstrating their value and warranting greater support.

More broadly, MDBs must significantly boost lending to support low-carbon, climate-resilient, and nature-positive growth. While discussions on much-needed recapitalization

are ongoing, optimizing MDB balance sheets remains the most effective way to stretch scarce public resources and accelerate sustainable development.

Lastly, our report calls for the development of new financing instruments aimed at mobilizing private capital for climate mitigation and adaptation. For example, we propose establishing a Finance Facility against Climate Change (F2C2)—a special-purpose vehicle designed to issue green bonds backed by future donor commitments. The proceeds would be directed primarily toward climate-mitigation investments in developing countries. If successful, the F2C2 could unlock up to \$1 trillion in private financing.

We also propose a new kind of equity-like instrument to finance climate-resilient infrastructure. Investments in sea walls, flood defenses, and similar systems can significantly reduce the costs of disaster relief and recovery. As the primary beneficiaries, insurance companies must work together with MDBs to develop an instrument capable of translating these savings into returns for investors.

These are all practical, actionable proposals. When combined with technical assistance and policy support, they could significantly improve the growth prospects of developing countries grappling with debt and climate risks. Making debt management both fiscally and environmentally sustainable is not only feasible but also essential to safeguarding global growth, which is in the interest of all countries—not just the poorest.

Vera Songwe, is Co-Chair of the Expert Review on Debt, Nature, and Climate. Moritz Kraemer is Chief Economist at LBBW Bank.

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SPECTRUM EDUCATION

Enhance credibility of NIRF rankings

In a significant development, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court has issued an interim stay order, temporarily barring the Union Education Ministry and the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) from releasing the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings for 2025. This judicial intervention comes amid growing concerns about potential irregularities in the ranking process and follows petitions challenging the transparency and methodology of the NIRF evaluation system. The court's decision underscores the need for greater accountability in India's higher education ranking framework, which has faced criticism in recent years for alleged biases, data discrepancies, and lack of consideration for qualitative aspects of institutional performance. This pause in the publication of rankings provides an opportunity to re-examine and refine the assessment parameters to ensure they truly reflect educational quality and institutional excellence across India's diverse higher education landscape. The stay order will remain in effect until further hearings can address the substantive issues raised about



Bhaskar Nath Biswal

THE NIRF HAS PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN ENHANCING QUALITY STANDARDS ACROSS INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

the ranking process.

The NIRF rankings serve as a critical benchmark for assessing the quality and performance of higher education institutions in India, providing students and parents with transparent, data-driven insights to make informed academic choices. By evaluating institutions on key parameters, NIRF promotes healthy competition among universities to improve their standards, align with global best practices, and attract funding or collaborations. For institutions, a strong NIRF ranking enhances credibility, visibility, and student recruitment, while policymakers use these rankings to identify gaps and allocate resources effectively.

The NIRF evaluates higher education institutions across five comprehensive parameters: Teaching, Learning & Resources (TLR) assesses faculty quality, infrastructure, and academic support systems; Research and Professional Practice (RP) measures research output, patents, and industry collaborations; Graduation Outcomes (GO) tracks student placement rates, higher education progression, and median salaries; Outreach and Inclusivity (OI) examines diversity

initiatives, access for disadvantaged groups, and community engagement; while Peer Perception captures institutional reputation through stakeholder surveys. Together, these criteria provide a holistic assessment of an institution's academic excellence, research impact, student success, social commitment, and national standing.

The NIRF has played a significant role in enhancing quality standards across Indian higher education institutions, yet it faces notable limitations due to its heavy reliance on quantitative metrics and inherent structural biases. By prioritizing easily measurable parameters like faculty-student ratios and publication counts, NIRF often overlooks qualitative aspects such as teaching innovation, student satisfaction, and holistic learning experiences. This marginalizes rural and regional colleges, which face contextual challenges like limited funding and infrastructure but may excel in localized impact or community engagement.

For example, IIT Bombay consistently ranks in the top 5, whereas Maa Manikeshwari University struggles to break into the top 200. The fact is that IIT Bombay is urban and

centrally funded, whereas state-funded Maa Manikeshwari University is situated in a backward region serving marginalized tribal communities.

Further undermining NIRF's credibility are issues like the opaque 'Peer Perception' parameter, which relies on subjective surveys prone to favoring established brands over lesser-known but deserving institutions.

To enhance the credibility and effectiveness of NIRF rankings, comprehensive reforms must be implemented to eliminate systemic biases, establish specialized benchmarks for different institutional categories, and prioritize qualitative assessment of teaching excellence and societal impact. These reforms should incorporate rigorous on-site verification processes, similar to NAAC's peer-review mechanism, to validate the authenticity of data submitted by participating institutions. Such improvements would align NIRF more closely with global best practices in educational quality assurance while addressing the unique challenges of India's heterogeneous academic landscape.

The writer is a retired Principal of Nabarangpur College, Odisha.

Resist religious hatred

Sir, The following details from injured tourists and their families shed light on the Pahalgam massacre: Among the 26 tourists killed, only one, a Muslim 'Ghodawalla,' bravely fought back by grabbing a terrorist's rifle. The attackers spoke different languages apart from Pakistani, hinting at the involvement of foreign mercenaries. Local residents did their best to assist the dead and injured. Locals are financially hit with the exodus of tourists, hoping for their return of trust. Meanwhile, the Pakistani Defence Minister denied the presence of 'Lashkar-e-Taiba' and its affiliate 'Resistance Front' (which Indian authorities suspect was involved in the attack) while expressing grief over the incident. Additionally, any effects from the potential denunciation of the Indus Water Treaty would not be seen until 2050, should the process begin now. Citizens must resist community and religious hatred, which appears to be a politically motivated tactic exploiting emotions and internal weaknesses of the nation, influenced by external forces. A military strike on all terror camps is an immediate solution to which Pakistan should agree and participate if it genuinely stands by its public statements.

RS Narula, PATIALA

Beware of DMK

Sir, The cabinet reshuffle is on the cards for DMK, following the recent Supreme Court order that the Minister of Electricity, Prohibition, and Excise, Senthil Balaji, cannot continue in his post if he is to enjoy his bail in the case of the cash-for-job scam against him. The Madras High Court has initiated suo motu proceedings against DMK Minister Ponmudy for his controversial remarks demeaning the moral worth of sex workers and subverting the harmony and peace of various religious groups. As the party gets closer to the assembly elections, this could be seen as a move to drop these two ministers and bring in new faces to alter public opinion. The people of Tamil Nadu should not fall prey to DMK. Notably, the cases against senior ministers Duraimurugan and MRK PannerSelvam on their corruption cases for disproportionate wealth have been reopened by the Madras High Court, which has stopped them from getting any relief.

T Radhika, CHENNAI

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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

OrissaPOST

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KARTARPUR REMAINS OPEN FOR PILGRIMS



Amid escalating India-Pakistan tensions following the Pahalgam terror attack, devotees continued visiting the Kartarpur Corridor at Dera Baba Nanak to pay obeisance at the historic gurdwara in Pakistan.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 25: Amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack, the Kartarpur corridor at Dera Baba Nanak in Punjab's Gurdaspur district remains open for pilgrims to offer prayers at the Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara in the neighbouring country. The Kartarpur corridor links the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan, the final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev, to the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur. Devotees Friday continued to visit the Kartarpur corridor at Dera Baba Nanak for paying obeisance at the

historic gurdwara in Pakistan.

The pilgrims sought that the Kartarpur corridor should remain open. "The corridor should remain open for pilgrims," said a Sikh devotee from Shaheed Bhagat Singh (SBS) Nagar district.

A woman pilgrim too said the corridor should not be shut. The pilgrims strongly condemned the dastardly terror attack in Pahalgam and said exemplary action should be taken against the perpetrators.

Twenty-six people, mostly tourists, were killed and several injured when terrorists opened fire at a meadow near the popular tourist town of Pahalgam in south Kashmir's Anantnag district Tuesday afternoon.

The Kartarpur corridor was opened November 9, 2019 on the occasion of Guru Nanak Dev's 550th birth anniversary.

Indian pilgrims of all faiths are allowed to undertake visa-free travel throughout the year to the historic gurdwara in Pakistan.

According to an agreement signed between India and Pakistan, a total of 5,000 pilgrims per day can cross over to the neighbouring country for paying obeisance at the gurdwara.

The Centre Wednesday announced a raft of measures, including expulsion of Pakistani military attaches, suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 and immediate shutting down of the Attari land-transit post,

Punjab to recruit 5,500 home guards to strengthen border vigil

Chandigarh: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack, Thursday gave his nod for recruiting 5,500 home guards to strengthen the second line of defence at the International Border. A decision to this effect was taken in a meeting chaired by the chief minister here, an official statement said. During the meeting, Mann said 5,500 jawans in the border wing of the Punjab Home Guards will be deployed in the seven border districts of the state to enhance security cover. In the wake of the terror attack, Mann said, the proposal to set up a second line of defence behind the Border Security Force (BSF) will help to catch anyone that escapes the BSF's net at the International Border. An effective second line of defence will "check nefarious designs of forces inimical to the state", he said. Considering the enormity of the task, the state government will certainly need the Centre's assistance, for which he will soon meet the Union home minister, Mann said.

in view of the cross-border links to the Pahalgam attack.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said Pakistani nationals will not be allowed to travel to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) and any Pakistani national currently in India under the scheme had 48 hours to leave the country.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was announced at the meeting that the integrated check-post (ICP) at Attari will be closed immediately and those who crossed over to Pakistan with valid documents may return through that route before May 1.

The Centre Thursday announced revoking all visas issued to Pakistani nationals from April 27 and advised Indian nationals residing in Pakistan to return home at the earliest as tensions between the two neighbours escalated following the Pahalgam attack.

MANN CALLS ON PANCHAYATS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, April 25: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann Thursday sought support of village panchayats for his government's ongoing anti-drug drive 'Yudh Nashey-an Virush' and announced financial assistance for villages declared as "drug free".

Mann further promised to develop these villages into model villages and also announced to hike honorarium for 'Sarpanchs' (village heads) to Rs 2,000 per month.

He was addressing a gathering during the state-level function to mark 'Panchayat Diwas' here.

A village that will declare itself "drug-free" will be given financial



assistance worth Rs 1 lakh, besides other ultra-modern facilities, Mann said. Drug free villages will be developed as model villages and no stone will be left unturned to give fillip to their development, he said.

He asked village 'Sarpanchs' to play a proactive role in this noble cause so that the scourge of drugs is wiped out from the state with active

public support.

Mann said the state government will not sit idly and watch smugglers bloom at the cost of bodies and pyres of drug victims.

The state government has already snapped the supply line of drugs and big fish involved in this heinous crime have been put behind bars, the chief minister said.

For the first time, the property of the drug smugglers acquired illegally is being destroyed by the state government so that it acts as a deterrent for others, he added.

Meanwhile, Mann announced that Sarpanches would be given an honorarium worth Rs 2,000 per month starting from the day they were elected.

Kerala bids tearful farewell to Pahalgam attack victim

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, April 25: Under a grey April sky, grief hung heavy over Changampuzha Park, Edappally, Thursday morning. A sea of mourners—across politics, professions, and generations—gathered in silence to bid a final farewell to N Ramachandran (65), who was killed in the Pahalgam terror attack.

His last rites were conducted with full state honours.

Emotional scenes unfolded as his body was kept for public homage at Changampuzha Park and later at his residence. The body, brought from a private hospital mortuary, arrived at the park around 7 am. Accompanied by grieving relatives and close friends, it was placed for public homage, marking a sombre morning in the heart of Kochi.

As mourners gathered, many softly chanted the universal prayer "Loka Samastah Sukhino Bhavantu" (may all beings everywhere be happy). A steady stream of people

ANTI-DRUG CAMPAIGN



others folding their hands in silence.

Many consoled his wife, Sheela, daughter Arathi R Menon, and son Suresh Menon.

Kerala Governor Rajendra Arlekar, Goa Governor PS Sreedharan Pillai, Union Minister Suresh Gopi, Kerala Industries Minister P Rajeev, Leader of Opposition V D Satheesan, Kochi Mayor M Anilkumar, Ernakulam Collector NSK Umesh, actor Jayasurya, Kerala High Court Judge Devan Ramachandran and others paid their respects.

At 10 am, as the crowd grew, the body was moved to his residence on Mangattu Road, Edappally, where friends, neighbours, and well-wishers awaited with tearful eyes and heavy hearts. As Ramachandran's final journey began around noon, the air echoed with chants of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai", "Ramachandran Amar Rahe", and "Namallellam Onnane" (We are one)—an acknowledgement of a life cut short by terror, but remembered with dignity and gratitude.

Hundreds joined the solemn procession that ended at the Santhikavadam crematorium, Edappally.

The cremation, conducted with full state honours at around 1 pm, was marked by quiet dignity and public solidarity. His son Suresh lit the pyre. A condolence meeting followed at Changampuzha Park.

Later, a steady stream of visitors continued to Ramachandran's home. Higher Education Minister R Bindu, former minister PK Sreemathi, and filmmaker Major Ravi were among those who offered condolences.

Kerala to form traditional knowledge authority under revised IPR policy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, April 25: After 17 years, Kerala's Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy is set for a comprehensive revamp, featuring a new Traditional Knowledge Authority, a Docketing System, and the launch of Mission IPR to boost IP administration.

The draft IPR Policy, prepared by RS Praveen Raj, Senior Principal Scientist at CSIR-National Institute of Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (CSIR-NIIST), proposes wide-ranging reforms aimed at modernising the state's IP governance framework.

Intellectual Property (IP) is defined as the 'Product of Mind', with IPR being the legally enforceable exclusive right granted to its creator for a limited time.

Other key proposals in the draft include setting up an IPR Academy and making intellectual property education mandatory in schools and universities.

"The 2008 policy primarily focused on the protection of traditional knowledge. Now, we aim to expand its scope by aligning it with the National IPR



Policy. The current effort is more about reinforcing existing rights while broadening the policy's reach," told Praveen Raj to PTI.

Traditional knowledge—comprising centuries-old practices, medicinal wisdom, and innovations passed down through indigenous and local communities—is increasingly vulnerable in the era of globalisation.

Misappropriation, exploitation, and commodification of such knowledge by external parties without proper acknowledgment or consent have raised significant ethical and legal concerns.

"The commodification of indigenous knowledge without appropriate recognition or compensation poses

serious ethical questions. The government is committed to preventing both direct and indirect misappropriation of traditional knowledge, which forms a vital part of our cultural heritage," the draft policy states.

"The focus of IPR Policy 2008 was traditional knowledge protection. The scope of this document is proposed to be broadened in line with the National IPR Policy, 2016. I presented my draft of 'IPR and Traditional Knowledge Policy 2025' at the brainstorming meeting held last month," Raj, who also serves on the state-appointed panel for revising the policy, said.

"The IPR Policy drafting committee has been directed to refine this zero draft," he added.

He further said the draft proposes to include IPR as a mandatory subject in university and school curricula. An IPR Academy is also on the anvil.

"Traditional Knowledge Docketing System (TKDS), 'Mission IPR', and the Kerala Traditional Knowledge Authority (KTKA) are other key highlights," Raj noted. To safeguard this valuable heritage, the policy proposes the creation of a Traditional Knowledge Docketing System (TKDS).

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया

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Zonal Office: Baripada, Bank of India Building, Lal Bazaar, In front of MKC School, PIN-757001

AUCTION SALE OF VEHICLES

Applications are invited from interested bidders for purchase of following vehicles, seized by the Bank on "As is where is & As is What is basis" as per terms and conditions listed below. This public notice will be treated as a notice to the borrowers/guarantors/mortgagors of the loans. They are hereby advised to pay their entire dues before the auction date, failing which the vehicles will be auctioned and balance dues, if any will be recovered from them with interest and cost.

Sl. No.	Branch Name	Name of the Borrower / Loan Account No.	Vehicle Details/ Outstanding (in Lakh)	Reserve Price / Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Parking Yard Details
1.	SULIAPADA / Contact No.: 7381388826	Ganeswar Hansda / A/c No.: 546276110000040	Make: Atul, Model: Elite Passenger Engine No.: LM0703, Chassis No.: MCG43R4EHL2104014, Regd. No.: OD11Y8895 / O/s : ₹1.82 Lakh	₹47,250/- / ₹ 5,000/-	
2.	PODA ASTIA / Contact No.: 9853523410	Bikasini Nayak / A/c No.: 551276210000101	Make- PIGCPL, Model- Atul Rik Plus BS-6 Engine No.- CMS22B06528 Chasis No.- MCG68R3CMB2203143 Regd. No.: OD11Z4190 / O/s : ₹2.51 Lakh	₹ 71,100/- / ₹ 7,500/-	
3.	PODA ASTIA / Contact No.: 9853523410	Chunuram Bindhani / A/c No.: 551276210000102	Make- Atul, Model- GEM 3p 200 CNG, Engine No.- CGS22G09148, Chasis No.- MCG61R3CGG2205435, Regd. No.: OD11W9266 / O/s : ₹2.66 Lakh	₹1,49,000/- / ₹ 15,000/-	
4.	PODA ASTIA / Contact No.: 9853523410	Bhagat Hansdah / A/c No.: 551276210000103	Make- Atul, Model- GEM PAXX, Engine No.- S2B9196745, Chasis No.- MCG37R3DBC2297229, Regd. No.: OD11Z5744 / O/s : ₹2.54 Lakh	₹1,49,000/- / ₹ 15,000/-	
5.	RANDIA / Contact No.: 7001369955	Manoj Kumar Jena / A/c No.: 535676210000008	Make- New Holland, Model- New Holland 3037, Engine No.- F62321, Chasis No.- NH6282451, Regd. No.: OD22B7487 / O/s : ₹5.70 Lakh	₹1,26,000/- / ₹ 13,000/-	
6.	MURGABADI / Contact No.: 9437289318	Somanath Sahu / A/c No.: 545072310000035	Make- PIGVPL, Model- D3S Passenger Auto, Engine No.- R6J2817227, Chasis No.- MBX00002FUK365564, Regd. No.: OD11H5124 / O/s : ₹0.79 Lakh	₹35,000/- / ₹ 3,500/-	
7.	RAIRANGPUR / Contact No.: 9438202800	Suresh Soren / A/c No.: 550376210000160	Make- Mahindra & Mahindra, Model-Alfa DX Diesel BS6, Engine No.-S2H9220919, Chasis No.- MA1LE2NR9N3J20021,, Regd. No.: OD11W9818 / O/s : ₹2.88 Lakh	₹1,49,000/- / ₹ 15,000/-	
8.	BANGIRIPOSI / Contact No.: 9861277365	Binaya Kumar Giri / A/c No.: 545372310000077	Make- Mahindra & Mahindra, Model- SUPRO LX Engine No.- HLG6K31825, Chasis No.- MA1FM2HLWG6K33262, Regd. No.: OD11K2930 / O/s : ₹5.12 Lakh	₹2,27,500/- / ₹ 23,000/-	
9.	RAIRANGPUR / Contact No.: 9438202800	Ashish Kumar Giri / A/c No.: 550360510000092	Make- Hyundai, Model- Hyundai Xcent Sx Dsl, Engine No.- D3FBHM405168, Chasis No.- MALA841ELHM279546H Regd. No.: OD11E9362 / O/s : ₹4.58 Lakh	₹2,23,255/- / ₹ 22,326/-	
10.	UDALA / Contact No.: 7978631137	Madhab Ch Roul / A/c No.: 547760510000124	Make- Hyundai, Model- Hyundai Grand i10, Engine No.- G4LMM854086, Chasis No.- MALB351CLMM209126, Regd. No.: OD11X5972 / O/s : ₹3.94 Lakh	₹2,70,227/- / ₹ 27,023/-	
11.	RAIRANGPUR / Contact No.: 9438202800	Jaga Kalia Nath / A/c No.: 550373210000155	Make- Mahindra & Mahindra, Model- Mahindra Jeeto, Engine No.: UGN3HD1059, Chasis No.- MA1KP2UGEN3H65835, Regd. No.: OD11W8468 / O/s : ₹2.88 Lakh	₹2,66,478/- / ₹ 27,000/-	
12.	ICHINDA / Contact No.: 7008955087	Tusharkanti Mohanta / A/c No.: 550860510000018	Make- Maruti Suzuki, Model-IGNIS Zeta Engine No.: K12MN43041354 Chasis No.: MA3NFG81SHG143955 Regd. No.: JH05BY5574 / O/s : ₹1.87 Lakh	₹ 1,88,000/- / ₹ 19,000/-	
13.	NOU BRANCH / Contact No.: 9777766622	Sasmita Parida / A/c No.: 551060510000306	Make-Hyundai, Model-Aura 1.2MT Kappa XZ+, Engine No.: REVTRN11FXXK82355, Chasis No.- MAT627129NLG71106, Regd. No.: OD01AP8180 / O/s : ₹7.97 Lakh	₹ 3,52,627/- / ₹ 35,263/-	
14.	RAIRANGPUR / Contact No.: 9438202800	Jumal Sirka / A/c No.: 550376210000185	Make- Mahindra & Mahindra, Model- Alfa DX Diesel BSVI, Engine No.: S2L9231158, Chasis No.- MA1LE2NR9P3C16471, Regd. No.: OD11AA3008 / O/s : ₹1.63 Lakh	₹ 1,66,000/- / ₹ 17,000/-	
15.	BADA DALIMA / Contact No.: 9685727039	Anoj Kumar Gupta / A/c No.: 548372310000015	Make- Maruti Suzuki, Model- Ertiga VDI, Engine No.: D13A5133129, Chasis No.- MA3FLEB1S00331993, Regd. No.: OD11A8969 / O/s : ₹2.88 Lakh	₹ 1,74,707/- / ₹ 17,471/-	
16.	JALESWAR / Contact No.: 9437299442	Sudam Kumar Sahu / A/c No.: 549260510000057	Make-Hyundai, Model-Aura 1.2MT Kappa Engine No.: G4LAPM503618, Chasis No.: MALB241CLPM188893 Regd No.:OD 01AS 3630 / O/s : ₹6.48 Lakh	₹ 2,10,000/- / ₹ 21,000/-	
17.	RAIRANGPUR / Contact No.: 9438202800	Jyoti Ranjan Barik / A/c No.: 550360510000184	Make- Maruti Suzuki, Model-Alto VXI Engine No.: F8DN6666732 Chasis No.: MA3EUA61S00K24193 Regd No.: OD11W7212 / O/s : ₹3.48 Lakh	₹ 1,05,000/- / ₹ 10,500/-	
18.	UDALA / Contact No.: 7978631137	Gamha Bindhani / A/c No.: 547760910000042	Make- Hero Motor corp, Model-Hero destiny 125 VX Engine No.: JF17ENPGK06915 Chasis No.: MBLJFW539PGK06265 Regd No.: OD11AC7172 / O/s : ₹0.81 Lakh	₹ 21,000/- / ₹ 2,100/-	
19.	BARSAHI / Contact No.: 9037061985	Kalpna Patra / A/c No.: 545260910000009	Make- Hop Leo Model-Hop Leo 34AH HS white Chasis No.: R41T24010PA100304 Regd No.: OD01AT5209 / O/s : ₹0.83 Lakh	₹ 15,625/- / ₹ 1,563/-	

Date of Auction: 15.05.2025 From 10.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M., E-Auction Portal- <https://baanknet.com>

Auction Venue: Zonal Office, Baripada, Bank of India Building, Lal Bazaar, In front of MKC School, PIN-757001

Terms and Conditions: Interested bidders can inspect the vehicle at above mentioned parking yards from 02.05.2025 to 13.05.2025 from 10.00 A.M. to 5.00 P.M. Application & quotes to participate in the auction would be supplied by the **Concerned Branch**. The application along with earnest money, mentioned against above vehicle to be submitted well before 14.05.2025. The EMD & other payments should be in form of **DD** and in the favour of **Bank of India, Zonal Office & payable at Baripada**. The bidders are informed to be present at the venue positively. The successful bidder has to deposit 25% of bid amount within one day after bid is successful and the balance amount within 7 days failing which the money deposited by the successful bidder would be forfeited. The cost of transfer of ownership and statutory dues/all misc. charges, if any is to borne by the successful purchaser. Vehicle will be auctioned on "**AS IS WHERE IS & AS IS WHAT IS**" basis. However the Bank reserves the right to accept/reject/cancel the auction sale process of the vehicle at its own discretion at any point of time. There will be bidding in the auction and the highest bidder will be declared as successful bidder.

Place: Baripada

Date: 25.04.2025

Zonal Manage

Bank of India

Task Enfo Solutions,
C/o: S & D Stockyard, Soubhagya Ranjan Mohanty, At.: Sorubila, Manchabanda, P.O.: Budhikhamari, Pin- 756003, Mob.: 7008498925

People have faith in the way the double engine government is working and after the election results, the NDA government is going to be formed in Bihar with a historic win

CHIRAG PASWAN | LOK JANSHAKTI PARTY (RAM VILAS) PRESIDENT

I thank the Supreme Court for giving Rahul Gandhi a slap in the face. He has been insulting national icons like Savarkar. Hope Rahul Gandhi, who keeps swearing by the Constitution, abides by the SC orders

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHA CM

Government of India has taken some steps. As far as Jammu and Kashmir is concerned, let's be honest we have never been in favour of the Indus Water Treaty

OMAR ABULLAH | J&K CM

SHORT TAKES

AP CM Naidu meets PM Modi

New Delhi: Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu met Prime Minister Narendra Modi here Friday and invited him for the groundbreaking ceremony of the renewed ₹65,000-crore Amaravati capital city project scheduled for May 2. During the brief meeting, Naidu also discussed the recent terrorist attack in Kashmir's Pahalgam, which killed 26 people, mostly tourists, and injured several others Tuesday, sources said. He informed the prime minister that two people from Andhra Pradesh -- S Madhusudhan Rao, a software engineer, and J S Chandramouli, a retired bank employee -- were among those killed in the attack.

Object falls from IAF aircraft, damages house

Shivpuri (MP): A "metal object" that fell from an Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft caused severe damage to a house in Madhya Pradesh's Shivpuri district Friday, but nobody was injured, police said. The IAF said it has instituted "an inquiry into the incident". "The IAF regrets the damage caused today to property on ground, near Shivpuri, by the inadvertent drop of a non-explosive aerial store from an IAF aircraft, and has instituted an inquiry into the incident," it said in a post on X.

Raja Iqbal to be Delhi's new mayor

New Delhi: BJP's Raja Iabal was elected Delhi's new mayor Friday as the saffron party returned to power in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) after two years. Iqbal defeated Congress candidate Mandeep Singh to grab the top civic body post. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) boycotted the mayoral election. As Singh took his seat, BJP councillors filled the air with chants of Bharat Mata ki Jai.

DC offices get bomb threat

Shimla/ Hamirpur: Police laid a cordon and launched a search after a mailer threatened to blow up the offices of Hamirpur and Chamba district commissioners. The office was evacuated after it received a threat mail around 11.30 am, threatening to blow up the office at 2.30 pm, Chamba DC Mukesh Repaswal said.

WAQF ROW

Can't stay law made by Parl when validity presumed: Govt to SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: The Centre Friday defended the amended Waqf Act in the Supreme Court and opposed any "blanket stay" by the court on a "law having presumption of constitutionality passed by Parliament".

In a preliminary 1,332-page affidavit, the Centre urged the top court to dismiss the pleas challenging the validity of Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, pointing out a "mischievous false narrative" surrounding certain provisions.

"While this court would examine these challenges when the cases are heard, a blanket stay (or a partial stay) without being aware of the adverse consequences of such an order in a generality of cases (even on members of the Muslim community itself) were the petitions to be unsuccessful, would be uncalled for, especially in the context of the presumption of validity of such laws," it argued.

The Centre, as a result, urged a bench headed by Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna, set to hear pleas for passing interim directions May 5, not to stay the law's provisions. The government claimed a "shocking

increase" of 116 per cent in the waqf properties since 2013

It also opposed the arguments over the necessary registration of "waqf by user" properties till April 8, saying if the provision was interfered with by an interim order, it would amount to "creation of legislative regime by judicial order".

The affidavit rebutted the submissions that Muslims might be in the minority in the Central Waqf Council and state Waqf Boards due to the change in the law.

The law is a "valid and lawful exercise of legislative power", one that strengthens the institution of waqf and aligns it with constitutional principles, and facilitates the wholesome realisation of waqfs in the contemporary era, it argued.

The Centre contended it was settled position in the law that constitutional courts would not stay a statutory provision, either directly or indirectly, and decided the matter finally.

Referring to the "reported misuse" of waqf provisions to encroach private and government properties, the affidavit said right before even Mughal era, pre-independence era and post-independence era, the total of waqfs created was 18,29,163.896 acre of land.

Court releases Medha Patkar after HC suspends sentence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: A Delhi court Friday released Narmada Bachao Andolan leader Medha Patkar on bail after the Delhi High Court suspended her sentence in a defamation case filed by Delhi LG V K Saxena.

"Counsel for appellant (Patkar) has stated that the order on sentence has been suspended by the Delhi High Court and the accused/appellant is directed to be released on bail on furnishing bail bond of ₹25,000 and at this stage they have submitted bail bond/surety bond for ₹25,000 and the same is accepted," additional sessions Judge Vipin Kharb said. The

matter was then posted May 3. At around 12 noon, following a non-bailable warrant for flouting its order, Patkar was arrested and produced before the sessions court Friday.

Patkar's counsel informed Kharb, "NBWs (non-bailable

We observed silence at the commencement of this conference. I join the nation in expressing profound grief and outrage at the heinous attack in Pahalgam that claimed innocent lives

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

96 PER CENT OF PRISONERS PASS UP BOARD'S CLASS XII EXAMS

In an impressive result, 91 out of 94 prisoners who appeared for the Uttar Pradesh Board of Secondary Education's Class XII examination from different jails across the state have passed the examination. According to the information revealed in the list released by the UP Board Friday, the Agra jail saw the highest participation with 17 prisoners appearing for the Intermediate (Class XII) exams and all of them clearing it

Students celebrate after the Uttar Pradesh Board declared Class XII result in Noida

PTI PHOTO

COURT REFUSES TO ISSUE NOTICE TO SONIA, RAHUL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: A Delhi court Friday refused to issue notice to Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi and others in the National Herald money laundering case for now.

Special judge Vishal Gogne was acting on a plea of the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which claimed cognisance of the complaint (ED's equivalent to a chargesheet) cannot be taken without hearing the accused according to the new provisions of law.

"Don't want this order to be prolonged. Let notice be issued," ED, which filed the chargesheet April 9, urged the court. The judge said he had to be satisfied before passing an order. Before court passes any order, it has to see if there is any deficiency, the judge added.

"There are certain documents missing in the chargesheet as

HERALD CASE

■ The chargesheet was filed under Sections 3 (money laundering) and 4 (punishment for money laundering) of Prevention of Money Laundering Act

■ The ED investigation began in 2021 after a metropolitan magistrate in Patiala House courts in Delhi took cognisance of a private complaint filed by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy June 26, 2014

highlighted by the Ahlmad. ED is directed to file those documents. After that the court will decide the issue of notice," the court said. The ED said it was "very transparent" and added, "Not hiding anything. Giving chance to them to come and give their point before cognisance is taken."

The judge posted the matter May 2. The court was also informed that the soft copies of the complaint and documents were filed by the ED in pursu-

ance to its earlier direction.

However, certain documents were noticed to have not been filed or serialised appropriately, the court was informed by its staff. The ED then informed the court that the investigating officer in the case should rectify any such deficiency.

"Let the documents in question or the serialisation be provided/rectified prior to the next date of hearing. List for further proceedings May 2, 2025," the judge said.

PAHALGAM ATTACK

Houses of 2 LeT terrorists destroyed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, April 25: The house of two Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists, including the prime suspect of the Pahalgam terror attack, were destroyed when explosives believed to be stored there went off, officials said Friday.

The incidents took place during the intervening night of Thursday and Friday, when the residences of Aadil Hussain Thokar and Asif Sheikh were being searched by security forces at Guree village in Bijbehara and Tral respectively in south Kashmir, the officials said.

Explosives were believed to have been found at the premises during the search

operation, prompting the security forces to evacuate the occupants of the houses as well as neighbours to safety, the officials claimed. Both the houses were damaged in the explosions, leading to their destruction, the officials said.

Thokar, a resident of south Kashmir's Anantnag district, is one of the key accused in Tuesday's Pahalgam massacre, while Sheikh, a resident of Tral in Pulwama district, is suspected to be involved in the conspiracy of the attack.

The family members of both men have claimed that they are not aware of the whereabouts of Thokar and Sheikh.

Ex-ISRO chief K Kasturirangan passes away dies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Bangalore, April 25: Former ISRO chief K Kasturirangan, who was at the helm of the space agency for nearly a decade, passed away in Bangalore Friday, officials said.

He was 84 and is survived by two sons, family sources said, and added that he was suffering from age-related ailments for the past few months. "He left for heavenly abode this morning at his residence in Bangalore. His body will be kept at Raman Research Institute (RRI) for paying last respects April 27," the officials said.

Condoling his death, Droupadi Murmu said on X: "Saddened to learn that Dr Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan is no more. As head of ISRO, he played a stellar role in the evolution of India's space programme." She also noted that Kasturirangan helped

draft the National Education Policy (NEP), which is already making a profound impact on the shaping of the next generation. In his condolence message, Prime Minister Narendra Modi described him as a "towering figure in India's scientific and educational journey." The space scientist's visionary leadership and selfless contribution to the nation will always be remembered, Modi said on X. He said Kasturirangan served ISRO with great diligence, steering India's space programme to new heights, for which we also received global recognition. His leadership also witnessed ambitious satellite launches and focused on innovation.

Be mindful of social media: Dos & don'ts for new civil servants

The guidelines are meant for the candidates selected through the civil services examination 2024, the results of which were announced Tuesday. As many as 1,009 candidates cleared that exam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: All recently selected civil service candidates have to be mindful that their social media posts reflect on the service and they should reject all forms of inducement such as gifts, hospitality, and free publicity, official guidelines issued on Friday stipulated.

Civil servants are the public face of the state and their conduct is under constant public scrutiny, it said.

"You must ensure that your personal conduct and official and social interface with the general public, people's representatives, corporate entities,

civil society organisations, government personnel, all other dignitaries and vulnerable sections of the society is courteous, respectful, dignified and appropriate," read the guidelines issued by Mussoorie-based Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), a premier training institute for the civil servants.

The guidelines are meant for the candidates selected through the civil services examination 2024, the results of which were announced Tuesday. As many as 1,009 candidates cleared that exam. "As a future civil servant you are expected to be a role model throughout.

Your past actions also will be a reflection of your character and personality throughout your career. You should start displaying exemplary conduct that befits an officer right from this day and not wait for your training to start. You will go on to occupy important positions

in institutions of governance and public service delivery," it said.

Comments and any posts made or facilitated "by you on social media will also reflect on the service," the guidelines said. One should, in particular, refrain from impulsively post-

ing statements on social media, the guidelines said.

The motto of the academy, 'Sheelam Param Bhushanam,' - Character is the supreme embellishment — guides the officers and alumni to conduct themselves with integrity, dignity, humility and rectitude at all times, the guidelines said, adding that their "inner conscience is the best way to go forward" and that these dos and don'ts "can be a good start."

The academy said that respect to women is central in Indian ethos and the bureaucrats must be gender-sensitive. According to it, the soon-to-be bureaucrats are expected to follow civic manners like following traffic rules, not littering, spitting in public spaces, and follow personal hygiene like turning out well-groomed and dressed appropriately.

The guidelines, issued by

the LBSNAA Director Sriram Taranikanti, said the candidates are expected to abstain from consuming any intoxicant substances in public. The candidates have also been advised to maintain punctuality. The academy said it is also good to familiarise the immediate family members with the cultural norms of the service. The academy said that in its curriculum, it promotes the use of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) for improving the speed and quality of services delivered to the people. The academy said that a healthy lifestyle is an added asset to public service.

As the academy follows a rigorous training schedule that comprises physical activity along with academic inputs, the guidelines said, "It is useful to imbibe these aspects from now onwards."

international

of the day quote

We said it from the start: The International Criminal Court in The Hague (ICC) doesn't have, and never had, jurisdiction to issue arrest warrants against Israel's Prime Minister and its former Minister of Defense. Israel is not a member of the ICC and is not party to the 'Rome Statute'

GIDEON SAAR | FOREIGN MINISTER, ISRAEL

Anzac troops came ashore here shoulder-to-shoulder with their brothers from half a world away. Some anticipated adventure far from home. But as the sun rose and the shadows drained from the gullies, it was not adventure that greeted them, but horror

CHRISTOPHER LUXON | PRIME MINISTER, NEW ZEALAND

The United States has defined a group of 15 countries with which it wants to find a quick solution in this tariff question. Switzerland is part of this group of these 15 countries

KELLER-SUTTER | PRESIDENT, SWITZERLAND

SHORT TAKES

6 killed as police plane crashes in sea

Bangkok: A small police plane crashed into the sea near a popular beach town in Thailand, killing all six people on board, officials said. The plane was conducting a test flight to prepare for parachute training in Hua Hin district before it crashed around 8 am, said Royal Thai Police spokesperson Archayon Kraithong. Officials did not immediately share the model of the propeller plane, but photos from the scene appear to show a Viking DHC-6 Twin Otter. The plane crashed near Hua Hin Airport, said the public relations department of Prachuab Kiri Khan province. The photos show the plane in the sea about 100 meters off shore. The body of the plane appeared to be broken in two.

Quake in Pacific Ocean rattles Ecuador

Quito (Ecuador): A strong 6.3 earthquake off Ecuador's Pacific coast shook the northern part of the country Friday, with some initial reports of some damages to houses. No injuries were reported. The earthquake was centred in the Pacific Ocean 20.9 km northeast of the city of Esmeraldas, and it had a depth of 35 km, according to the United States Geological Survey. Ecuador's risk management office said on X that the earthquake was felt in at least 10 provinces, but it's still monitoring and assessing the situation.

India hands over vaccines to Nepal

Kathmandu: India handed over Sickle Cell and Thalassemia vaccines to Nepal in response to the Nepal government's request, a statement said Friday. Ambassador of India to Nepal Naveen Srivastava handed over the first consignment of vaccines for Sickle Cell Disease and Thalassemia to Minister of Health and Population Pradip Paudel, the statement said. "The Government of India is providing medicines and vaccines worth \$2 million for the management of patients with Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Disease in response to a request from the Nepali government," the statement said.

Doing dirty work for US, West: Pak min

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, April 25: Pakistan Defence Minister Khwaja Asif has admitted the country's history of supporting, training and funding terrorist organisations as "dirty work" for the West, a mistake for which he said Pakistan had suffered.

In an interview with Sky News aired overnight, news presenter Yalda Hakim questioned Asif on Pakistan's response and stance on terrorism in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Pahalgam that killed 26 people earlier this week.

"You do admit, sir, that Pakistan has had a long history of backing and supporting and training and funding these terrorist organisations," asked Hakim.

"Well, we have been doing this dirty work for the United States for about three decades, you know, and the West, including Britain," replied Asif.

"That was a mistake, and we suffered from that, and that is why you are saying this to me. If we had not joined the war against the Soviet Union and later on the war after 9/11, Pakistan's track record was an unimpeachable track record," he said.

"It is very convenient for the big powers to blame Pakistan for whatever is happening in this region. When we were fighting the war on their side way back in the 80s against the Soviet Union, all these terrorists of today, they were wining and dining in Washington.

"And then came the 9/11 attacks. Again, the same situation was repeated. I think our governments then made a mistake," he said, adding that Pakistan was "used as proxies" at the time.



Terrorists opened fire in Pahalgam Tuesday afternoon, killing 26 people, mostly tourists, in the deadliest attack in the Valley since the Pulwama strike in 2019

Well, we have been doing this dirty work for the United States for about three decades, you know, and the West, including Britain

KHWAJA ASIF | DEFENCE MINISTER, PAKISTAN

The minister was pushed on the finger of blame being pointed at Pakistan for Tuesday's terror attack in Pahalgam and that The Resistance Front, which has admitted responsibility for the strike, being an off-shoot of the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

"Lashkar-e-Taiba doesn't exist in Pakistan anymore. It is extinct. It is extinct if the parent organisation does not exist, how can the offshoot take birth here," said Asif.

Asked if Pakistan fears an escalation as a result of the Pahalgam terrorist attack, the minister said the country is prepared to respond "in kind". "We will measure our response to whatever is initiated by India, according to that. It would be a measured

response, if there is an all-out attack or something like that, then obviously there will be an all-out war," he said in the

IRAN OFFERS TO MEND INDIA-PAKISTAN TIES

Tehran: Iran Friday offered its help in mending relations between India and Pakistan, amid flared tensions after the Pahalgam terror attack. Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi said Tehran stands ready to use its good offices in Islamabad and New Delhi to "forge greater understanding at this difficult time." Agarchi had condemned the Pahalgam attack "strongly and unequivocally" two days ago. In a post on X, Araghchi drew attention to how India and Pakistan are "brotherly neighbours" of Iran, enjoying relations rooted in centuries-old cultural and civilizational ties and how, like other neighbours, Iran considers the two of them as "our foremost priority."

virtual interview.

Terrorists opened fire in Pahalgam Tuesday after-

noon, killing 26 people, mostly tourists, in the deadliest attack in the Valley since

the Pulwama strike in 2019. The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy of the banned Paki-

stan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), claimed responsibility for the attack.

Top Russian general killed in car bombing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Moscow, April 25: A top Russian general was killed in a car bomb blast near Moscow Friday, with the Foreign Ministry describing it as a terrorist act, according to a media report.

Deputy director of the Main Operations Directorate of the General Staff of the Ministry of Defence, Lt General Yaroslav Moskalik, was killed when an improvised explosive device went off, Vesti FM radio cited the Investigative Committee as saying. "Fragments of the device were found at the site and have been sent for examination," Investigative Committee Spokeswoman Svetlana Pternenko said. Moskalik, 59, represented the defence ministry in various negotiations.

It was not immediately confirmed whether his assassination was linked to US Envoy Steve Witkoff's talks with the Kremlin later Friday over Ukraine negotiations.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova described the general's killing as



a "terrorist act".

"The main question is how to stop the war in the centre of Europe, the world. We see so many victims every day. Even today, a Russian soldier was killed in a terrorist attack in Moscow," Zakharova was quoted as say-

ing by TASS. Several Russian military officials involved in the Ukraine campaign have been killed near their homes, hundreds of kilometres away from the battlefield, by alleged agents of Ukrainian Intelligence "SBU."

Documents expose differences over US peace drive for Ukraine

REUTERS

London, April 25: Ukrainian and European officials pushed back this week against some US proposals on how to end Russia's war in Ukraine, making counterproposals on issues from territory to sanctions, according to the full texts of the proposals seen by Reuters.

The sets of proposals from talks between US, European and Ukrainian officials in Paris April 17 and in London April 23 laid bare the inner workings of the shuttle diplomacy under way as US President Donald Trump seeks a quick end to the war.

The primary areas of difference in the two texts are over the sequencing for resolving questions over territory, the lifting of sanctions on Russia, security guarantees and the size of Ukraine's military.

While some of the divergences have been highlighted



by sources close to the talks, the documents seen by Reuters set out for the first time the differences in full and explicit detail.

The first text says its "terms represent the final offer from the United States to both sides". It contains proposals set out by Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff to European officials in Paris that were passed to the Ukrainians, according to sources close to the talks.

- US is seeking a quick end to war in Ukraine

- US officials met Europeans, Ukrainians in Paris and London

- Proposals and counterproposals set out in two documents

- The two texts show areas of divergence at the talks

- Trump envoy in Moscow for talks with Putin

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio described the proposals as a "broad framework" to identify differences between the sides, though US Vice President JD Vance later said the United States had issued a very explicit proposal to both sides and it was time to agree or see Washington quit its peace efforts.

The second text emerged this week from talks between Ukrainian and European officials in London and has been given to the American side, the sources said.

China exempts some goods from US tariffs

REUTERS

Beijing, April 25: China has exempted some US imports from its 125% tariffs and is asking firms to identify critical goods they need levy-free, according to businesses that have been notified, in the clearest sign yet of Beijing's concerns about the trade war's fallout.

The dispensation, which follows de-escalatory statements from Washington, signals that the world's two largest economies were prepared to rein in their conflict, which had frozen much of the trade between them, raising fears of a global recession.

Beijing's exemptions - which business groups hope would extend to dozens of industries - pushed the US dollar up slightly and lifted equity markets in Hong Kong and Japan.

"As a quid-pro-quo move, it could provide a potential way to de-escalate tensions," said



Alfredo Montufar-Helu, a senior adviser to the Conference Board's China Center, a think tank.

But, he cautioned, "It's clear that neither the US nor China want to be the first in reaching out for a deal."

China has not yet communicated publicly on any exemptions.

US President Donald Trump

told TIME magazine in an interview that US-China talks were taking place on tariffs, and that Chinese President Xi Jinping had called him. Beijing has so far disputed the US characterization of talks.

"He's called. And I don't think that's a sign of weakness on his behalf," Trump told TIME. He did not say when Xi called or what the two leaders

- China exempts some US imports from 125% tariffs

- Beijing seeks to mitigate economic fallout from trade war

- Some recent imports from US have not been subject to tariffs, AmCham says, citing members

discussed.

Equity markets largely shrugged off the interview. European shares remained in positive territory, while US stock futures failed to hold onto early gains and were last little changed on the day.

A Friday statement by the Politburo, the Communist Party's elite decision-making body, focused on efforts to maintain stability at home by supporting firms and workers most affected by tariffs.

The readout, which followed the Politburo's regular monthly meeting, showed that Beijing was also ready to hunker

NEPAL OBSERVES 10TH ANNIV OF 2015 QUAKE

A 4.1 magnitude earthquake jolted Nepal Friday as the country was observing the 10th anniversary of the devastating 2015 temblor that killed more than 9,000 people. The tremor with its epicentre at Phulpingkot of Sindhupalchowk district occurred at 11.57 am, according to the Earthquake Measurement and Monitoring Centre, Kathmandu



Pak Senate slams India over Pahalgam attack link

Islamabad: Amid Indo-Pakistan tensions, Pakistan's Senate Friday passed a resolution rejecting India's "frivolous and baseless attempts" to link the country with the Pahalgam terror attack. The attack in Kashmir's Pahalgam Tuesday killed 26 people, mostly tourists. The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy of the banned Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, claimed responsibility. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar moved the resolution, which got across-the-board support from parties in the upper house of parliament. "Pakistan remains fully capable and prepared to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity against any aggression, including water terrorism or military provocation," the resolution said.

The resolution, rejecting all "frivolous and baseless attempts" to link Pakistan with the attack, said killing innocent civilians was against the values upheld by Pakistan. It condemned "the orchestrated and mala fide campaign by the Indian government to malign Pakistan, which follows a familiar pattern of exploiting the issue of terrorism for a narrow political goal." The resolution also condemned India's declaration to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance and said the move amounted to "an act of war".

UN chief urges India, Pakistan to exercise 'maximum restraint'

United Nations: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is following the situation between India and Pakistan "very closely and with very great concern" and appeals to both governments to exercise maximum restraint and ensure no further deterioration, his spokesperson said. "We were very clear in our condemnation of the terror attack that occurred in Jammu and Kashmir, the 22nd, two days ago, which killed a large number of civilians," Stephane Dujarric, Spokesman for the Secretary-General, said at the daily press briefing Thursday. Dujarric was responding to a question on whether Guterres has had any contact with the governments of India

and Pakistan amid escalating tensions in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 civilians were killed. He said Guterres has not had any direct contact, "but I can tell you he's obviously following the situation very closely and with very great concern." The secretary-general "very much" appeals to both the governments of India and Pakistan to "exercise maximum restraint and to ensure that the situation and the developments we've seen do not deteriorate any further."

Will support India: DNI Tulsi Gabbard

New York/Washington: US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard Friday said America stands with India as it hunts down those responsible for the heinous Pahalgam attack that killed 26 Hindus. The State Department too said the US stands with India and called for Pahalgam attack perpetrators to be brought to justice. "We stand in solidarity with India in the wake of the horrific Islamist terrorist attack, targeting and killing 26 Hindus in Pahalgam," Gabbard said in a post on X. "My prayers and deepest sympathies are with those who lost a loved one, PM @narendramodi, and with all the people of India. We are with you and support you as you hunt down those responsible for this heinous attack," she said.

Pak cancels contentious canals project on Indus

Islamabad: Pakistan government has decided to halt the contentious canals project after India decided to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty in the wake of deadly terrorist attack in Pahalgam. Army chief General Asim Munir and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had inaugurated the ambitious Cholistan project in February to irrigate the desert region in Punjab province. However, it created an uproar in Sindh province where different political parties, including the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), which is part of the ruling coalition at the centre with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), began protest against the project. At the height of the tension between the two parties, India announced to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), prompting Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to meet PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and agreed to stop the canals project. They also agreed that the contentious canals project will remain suspended until a consensus on the issue could be reached in the Council of Common Interests (CCI), a high powered inter-provincial body to tackle controversies between provinces.

UN agency runs out of food aid in Gaza after Israeli blockade

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Deir al-Balah (Gaza Strip), April 25: The World Food Programme says its food stocks in the Gaza Strip have run out under Israel's nearly 8-week-old blockade, ending a main source of sustenance for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the territory.

The WFP said in a statement that it delivered the last of its stocks to charity kitchens that it supports around Gaza. It said those kitchens are expected to run out of food in the coming days.

Some 80% of Gaza's population of more than 2 million relies primarily on charity kitchens for food, because other sources have shut down under Israel's blockade, according to the UN. The WFP has been supporting 47 kitchens that distribute 644,000 hot meals a day, WFP spokesperson Abeer Etefa told the Associated Press.

Quote of the day

India is poised to contribute significantly to global steel demand, and grow the steel industry by leaps and bounds

PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION MINISTER

We look forward to bringing premium EVs to India's up-wardly mobile consumers, vehicles that redefine modern driving with cutting-edge technology, comfort, and sustainability

SHAILESH HAZELA | CEO AND MD, STELLANTIS INDIA

The creation of quality new supply has not kept pace with the post-pandemic surge in absorption as a return to the office took effect

PEUSH JAIN | MD-COMMERCIAL LEASING AND ADVISORY, ANAROCK GROUP

Q4 RESULTS

Reliance's new feat

Mumbai: Reliance Industries Ltd Friday reported a 2.4 per cent rise in its March quarter net profit as store rationalisation in retail business and improved margins in telecom helped offset weakness in mainstay oil and petrochemicals business and higher finance cost. Annual profits were almost unchanged at ₹69,648 crore but the oil-to-telecom-and-retail conglomerate became the first company to hit a net worth of over ₹10 lakh crore in 2024-25. Last year, it became the first company to hit a market cap of ₹20 lakh crore. Consolidated net profit of ₹19,407 crore, or ₹14.34 per share, in January-March - the fourth quarter of April 2024 to March 2025 fiscal (FY25) - was higher than ₹18,951 crore, or ₹14 a share, in the same period a year back.

Maruti profit dips 1%

New Delhi: Maruti Suzuki India Friday said its consolidated net profit slipped 1 per cent year-on-year to ₹3,911 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2025. The country's largest carmaker reported a net profit of ₹3,952 crore in the January-March quarter of FY24. Total revenue increased to ₹40,920 crore during the March quarter last fiscal as compared with ₹38,471 crore in the year-ago period, Maruti Suzuki India said in a regulatory filing.

HZL profit jumps 47%

New Delhi: Vedanta group firm Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) Friday reported a 47.3 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at ₹3,003 crore in the quarter ended March 2025 on the back of higher income. The company had posted a net profit of ₹2,038 crore in the year-ago period. Income of the company during the latest January-March quarter increased to ₹9,314 crore from ₹7,822 crore in the year-ago period, HZL said in a filing to BSE.

BoM profit rises 23%

New Delhi: State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) Friday reported a 23 per cent rise in net profit to ₹1,493 crore for the March 2025 quarter. The Pune-based lender had earned a net profit of ₹1,218 crore in the year-ago period. During the quarter, the bank's total income increased to ₹7,711 crore as against ₹6,488 crore a year ago, BoM said in a regulatory filing. Interest income grew to ₹6,731 crore during the period under review, from ₹5,467 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago.



Income tax relief on annual earnings of up to ₹12 lakh is unlikely to revive demand for small cars, which is critical for overall growth of the industry in India, and the government needs to take steps to address the issue

RC BHARGAVA | CHAIRMAN, MARUTI SUZUKI

HINDALCO ENTERS EV COMPONENT MFG

Hindalco Industries Friday unveiled its ₹500-crore EV component manufacturing facility at Chakan, in Pune, designed to cater to the growing demand for lightweight, crash-resistant battery solutions. The facility, built with a capital investment of ₹500 crore and spread across 5 acres within an industrial park, represents Hindalco's foray into EV component manufacturing, a company statement said



Forex reserves swell \$8.31bn to \$686.145bn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 25: India's forex reserves jumped \$8.31 billion to \$686.145 billion for the week ended April 18, the RBI said Friday.

This is the seventh consecutive week of a rise in the kitty, which had jumped by \$1.567 billion to \$677.835 billion in the previous reporting week ended April 11. The forex reserves had touched an all-time high of \$704.885 billion in end-September 2024.

For the week ended April 18, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, increased by \$3.516 billion to \$578.495 billion, the data released Friday showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves increased by \$4.575 billion to \$84.572 billion during the week, the RBI said. India's reserve position with the IMF also rose by \$7 million to \$4.51 billion in the reporting week.

Airlines to suffer higher costs, detours



Air India is currently the most affected with the largest long- and ultra-long haul network out of Delhi

AJAY AWTANEY | FOUNDER, LIVEFROMALOUNGE

The nuclear-armed arch rivals have unleashed a raft of measures against each other in response, with India keeping a critical river water-sharing treaty in abeyance and Pakistan closing its airspace to Indian airlines.

International airlines are not affected by the ban.

The impact of the airspace closure was visible starting late Thursday, as Air India and IndiGo began to reroute flights to New York, Azerbaijan and Dubai - all of which typically use Pakistan airspace, according to data from tracking website Flightradar24.

Pakistan-India tensions take toll on top Indian airlines

Flights to take longer routes after Pakistan airspace shut

Indian pilot says flying hours, rosters will need to be reworked

Indian airlines suffered losses in 2019 due to similar move

The worst impacted airport will be New Delhi, one of the world's busiest, from where flights cross Pakistani airspace to fly to destinations in the West and the Middle East. Data from Cirium Ascend showed IndiGo, Air India and its bud-

India could grow at 6.5% in FY26: EY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: Indian economy could grow at 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal as lower prices of crude oil are expected to ease inflationary pressure and support domestic growth, despite intensifying global trade tensions, EY said Friday. The 'EY Economy Watch' report for April identifies four key interlinked effects which would have a bearing on India's growth — reduced exports, global slowdown, falling crude oil prices, and the impact of global excess production capacities.

"With suitable fiscal and monetary policies, India may be able to sustain a real GDP growth at about 6.5 per cent in FY26 as also in the medium term, while maintaining a CPI inflation below 4 per cent.

"We also expect global crude prices to remain in the range of \$60-65/bbl in FY26, which may be to India's advantage," EY India Chief Policy Advisor DK Srivastava said.

It said exports may slow due to higher tariffs and weakening global demand, but the overall GDP impact may be limited, given the subdued role of net exports in India's recent growth experience.

Global slowdown may constrain growth worldwide, but India's relatively strong fiscal space and monetary flexibility provide scope for calibrated stimulus.

Falling crude oil prices dropping from \$75/bbl in early April to \$65/bbl by mid-month, and remaining within an expected range of \$60-65 during FY26, is expected to support domestic growth while easing inflationary pressures.

PAK CLOSES AIRSPACE

The impact of the airspace closure was visible starting late Thursday, as Air India and IndiGo began to reroute flights to New York, Azerbaijan and Dubai - all of which typically use Pakistan airspace

REUTERS

New Delhi, April 25: Top Indian airlines Air India and IndiGo are bracing for higher fuel costs and longer journey times as they reroute international flights after Pakistan shut its airspace to them amid escalating tensions over a deadly militant attack in Kashmir.

India has said there were Pakistani elements in Tuesday's attack in which gunmen shot and killed 26 men in a meadow in the Pahalgam area of Indian Kashmir. Pakistan has denied any involvement.

Direct tax collection for '24-25 fiscal misses target

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: The net direct tax collection for the 2024-25 financial year narrowly missed the target, even as it grew 13.57 per cent to over ₹22.26 lakh crore, due to issuance of the highest-ever amount of refunds delivered, official data said Friday.

The government set a target of ₹22,07,000 crore for the direct tax administration as per the budget receipt of July 2024 and revised it to ₹22,37,000 crore during the budget presented this February.

Direct taxes include revenue collected by the Union government under the corporate taxes, securities transaction tax (STT) and non-corporate taxes category (earlier personal income tax). The non-corporate taxes category includes taxes paid by individuals, firms, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), local authorities, artificial juridical persons etc.

According to official data, the provisional gross (before adjusting for refunds) direct tax collection for the 2024-25 fiscal that ended March 31 stood at ₹27.02 lakh crore, a growth of 15.59 per cent, when compared to the gross collection of ₹23.37 lakh crore during the 2023-24 fiscal.

Similarly, the provisional figures for net (after issuing refunds) direct tax collections for the 2024-25 fiscal stood at ₹22.26 lakh crore, an increase of 13.57 per cent as compared to ₹19.60 lakh crore in the preceding 2023-24 fiscal, the data shows.

It added that revenue collection from the STT grew to



₹53,296 crore during the last fiscal from ₹34,192 during the preceding financial year of 2023-24.

The provisional net direct tax collections are 100.78 per cent as per the July receipt budget target (₹22.07 lakh crore) and 99.51 per cent of the revised estimate target presented during the February budget (₹22.37 crore).

These direct tax collection figures are provisional and the collections are expected to grow as last stage reconciliation and adjustments for the 2024025 fiscal are still underway, officials said. The data shows that the tax department issued the highest-ever refunds worth ₹4,76,743 crore during the 2024-25 fiscal which is an increase of 26.04 per cent as compared to the refunds of ₹3,78,255 crore issued during the last fiscal of 2023-24.

"The gross direct tax collection has exceeded the budget target of ₹22.37 lakh crore and the income tax department was able to achieve these high numbers even after issuing a record ₹4.76 lakh crore in refunds," an official said.

Light-weight jewellery, other items to drive gold demand

Gold prices have hit a historic high of ₹1 lakh per 10 grams

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, April 25: With gold prices hovering near ₹1 lakh per 10 grams, jewellers expect light-weight jewellery and other items to drive consumer demand this Akshaya Tritiya, which is considered an auspicious day to buy precious metals.

Akshaya Tritiya, which is celebrated on the third day of bright half of Hindu calendar month Vaisakha, falls April 30 this year.

"As we approach the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, the gold market is buzzing with anticipation. Ak-

shaya Tritiya holds immense cultural significance in India, traditionally marking a surge in gold purchases. This year, despite the elevated prices, we anticipate a healthy demand driven by light-weight items," All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC) chairman Rajesh Rokde told PTI.

Gold Friday traded weak at ₹95,075 per 10 grams on MCX, as Comex gold continued to face resistance near the \$3,330-an-ounce-mark.

While some consumers might show initial hesitation, the enduring appeal of gold as a safe-haven asset and the metal being an integral part of our traditions will likely translate into positive sales, Rokde stated.

To encourage market demand, the industry is doling out a diverse range of offerings,



catering to varied budgets and preferences, he added.

GJC vice-chairman Avinash Gupta said, while the current price levels might prompt some to exercise caution, the inherent cultural significance of gold during Akshaya Tritiya, coupled with its enduring sta-

tus as a reliable asset, suggests continued positive momentum in buying.

"High prices may keep the volume demand either the same as last year or bring it down by 10 per cent. The jewellery sector is showcasing innovative designs alongside classic piec-

TWO DAYS OF FALL

Equity investors' wealth erodes by ₹8.88L-crore

In two days, the benchmark has lost 903.96 points or 1.12%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: Investors' wealth got wiped out by ₹8.88 lakh crore in two days of market slump due to profit-taking and growing tensions along the Indo-Pak border following the terror attack at Pahalgam in Jammu & Kashmir.

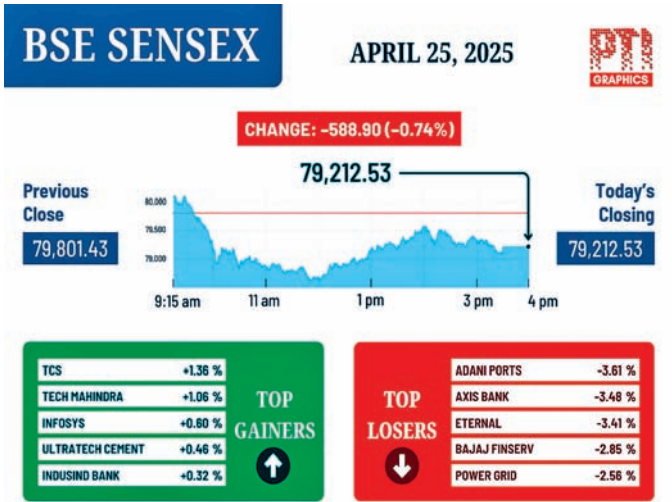
On Friday, the 30-share BSE barometer tanked 588.90 points or 0.74 per cent to settle at 79,212.53. During the day, it dropped 1,195.62 points or 1.49 per cent to 78,605.81.

In two days, the benchmark has lost 903.96 points or 1.12 per cent. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms declined by ₹8,88,975.14 crore to ₹4,21,58,900.91 crore (\$4.93 trillion) in two days.

Experts said worries over growing geopolitical tensions after Pahalgam terror attack weighed on market sentiment.

Among Sensex firms, Adani Ports, Axis Bank, EternaI, Bajaj Finserv, Power Grid, Bajaj Finance, Tata Motors, Tata Steel, NTPC and Maruti were the biggest laggards. However, Tata Consultancy Services, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, UltraTech Cement, IndusInd Bank, Hindustan Unilever and ICICI Bank were the gainers. The BSE smallcap gauge tanked 2.56 per cent and midcap dropped 2.44 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, services dropped 3.11 per cent, utilities (2.96 per cent), realty (2.87 per cent), power (2.77 per



Benchmark indices extended losses on Friday in a volatile session on rising tensions between India and Pakistan in the aftermath of terror attack in J&K. Investors also looked to book profits ahead of weekend after markets posted sharp gains in recent sessions

SATISH CHANDRA ALURI | ANALYST, LEMONN MARKETS SESK

cent), consumer discretionary (2.28 per cent), industrials (2.19 per cent) and capital goods (2.06 per cent). IT and BSE Focused IT ended higher.

"After a positive start supported by favourable global cues, Indian benchmark indices declined sharply. This was on account of profit-booking which came in as cross-border tensions between India and Pakistan escalated, following the terrorist attacks in Pahalgam, Kashmir," Siddhartha Khemka,

Head - Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

"Investor sentiment turned cautious amid escalating tensions along the Indo-Pak border. Mid and smallcap stocks bore the brunt of the sell-off, driven by their elevated valuations and growing concerns over potential earnings downgrades following a muted start to the earnings season," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Gold purchases have traditionally been an integral part of Akshaya Tritiya celebrations for millions of Indians, symbolising prosperity and good fortune. We are currently witnessing sky rocketing gold prices - 'gold's era'. This year marks a significant period for gold, with global prices increasing by 25 per cent since January and reaching a record high of \$3,500 per ounce

SACHIN JAIN | CEO (INDIA), WORLD GOLD COUNCIL REGIONAL

es to cater to diverse consumer needs," he added.

PNG Jewellers chairman and managing director Sausrabh Gadgil said this Akshaya Tritiya presents a unique set of market conditions, with gold prices at an all-time high,

however, the sentiment in the market remains robust, and investor confidence in gold continues to be strong.

"Volume has been under pressure for quite some time as the gold prices continue to soar. However, with Akshaya Tritiya falling at the cusp of a packed wedding season, we are optimistic that it will mirror the encouraging performance we saw during Gudi Padwa. We anticipate a strong turnout both for fresh purchases and for deliveries scheduled on the day," he stated.

"Gold bars and coins are also expected to perform well as consumers continue to look at gold as a safe, long-term asset. The next 10 days will be crucial in shaping momentum, but all indicators point to a promising Akshaya Tritiya ahead," he added.

Hurts to see my integrity being questioned: Neeraj

One of India’s most decorated athletes is getting hate and abuse for inviting Pak’s Nadeem to NC Classic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, April 25: Two-time Olympic medallist javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra Friday hit out at those targetting him for inviting Pakistan's javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem for the Neeraj Chopra Classic, saying it was just an "invite from one athlete to another", sent before the Pahalgam terror attack.

The Tokyo Olympics gold medallist and Paris Games silver medallist added that it "hurts" him to see he and his family being abused and their integrity being questioned.

Chopra had invited Nadeem, who had beaten the Indian at the Paris Olympic last year to win gold, for the inaugural edition of the Neeraj Chopra Classic to be held in Bangalore May 24.

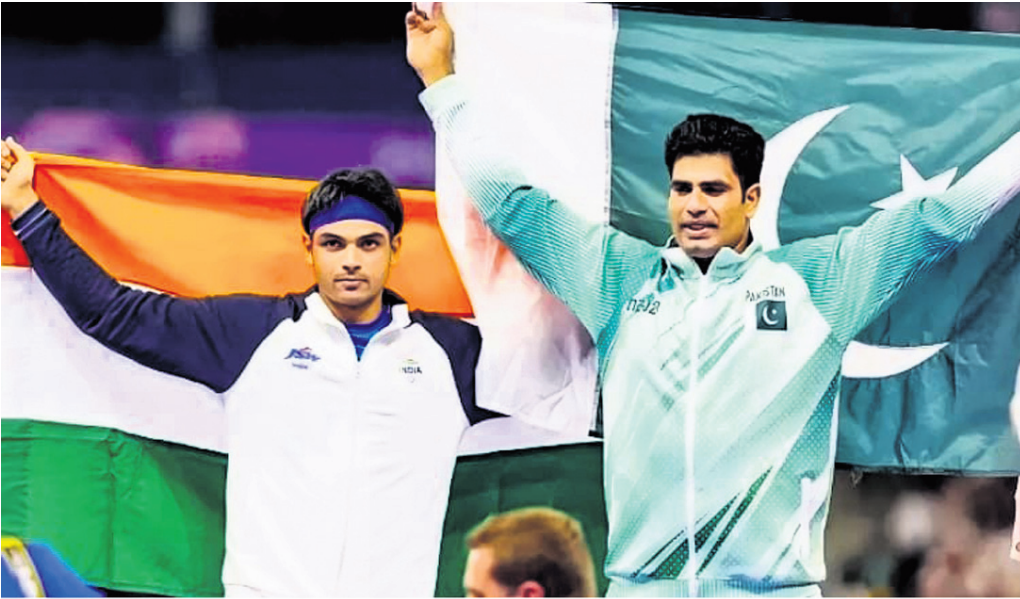
Nadeem had declined to come citing other commitments.

"There has been so much talk about my decision to invite Arshad Nadeem to compete in the Neeraj Chopra Classic, and most of it has been hate and abuse. They haven't even left my family out of it," said Chopra in a long post on 'X'.

"I usually am a man of few words, but that doesn't mean I will not speak up against what I think is wrong. More so when it comes to questioning my love for our country, and the respect and honour of my family," he wrote.

Chopra said invites were sent out Monday, two days before the Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed.

"The invitation I extended to Arshad was from one athlete to another -- nothing more, nothing less. The aim of the



“There has been so much talk about my decision to invite Arshad Nadeem to compete in the Neeraj Chopra Classic, and most of it has been hate and abuse. They haven't even left my family out of it

NEERAJ CHOPRA

NC Classic was to bring the best athletes to India and for our country to be the home of world-class sporting events.

"Invites had gone out to all athletes on Monday, two days before the terrorist attacks at Pahalgam," he added.

Chopra said Nadeem's participation was "completely out of the question" given all that had happened over the last two days.

"After all that has taken place over the last 48 hours, Arshad's presence at the NC Classic was

completely out of the question. My country and its interests will always come first. To those that are going through the loss of their people, my thoughts and prayers are with you. Along with the entire nation, I am both hurt and angry at what has taken place," said Chopra.

"I am confident that our country's response will show our strength as a nation and justice will be served," Chopra added.

One of India's most decorated athletes, Chopra, an army man, said it hurts to see his integrity being questioned.

"I have carried my country with pride for so many years now, and so it hurts to see my integrity being questioned. It pains me that I have to explain myself to people who are targeting me and my family, with no good reason," he wrote.

"We are simple people, please don't make us out to be anything else. There are

so many false narratives that certain sections of the media have created around me, but just because I do not speak up, it doesn't make it true."

Chopra also highlighted "how people switch opinions", while mentioning his mother's statement on Nadeem, whom she had described like her child after the Pakistani had won the Paris gold.

"I also find it difficult to understand how people switch opinions. When my mother - in her simplicity - had made an innocent comment a year ago, there was an outpouring of praise for her views. Today, the same people haven't held back from targeting her for that very same statement."

"I, meanwhile, will work even harder to ensure that the world remembers India and looks at it with envy and respect for all the right reasons," he added.

Great opportunity for us to gain valuable match exposure: Tete

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Perth, April 25: After a month-long senior national training camp, the Indian women's hockey team is set for a challenging five-match tour of Australia from April 26 to May 4.

The tour begins with two matches against Australia A April 26 and 27, followed by three matches against the World No 5 Australian senior women's team May 1, 3 and 4 at the Perth Hockey Stadium.

The Indian team last competed in the FIH Hockey Pro League (Women) at home, where they registered two wins and one shootout victory in a mixed campaign. They ended the tournament on a high, clinching a bonus point against World No 1 Netherlands in a thrilling shootout after a 2-2 draw across regulation time.

Hockey India has named a 26-member squad for the tour, with Salima Tete leading the side as captain and Navneet Kaur as vice-captain.

Ahead of the series, Salima Tete said, "We are excited to be here in Perth. This is a great opportunity for us to gain valuable match exposure against strong opponents. These matches will help us understand our team combinations better and test different strategies ahead of the Europe leg of the Pro League and the Women's Asia Cup later this year. All the players, especially the new faces, are eager to make the most of this experience."

Australia have traditionally been a strong opponent, winning 10 of the 16 matches played between the two sides and drawing three.

However, India will take confidence from their recent 1-0 win over Australia in the FIH Hockey Pro League 2023-24 and will look to build on that momentum.

ASIAN ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Kujur to lead India's strong contingent

NEERAJ MISSING IN 59-MEMBER SQAUD



India, currently third in the all-time medal tally of the Asian Championships behind China and Japan, will look to better its previous edition's total of 27 medals including six gold in Bangkok 2023

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, April 25: The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) Friday unveiled a strong 59-member Indian contingent for the upcoming Asian Athletics Championships, scheduled to be held from May 27 to 31 in Gumi, South Korea. The announcement came a day after the conclusion of the Federation Cup in Kochi, which served as the final selection trial for the continental event.

Headlining the squad are some of India's top track and field stars including triple jumper Praveen Chithravel, long jumper Shaili Singh, and sprinter Animesh Kujur, all of whom are expected to lead India's medal hunt. India, currently third in the all-time medal tally of the Asian Championships behind China and Japan, will look to better its previous edition's total of 27 medals including six gold in Bangkok 2023.

The selection process was stringent, with the AFI mak-

ing it mandatory for athletes to meet qualification standards at the Federation Cup and finish in the top two positions to be considered. AFI President Bahadur Singh Sagoo and chief coach Radhakrishnan Nair reiterated the importance of recent form in the final decision.

Notably, sprinters Gurindervir Singh and Manikanta Hobli-dar, despite meeting the 100m qualifying marks earlier at the Indian Grand Prix-1, were left out of individual events after failing to deliver top finishes in Kochi. However, both have been named in the 4x100m relay squad.

Exemptions were granted to elite international performers such as Avinash Sable and Parul Chaudhary, given their consistent overseas records. Sable will compete in the 3000m steeplechase while Parul is set to participate in the 3000m steeplechase and 5000m events.

Olympic gold medallist Neeraj Chopra, however, will not be a part of the Indian squad due to overlapping international commitments, including the Doha Diamond League and the Neeraj Chopra Classic.

SHORT TAKES

Khushi, Tikam in semis

Amman: Khushi Chand and Tikam Singh were among the Indians boxers who reached the semifinals of the Asian U-15 & U-17 Championships being held here. Khushi (46 kg), a bronze-medallist at the 2024 Asian School Boys & Girls Boxing Championship in Abu Dhabi, forced an early end to her quarterfinal bout against Vietnam's Nguyen Thi Hong Yen after out-boxing her. Tikam (52 kg) got the better of Palestine's Othman Diab in his last-eight contest, which also ended early. In the men's section, Ambekar Meetei (48 kg), Udhham Singh (54 kg), and Rahul Gariya (57 kg) won by unanimous 5-0 decisions, while Aman Dev (50 kg) edged past Jordan's Osamah Al-Khaldi 3-2 in a tight bout. Jiya (48 kg) defeated Vietnam's Thi Ru Na Dinh for a 5-0 win while Jannat (54 kg) overpowered Ukraine's Anhelina Rumiantseva 4-1.

Pakistan not invited for Azlan Shah Cup

Karachi: The Malaysian Hockey Federation has not extended invitation to Pakistan for the annual Azlan Shah Cup in the wake of non-payment of dues to the tune of \$10,349 to the Johar Hockey Association. A source in the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) said the Johar Association has sent a stern official letter to the PHF regrading the dues it needs to pay for the accommodation, travel and other expenses of PHF officials and their families who went to Malaysia with the team in October 2023. The Pakistan team had gone to Malaysia to play in the Johar hockey cup and the PHF officials including their families also accompanied the team.

Italian Cup final: Bologna vs AC Milan

Bologna: Bologna advanced past Empoli to reach its first Italian Cup final in more than half a century Thursday. Thijs Dallinga's 87th-minute header earned Bologna a 2-1 win and the team advanced 5-1 on aggregate. Giovanni Fabbian opened the scoring for Bologna with a header seven minutes in. Then Viktor Kovalenko equalized for Empoli in the 30th by turning in a rebound to finish off a counterattack. Bologna won the first leg 3-0. In the May 14 final in Rome, Bologna will face AC Milan, which eliminated city rival Inter Milan on 4-1 aggregate following a 3-0 win Wednesday.

Bihar take crown from Odisha



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati, April 25: Bihar defeated defending champions Odisha 21-12 to be crowned as the winners of the 12th Senior National Rugby 7s Championship (Women). This marked Bihar's second national championship title, having won it earlier in 2022 on home soil.

The battle for bronze also saw a closely fought contest with Maharashtra defeating Delhi 14-5 to retain their 3rd place. Sunita Hansdah of Odisha emerged as the top scorer of the competition with 13 tries with Anshu Kumari; Arti Kumari from Bihar close behind at 12 tries.

Speaking on the completion of the women's competition, Indian Rugby Football Union (IRFU) President Rahul Bose said, "The 12th Senior Nationals

witnessed some fierce battles between teams and was a testament to the progress women's rugby has made in the country in the last few years.

"All teams from 24 states that participated deserve applause for giving their all on the field. Many congratulations to all the medal winners and especially Bihar on winning their second national championship. The progress that Bihar has made in women's rugby is an example for any upcoming state to follow," he added.

Bose also thanked the Government of Assam for the extensive support provided in hosting the competition.

With the women's competition now over, the action moves to the men's category, where 26 states will be battling it out on April 27 and 28 to be crowned as champions.

SRH all but end CSK's chances with win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, April 25: Pacer Harshal Patel made the best use of a sluggish Chepauk surface as Sunrisers Hyderabad put Chennai Super Kings on the brink of exit door by winning the battle of back-benchers by five wickets in the Indian Premier League here Friday.

Harshal, a fine exponent of the slower delivery and the knuckle ball, took 4 for 28 as Chennai Super Kings endured another poor outing with the bat and were bowled out for 154 in 19.5 overs.

Despite getting assistance from the dew-laden surface, SRH made a heavy weather of the chase before finally knocking off the target in 18.4 overs.

Ishan Kishan (44 off 34 balls), after his brain fade against Mumbai Indians, played a responsible hand at the top before Kamindu Mendis (32 not out off 22 balls) and Nitish Kumar Reddy (19 not out off 13 balls) got the visitors two points with a 49-run stand. This was SRH's first win at this venue.

With six points from nine games, SRH's play-off qualification hangs by a thread as they need to win all their five matches and that too by a fair margin



to end on 16 points, which is a safe cut-off.

SRH leapfrogged Rajasthan Royals to the eighth position in the 10-team table as Mahendra Singh Dhoni's men remain at the bottom of the heap.

For CSK, their seventh defeat in nine games practically ends their hopes as they now need wins in the next five games and hope that the play-off cut-off remains at 14 for the fourth-placed team.

The confidence of CSK bat-ters has been shot to pieces and the lack of a collective effort from their bowlers only compounded the problems.

Harshal, who cleverly used the change of pace, was com-

plemented well by skipper Pat Cummins (2/21), ambidextrous spinner Kamindu (1/26), veterans Mohammed Shami (1/28) and Jaydev Unadkat (2/21).

Dewald Brevis (42 off 25) was the top scorer while Deepak Hooda (22 off 21) played some lofty shots towards the end to take CSK past 150-run mark.

Young Ayush Mhatre (30 off 19) was, however, going great guns, picking up boundaries at will with his attacking batting against Shami, SRH skipper Cummins and Unadkat. But Shivam Dube (12 off 9) and Brevis (42 off 25) had other plans as they took the attack to the opposition with their power hitting. Shivam Dube (12 off 9) and

Brevis (42 off 25) had other plans as they took the attack to the opposition with their power hitting. While Dube hit Shami for two exquisite boundaries through covers in the 11th over, Brevis clobbered Mendis for three maximums in the next over to keep up the run rate.

Dhoni in his 400th T20 match too failed to fire as the veteran batter slashed a Harshal delivery straight to Abhishek at point.

BRIEF SCORES

Chennai Super Kings: 154 all out in 19.5 overs (Dewald Brevis 42; Harshal Patel 4/28) lost to Sunrisers Hyderabad: 155/5 in 18.4 overs (Ishan Kishan 44).

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

Mbappe, Real Madrid eye El Clasico redemption vs Barca

This is the first Copa del Rey final between Spain's biggest rivals since 2014. Barcelona holds a record 31 Spanish cups. Madrid has 20, third place all time

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona, April 25: Barcelona and Real Madrid meet in the Copa del Rey final Saturday with more than just the trophy on the line for the fierce Spanish rivals.

Barcelona wants to grab the first piece of a potential treble of major titles in coach Hansi Flick's debut season. The team is on pace to conquer La Liga, and three days after the cup final it will start its two-legged Champions League semifinal against Inter Milan.

It could also be the last trophy for Carlo Ancelotti, who many Madrid watchers speculate could leave the powerhouse this summer, possibly to take over the Brazil national team.

Madrid arguably has more at stake. Out of the Champi-



ons League, the cup is its best chance to salvage the campaign with some silverware. It is also alive in La Liga, but it needs to overhaul a four-point deficit to Barcelona with five games left — a home stretch that includes

yet another clasico.

For Barcelona, a title won at the expense of Madrid would give it a huge momentum boost for Inter's visit Wednesday as the Catalan club pursues its first European Cup in a decade.

Barcelona dominated their other two meetings this season, beating Madrid 5-2 in the Spanish Super Cup final in January after winning 4-0 at Madrid in the league in October.

The third clasico of the season will be played before 70,000 fans in Seville's La Cartuja Stadium, where King Felipe VI will award the trophy to the winners.

Filling in for Lewandowski

Flick's biggest task will be filling in for the injured Robert Lewandowski, who picked up a left-thigh injury last weekend. The Poland striker is producing another stellar season with a team-high 40 goals across all competitions.

Ferran Torres is likely to

start in his place. The versatile forward has emerged as Barcelona's super sub in this campaign. He has netted 17 goals overall in limited minutes, including five in the cup. Another option, however, could be playing attacking midfielder Dani Olmo as a "false nine" flanked by Lamine Yamal and Raphinha.

Barcelona will also be without starting left back Alejandro Balde. Youth player Gerard Martin is likely to take his place unless Flick wants to slot a more experienced player into that position.

Mbappé's moment?

Finishing the season without a trophy would be a major disappointment after Madrid brought in superstar Kylian Mbappé last summer.

The France striker has scored goals galore but has

failed to produce big in the biggest games of the season. He was jeered when substituted late in the second of two losses to Arsenal in the Champions League quarterfinals.

Vinicius Júnior has seen his productivity in attack fade ever since he felt overlooked in the Ballon d'Or award selection earlier this season. But the Brazil forward has previously risen to the occasion in finals.

Midfielder Eduardo Camavinga injured a tendon this week and will miss the rest of the season, joining Madrid's long-term casualty list that includes defenders Dani Carvajal and Eder Militao.

Madrid's main task in defense will be keeping Yamal and Raphinha in check after both ran rampant in the previous clasicos this campaign.