

### Sai's visualisation

Actor Sai Pallavi shares her perception on 'beautiful and confident woman' in film industries

LEISURE | **P2**



### China backs Pakistan

China supports a fair probe into Pahalgam attack and urges calm, backing Pakistan in safeguarding its sovereignty and security

INTERNATIONAL | **P10**



### Factory growth flat

India's industrial production growth remains almost flat at 3 per cent in March, sequentially

BUSINESS | **P11**



### Vaibhav sets record

Vaibhav Suryavanshi hits the fastest century for any Indian in the IPL as RR defeat GT by eight wickets

SPORTS | **P12**

SHORT TAKES

3 from Odisha receive Padma Shri from Prez

**Bhubaneswar:** Three distinguished personalities from Odisha were conferred with Padma Shri by President Droupadi Murmu Monday for their outstanding contributions in various fields. The awardees are: Adwaita Charan Gadanayak and Durga Charan Ranbir for Art and Ashok Kumar Mahapatra for Medicine. Adwaita Charan Gadanayak, a renowned sculptor, is acclaimed for his profound works that embody Indian culture, spirituality, and heritage. His artistic contributions have been recognized both nationally and internationally. Durga Charan Ranbir, a veteran Odissi dancer and one of the most senior Gurus of the classical dance form, has dedicated over four decades to the promotion and teaching of Odissi. Mahapatra, an eminent neurosurgeon and former professor at AIIMS, has contributed significantly to medical science through his research, publications, and neurosurgery. **P8**

Pact inked with France for 26 Rafale jets

**New Delhi:** India and France Monday inked an intergovernmental agreement to procure 26 naval variants of Rafale fighter jets at a cost of around ₹64,000 crore for the Indian Navy. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was present at the signing ceremony. Under the terms of reference, the delivery of the jets will have to start around five years after signing of the contract. **P9**

Power outage hits Spain, Portugal

**Madrid/Lisbon:** Spain and Portugal were hit by a widespread power outage Monday that paralysed public transport, caused large traffic jams and delayed flights. Utility operators sought to restore the grid but Spanish electricity transmission operator Red Eléctrica said the outage, the cause of which was not immediately known, could last from six to 10 hours. Officials said the possibility that it was caused by a cyber attack had not been ruled out. **P10**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Yes, we've blocked a few channels for spreading lies, but don't worry, they're Pakistani YouTube channels

Odisha cancels foreign nationals' ration cards

**Bhubaneswar, April 28:** Following Pahalgam terror attack that claimed 26 lives, including one from Odisha, the state government has decided to cancel ration cards illegally issued to foreign nationals over the years, officials said Monday.

Speaking to reporters, state Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister KC Patra said all District Collectors have been instructed to immediately revoke ration cards issued to Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Burmese nationals residing in the state.

"We have tightened our stance after the terror attack. Foreign nationals staying

VULGARITY ON OTT, SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

SC asks Centre to act

*The Supreme Court Monday, while expressing deep concern over the perverse nature of some contents being aired on social media and over-the-top (OTT) platforms, issued a notice to Centre on a plea seeking restrictions on the streaming of such contents on these platforms which can harm children and adolescents, potentially encouraging risky sexual behaviours. However, the bench of Justices BR Gavai and Augustine George Masih refused to pass any order, as sought by the petitioner, stating that it is either for the legislature or the executive to come out with measures to deal with the issue. "This is not within our domain. As it is, there is lot of allegation that we are encroaching upon the legislative and executive powers," Justice Gavai said. It is obvious that the learned justice was hinting at the criticisms the top court faced following the judgement in the Tamil Nadu Governor vs MK Stalin government case which was dubbed as judicial excess by some BJP leaders*

**New Delhi, April 28:** The Supreme Court Monday called it an "important concern" and sought responses from the Centre and others on a plea seeking a ban on streaming of sexually explicit content on OTT and social media platforms.

A bench of Justices BR Gavai and Augustine George Masih said it is either for the legislature or the executive to come out with measures to deal with the issue.

"This is not within our domain. As it is, there is lot of allegation that we are encroaching upon the legislative and executive powers," Justice Gavai said in an apparent reference to recent attacks on the judiciary.

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said the government would not take it as an adversarial litigation. "Kindly monitor it here. We will come out with something which balances the freedom of speech while (Article) 19 (2) is taken care of," he said.

Mehta said some of the contents are not only obscene but also "perverse". Advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain, appearing for the petitioner, said it is not an adversarial litigation and the plea raised a serious concern over such contents on over-the-top (OTT) and social media.

Jain said such content was displayed without any checks or restrictions. "Mr solicitor, you should do something," Justice Gavai told Mehta.

The law officer said children are more exposed to all this nowadays. "Some of the things which are in regular programmes, the language, the contents... is of such a nature that it is not only vulgar, it is perverse," he said.

Mehta said some of the content is so perverse even two respectable men cannot sit and watch it together.

He said the only condition is that such programmes are for viewers aged over 18 years but cannot be controlled.

The bench referred to the use of cell phones by children.

"They (children) are quite adapt. It is a good thing, provided they reach the correct website," Mehta said.

The bench observed, "On the last date itself, we had told him (Jain) that this is for either the legislature or the executive."

The apparent reference was to the remarks of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar and BJP MP Nishikant Dubey against the judiciary.

Dhankhar had questioned the judiciary setting a timeline for the president to make decisions and acting as a "super Parliament", saying the Supreme Court cannot fire a "nuclear missile" at democratic forces. Soon after, BJP MP Nishikant Dubey said Parliament and Assemblies should be shut if the apex court had to make laws.

Mehta Monday said something is needed to be done to deal with the issue. When the bench offered to issue notice on the plea for responses from the Centre and others, including some OTT and social media platforms, Mehta said it may not be necessary to issue notice to others.

Incursion by India imminent: Pak Min

**Islamabad, April 28:** Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif Monday said a military incursion by neighbouring India is imminent in the aftermath of a deadly terrorist attack on tourists in Kashmir last week, as tensions rise between the two nuclear-armed nations.

The terrorist attack killed 26 people and triggered outrage in India, along with calls for action against Pakistan. India accuses the neighbouring country of backing terrorism in Kashmir, a region both claim and have fought two wars over.

"We have reinforced our forces because it is something which is imminent now. So in that situation some strategic decisions have to be taken, so those decisions have been taken," Asif told Reuters in an interview at his office in Islamabad.

Asif said India's rhetoric is ramping up and that the government on the possibility of an Indian attack. He did not go into further details on his reasons for thinking an incursion was imminent.

After the Kashmir attack, India identified two suspected terrorists as Pakistani. Islamabad has denied any role and called for a neutral investigation.

REUTERS & AGENCIES

Govt blocks 16 Pak YouTube channels

**New Delhi:** The Centre has blocked 16 Pakistani YouTube channels for allegedly disseminating "false, provocative and communally sensitive content" about India and has also strongly objected to the BBC's reportage on the Pahalgam attack, officials said Monday. The YouTube channels blocked are: Dawn News, Irshad Bhatti, SAMAA TV, ARY NEWS, BOL NEWS, Raftar, The Pakistan Reference, Geo News, Samaa Sports, GNN, Uzair Cricket, Umar Cheema Exclusive, Asma Shirazi, Muneeb Farooq, SUNO News and Razi Naama. **P9**

PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK

Titanic survivor's letter fetches over ₹3cr at UK auction

The letter, penned by Colonel Archibald Gracie just days before the Titanic sank, was written April 10, 1912, from Southampton

**AGENCIES**

**London, April 28:** A letter penned by Titanic survivor Colonel Archibald Gracie fetched \$3,99,000 (Rs 3.4 crore) at an auction by Henry Aldridge & Son in Wiltshire, England. Described as "museum grade", the letter was acquired by a private US collector after intense bidding, the auction house announced recently, according to a report.

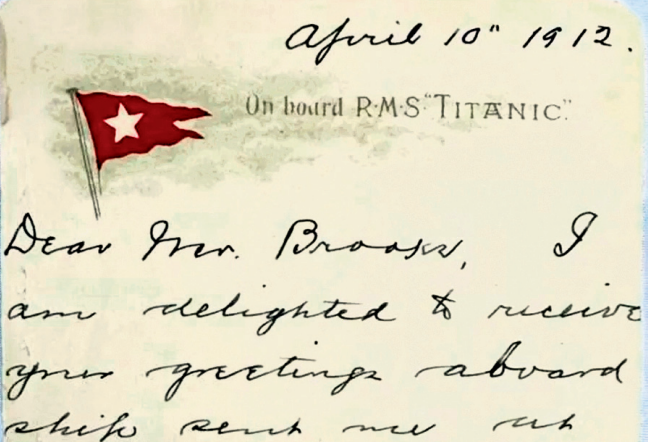
The report said Gracie had written the letter from Southampton April 10, 1912, just days before the gigantic Titanic sank into the icy waters of the North Atlantic after colliding with an iceberg.

Gracie, a first-class passenger, mailed it while the ship was on its way to Queenstown (now Cork), Ireland, one of its

**Gracie survived by jumping into the freezing ocean and reaching an overturned collapsible lifeboat, later being rescued by another lifeboat**

two scheduled stops before the catastrophic disaster struck, killing around 1,500 people.

In the letter, Gracie, then 54, expressed his cautious optimism about the ship: "It is a fine ship but I shall await my journey's end before I pass judgement on her," according to a report by 'The New York Post'. Those words would take on a haunting significance just days later, as the Titanic struck an iceberg and sank in the early



April 10" 1912.

On board RMS "TITANIC"

Dear Mr. Brooss, I am delighted to receive your greetings aboard ship sent me at

hours of April 15, 1912.

Gracie, who survived the wreck, later recounted his escape in his book, 'The Truth about the Titanic', published posthumously in 1913. After the ship went down, he jumped into the freezing ocean and swam to an overturned collapsible lifeboat. There, he was eventually

rescued by other passengers aboard a passing lifeboat.

Despite surviving the wreck, Gracie continued to suffer from the physical effects of hypothermia. His health deteriorated over the following months, and he became the first adult Titanic survivor to die. He died in December 1912, with the cause of death listed as complications from diabetes. At the time of the Titanic disaster, Gracie was returning to New York after a trip to Europe.

A man of notable heritage, Gracie's father had served as a Confederate officer during the Civil War, and his great-grandfather had built Gracie Mansion, which is still the official residence of New York City's mayor today.



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*

**ARIES**  
So, busy bee, you finally realise you've been ignoring your near and dear. And now, it's going to cost you a lot of effort to make it up to them. Dinner at the finest restaurant, a trip to the theatre, shopping at a posh boutique... be ready to splurge, says Ganesha!

**TAURUS**  
Your think tank will be running on overdrive today. Your possessiveness might kick in to cause a conflict. Keep your anger under the carpet to avoid any unnecessary complications. Introspection will also play upon your thoughts, leading you to explore your problems and pry for solutions, predicts Ganesha.

**GEMINI**  
Ganesha opines that today you might feel a little blue and under the weather. You may harbour feelings of loneliness today. Your repressed emotions and yearnings as well as your intellectual leanings will likely come to the fore today, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
Your ideas today are source of your energy. A situation may arise, which will force you to take hard decisions later. A new business or venture may prove beneficial. Your magical touch will bestow success in every endeavour. Ganesha is with you.

**LEO**  
You might be the man of the house, but to make that house a home, you need a family. So keep that in mind, says Ganesha, and remember that your family is the foundation of your success. Make every possible effort to make your family's roots stronger. The fruits of such efforts shall only be sweeter.

**VIRGO**  
Today might just bring those emotions to the fore that were lying in the closet of your heart. You will develop a bonding – a sentimental attachment – with your belongings. But you'll be a fish out of water, if and when you don't find the surroundings to your liking.

**LIBRA**  
Unleash the artist in you today! Don't be surprised if you happen to discover a love for the fine arts. The stars bestow on you refined aesthetic sense. As a result, your penchant for interior decoration is sure to get a boost.

**SCORPIO**  
Family matters have been screaming for long for your attention now. Your estranged spouse may deal the final blow to sever all ties, foretells Ganesha. But keep calm, and hold that tongue, advises Ganesha. Your priority should be to secure your family's peace.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
The nerd in you will rise to the fore today. Religious literature will catch your fancy. Ganesha also sees you diving deep into pages of detective tomes, murder and science fiction. Au contraire, find some relief from the roller-coaster by listening to some soothing music.

**CAPRICORN**  
The chances of you meeting financial success are few, but they are there nonetheless, says Ganesha. If you really want to improve your account balance and settle all the burgeoning debts, focus on what all needs to be done, and get it done without delay. You will make merry later in the day and will enjoy the company of your loved ones.

**AQUARIUS**  
The day is taxing. You may find that others have dumped their share of work on you. But you are not one to admit defeat, and will deal with the challenge squarely, says Ganesha. You will outwit your opponents, and toast your success by starlight!

**PISCES**  
While your day is unlikely to be very satisfactory, keeping your expectations low will help lessen your disappointment, says Ganesha. However, the evening is likely to be as refreshing as your day was depressing, with all the socialising in store for you. A rollicking party awaits you with good food, wine and music as accompaniments.



## RIHANNA'S PARENTING HACK TO GRAB HER KIDS' ATTENTION

RiRi is dropping parenting hacks to help fellow parents cope. Grammy-winning singer-songwriter Rihanna recently took to the Stories of her Instagram, and shared a video of her eyes and lips with a banana filter. “Since my kids love bananas so much but wanna ignore me”, the caption read.

## SALMA: FEMALE SOLIDARITY HAS BEEN MY STRENGTH

Actress Salma Hayek says she and Penelope Cruz both offered huge support to one another as they tried to make it in Hollywood as actresses from Mexico and Spain, respectively. She said that female solidarity has been her strength, inspiration and her safe space.



## Sai's perception of beauty, confidence

**Chennai:** Sai Pallavi, the spectacular actress who works primarily in Telugu and Tamil films, has changed the perception of being portrayed as a ‘beautiful woman’ or a ‘confident woman,’ with her decisions and she owns it. Pallavi doesn’t apply make-up, and she endorses her vision with pride, winning hearts simply with her acting prowess and gracious demeanour.

In a 2023 interview with *Film Companion*, Pallavi was asked about her confidence to do films without make-up in a world full of insecurities and Instagram filters. Pallavi humorously stated, “For *Premam* and the films after that, I did put on make-up during the photoshoots that we have before [shoot], test shoots that we have before we start shooting. Most of the directors you know want to try, ‘let’s see how she looks with lenses and with make-up.’ Then they have me take it off, and they say, ‘No, we like the way you are. So just come and you emote.”

She continued that she completely understands the labour that goes behind putting on makeup, and if a person feels confident after that, it’s their choice. However, when it comes to her the actress smiled and said that she feels confident in the way she is.



AGENCIES



## Dimple joins *Sharwa38* cast

**Chennai:** The makers of director Sampath Nandi’s upcoming action drama, featuring actor Sharwanand in the lead, Monday welcomed actress Dimple Hayathi on board.

Sources in the know have said that while Anupama will play the film’s leading lady, Dimple will have a pivotal role to play in the film.

Taking to his X timeline on Monday, director Sampath Nandi wrote, “Our #Sharwa38 world just got brighter! Welcoming @DimpleHayathi. The Chandh of our Soil. Shoot begins soon. A #SharwaSampath-BloodFest.”

Sharwanand is stepping into uncharted territory with his first-ever pan-India film, which is tentatively being referred

to as #Sharwa38. He is teaming up with director Sampath Nandi, known for having delivered blockbusters before.

The film is being produced by KK Radhamohan under the Sri Sathya Sai Arts banner and presented by Lakshmi Radhamohan. The film, which is to be made on a lavish scale, boasts a top-notch technical team.

Both Anupama and Dimple are playing impactful roles in the film, say sources. The poster released to welcome Dimple does not show her face. However, interestingly she seems to be wearing gold ornaments on her neck, nose, ears, hands and fingers.

Set against the rugged backdrop of the North Telangana-Maharashtra border during the late 1960s, the film plunges viewers into a raw, violent world where power is everything and survival is soaked in blood.

IAN5



## Film fraternity celebrates 90 years of Odia Cinema

**Bhubaneswar:** An event commemorating the 90th anniversary of Odia cinema was hosted at the Press Club of Odisha Monday. The event saw the participation of prominent Ollywood personalities, including actors Siddhant Mohapatra, Sritam Das, Partha Sarthi Ray, Sukant Rath, actresses Anu Choudhury and Usasi Mishra, director Sabayasachi Mohapatra, producer Kaushik Das, cinematographer Niranjan Nayak, and others.

The programme featured a short video showcasing landmark Odia films, tracing the journey from the first Odia film,

*Sita Bibaha* (1936) by Mohan Sundar Deb Goswami, to the recent hit *Daman*. A commemorative poster titled “90 Years of Odia Cinema” was also unveiled.

Speaking at the event, Siddhant said, “We have witnessed a tremendous evolution in Odia cinema. I am grateful to have worked with some of the best technicians, actors, and directors, and have learned a lot from these people throughout this journey. Cinema is a continuous journey — people may come and go, but the spirit of cinema endures.”

Anu emphasized the struggles and triumphs of Odia cinema, saying, “Mohan Sundar Deb Goswami, the father of Odia cinema, paved the way. Many have contributed to our journey. We exist because of our audience, and it is their love that keeps us moving forward.”

On the occasion, the film fraternity urged everyone to come together and celebrate ‘Odia Cinema Day’ annually on April 28 and requested the government to officially recognize the day.

PNN

## RAJINI'S HUMILITY

**Chennai:** Superstar Rajinikanth once again showed his humility by surprising fans when he traveled in economy class on his recent flight to Chennai. The unexpected moment quickly

went viral after a video captured the reactions of stunned passengers. As soon as fans noticed him, excitement filled the cabin with people waving, cheering, and calling out “Thalaiva” to get his attention. Rajinikanth, true to his humble nature, greeted them warmly, waving back with his trademark

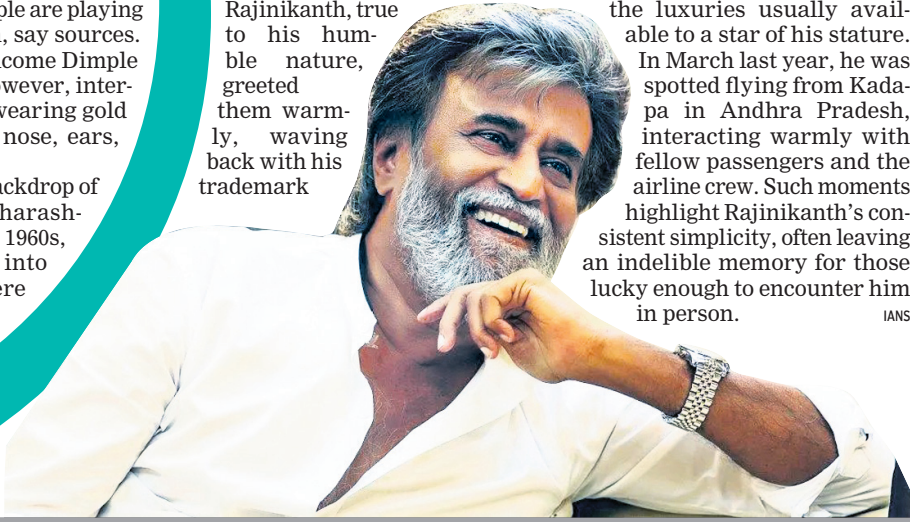
smile and leaving passengers thrilled by the rare encounter.

The video, shared widely on X, showcased passengers enthusiastically recording the moment and expressing their joy. Fans flooded the comments with heartfelt messages like, “Very nice! Never tired of watching him on the screen!” and “The ever-humble superstar.” Rajinikanth’s approachable gesture once again reinforced why he remains such a beloved figure. His simple demeanor, even amidst adulation, continues to set an example of groundedness and affection towards his fans.

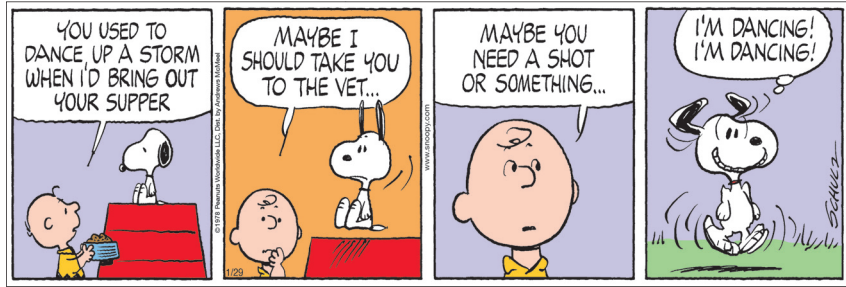
This isn’t the first instance where Rajinikanth chose economy travel over the luxuries usually available to a star of his stature.

In March last year, he was spotted flying from Kadapa in Andhra Pradesh, interacting warmly with fellow passengers and the airline crew. Such moments highlight Rajinikanth’s consistent simplicity, often leaving an indelible memory for those lucky enough to encounter him in person.

IAN5



## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

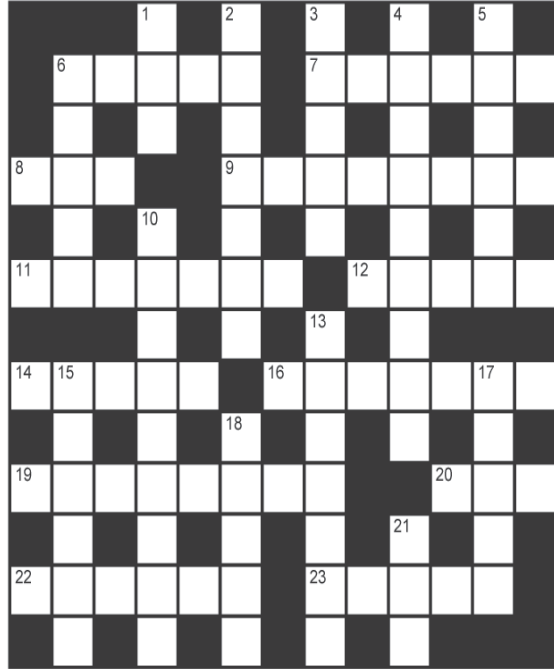


## BREVITY



## FUN post

## CROSSWORD



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### Across

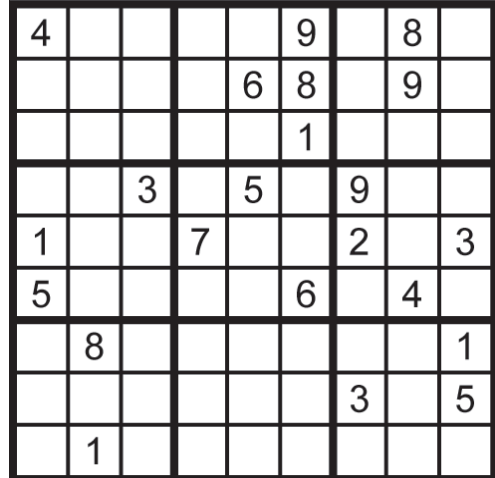
- 6 Dirigible
- 7 Justification
- 8 Missile’s path
- 9 Forebear
- 11 Trounce
- 12 Petrol unit
- 14 Inundate
- 16 Dissect
- 19 Just so-so

### Down

- 1 Lend a hand
- 2 Clothes
- 3 Armistice
- 4 Mediterranean port city
- 20 Family room
- 22 Plump
- 23 Coconut holders
- 5 Azure, for one
- 6 Aquamarine
- 10 Vulgar and offensive
- 13 Scruffy
- 15 Stay out of sight (3,3)
- 17 Garden starters
- 18 Corrosive liquids
- 21 Ancient

## SUDOKU

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

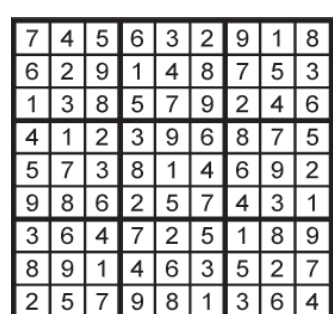


## SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW









**HONOUR:** Noted neurosurgeon Ashok Kumar Mahapatra, veteran Odissi exponent Durga Charan Ranbir and renowned sculptor Adwaita Charan Gadanayak receive Padma Shri from President Droupadi Murmu in New Delhi, Monday



# Odisha’s rice fallow mgmt: A quiet force against climate challenge



ARABINDA KUMAR PADHEE

With climate change, Climate-smart agriculture (CSA) is imperative for ensuring food security for current and future generation that equates to the problem of sustainably increasing agricultural productivity. CSA has many facets. One CSA that possibly has large effects but misses the recognition it deserves is Comprehensive Rice Fallow Management (CRFM), a flagship program in Odisha with a package of practices in all 30 districts of state since 2022.

CRFM is a true climate-smart agriculture involving utilizing land traditionally left fallow after rice harvest in the Kharif season to grow other crops, particularly pulses and oilseeds. While CRFM addresses climatic challenges it thus also benefits in the form of better soil health and improving cropping intensity in areas where it has been traditionally low. CRFM initiated by the Department of Agriculture & Farmers’ Empowerment (DAFE), targets sizable fallow lands as high as 1.1 million acres, representing significant opportunity to spur productivity, food security and rural livelihoods.

In eastern India, a range of environmental and socioeconomic factors limit the adoption of a second crop after rice comprising limited irrigation, inadequate moisture levels, low soil fertility, input supply problems, and insufficient risk mitigation, most of these com-

pounded by climate change. CRFM offers climate-resilient practices: drought-tolerant crop varieties, agroforestry, and sustainable water management. Incorporating legumes into crop rotation, for example, improves soil health by fixing nitrogen.

Significant challenges are faced by CRFM inter alia viz. erratic or low, inadequate residual moisture and widespread cultivation of long-duration rice varieties requiring 150 to 165 days to mature, restricting potential for cultivating a subsequent Rabi crop. With deep commitments of the government and delicate challenges, it was imperative to evaluate CRFM for planning and implementation.

Government of Odisha along with International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) embarked on an ambitious evaluation of CRFM in Odisha applying impact evaluation methods and administrative and satellite remote sensing data, reliably identified and monitored land use patterns, offering synoptic and repeated coverage at various resolutions, making it suitable for both real-time and historical data analysis. CRFM mandates estimating residual soil moisture after Kharif season for Rabi crops in fallows. Remote sensing analyses utilization of both perennial and ephemeral rice fallows. There definitely are green shoots in fallow to non-fallow conversions at a rate faster than other regions in eastern India which cumulatively comprise 80% of rice fallows in India. Upon utilization of the fallows, there are significant increases in yield in Bengal gram, black gram, green gram, lentils, sesamum, and mustard for Odisha.

Evaluation shows soil moisture and other land characteristics bear on fallows’ utilization.

If areas under CRFM involve production with higher yields, the overall productivity in Odisha will increase. Odisha currently is surplus in rice but deficit in pulses and oilseeds.

IFPRI evaluation establishes significant yield improvements in Odisha for key crops: Bengal Gram, Grass Peas, Lentils, and Mustard. To optimize CRFM interventions, there may be a need to further adjust or repurpose resource allocation across locations and crops, requiring analyzing regional needs and identifying crops that require more targeted interventions which like oilseeds-mustard and sesame, may be comparatively under-supported.

Further, identifying high value markets may be essential for maximizing the profitability of CRFM-supported crops mandating market analysis to locate areas with strong demand allowing farmers to capitalize on value-added opportunities. CRFM could involve an integrated environmental, livelihood, and economic assessment.

Odisha is a pioneering state in digital agriculture and information systems underscores the importance of robust data systems to monitor outcomes, integrating Krushak Odisha and ADAPT portal enabling tracking, and geospatial mapping and remote sensing. With a robust monitoring and evaluation system, both short term and long-term performance of CRFM can be gauged.

*Arabinda Kumar Padhee is Principal Secretary in Agriculture and Farmers’ Empowerment department. Co-authors Mamata Pradhan and Devesh Roy are researchers at IFPRI (The views are authors’ own)*

# Crime Branch arrests several fraudsters in cheating cases

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, April 28:** The Odisha Crime Branch Monday arrested multiple fraudsters in connection with six major cases of cheating involving lakhs of rupees. Crime Branch director General Vinaytosh Mishra said the crackdown targeted individuals involved in cyber frauds, fake websites, and capital investment scams across different regions.

In a significant development, two fraudsters — Anshuman Sharma from Agra and Arvind Kumar from Prayagraj — were arrested for duping devotees through a fake website created in the name of Niladri Bhakta Nivas in Puri.

Based on a complaint filed by the Shri Jagannath Temple Administration, it was found that the accused operated a fraudulent portal and asked devotees to transfer money online for accommodation bookings.



Police seized laptops, mobile phones, SIM cards, fake ID documents, and website details from them. The temple administration has urged devotees to use the official website, www.shree-jagannath.in, for any bookings.

In another case, Akash Kesharwani of Prayagraj was arrested in connection with a cyber fraud case involving former minister Tusharkanti Behera. Fraudsters had siphoned off around ₹1.4 crore under the pretext of stock market investments. Kesharwani’s arrest brings the total number of arrests in this case to eight.

Meanwhile, Hiteshbhai Patra, originally from Balasore and

currently residing in Surat, was nabbed for defrauding people of ₹1.28 crore through a capital investment scam. Authorities recovered cheque books, debit and credit cards, mobile phones, SIM cards, rubber stamps, and other incriminating materials from his possession.

In Ahmedabad, Partha Parmar was arrested for allegedly cheating investors out of ₹7.5 crore. Additionally, Thakkar Karsanji Sobhaji and Qureshi Mohammad Aslam from Gujarat were taken into custody for duping people of ₹87.8 lakh in another investment fraud.

DGP Mishra said investigations are ongoing in all cases and raids are being conducted at various locations to apprehend other accused persons still at large.

The Crime Branch has also advised the public to stay vigilant, especially while making financial transactions online or investing in unknown schemes.

## 7th anniversary of CHW held

**Bhubaneswar:** The 7th anniversary of the Cuttack Heritage Walks (CHW) was celebrated recently at the Conference Hall of the Odisha Cricket Association, honouring the city’s rich historical and cultural legacy. Led by CHW convener Dipak Samantarai, the event paid tribute to Cuttack’s vibrant traditions, with a special focus on recognising traditional artisans for their dedication to preserving age-old crafts. Among those honoured were Pankaj Charan Sahoo and Biswanath Dey for their mastery in silver filigree, Ashok Behera for horn work, Purna Chandra for (Japani), Singh Jari work on Goddess Durga’s tableau, and Urvasi Baiyani for her colourful clay dolls. Eminent poet and retired bureaucrat Pradeep Kumar Biswal chaired a special session on preserving heritage sites, stressing the need for sustainable efforts. Professor Kharavel Mahanti, the chief speaker, highlighted Barabati Fort’s crucial role in Odisha’s history, from the Kalingan era to its significance under Afghan, Mughal, Maratha, and British rule. History enthusiast JP Jagdev and Professor Sanjay Acharya also discussed Cuttack’s pivotal role in showcasing Odisha’s cultural prominence on national and global stages.

## RENGALI LEFT CANAL PGC HOLDS 4TH MEET

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 28:** The 4th meeting of the Project Governing Committee (PGC) for the Rengali Left Canal was held chaired by Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary of the Department of Water Resources Anu Garg Monday.

The meeting focused on reviewing the progress of the irrigation project aimed at improving agricultural productivity and water management in the region.

It was reported that about 59 per cent of the physical work has been completed. While acknowledging the progress, the committee emphasised the urgency of resolving pending issues, particularly related to coordination with Railways, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), land acquisition, and forest diversion.

Garg stressed the importance of inter-departmental coordination to overcome delays and ensure timely completion of the project, which is crucial for irrigation, livelihood improvement, and water security in the command area.

The committee also discussed sustainable water usage, socioeconomic impacts, and the project’s long-term benefits. A key topic was the Japan International Cooperation Agency’s (JICA) role in community engagement, farmer empowerment, and capacity-building efforts, all vital for the project’s success.

The meeting ended with a renewed commitment to accelerate progress, ensure inclusive development, and align the project with broader goals of climate resilience, agricultural transformation, and rural development in Odisha.

## Book documenting Kalinga relics in South India unveiled

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, April 28:** In an effort to document and preserve the rich Kalinga heritage scattered across South India, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) Odisha state chapter recently launched a book titled ‘Relics of Kalinga in South India, Part-I’.

Authored by heritage researcher Deepak Kumar Nayak, and edited by retired IAS officer Sanjib Chandra Hota and Professor Asoka Kumar Rath, the book was unveiled by Padma Shri Priyambada Mohanty Hejmadi, a respected

Odissi exponent and former vice-chancellor of Sambalpur University, during a function at the IPS Officers Mess in the Silver City.

Hejmadi lauded the initiative as a monumental contribution to the reinterpretation of Odisha’s history, highlighting the importance of cultural continuity seen in classical dance mudras in temples like Konark and Rajarani. Deepak Kumar Nayak, the author and project coordinator, said that many relics, especially those outside Odisha, had been obscured over time, particularly after Odisha became a separate state.

## Puri-Bangiriposi Exp gets LHB coaches

*Upgrade to LHB coaches brings improved safety, comfort, and efficiency, connecting key coastal and tribal regions of Odisha*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, April 28:** The 12892/12891 Puri-Bangiriposi-Puri Super Fast Express has been upgraded with modern Linke-Hofmann-Busch (LHB) coaches, enhancing passenger safety and comfort. The inaugural run of the upgraded train service was flagged off from Bangiriposi railway station



Monday.

Regular services with the new LHB coaches will begin from Puri April 29 and from Bangiriposi April 30. The train

previously operated with conventional ICF coaches.

The upgraded train composition includes one AC chair car, six second class reserved seat-

ing coaches, five general second class coaches, one guard-cum-rower car, and one guard-cum-second class coach for Divyang passengers.

The inaugural event was attended by several dignitaries, including Mayurbhanj MP Naba Charan Majhi, Rajya Sabha MP Mamata Mohanta, Bangiriposi MLA Sanjali Murmu, and Saraskana MLA Bhadav Hansdah.

The introduction of LHB coaches is a significant improvement in passenger amenities and operational efficiency on this vital route, which connects Odisha’s coastal and tribal regions with the state capital, Bhubaneswar.

# Ultra-processed foods up risk of premature deaths

Do you frequently rely on ready-to-eat or ready-to-heat meals? If so, it’s time to rethink your choices. A major global study has found that the regular consumption of ultra-processed foods (UPFs) can significantly increase the risk of preventable, premature deaths.

Previous research has already linked UPFs — foods typically high in sodium, trans fats, and sugar — to at least 32 diseases, including cardiovascular conditions, obesity, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, and even depression. However, the new findings provide a more comprehensive look at the broader impact of UPFs on mortality.

The study, published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine, analysed nationally representative dietary surveys and mortality data



from eight countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the United States. It found that premature deaths rise sharply in relation to the proportion of UPFs in individuals’ total energy intake.

These results strengthen calls for urgent, worldwide

action to reduce UPF consumption through regulatory reforms and fiscal strategies that promote healthier eating environments.

UPFs are industrially manufactured products, typically made with ingredients extracted from foods or created in laboratories. They contain little

to no whole food and are often loaded with artificial additives such as colourants, flavourings, sweeteners, emulsifiers, and other processing agents. Beyond their unhealthy nutrient profile, researchers stress that the very nature of industrial food processing — and its reliance on synthetic components — poses a serious threat to human health.

“UPFs affect health not only due to their excessive sodium, trans fat, and sugar content but also because of changes introduced during industrial processing and the addition of artificial ingredients,” explained lead author Eduardo AF Nilson from the University of São Paulo, Brazil. “Evaluating deaths from all causes associated with UPF consumption gives a clearer picture of the true harm of industrial food processing.”

The team found that every 10 per cent increase in UPF

consumption corresponded to a 3 per cent rise in the risk of death from any cause. Modelling national food consumption patterns, they estimated that UPF-related premature deaths could range from about 4 per cent in countries with lower consumption (like Colombia) to nearly 14 per cent in nations with higher consumption rates (like the US).

Alarmingly, while UPF consumption has stabilised at high levels in wealthier countries, it is steadily increasing in low- and middle-income nations. Researchers warn that the health burden could soon shift dramatically toward developing countries.

“Our findings show the urgent need for policies that reduce UPF consumption and encourage diets based on fresh, minimally processed local foods,” Nilson said.

WEATHER		
	BBSR	CTC
Max Temp	37.4°	37.0°
Min Temp	26.5°	25.2°
Humidity	68%	64%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
<b>FORECAST</b> Partly Cloudy sky		

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX		VARIATION	
BOURSES	SENSEX	80,218.37	▲ 1,005.84
	NIFTY	24,328.50	▲ 289.15
	DOLLAR	85.16	▼ 0.22
	EURO	96.97	▼ 0.05
	GOLD	₹95,677	▲ ₹606
CURRENCY	SILVER	₹96,243	▼ ₹337

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## Bhitarkanika to be shut for croc breeding season

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rajnagar, April 28:** Bhitarkanika National Park will be out of bounds for tourists from May 1 to July 31 during a two-month closure to accommodate the annual breeding season of saltwater crocodiles.

The park, recognised as one of the premier breeding grounds for the species, enforces the closure each year to minimise human disturbance during this critical period. Female crocodiles typically move inland from tidal zones to prepare nesting sites and lay eggs during these months. Officials said mother crocodiles are known to become highly aggressive while guarding their nests. The restriction on tourist access is intended to prevent potential attacks and ensure a safe, undisturbed environment for the reptiles to nest and hatch their young.

Man-crocodile conflict often reaches a flashpoint in peripheral villages of Bhitarkanika wildlife sanctuary during these rainy months.



**RAGING BLAZE:** Thick plumes of billowing black smoke fill the skyline as a major fire broke out at the pipe stockyard of IOCL refinery at Paradip, Monday

OP PHOTO

## Massive fire breaks out at Paradip refinery pipe yard

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Paradip, April 28:** Panic gripped residents after a massive fire broke out Monday afternoon at the entry point of the IOCL refinery at Paradip in Jagatsinghpur district.

The blaze started in a stack of plastic-coated pipes belonging to a private consultancy firm Techno Mount, which works within the refinery premises. These pipes were intended for underground installation. The fire erupted near the Dochhaki area, close to the Goa Carbon Company, where hundreds of pipes were stored together. Flames quickly engulfed the area, and dark billowing smoke was visible from up to a distance of two kilometres. The fire created a thick blanket of smoke that spread across the area.

Upon receiving alerts, fire tenders from the refinery, Kujang, and various private companies rushed to the scene and worked to contain the blaze. According to the latest reports, the fire was brought under control by 7pm. Following the incident, the refinery's executive director, along with departmental heads, visited the site for an inspection.

RK Sahu, an officer from Indian Oil Corporation Limited's (IOCL) pipeline division, stated that the affected area was the refinery's dumping yard, where over a thousand iron and rubber-coated pipes had been stored. He added that while the cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, the pipes were old and had been placed there after being replaced from under the sea and underground pipelines.

# Kendrapara chases a 'pipe' dream

The coastal district was the only one selected from state in the Jal Shakti Abhiyan in 2019 to boost groundwater recharge

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, April 25:** The Central government has identified Kendrapara district as the state's only water stressed district and included it in the Jal Shakti Abhiyan for ground-water recharge initiatives.

However, locals allege that they have seen little improvement as the government's mission to ensure piped water supply to every household by 2024 has fallen flat in this coastal district. With mercury soaring, an exacerbating drinking water crisis gives burning evidence of the mission's failure.

Moreover, seven rivers under the Mahanadi, Brahmani and Baitarani systems have dried up, leaving the district's residents without access to potable water. To top it all off, over 10,000 tube wells are throwing saline water. The above factors are indicative of the severity of the drinking water crisis plaguing the residents of this coastal district.

Complaints of water shortage are rising during public grievance camps with people often resorting to agitations in various areas due to lack of piped water supply.

According to the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) department, Kend-



rapara district has 17,238 tube wells, 331 drinking water projects and 181 overhead tanks intended to supply drinking water to villagers. Yet, residents say they are not getting the intended benefits with most of the tube wells discharging saline water.

Social activists Pratap Padhi, Bibhuti Bhusan Rout, Pratap Ranjan Tripathy, Debashis Samal and Prakash Chandra Das pointed out that despite the presence of seven rivers, Kendrapara faces a serious drinking water crisis. Due to its coastal location, groundwater in the district has turned saline. Overhead tanks are often dry, and digging a single tube well now

costs at least ₹3 lakh, which is a gamble as it might spew salty water in the end.

Additionally, industries and agricultural activities under the Mahanadi, Brahmani and Baitarani river systems are drawing excessive amounts of water. To make it worse, presence of barrages upstream reduces the water flow, further diminishing groundwater recharge potential.

Reports from both state and Central Water Resource departments indicate that groundwater in areas like Garadpur block is no longer suitable for drinking. Similarly, absence of canal in Aul, Mahakalapara, Rajnagar and

Rajkanika blocks in the district makes groundwater recharge even more difficult. Proximity to the sea has also worsened the water salinity, especially in Mahakalapara block.

In 2019, Kendrapara was the only district in the state selected in the Jal Shakti Abhiyan to boost groundwater recharge. The campaign focused on installing shocking pipe fittings in tube wells, afforestation, rainwater harvesting, and the revival of water sources. However, due to administrative negligence, the campaign failed to achieve its objectives,

and groundwater recharge could not be realised.

Meanwhile, the district also fell short of its target to supply drinking water through pipelines to 2,91,160 families by March 2025. So far, only about 33,000 families have benefited from the initiative. Several mega water supply projects have been launched across the district to improve piped water access, but many started without conducting proper land and environmental assessments.

The drinking water project under construction at Manikunda under Marshaghai block has been halted following a National Green Tribunal (NGT) case. Officials and political leaders have acknowledged that the lack of coordination between the administration and public representatives has contributed to these issues.

When contacted, Additional District Magistrate Nilu Mahapatra said a meeting on drinking water supply had been held recently. He added that various projects are underway to ensure piped drinking water reaches every household in rural areas soon.

Saline water flowing from 10,000 tube wells

## 44 kids from state to undergo surgery at Mumbai hospital under Central scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Berhampur, April 28:** A total of 44 children suffering from congenital heart disease (CHD) went to Mumbai from Ganjam district Monday for free surgery under a Central scheme, officials said.

These children, aged between 3 months and 15 years, will be treated at the SRCC Children's Hospital under

the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK), they said.

A four-member team of doctors accompanied them to coordinate their treatment in Mumbai, said district manager of RBSK Lopamudra Mishra.

The doctors at the Mumbai hospital will test them first and schedule the surgeries, considering the condition of each patient, she said.

These children were identi-

fied during health screening at anganwadi centres and schools by RBSK teams working at the block level, she added.

After being identified, they were treated at the City Hospital here. They were referred to the SRCC Hospital in Mumbai as doctors felt that they needed early surgery, Mishra said.

RBSK was launched in February 2013 under the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM).

## 2 Fine Cup awards for Koraput Coffee

**Koraput:** Koraput Coffee has bagged two prestigious Fine Cup awards for its Arabica Washed and Arabica Naturals at the 2024 KYK (Know Your Kappi) Drive, organised by the Coffee Board of India. Recognised for exceptional taste and aroma, both the variants ranked among India's top four coffees in the 'Flavour of India' competition. The Tribal Development Co-operative Corporation of Odisha Ltd (TDCCOL) played a pivotal role, managing the entire process from collecting cherries at farmers' doorsteps to final processing. This achievement marks a historic moment for TDCCOL, highlighting the excellence of Odisha's tribal coffee farmers.

# Shalachua's struggle for connectivity

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Anandapur, April 28:** In the remote village of Shalachua, nestled on the edge of Keonjhar's Anandapur block and abutting Mayurbhanj district, residents are stuck in a time warp. While India rapidly expands 5G network and works on cutting-edge telecommunication advancements, villagers here climb trees to catch a fleeting mobile signal, a stark reminder of the digital divide plaguing rural areas.

Surrounded by dense forests and hills, Shalachua, largely home to tribal communities, has no mobile towers in or near the village. The absence of basic network access forces locals to scale tall trees, hoping to connect to a weak and unreliable signal. Even then, success is not guaranteed. "It's frustrating," said Durlabh Nayak, a

### CLIMBING TREES FOR SIGNAL



local resident. "We climb, but the network is rarely there."

The lack of connectivity disrupts daily life. From accessing government schemes to contacting emergency services, residents face constant hurdles. Surrounded by

wildlife, the village grapples with the fear of animal attacks, and without reliable communication, reaching the Forest department or medical help during crises is nearly impossible. Students too suffer, unable to access online

resources or communicate effectively for their studies. At night, the village falls into what locals call a "mobile blackout," leaving them completely cut off.

Despite the telecom boom in urban centres and along highways, remote rural pockets like Shalachua remain overlooked by companies competing to expand services. Villagers, including Kshirod Nayak, Muna Nayak, Rabindra Nayak, Kabindra Nayak, and Ballabh Nayak, demanded action. They've called on the administration to install a mobile tower to bring basic communication services and bridge the gap to government programmes.

For now, Shalachua's residents continue their precarious climbs, chasing signals in the treetops, hoping for a future where connectivity is no longer a distant dream.

बैंक ऑफ इंडिया

Bank of India

BOI

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

**CORRIGENDUM TO AUCTION SALE OF VEHICLES**

With reference to our "Auction Sale of Vehicles" published in the "Orissa POST" on 26.04.2025, the published terms and conditions for sale of vehicles has been changed, the interested bidders should read the following changed terms & conditions. All other facts remain unchanged.

Date of submission of EMD through E-Auction Portal- <https://baanknet.com> from 05.05.2025 to 15.05.2025 from 10.00 A.M. to 03.00 P.M.

**Terms and Conditions:** Interested bidders can inspect the vehicles at the premise of the stock yard as mentioned on 02.05.2025 to 13.05.2025 from 10.00 A.M. to 4.00 P.M.. The successful bidder has to deposit 25% of bid amount within one day after bid is successful and the balance amount within 15 days failing which the money deposited by the successful bidder would be forfeited. The cost of transfer of ownership & statutory dues/all misc. charges, if any is to be borne by the successful purchaser. Successful Bidders are fully responsible for taking delivery of all vehicle(s) from stockyard after full payment is made within a period of 15 (fifteen) days. Vehicle will be auctioned on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" & "WHATEVER THERE 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. For further information & clarification contact: **Biswaranjan Samantaryay, Mob.: 6289802435.** This is also a 15 days sale notice to the Borrower(s)/ Legal Heir(s) of the said loan accounts for settlement of their outstanding dues with the bank and to participate in the public auction/e-auction on the mentioned date.

Place: Baripada  
Date: 28.04.2025

Zonal Manager  
Bank of India

यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया

Union Bank of India

A Government of India Undertaking

ROURKELA MAIN BRANCH

Rosy Shopping Centre, 1st Floor, Main Road, Rourkela, Dist.: Sundergarh-769001

**POSSESSION NOTICE**

(For Immovable Property)

**[RULE 8(1) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES – 2002]**

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of **Union Bank of India, Rourkela Main Branch** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (Second) Act, 2002 (Act. No. 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) read with Rule 3 of the Security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice calling upon the Borrower(s)/ Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) in loan A/c mentioned below to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus interest thereon within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower(s)/ Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower(s)/ Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules. The Borrower(s)/ Co-applicant(s)/Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s) 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 **Union Bank of India** for an amount mentioned below & interest 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(s)/ Co-applicant(s)/ Guarantor(s)/Mortgagor(s)	Liabilities Due as per Notice (in ₹)	Date of Demand / Possession Notice	Description of Secured Asset
<b>Borrowers:</b> 1) <b>Mr. Sohail Ahmed</b> , S/o: Mr. Wasi Ahmed of Budeljore, Plot No.: 6/1726, Ashiyana High School Lane, Bisra, Dist.: Sundergarh, PIN-770036, 2) <b>Mr. Wasim Ahmed</b> , S/o: Late Wasi Ahmed of Gajanand Lane, Old Station Road, Rourkela, Sundergarh, PIN-769001	<b>₹ 22,19,297.41</b> + Interest thereon	<b>07.11.2024 / 22.04.2025</b>	All that part of the property consisting of Residential Building located at Plot No.: 6/1726, Khata No.: 88/1289, Mouza: Budeljore, P.S.: Bisra, Tahasil: Bisra, Dist.: Sundergarh, Area: Ca. 0.040 Deca., Owned by <b>Mr. Sohail Ahmed</b> , Bounded by North: Plot No.: 6/701/P, South: Road, East: Plot No.: 6/701/P, West: Road
<b>Place: Rourkela</b> <b>Date: 28.04.2025</b>			<b>Sd/- Authorised Officer</b> <b>Union Bank of India</b>

यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया

Union Bank of India

A Government of India Undertaking

ROURKELA MAIN BRANCH

Rosy Shopping Centre, 1st Floor, Main Road, Rourkela, Dist.: Sundergarh-769001

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“

Spirituality is indeed the master key of the Indian mind; the sense of the infinitive is native to it.

SRI AUROBINDO

# Historical Vacuum

Writing history presupposes painstaking efforts to reconstruct what happened in a remote past in a manner that should ensure, as much as possible, authenticity, accuracy and above all objectivity. Available material needs to be used by the writer without colouring them with his or her own perceptions, imagination, bias and preconceived notions. This is not an easy task and court historians or those commissioned by the powers that be have time and again let their own prejudices and those of their masters, who have paid for and assigned the task to them, influence the tone and tenor of their narratives. It is easy to claim that all these eventually boil down to travesty of truth. Facts and events that took place centuries ago have to be presented as they were, no matter whether they are to the liking of the present generation or not. If this discipline is violated, then the result is a pseudo-history and falsification of facts that do grave injustice to the times gone by. However, in a scenario that existed in the Indian subcontinent during the last thousand years or so, no unbiased, impartial or reliable records of events were ever maintained. Unlike Egypt or China where hieroglyphics existed prior to the birth of formal script, Indian society was deprived of any script of its own till much later in time of human evolution. Also, as education and exposure was limited to certain sections of society, primarily the upper caste, all recorded history glorified the ruling class or those who were close to them through economic or socio-religious standing. On second thought, even the trader or business class was not considered high enough to have access to governance or god. Therefore, Indian history has, sadly, throughout the past has always been trampled upon and disfigured and discoloured.

India is confronted with this problem once again with the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) making major changes to its Class VII Social Science textbooks, removing all references to the Mughals and the Delhi Sultanate. The latest revision also brings in new chapters that highlight ancient Indian dynasties - the Magadha, Mauryas, Shungas, and S tav hanas - with a focus on “Indian ethos”, the Maha Kumbh festival and major initiatives of the government. If the intent is to widen and bring in underplayed parts of history to the forefront, that is a welcome step. If instead it is to whitewash one part of Indian history and disproportionately highlight another, then the whole story gets perverted. The changes are being touted as part of the new National Education Policy (NEP) and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2023. Both focus on promoting Indian traditions, philosophies, knowledge systems, and local heritage within the school curriculum. But then the question arises whether what is considered ‘local heritage’ in Mathura or Benares, will those same beliefs be considered local or acceptable for Jagannath at Puri or Ayyappan lore of Sabarimala?

The apparent allergy to Indian history during periods when Moslem rulers dominated the scene in Delhi was in evidence during the COVID-19 pandemic when the NCERT “trimmed” content on the Tughlaqs, Khiljis, Mamluks, and Lodis, along with a two-page table about Mughal emperors’ achievements. But, this is the first time that all material relating to the Mughals and Delhi Sultanate, an important part of north and west Indian history, has been taken out completely. This decision will certainly create a period of complete vacuum in history when, for future school students, there will be no trace of who governed that portion of this sub continent during those centuries.

Predictably, this syllabus rationalisation by the NCERT in its textbooks has been met with criticism from opposition parties. Whether this would help education or damage the knowledge base is a point to ponder.

Another new chapter on sacred and pilgrimage sites across India and outside for religions like Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism has been named “How the Land Becomes Sacred.” This chapter refers to places with 12 Jyotirlingas, the Char Dham yatra, and the “Shakti pithas” with revered river confluences, mountains, and forests have been mentioned as a “sacred geography.” A quote from India’s first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, which described the country as a land of pilgrimages, also finds a mention.

The new textbook claims that the “varna-jati system” initially provided social stability, but became rigid, particularly under British rule, leading to inequalities. A mention about the Maha Kumbh states how 660 million people participated in it, but has no mention of the recent stampedes in which many pilgrims died and several injured.

NCERT Director Dinesh Prasad Saklani showed a lack of understanding the spirit of history when last year he claimed, “teaching about riots can make young children negative citizens.” The remark was made in the context of the NCERT’s removal of portions referring to the Gujarat communal violence of 2002.

The NCERT should refrain from distorting history and damaging the education of future generations.

## WISDOM CORNER

“Art is not a handicraft, it is the transmission of feeling the artist has experienced.

LEO TOLSTOY

“Love is the only reality and it is not a mere sentiment. It is the ultimate truth that lies at the heart of creation.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

“Have a heart that never hardens, and a temper that never tires, and a touch that never hurts.


CHARLES DICKENS

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

- **1429:** French national heroine Joan of Arc and her troops entered the besieged city of Orléans during the Hundred Years' War.
- **1770:** British explorer James Cook made his first landing in Australia, at Botany Bay.
- **1916:** About 10,000 British troops surrendered to Ottoman Turks at Al-K-t, Iraq, following a five-month siege during World War I.
- **1936:** Orchestral conductor Zubin Mehta was born in Bombay (Mumbai), India.
- **1991:** A tropical cyclone struck Bangladesh, killing an estimated 140,000 people and causing 10 million to lose their homes.

L

YOU WON'T GO TO JAIL




worry. You'll never have to go to jail with all that money.” And the lawyer was right. When the man was sent to prison, he didn't have a dime.

FOCUS

ECONOMY

# IMF’S GRIM FORECAST



### In a global environment marked by uncertainty and subdued growth, India’s resilience stands out, reinforcing its role as a key driver of global economic activity

The US tariff war re-setting the world order of 80 years slows down global growth to 2.8 percent in 2025, down from January forecast of 3.3 percent says the World Economic Outlook (WEO) of International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The IMF seemingly has a grim forecast as it foresees repetition of the Great Depression (GD) or worse, as the US effective tariff rate surged past levels reached during the GD while counter-responses from major trading partners significantly pushed up the global rate. The world may be in turmoil as the US may plunge into severe slowdown with its growth plunging to 1.8 percent, a 90-basis point loss. The problems could surpass the economic trouble to worsening trade tensions, a hint towards a bigger political conflict.

For India, however, the growth outlook is relatively more stable. The IMF projects steady expansion for the Indian economy, supported by firm private consumption, particularly in rural areas.

Despite these revisions, India’s robust growth trajectory continues to set it apart on the global stage. The projections could change the global investment pattern. It might create an additional interest for India despite the capital flight witnessed in the country’s bourses, falling rupee against the dollar and surging gold and silver prices. The rupee could fall further as the WEO says the US benefits as tariffing country in the dollar appreciating further. This apart global investment scenario could face difficulties adding to the problems in the Indian market.

However, greater policy uncertainty, dimmer US growth

prospects, and an adjustment in the global demand for dollar assets—that has so far been orderly—can weigh down on the dollar. In the medium term, the dollar may depreciate if the tariffs translate into lower productivity in the US tradable goods sector, relative to its trading partners.

Risks to the global economy have increased, and worsening trade tensions could further depress growth. Financial conditions could tighten further as markets react negatively to the diminished growth prospects and increased uncertainty. While banks remain well capitalized overall, financial markets may face more severe tests.

Tariffs constitute a negative supply shock leading to productivity loss accompanied by higher production prices, increased rent seeking – a word for rising corruption, that could further impact world growth. Monopolisation could increase as competition decreases. In the US, demand was already softening before the recent policy announcements, reflecting greater

policy uncertainty. With one percentage point rise in inflation above 2 percent predicted earlier, it could spur global prices to rise.

Growth in the Euro area, which is subject to relatively lower effective tariffs, is revised down by 0.2 percentage point, to 0.8 percent. Both in the Euro area and China, stronger fiscal stimulus will provide some support this year and next. Many emerging market economies could face significant slowdowns depending on where tariffs settle. The WEO lowers its growth forecast for the group by 0.5 percentage point, to 3.7 percent.

Dense global supply chains, WEO says, can magnify the effects of tariffs and uncertainty. Most traded goods are intermediate inputs that cross borders multiple times before being turned into final products. Disruptions can propagate up and down the global input-output network with potentially large multiplier effects, as we saw during the pandemic. Companies facing uncertain market access will

likely pause in the near term, reduce investment and cut spending. Likewise, financial institutions will reassess borrowers’ exposure. The increased uncertainty and tightening of financial conditions could well dominate the short term, weighing on economic activity, as reflected in the sharp decline in oil prices.

Risks to the global economy have increased, and worsening trade tensions could further depress growth. Financial conditions could tighten further as markets react negatively to the diminished growth prospects and increased uncertainty. While banks remain well capitalized overall, financial markets may face more severe tests.

The scenarios are painted with much conditionality. In short, the IMF does not appear optimistic.

Assessing the global financial stability, it says that risks have increased significantly as financial conditions tightened and economic and trade policy uncertainty remain elevated.

Overall, investor concerns about public debt sustainability and other fragilities in the financial sector can worsen in a mutually reinforcing fashion.

As the IMF reaffirms India’s economic resilience, the country’s role as a key driver of global growth continues to gain prominence. It feels the country can sustain momentum in a complex international environment. Despite that the threat is not diminished. It is witnessed in its volatile bullion, currency market, inflation indicators and manufacturing. India has chances to stand apart but withering the global winds would not be easy.

SPECTRUM

SOCIETY

# Human Capital Formation key to economic growth



Sushanta Kumar Mahapatra & Pareswar Sahu

### THE BUDGET SHOULD BE THE FINANCIAL MIRROR OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXPENDITURES

Human capital formation (HCF), sustained through the universal provision of basic social services like health and education, is the key to economic development. Developed nations like France, Denmark, Belgium, and Finland spent more than 30% of their GDP on social expenditures in 2014. India spends 5% of its GDP on social expenditure, according to the UNDP (2016). Of the total social expenses of the country, states spend around 80%.

Social expenditure in Odisha looks promising, ranking third among the 14 undivided major general category states, as reflected by the value of the social expenditure index from 1990–91 to 2016–17. Odisha ranks seventh, third, and ninth in terms of the proportion of social expenditures in total expenditures, Gross State Domestic Product, and per capita, respectively, among the 14 major states of the country. The proportion of capital account social expenditures in total expenditures and GDP is 1.7% and 0.4%, respectively. The situation is dismal in the case of per capita capital ac-

count social expenditures (Rs 150). The Odisha government gave the highest priority (41%) to non-developmental expenditures on general services, interest payments, repayment of debt, and pensions.

Compositional analysis of social expenditures presents a gloomy picture of the economic development of the state. Although a significant proportion (71%) of social expenditures is diverted to HCF, Odisha ranks fifth among the 14 major states in the HCF index, measured by the average of education, medical and public health, water supply and sanitation, labor, employment, and nutrition indices. Odisha’s HCF index value is two-thirds that of Kerala and even lower than the value of Bihar (0.38).

Values of educational output indicators are relatively lower than those of Middle Income Group (MIG) and High-Income Group (HIG) states. For example, the average literacy rates of HIG and MIG states are 77.9% and 78.6%, respectively, whereas it is 73% in Odisha, according to the 2011 census. The literacy rate of the state is 21% less than the literacy rate

(94%) of Kerala.

Health output indicators signal a dismal picture due to lower health expenditure (1.4% of GSDP). In 2002–06, life expectancy at birth was 59.6 years in Odisha, lower than that of Bihar (61.1 years). In 2010–12, the maternal mortality rate was 16 per 100,000 live births, below the national average of 12.4. In 2012, anemia contributed to 3.15% of deaths and tuberculosis to 1.49%. In total, 78% of households had no access to toilets in 2011. It is argued that the proportion of health expenditures should not be less than 3% of the GDP to provide universal health coverage.

Populist expenditures were given higher priority than education, health, and employment in the state. Populist expenditures constituted 29% of total social expenditures and 2% of the GSDP. The state is recognized as the fifth highest in terms of populist social expenditure (0.46) among the 14 major states. A single majority party held political power continuously over time and has used populist measures as a strategy to win elections. Populism is both the cause

and consequence of winning elections by the ruling party in the absence of political competition. With the continuous low political competition among the political parties from the 10th to the 16th Assembly elections in the state, expenditures on populist measures increased tremendously. Proper social policies could not be determined by the political opinions of citizens due to a lack of political competition.

The level, composition, and trends of social expenditures stand as a predicament for the economic development of the state. The budget should be the financial mirror of social and economic expenditures. To enhance economic development, the newly formed government, led by the Bharatiya Janata Party, is expected to emphasize HCF.

Sushanta Kumar Mahapatra teaches at ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education, Hyderabad.

Pareswar Sahu teaches at the Department of Economics, Barpali College, Odisha

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

**OrissaPOST**  
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### Dravidian drama

Sir, It is unheard of that the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, as a mark of appreciation, wanted to felicitate the legal team for their role in the apex court’s order on the clearance of 10 bills, which were pending from the governor R.N. Ravi in Tamil Nadu. The senior advocates Rakesh Dwivedi, A.M. Singhvi, Mukul Rohatgi, and P. Wilson, who is also the DMK’s Rajya Sabha MP, will be part of this celebration. What one can’t understand is the action of the CM M.K. Stalin on this, as it needs to be treated as a private vote of thanks, which otherwise turns out to be an event of publicity. When it costs huge legal fees from the exchequer, the dinner may cost little for the government, but in the spirit of it, the lawyers are, after all, discharging their professional duty, and the state need not require any legal advice on this issue of partying or felicitation. It’s unfortunate that the state is putting the court and lawyers in a bad light by this unethical partying, which needs to be viewed as an objectionable act by the state. Was it not an embarrassment to the top court when the political party and lawyers indulge themselves in what appears to be a gimmick before the Assembly elections of 2026? The Court shouldn’t be used as a tool for publicity and must condemn this unhealthy new precedent in the future.

AP Thiruvadi, CHENNAI

### Safe and secured

Sir, The cheque remains a cornerstone of India’s financial systems, balancing convenience and security. By understanding its legal framework, features, and liabilities, both individuals and businesses can use cheques effectively while minimizing risks. As the banking landscape evolves, cheques continue to coexist with modern digital payment methods, holding their ground in specific scenarios. Cheques are one of the oldest and most trusted instruments for transferring money securely in financial transactions. Even as digital modes of payment rise in popularity, cheques continue to hold a significant place in banking systems, offering flexibility, traceability, and legal enforceability.

Jayanthi S Maniam, EAST MUMBAI





UP MADRASSA SURPRISE INSPECTION

# No Class X student can write name in English

Alarmed, authorities issued a warning and a notice to the madrasa and asked the seminary to focus on other subjects besides Arabic and Persian

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bahraich (UP), April 28:** A surprise inspection at a madrasa in this district has unveiled the sorry state of education there, with officials saying that none of its class 10 students could write their names in English.

Alarmed, authorities issued a warning and a notice to the madrasa and asked the seminary to focus on other subjects besides Arabic and Persian.

Qari Irfan, a faculty member at the seminary, said 15 students have been enrolled in class 10 so far, and of them 10 were present during Monday's surprise inspection.

"The students asked to write in English are new to this seminary. They are weak in English and could not perform to the satisfaction of the inspecting officials. We will hold separate classes for struggling students," the acting principal (Naib Principal) of the madrasa, Maulana Shamsuddin, told PTI.

District Minority Welfare Officer Sanjay Mishra told reporters Monday that the surprise inspection was conducted at Jamia Gaziya Sayyadul Uloom, a recognised madrasa in the Badi Takiya area.

One of the teachers was found absent though it was not recorded in the attendance register, Mishra said and also noted that students' attendance in Munshi, Maulvi, and Alim classes was significantly lower compared to the registered number.

"During the inspection,



class 10 students were asked to write their names and that of the madrasa in English. But none could do it," he claimed and pointed out that the seminary's focus was largely limited to Arabic and Persian studies with little attention to other subjects.

This has led to an "alarming" academic situation, the officer said, adding "Neglecting the broader education of students is playing with their future."

The authorities have warned the madrasa of strict action if immediate steps are not taken towards improving the quality of education. Notices have been sent to the madrasa management and the absent teacher.

Shamsuddin pointed out that besides imparting religious education, the madrasa had provisions for teaching English, Hindi, Mathematics, and Science. "Which is why a science teacher had been appointed. But more emphasis was given to Arabic, Persian, and Urdu rather than these subjects."

"However, since the implementation of the NCERT curriculum... we have now started focusing on all subjects. It is better for the children's future that they are not limited to becoming just Alims (religious scholars) but also have oppor-

tunities in other fields as well," he said. In view of the minority welfare officer's warning, "we have now prepared a timetable for teachers to teach all subjects", the acting principal added.

About the officer complaining that very few students of Munshi, Maulvi, and Alim classes being in attendance at the seminary, Irfan said the madrasa has enrolled 350 pupils for this academic session so far and the admissions was still in progress.

The student count is expected to increase as admissions continue, the teacher said.

The seminary has a three-tier academic structure. Classes 1 to 5, categorized as the primary level, are referred to as "Darja Tehtania"; classes 6 to 8, the junior level, are known as "Darja Faukania", while classes 9 to 12, comprising the high school and intermediate levels, are termed "Darja Alia."

Irfan further said that teachers handling classes up to 10 are traditionally titled "Maulvi" or "Munshi," while those teaching Classes 11 and 12 hold the title of "Alim".

The Bahraich district has 301 recognised madrasahs. Additionally, a recent survey has identified 495 unrecognised madrasahs in the district, according to officials.

# Digha to be int'l tourist attraction: Mamata

The newly-built Jagannath Temple, a replica of the 12th-century shrine in Puri, is scheduled to be inaugurated April 30 on the auspicious occasion of the 'Akshay Tritiya'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Digha (WB), April 28:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Monday expressed hope that Digha would grow into an international tourist attraction after the newly-built Jagannath Temple is inaugurated April 30.

Digha is a popular sea resort town in Purba Medinipore district in the southern part of West Bengal.

Banerjee, who reached here Monday afternoon, said that the temple will serve as a place for congregation of people for the next several thousand years. "This temple will definitely add a new feather to the state's cap. Digha will grow into an inter-

## JAGANNATH TEMPLE INAUGURATION



national tourist attraction. This will serve as a place of harmony,' Banerjee said.

"Because of the sea, Digha has a special charm. Now, if it becomes a place of pilgrimage, more tourists will come. I think the sculptors have done a splendid job," she said.

The newly-built Jagannath Temple, a replica of the 12th-century shrine in Puri, is scheduled to be inaugurated April 30 on the auspicious occasion of the 'Akshay Tritiya'. Digha is around 350 km from Puri.

The CM reviewed the preparations for the grand inaugura-

**Banerjee, who reached here Monday afternoon, said that the temple will serve as a place for congregation of people for the next several thousand years**

tion of the Jagannath Temple.

"The rituals... the yajna will continue till tomorrow. On the day after tomorrow, there will be preparations for installing the idols. The inauguration will take place after that," she said.

Later in the evening, Banerjee again went to the temple for another round of review of the preparations.

She went around the temple premises and spent at least half an hour enquiring about the rituals. The CM also went inside the main temple.

"I have come here to see the preparations for Wednesday's inauguration. Everything seems to be in place," she said.



A brick kiln worker drinks water to quench her thirst during a hot summer day, in Nadia district, West Bengal



## UP to organise summer camp for children, youth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lucknow, April 28:** The Uttar Pradesh State Lalit Kala Academy will hosting summer camps across all 75 districts from May 1 to June 30, an official statement said Monday.

Divided into two age groups -- 10-17 years and 18-25 years -- the camps will offer expert-led training in various art forms, daily from 8 am to 10 am, it said.

Dr Shraddha Shukla, Director of the State Lalit Kala Akademi said that the workshop, being organised under the state government's guidance, aims to refine the artistic talents of the youth. The initiative seeks to foster creativity and inspire interest in visual arts.

Shukla informed further that the workshop will impart detailed knowledge of visual arts. Major topics will include art, sketching, watercolour painting, wash technique, fabric work, clay work, and oil colour painting.

Subject experts will be appointed as regional coordinators in the districts. Participants will also learn about various forms of folk art such as Bundelkhand's Chiteri art, Sanjhi, Kohbar, and miniature paintings.



# Over 400 jobless Bengal school employees block Kolkata road

Protesters demanded to be reinstated or at least allowed to work until December 31, following the court's directive that allowed some teachers to continue temporarily

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, April 28:** Over 400 people, among the 25,753 teaching and non-teaching staff rendered jobless following the Supreme Court order April 3, Monday blocked the Hazra Crossing in south Kolkata demanding an audience with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Traffic came to a standstill for nearly an hour along the busy Asutosh Mukherjee Road-Hazra Road crossing as protesters voiced their anger at being labelled "tainted" despite qualifying in the 2016 WBSSC Recruitment Test.

They demanded to be reinstated or at least allowed to work until December 31, following the court's directive that allowed some teachers to continue temporarily.

As police tried to stop them from moving towards the CM's official residence in Kalighat area, around 1 km away, the protesters scuffled with police and squatted in the middle of the road.

Some of them were forced to board waiting police vehicles, while others were persuaded to move to the side of road.

One protester, a woman ly-



ing in the middle of the road, refused to budge even after a senior police officer folded his hands and pleaded with her to move aside.

Another protester, holding up a photo of her OMR sheet,

accused the SSC of playing a "divisive game" by excluding her name from the list of "not specifically tainted" candidates submitted to the district inspector of schools in Cooch Behar.

"We are facing social humil-

iation despite clearing the SSC exams fairly before 2016," said one teacher, who did not want to be named.

"If the Supreme Court itself said it couldn't distinguish between tainted and untainted candidates due to the corruption in the recruitment process, why is the state government isolating us?"

Bipul Jana, a former non-teaching staff member from a South 24 Parganas school, added, "While the SSC has sent lists of untainted teachers to respective DI offices in every region, no thought has been spared for the Group C and D staff. We earned our jobs in a fair way in 2016, but we are staring at an uncertain future because of the large-scale irregularities committed by a section of the ruling party and government officials at that

time."

He also criticised the Chief Minister's announcement of a temporary allowance, saying, "The Rs 25,000 monthly allowance for Group C and Rs 20,000 for Group D employees until December 31 is simply not enough."

The blockade, organised by the United Teaching and Non-Teaching Employees Forum, lasted around 40 minutes before police managed to clear the area.

The Supreme Court has scrapped the entire 2016 WBSSC recruitment panel, resulting in 25,753 teachers and non-teaching staff losing their jobs.

The court later allowed "untainted" teachers to continue until December 31, but this relief was not extended to Group C and Group D staff.

# Mathura prepares for grand Akshay Tritiya celebrations

District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh said that every effort will be made to facilitate easy darshan for devotees, without compromising security

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mathura (UP), April 28:** Extensive arrangements have been made across Brajbhumi's temples for the smooth conduct of the Akshay Tritiya festival April 30 amid tight security and a detailed traffic plan, officials here said Monday.

District Magistrate Chandra Prakash Singh said, "Without compromising security, every effort will be made to facilitate

easy darshan for devotees."

He also added that Nagar Nigam officials have been instructed to ensure a constant water supply and fans are installed to provide relief from the heat.

The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) has also been directed to ensure round-the-clock medical facilities, including ambulance availability, the official said.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Shlok Kumar stated



that the area has been divided into three zones and nine sectors, with adequate police arrangements in place.

He also noted that a detailed traffic plan has been devised to

ensure smooth vehicle movement during the festival.

Gyanendra Kishor Goswami, the priest of Bankay Bihari Temple, explained, "Devotees pay obeisance to the lotus feet

of Bihari Ji Maharaj in the morning and have Sarwang Darshans in the evening, a rare occasion available once a year."

He highlighted the special rituals for the day, including

the application of sandalwood paste and offering 'Sattu' prasad to the deity to protect him from the heat.

"Bankey Bihari Maharaj wears a Peetambari (yellow-coloured dhoti) and Payal (anklets) on this day, a tradition started by Swami Haridas," he added.

The priest also mentioned that darshan of the lotus feet of the deity on Akshay Tritiya is considered equivalent to visiting the Badrinath Dham in Uttarakhand, which reopens today after the winter closure.

In Vrindavan's Radha Raman Temple, the day marks the start of a tradition where the deity is given a new floral abode daily. Dinesh Chandra Goswami, the temple priest, noted that

this practice cools the deity as the sanctum is kept cool. The deity's attire, including Dhoti, Bagalbandi, crown, and flute, will be made of sandalwood, and the "Bhog" will include cooling fruits like muskmelon and cucumber. The preparation of sandalwood paste for this event began 15 days ago.

The temple also observes Jhaki darshan, where the curtain is drawn and opened frequently to protect the deity from evil eyes.

Bhagwatacharya Keshav Acharya explained the significance of Akshay Tritiya, stating, "According to Hindu mythology, Treta Yug began on this day. It is a day of giving up, and blessings received on this day continuously increase."





of the day **QUOTE**

Because of the sea, Digha has a special charm. Now, if it becomes a place of pilgrimage, more tourists will come. I think the sculptors have done a splendid job

**MAMATA BANERJEE** | WEST BENGAL CM

Today, the Balochistan movement stands as a symbol of an indigenous people's enduring aspiration for dignity, rights, and control over their own destiny — a struggle marked by immense sacrifice, resilience, and an unbroken spirit for freedom

**HIMANTA BISWA SARMA** | ASSAM CHIEF MINISTER

Only through genuine, day-to-day commitment can we truly mainstream Hindi in all spheres of governance

**JITENDRA SINGH** | UNION MINISTER

**SHORT TAKES**

**Minor fire at Yadadri power plant in T'gana**

**Hyderabad:** A minor fire broke out in Unit-1 of Yadadri Thermal Power Station (YTPS) in Nalgonda district of Telangana Monday, officials said. No one was injured in the incident, which occurred around midnight, they said, adding only some cables and valves were burnt. "It was a minor fire where some cables were burnt. The fire was brought under control immediately," a senior police official told PTI.

**Five killed in road mishap**

**Tirupati:** Five people were killed and two injured when their speeding car rammed into a logistics vehicle near Thotapalli village in this district Monday, police said. One person sustained serious injuries and another remains in critical condition. They were admitted to the hospital by the locals, they said. "The car rammed into the logistics vehicle from behind, killing five people on the spot. It is clearly a case of negligent driving," a senior police official said.

**24 Naxalites surrender**

**Bijapur:** Twenty-four Naxalites, including 14 with a total reward of Rs 28.50 lakh on their heads, surrendered in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh Monday, a police official said. The surrender comes amid a massive anti-Naxal operation involving around 24,000 security personnel underway on hills of Bijapur bordering Telangana since April 21.

**Four-year-old girl raped in Jabalpur**

**Jabalpur:** A four-year-old girl was raped by an unidentified person in Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh, a police official said Monday. The incident took place on the night of April 26 in a village under Majhgawa police station limits, he said.

**Man shot dead**

**Khagaria (Bihar):** A 20-year-old man was allegedly shot dead by unidentified assailants in Bihar's Khagaria district, police said Monday. The deceased has been identified as Rampravesh Kumar. Kumar's bullet-riddled body was recovered from a mango orchard in Shobhni village in the early hours of Monday.

Leaders of all parties attended the all-party meeting, but it is sad that PM Modi did not come to that meeting. Was Bihar far away? The PM should have come to the all-party meeting and explained the plan. What help does he need from us?

**MALLIKARJUN KHARGE** | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

**WIFE OF BSF JAWAN DETAINED BY PAK HEADS TO FEROZPUR**

The pregnant wife of BSF jawan Purnam Sahu — detained by Pakistan Rangers after inadvertently crossing the international border — reached Chandigarh Monday and is now on her way to Ferozpur in Punjab to meet senior BSF officials and gather information on efforts to bring her husband back



**PAHALGAM TERROR ATTACK**

**Oppn MPs demand special Parl session**

**Directing its leaders to either toe the party line or refrain from commenting on the Pahalgam attack, the Congress asserted that only the recent CWC resolution along with the views expressed by party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul Gandhi and authorised AICC office-bearers represent its position on the sensitive issue**



lution condemning the Pahalgam terror attack to convey the message to the world that the country is united.

Jha, in his letter addressed to the Prime Minister, said the Parliament of India stands as the cornerstone of the republic and the highest forum for democratic expression.

Kumar, a CPI MP from Rajya Sabha, in his letter addressed to Rijiju, said the special session would allow members across party lines to come together to mourn the loss and express the will of the nation.

He said the attack did not only cause immense sorrow to the victims' kin but also shook the "collective conscience of our nation." "In view of the magnitude of this tragedy, I urge you to consider convening a Special Session of Parliament at the earliest. Such a session would allow Members across party lines to come together in one voice to mourn the loss, to express the will of the nation and to send a clear and strong message that India remains united, resilient and resolute against those who seek to harm us through acts of terror," he said.

Kumar said Parliament should rise above political divides to embody the spirit and aspirations of the people. "At this moment of national mourning, a collective expression of solidarity from the highest forum of democracy would be both timely and necessary," he said. Terrorists in Pahalgam April 22 gunned down 26 people, mostly tourists, in what is the deadliest attack in the Valley since the Pulwama strike in 2019.

**Don't believe in cheap politics: Omar**

**Jammu:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Monday said he will not use the Pahalgam terror attack as an opportunity to press for restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that he does not believe in "cheap politics". Abdullah also announced a dedicated helpline for local students studying outside the Union Territory so that they can register their concerns in the hour of need for timely government intervention. "The security in Jammu and Kashmir is not the responsibility of the UT's elected government. But I will not use this occasion to seek statehood. How can I push for statehood now? I do not believe in cheap politics."

vides to embody the spirit and aspirations of the people. "At this moment of national mourning, a collective expression of solidarity from the highest forum of democracy would be both timely and necessary," he said.

Terrorists in Pahalgam April 22 gunned down 26 people, mostly tourists, in what is the deadliest attack in the Valley since the Pulwama strike in 2019.

**SC orders return of passport to Allahbadia**



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 28:** The Supreme Court Monday allowed the return of passport to pod-caster Ranveer Allahbadia to enable him to travel abroad for work.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh relaxed the condition after Assam and Maharashtra governments said the investigation against him was complete. The bench asked Allahbadia to approach the Maharashtra cyber police bureau to retrieve his passport. The top court told Allahbadia's lawyer, senior advocate Abhinav Chandrachud, it would consider his prayer to club the FIRs against his client and bring it in one place on the next hearing. Chandrachud said the Maharashtra FIR was the first one on the issue and the Guwahati FIR could be clubbed with it as it stemmed from the same facts and incident.

**INDIA'S GOT LATENT REMARKS ROW**

Justice Kant, however, told Chandrachud the Guwahati FIR comprised a different set of allegations, specific to people of Assam.

The bench also allowed NGO Cure SMA Foundation of India to implead "India's Got Latent" host Samay Raina and other co-accused through the police of Maharashtra and Assam, as their statements were recorded in the case. Senior advocate Aprajita Singh, representing the NGO, said they were not able to implead Raina and others in the case as respondents for want of their addresses and requested the bench to allow them to be made parties even without their particulars.

**ANTI-TERROR CLAMPDOWN**

**J&K Police raids dozens of places in Srinagar, Doda**



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar/Jammu, April 28:** Police Monday carried out raids at dozens of places in Srinagar, Doda and Kishtwar in Jammu and Kashmir as part of the massive clampdown on terror ecosystem launched after the horrific Pahalgam terror attack that left 26 persons dead.

"The searches were conducted in accordance with proper legal procedures in the presence of executive magistrates and independent witnesses under the supervision of the officers of J-K Police," a spokesman said. He said the searches were carried out across the length and breadth of Srinagar city at 36 locations. Most of the premises belong to terrorists or terrorist sympathisers.

As part of the stepped-up anti-terror operations, security forces have raided more than 600 locations in the Valley in just six days and grilled hundreds of suspects. Authorities have also demolished nine houses of suspected terrorists and underground workers of terror outfits since the April 22 attack in the lush meadows of Baisaran.

Sources said that police teams conducted searches at the premises of several individuals believed to be connected to terror groups and those operating from Pakistan-occupied

**24 held in Assam**

**Guwahati:** Twenty-four people have been arrested in Assam so far for "defending Pakistan on Indian soil" following the Pahalgam terror attack, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said Monday. Among those apprehended is opposition AIUDF MLA Aminul Islam, who was booked on sedition charges for allegedly defending Pakistan and its complicity in the Pahalgam attack. In a post on X at 7.30 pm, Sarma said, "24 Anti Nationals are behind the bars now." Earlier in the day, he said the number of arrests was 22.

Kashmir (PoK) in Doda and Kishtwar districts Monday.

"In its continuing persistent action against terrorist associates of proscribed terrorist outfits and in the furtherance of investigation into cases registered under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Srinagar Police continues searches across multiple locations in the city with the aim to dismantle terror-supporting infrastructure in the district," the police spokesman said in Srinagar. He said the searches were carried out to seize arms, documents and digital devices with the objective of evidence collection and intelligence gathering to detect and deter any conspiratorial or terrorist activity against the security of the nation.

**Left maintains JNUSU foothold**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 28:** Left candidates bagged three of the four central panel posts in the JNUSU election to maintain their foothold in the university, while the RSS-affiliated ABVP ended a nine-year phase out of office to win the post of joint secretary.

According to the results announced by the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) election commission Monday, Nitish Kumar of the All India Students' Association (AISA) secured 1,702 votes to win the post of president. His closest competitor -- Shikha Swaraj of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) -- secured 1,430 votes while Students' Federation of India (SFI)-supported Tayabba Ahmed polled 918 votes.

Manisha of the Democratic Students' Federation (DSF) won the post of vice-president by securing 1,150 votes, ahead of the ABVP's Nittu Goutham who polled 1,116 votes.

The DSF also bagged the general secretary's post, with Munteha Fatima polling 1,520 votes, ahead of the ABVP's Kunal Rai who secured 1,406 votes.

The ABVP clinched the post of joint secretary, with Vaibhav Meena polling 1,518 votes, ahead of AISA's Naresh Kumar (1,433 votes) and Progressive Students' Association (PSA) candidate Nigam Kumari (1,256 votes).

Meena's win marked the first time the ABVP has bagged a central panel post since Saurabh Sharma's victory on the same post in 2015-16. The last time the ABVP won the post of president was in 2000-01 when Sandeep Mahapatra had emerged victorious.

ABVP National General Secretary Virendra Solanki said that a new dawn of nationalism has begun in JNU.

**Pankaj Udhas, Shekhar among Padma awardees**



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 28:** Former chief of Suzuki Motor late Osamu Suzuki, late singer Pankaj Udhas, former Bihar deputy chief minister late Sushil Kumar Modi, and publisher of Tamil daily Dinamalar, Lakshmiopathy Ramasubbaiyer, were among the 71 prominent personalities conferred with Padma awards by President Droupadi Murmu Monday.

Altogether 139 distinguished persons were named for the country's civilian awards -- Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan

and Padma Shri -- on the eve of the 76th Republic Day January 25.

While 71 of them were given the awards at the Rashtrapati Bhavan's majestic Durbar Hall Monday in the presence of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, among others, the remaining will be conferred with the decorations at a separate function to be held soon.

Veteran actor Shekhar Kapur, cricketer Ravichandran Ashwin, hockey player P R Sreejesh, chairman of Asian Institute of Gastroenterology and AIG Hospitals, D Nageshwar Reddy, violinist Lakshminarayana Subramaniam and Telugu superstar Nandamuri Balakrishna, also known as Balayya, were the other prominent persons conferred with the Padma awards by Murmu.



A BSF personnel checks documents of a family of Pakistani nationals who arrived to cross over to their country, at the Attari-Wagah border near Amritsar, Monday, April 28, 2025. India has announced the closure of the Attari border as part of heightened security measures following the Pahalgam terror attacks

PTI PHOTO

**Build facilities, not just highways: SC to Centre**

**The top court said though Section 164A of Motor Vehicles Act was brought into force April 1, 2022 for a period of three years, the Centre did not implement it by framing the scheme for the interim relief to claimants**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 28:** You are constructing huge highways but people are dying there because of lack of facilities, the Supreme Court Monday said as it pulled up the Centre over

the delay in formulating a cashless scheme for treating motor accident victims.

A bench of Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan observed despite its January 8 order, the Centre neither complied with the direction nor did it ask for an extension of time.

The top court said though Section 164A of Motor Vehicles Act was brought into force April 1, 2022 for a period of three years, the Centre did not implement it by framing the scheme for the interim relief to claimants.

"You are in contempt. You have not bothered to seek extension of time. What is this going on? You tell us when will you frame the scheme? You don't care for your own statutes. This is one of the welfare provisions. Three years (since) this provision has come



into place. Are you really working for the welfare of common man?" the bench asked. "Can you be so casual? Are you not serious about this provision? People are dying in road accidents. You are constructing huge highways but people are dying there because there is no facility. There is no scheme for golden hour treatment. What is the use of constructing so many highways?" the top court questioned the secretary of the Ministry of Road Transport further.

The golden hour under Section 2 (12-A) of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 refers to a one-hour window following a traumatic injury under which a timely medical intervention will most likely prevent death. The top court had summoned the official to explain the reasons for the delay in the scheme. The secretary on Monday said a draft scheme was prepared but a roadblock was hit as the General Insurance Council (GIC) raised objections. "The GIC has not been coop-

erative. It has contended that it should be permitted to check the status of insurance policy of motor vehicle involved in an accident," the secretary said. The top court also recorded the submission that the scheme for golden hour will be brought into force within a week from Monday.

The bench then directed for the notified scheme to be placed on record by May 9 and posted the matter May 13.

On January 8, the top court directed the Centre to formulate the scheme for the cashless medical treatment of motor accident victims in the golden hour period mandated under the law. The bench referred to Section 162(2) of the Act, and ordered the government to provide by March 14 the scheme which could save numerous lives with prompt medical care to accident victims.



of the day quote

I have always favoured dialogue and was desirous of talks (with Pakistan) but what we will tell to the families (of the terror victims)? Will this be justice?

**FAROOQ ABDULLAH** | NC PRESIDENT

The youth hold the power to shape the destiny of our nation and with determination and innovation they can build a stronger and more prosperous India

**N CHANDRABABU NAIDU** | AP CM

The detentions under Goondas Act increased while the number of custodial deaths declined to three and absolutely none during 2024 in the present DMK regime

**M K STALIN** | TN CM

POST OF THE DAY

If you are an honest group A officer: you legit income would be around 1.5L/ month. Saving's rate would be 30% (45K in total) 30 years of service= 45K\*12 \* 30 = 1.62Cr You would struggle to buy a decent 3BHK-home in cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Gurgaon, B'lore now with that income. Here, I am talking about Group A officers (Toppers, who crack the toughest exams, etc). Something is deeply broken if even Group A officers can't buy a Home with their honest income.

@Akshat\_World

SHORT TAKES

Delhi court extends Rana's NIA custody

**New Delhi:** A Delhi court Monday extended by 12 more days the NIA custody of 26/11 Mumbai attack accused Tahawwur Hussain Rana. Special NIA judge Chander Jit Singh extended Rana's custody on NIA's request after his previous 18-day remand got over. Rana was produced in court with his face covered amid tight security. Senior advocate Dayan Krishnan and special public prosecutor Narendar Mann are representing the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in the matter which is taking place in chamber.

SC upholds guilt of 11 convicts

**New Delhi:** Honour killing must get a strong measure of punishment, the Supreme Court Monday said and upheld the conviction of 11 accused for the "dastardly murder" of a young couple in Tamil Nadu in July 2003. A bench of Justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Prashant Kumar Mishra refused to interfere with the Madras High Court's June 2022 verdict that upheld the conviction and sentence of the accused persons, including two police officers.

Noted Malayalam rapper Vedan held

**Kochi:** Popular Malayalam rapper and songwriter Vedan and eight others were arrested after ganja was seized from his flat in Tripunithura here Monday, police said. Hailing from neighbouring Thrissur district, the musician's original name is Hiranand Murali. Based on a tip-off, the police carried out a search at the rented apartment where nine people, including the singer, were present.



The bullet train work is going on rapidly. Hopefully by the end of 2028 it will be completed

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | MAHARASHTRA CM

India, France sign ₹64K-cr deal for 26 Rafale fighters



The ambitious pact provides for the setting up of a production facility for Rafale fuselage as well as maintenance, repair and overhaul facilities for aircraft engines, sensors and weapons in India, according to the Defence Ministry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 28:** India and France Monday inked an intergovernmental agreement sealing a mega deal to procure 26 Rafale marine jets at a cost of ₹64,000 crore (Euro 7 billion) for deployment on board Indian Navy's aircraft carrier INS Vikrant.

The ambitious pact provides for the setting up of a production facility for Rafale fuselage as well as maintenance, repair and overhaul facilities for aircraft engines, sensors and weapons in India, according to the defence ministry. The agreement will also facilitate the transfer of technology for the integration of indigenous weapons in India.

The delivery of the aircraft will begin in 2028 and will be completed by 2030, with the crew undergoing training in

France and India. "The induction (of Rafale-Marine) would lead to the addition of a potent force multiplier to the Indian Navy's aircraft carriers, substantially boosting the nation's air power at sea," the ministry said in a statement. Dassault Aviation, the manufacturer of Rafale jets, said the new acquisition testifies the importance of the strategic relationship between India and France and the recognition of the aircraft as an "essential vector" of national sovereignty.

The Rafale-Marine will provide the Indian armed forces with state-of-the-art capabilities and the Indian Navy will benefit from the experience of the French Navy that already operates this aircraft, it said.

The Rafale-Marine is a carrier-borne combat-ready aircraft with proven operational capabilities in the maritime environment. "On behalf of Dassault Aviation and its partners, I would like to thank the Indian authorities, with whom we have been working for more than 70 years, for their confidence in us and reaffirm our unwavering determination to stand by their side to contribute to India's expression of its sovereign power, its strategic

challenges and its ambitious vision of the future," said Eric Trappier, the CEO Dassault Aviation.

Under the deal, the French aviation major will deliver 22 single-seat Rafale-Marine jets and four twin-seat trainers. The deal also includes training of personnel, supply of simulators, associated equipment, weapons and performance-based logistics.

It also includes additional equipment for the existing Rafale fleet of the Indian Air Force. At the signing ceremony, French Ambassador to India Thierry Mathou, said: "Today's agreement marks a significant new milestone in the strategic partnership between France and India."

The Indian Air Force already operates 36 Rafale fighter aircraft. The sealing of the Rafale-Marine mega deal came three weeks after the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi cleared the procurement. In July 2023, the defence ministry accorded the initial approval for the mega acquisition following a series of deliberations and evaluation tests of the platform. The defence ministry said that the Rafale-Marine has "commonality" with the Rafale being operated by the Indian Air Force (IAF). The intergovernmental pact has been signed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and France's Minister of Armed Forces Sebastien Lecornu. The signed copies of the agreement, aircraft package supply protocol and weapons package supply protocol were exchanged by Indian and French officials, the defence ministry said.

The agreement will also facilitate the transfer of technology for the integration of indigenous weapons in India

The delivery of the aircraft will begin in 2028 and will be completed by 2030, with the crew undergoing training in France and India

Govt blocks 16 Pak YouTube channels

The YouTube channels blocked are Dawn News, Irshad Bhatti, SAMAA TV, ARY NEWS, BOL NEWS, Raftar, The Pakistan Reference, Geo News, Samaa Sports, GNN, Uzair Cricket, Umar Cheema Exclusive, Asma Shirazi, Muneeb Farooq, SUNO News and Razi Naama

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, April 28:** The government has blocked 16 Pakistani YouTube channels for allegedly disseminating "false, provocative and communally sensitive content" about India and has also strongly objected to the BBC's reportage on the Pahalgalam attack, officials said Monday.

The government's move follows recommendations from the Ministry of Home Affairs in the wake of the April 22 terror attack in the upper reaches of the Kashmir resort town in

which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed. Besides, the Ministry of External Affairs will be monitoring reporting of the BBC, which termed terrorists as militants, officials said.

The YouTube channels blocked are Dawn News, Irshad Bhatti, SAMAA TV, ARY NEWS, BOL NEWS, Raftar, The Pakistan Reference, Geo News, Samaa Sports, GNN, Uzair Cricket, Umar Cheema Exclusive, Asma Shirazi, Muneeb Farooq, SUNO News and Razi Naama. "On the recommendations of the Ministry of Home



Affairs, the Government of India has banned Pakistani YouTube channels for disseminating provocative and communally sensitive content, false and misleading narratives and misinformation against India, its Army and security agencies in the backdrop of the tragic

RBI ASKS BANKS TO ENSURE ATMS DISPENSE ₹100, ₹200 NOTES

The Reserve Bank of India Monday asked banks to ensure that ATMs dispense ₹100 or ₹200 denomination notes to enhance the availability of these currency notes to the public. Banks and White Label ATM Operators (WLAOs) have to implement the direction in a phased manner



Beneficiaries during the distribution of Ayushman Bharat cards by the Delhi Government under the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana, at the Thyagaraj Stadium in New Delhi

Railway exam symbol controversy sparks outrage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mangalore/Bengalore, April 28:** The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and other Hindu outfits Monday strongly opposed an instruction requiring candidates to remove religious symbols for the Railway department's Nursing Superintendent examination, leading to its immediate withdrawal.

Following widespread protests, the railway authorities have now clarified that candidates will not be required to remove religious symbols such as the 'mangalsutra' (a sacred necklace worn by married Hindu women) and 'janivara' (sacred thread worn by Brahmins) before entering the exam hall.

Amidst the growing outrage, Minister of State for Railways, V Somanna, intervened in the matter and clarified that candidates appearing for the Railway Recruitment Board's Nursing Superintendent exam would not be required to remove any religious symbols or mangalsutras.

NEET-UG plan laid out to prevent cheating



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 28:** The Ministry of Education is holding a series of meetings with district magistrates and superintendents of police from all states and Union territories to ensure there are no lapses in the upcoming medical entrance exam NEET-UG, sources said Monday.

The May 4 exam will be conducted in more than 550 cities at over 5,000 centres across the country. The ministry has been working on a "fool-proof" plan after the last year's exam was blighted by irregularities, including paper leaks.

"To ensure smooth, fair and secure conduct of NEET-UG, a series of meetings have been held with DMs and SPs of all states and UTs. The district-level coordination committees are being fully activated to manage logistics, security and crisis response," a source told PTI. "There will be multi-layered frisking by district police in addition to NTA-designated security at the centres. The transport of confidential materials like question papers and OMR sheets will be under full police escort. Coaching centres and digital platforms will be monitored to prevent organised cheating networks," the source added.

Duty Magistrates are being deployed for mandatory inspection of all examination centres, while there will be personal visits by DMs and SPs to exam centres to assess preparedness.

Under scrutiny over last year's irregularities in NEET-UG and PhD entrance NET,

the Centre had last year set up a panel to ensure "transparent, smooth and fair" conduct of exams by the National Testing Agency, or NTA. Last year, the UGC-NET (University Grants Commission - National Eligibility Test) was cancelled as the ministry received input that its integrity had been compromised.

Both matters are being investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Two other exams -- CSIR-UGC NET, NEET-PG -- were cancelled at the last moment as a preemptive step.

This year, more than 23 lakh candidates are expected to appear for the exam which determines whether they will it to a medical college in the country. "Monitored by the education ministry, 180 central institutions have been entrusted to verify the preparedness of the centres. The Ministry is closely working with the Home Ministry which also conducted meetings with state chief secretaries and DGPs to take stock of the ground situation," the source said.

The NTA had Saturday a opened a platform to report suspicious claims regarding NEET-UG. "Candidates can report any suspicious activities falling in three categories -- unauthorised websites or social media accounts claiming access to NEET question paper; individuals claiming access to exam content and impersonators posing as NTA or government officials," NTA Director General Pradeep Singh Kharola said.

"The reporting form is simple and allows users to describe what they observed, where and when it occurred and upload supporting file. The initiative aligns with the Public Exam inations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024 which aims to eliminate unfair practices in public examinations and protect the future of aspirants," he said.

WORST HAPPENINGS OPEN THE BEST DOORS

There is many a slip between the bolt and the latch. A nation stands numbed, still seeking to come to terms with the pulse of Pahalgalam. A laughing, smiling crowd of merrymakers had their reverie disrupted by blood and gore, with 26 people succumbing to terror attacks and numerous others injured. India is a country steamrollered by grief. The pain is palpable as people line up at the Attari border in Amritsar district to hurry back to Pakistan as the deadline for departure ends. Medical visas issued to Pakistani nationals are valid only up to April 29.

The neighbours may have denied any role in the attack, but India is holding Pakistan-based terror outfits complicit for the cold-blooded killings and has clamped down with a set of retaliatory measures. These include closure of the main border crossing, suspension of a landmark water-sharing treaty, and the expulsion of some diplomats. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has threatened to pursue the aggressors to the ends of the earth, with a resolve that he says should leave no shred of doubt. Pakistan too has

announced retaliatory moves and sought evidence of Indian claims. It has termed Indian measures as unilateral, unjust, politically motivated, extremely irresponsible, and devoid of legal merit.

An offshoot of a Pakistan-based group has claimed responsibility for the attack, and thus the volley between the two countries goes on. There are numerous questions that nevertheless cry out for answers. The Prime Minister rightly cut short his visit to Saudi Arabia and returned home in the face of such a shocking development, but what followed thereafter was flabbergasting. Instead of visiting the blood-stained valley, his presence at an election rally in Bihar had the Opposition—both the RJD and Congress—in uproar. The visuals of the rally, involving a conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on such a sombre occasion, did not inspire confidence in a nation battling gloom.

The Leader of the Opposition, Rahul Gandhi, who was away in the USA, cut short his tour and returned



to India to be present at deliberations that may require his presence. He also visited the injured in hospital. The Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, conducted a full-scale security review of the prevailing situation in the valley. Officialdom, from its high perch, had time and again made it a point to scale up normalcy levels, pointing to the situation being well under control. And yet when shots reverberated in the area, it caught the bulk of the tourist population off guard—and the security agencies as well. "There was no security around in the area," went a common refrain.

Relatives of tourists from Gujarat, who had gone to the valley for a fun-time breather and a respite from

the heat, were delirious with grief at their loss. "Our lives are peppered with taxes and tolls at every step, but when my husband needed protection and help there were none. It's the politician whose life only matters," said an angry Shital from Surat, whose husband Shailesh Kalathiya, a banker, paid with his life in the valley. She poured out her anguish before Union Water Resources Minister C. R. Patil, local MP Mukesh Dalal, and Gujarat Minister of State for Home, Harsh Sanghvi.

Kajal, the widow of a father and son from Bhavnagar who lost their lives in the salubrious climes of the valley, is numbstruck. The temple town of Palitana remained closed as a mark of respect for the deceased.

The one voice that emerges loud and clear from this entire episode is the need to refrain from playing cloaks and daggers with national sentiment. Electoral politics has its ifs and buts. It does not work and leaves society needlessly divided. There are those who gave up their lives in a desperate attempt to save the tourists. People in the valley have voiced their solidarity with the visi-

tors and stood up to be counted. It is time that the ruling party stood up to shun elements who seek to divide the nation.

Unity is the need of the hour, and every Indian—Hindu or Muslim—needs to stand united for it. Already, political leaders in the valley have urged authorities to exercise caution to ensure that the rising tide of anger against the perpetrators of terror is not misdirected. There are reports of at least nine houses allegedly linked to militancy being targeted. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has pointedly called for restraint: "Punish the guilty mercilessly but ensure that the innocent do not become collateral damage," added the Chief Minister.

The Opposition stands firm with the government on the issue and is reaching out for a special session of Parliament to discuss the Pahalgalam attack and measures needed in its wake. The Leader of the Opposition has made it clear that it will support all actions that the government takes on the matter. Worst happenings open the best doors, and it's never too late to make a beginning.



of the day

quote

Racism and hatred based on religion will never have a place in France. Religious freedom is inviolable

EMMANUEL MACRON | PRESIDENT, FRANCE

Germany is being called on, and we heard the call. We got the message and indeed, Mark, you can count on us

FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER | PRESIDENT, GERMANY

Thirty-one years ago, on this day, the eyes of the world were on South Africa. For the very first time in South Africa, Africans, Indians, coloureds (mixed race) and whites would be allowed to vote alongside each other for the government of their choice

CYRIL RAMAPHOSA | PRESIDENT, SOUTH AFRICAN

SHORT TAKES

Kim Kardashian jewel heist trial starts

**Paris:** A trial has started in Paris over the 2016 heist in which armed robbers tied up Kim Kardashian in her bedroom and stole millions of dollars' worth of jewellery during Fashion Week. Ten people, nine men and a woman, are on trial on charges of robbery and kidnapping of the media personality and the concierge of the residence where she was staying on the night of October 2, 2016. Two of them acknowledged their participation and the others denied it.

Iran port explosion: Death toll rises to 65

**Dubai:** The death toll from a huge explosion that rocked one of Iran's main ports rose Monday to 65, authorities said, as reports from the site raised more questions about the cause of the blast. Iranian state television reported the toll from the blast at Shahid Rajaei port near Bandar Abbas, citing local officials. The fire still burned at the site, some two days after the initial explosion Saturday, just as Iran began a third round of negotiations with the United States over its rapidly advancing nuclear program. Over 1,000 people suffered injuries in the blast. Authorities still haven't offered an explanation for the explosion.

Georgia sheriff's deputy killed

**Evans:** One Georgia deputy was killed and a second was shot in the face after a motor home driver they had pulled over opened fire, law enforcement officials said Sunday. The driver of the motor home also died in the incident. James Blake Montgomery was pulled over Saturday evening on Interstate 20 near Augusta by deputies who tried to serve a temporary protective order for a domestic violence case.

FTA talks: Goyal begins UK visit

**London:** Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said he held a "productive meeting" to advance the ongoing Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with his UK counterpart, Business and Trade Secretary Jonathan Reynolds, soon after he arrived in London Monday morning. The minister, who is accompanied by a business delegation of leading Indian companies, is on a two-day visit to the UK aimed at strengthening trade and investment relations.

China backs Pakistan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Beijing, April 28:** China Monday said it welcomes all measures to "cool down" the current situation between India and Pakistan, including a "swift and fair investigation" into the Pahalgam terror attack, and expressed support for its all-weather ally in safeguarding its sovereignty and security.

"China welcomes all measures that are conducive to cooling down the current situation and supports an impartial investigation as soon as possible," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun told a media briefing here.

However, he evaded a direct response to a question whether Beijing will take part in the probe, as according to a Russian media report, Pakistan wanted China and Russia to be part of the investigation into the Pahalgam attack.

He also parried another question about fairness and credibility of any investigation, considering that Pakistan faced allegations of sponsoring cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

"As a common neighbour of India and Pakistan, China hopes that both sides will exercise restraint, meet each other halfway, properly handle relevant differences through dialogue and consultation, and

PAHALGAM ATTACK



As an ironclad friend and an all-weather strategic cooperative partner, China fully understands Pakistan's legitimate security concerns and supports Pakistan in safeguarding its sovereignty and security interests

WANG YI | TOP DIPLOMAT, CHINA

jointly maintain regional peace and stability", he said.

India and Pakistan are both important countries in South Asia, and the harmonious coexistence between the two countries is crucial to regional peace, stability and development, he said.

While China April 23 strongly condemned "the brutal terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam in which

26 people, mostly tourists, were killed, its first reaction on the rising tensions between India and Pakistan came after Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar called China's top diplomat Wang Yi Sunday and sought Beijing's support.

Wang had the phone call with Dar upon his request, state-run Global Times reported.

Dar briefed Wang, who besides being foreign minister is also a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC), on the latest tensions between Pakistan and India "following a terrorist attack in the Kashmir region", state-run Xinhua news agency

Over 1,000 Indians leave Pak for home

**Lahore:** More than 1,000 Indians have left Pakistan for their home via the Wagah border over the last six days after they were forced to cut short their visits because of the cancellation of visas in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack, an official said Monday. "Over 1,000 Indians have left Pakistan for their home via the Wagah border over the last six days. Similarly, more than 800 Pakistanis have returned home by Monday," a government official told PTI. He added that those possessing long-term visas from both countries are facing problems in repatriation. 236 Pakistanis returned home and 115 Indians crossed into their homeland Sunday. At Wagah, Pakistan Rangers and India's Border Security Force thoroughly checked the papers of the repatriated citizens before allowing them to proceed with immigration.

cy reported quoting a foreign press release.

For his part, Wang said China was closely following the developments, stressing that combating terrorism was a shared responsibility of the entire world while reaffirming Beijing's consistent support for Pakistan's firm counterterrorism efforts, it said.

CONCLAVE TO ELECT NEW POPE WILL START MAY 7

Catholic cardinals Monday set May 7 as the start date for the conclave to elect Pope Francis' successor, delaying the secret voting for two days so they can get to know one another better and find consensus on a candidate before they are sequestered in the Sistine Chapel



SNIPPETS

Indian diplomat meets Afghanistan's foreign min

**Islamabad:** A top Indian diplomat has met the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, according to an official release Monday. Joint Secretary of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran Division Anand Prakash met the Taliban government's foreign minister and discussed ways to strengthen bilateral political relations and enhance trade and transit cooperation, according to a release by the Afghan Foreign Ministry. The two also exchanged views on recent regional developments. According to the release, Muttaqi underscored the importance of expanding diplomatic and economic relations between Kabul and New Delhi. He also stressed the need to facilitate the movement of people between the two countries and called for the normalisation of visa issuance processes for businessmen, patients, and students. Prakash reaffirmed India's commitment to relations with Afghanistan and expressed hope about further deepening cooperation across multiple sectors.



Friedrich Merz's party approves German coalition agreement

**Berlin:** German election winner Friedrich Merz's party Monday approved an agreement to form a coalition government with a centre-left rival, bringing him closer to the helm of a leading European power as it grapples with a stagnant economy, the Trump administration's trade policy and the war in Ukraine. Delegates at a convention of Merz's centre-right Christian Democratic Union party approved the agreement that was reached earlier this month. German news agency dpa reported that the exact vote count was not released Monday. The would-be coalition aims to spur economic growth, ramp up defence spending, take a tougher approach to migration and catch up on long-neglected modernisation for the 27-nation European Union's most populous member. The deal still has a bigger hurdle to clear before parliament can meet to elect Merz. The junior partners in the prospective coalition, the centre-left Social Democrats of outgoing Chancellor Olaf Scholz, put the agreement to the ballot of their entire 358,000-plus membership. The results are expected Wednesday.



Power outage hits large parts of Spain, Portugal



REUTERS

**Madrid/Lisbon, April 28:** A huge power outage hit large parts of Spain and Portugal Monday, paralysing traffic, grounding flights, trapping people in elevators and leaving power operators scrambling to restore power to millions of homes and businesses.

Some hospitals halted routine work and the two countries' governments convened emergency cabinet meetings, with officials initially saying a possible cyber attack could not be ruled out. Outages on such a scale are extremely rare in Europe, and the cause could not immediately be established.

Reuters witnesses said power had started returning to the Basque country and Barcelona areas of Spain in the early afternoon, a few hours after the outage began. It was not clear

when power might be more widely restored.

Hospitals in Madrid and Catalonia in Spain suspended all routine medical work but were still attending to critical patients, using backup generators. Several Spanish oil refineries were shut down and retail businesses shut.

The Bank of Spain said electronic banking was functioning "adequately" on backup systems, though residents also reported ATM screens had gone blank.

"I'm in a data centre, and everything has gone off. All the alarms popped up, and now we're with the groups, waiting to find out what happened," said Barcelona resident and engineer Jose Maria Espejo, 40.

In Portugal, water supplier EP-AL said water supplies could also be disrupted, and queues formed at stores by people rushing to purchase emergency supplies like gaslights, generators and batteries.

Putin announces May 8-10 ceasefire

REUTERS

**Moscow, April 28:** Russian President Vladimir Putin Monday declared a three-day ceasefire in May in the war with Ukraine to mark the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet Union and its allies in World War Two.

The Kremlin said the 72-hour ceasefire would run May 8, May 9 - when Putin will host international leaders including Chinese President Xi Jinping for lavish celebrations to commemorate victory over Nazi Germany - and May 10.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha, in response, said, "If Russia truly wants peace, it must cease fire immediately. Why wait until May 8th?"

A ceasefire should be "real, not just for a parade," he posted on X.

The White House said President Donald Trump wanted a permanent ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine. Against a background of increasing US impatience, Putin's move appeared aimed at signalling that Russia is still interested in peace - something that Ukraine and its European allies dispute.

"All military actions are suspended for this period. Russia believes that the Ukrainian side should follow this example," the Kremlin said in a statement on the May 8-10 ceasefire.

"In the event of violations by



UKRAINE WANTS TRUCE NOW

the Ukrainian side, Russia's armed forces will give an adequate and effective response."

It was the second unilateral truce announcement that Putin has made in quick succession, following a 30-hour Easter ceasefire that each side accused the other of violating countless times.

It came after Trump criticised Putin for a deadly Russian attack on Kyiv last week and voiced concern at the weekend that Putin was "just tapping me along". Washington has repeatedly threatened to abandon its peace efforts unless there is real progress.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, who met Trump on the sidelines of Pope Francis' funeral in Rome Saturday, has

RUSSIA ANNOUNCES SECOND CEASEFIRE IN QUICK SUCCESSION

TRUCE TO MARK CELEBRATIONS MARKING VICTORY OVER NAZIS

UKRAINE SAYS CEASEFIRE SHOULD BE REAL, NOT JUST FOR PARADE

said Kyiv would be ready to hold talks with Moscow once a ceasefire deal has stopped the fighting.

Ukraine's Sybiha said Kyiv had been "constantly proposing" a ceasefire for at least 30 days. Russia has said it wants a full settlement, not a pause.

'TALKS WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS'

The Kremlin reiterated its willingness for peace talks

without preconditions, aiming to address the root causes of the Ukraine conflict. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated Ukraine must initiate talks, noting a 2022 decree by President Zelenskiy that bans negotiations with Putin following Russia's illegal annexation of four Ukrainian regions.

Ukraine accuses Russia of using diplomacy to stall while seizing more territory and calls for increased global pressure on Moscow. Russia, in turn, claims Ukraine refuses to compromise and seeks a ceasefire only on its terms. Meanwhile, Trump urged Russia to halt attacks and suggested Zelenskiy might concede Crimea—something Kyiv denies.

Canadians vote in election dominated by concerns about Trump

REUTERS

**Ottawa, April 28:** Canadians are going to the polls Monday after an election campaign in which US President Donald Trump's tariffs and musings about annexing Canada became the central issue.

Trump's threats ignited a wave of patriotism that swelled support for Liberal Prime Minister Mark Carney, a political newcomer who previously led two G7 central banks.

The campaign ended on a somber note Sunday after a man rammed an SUV through a crowd at a Filipino community festival in Vancouver, killing at least 11 people and injuring dozens.

Carney briefly paused his campaign, and both he and Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre mentioned the tragedy in their final campaign

events. Duane Bratt, professor of political science at Calgary's Mount Royal University, said he did not expect the mass casualty event to deter voters.

Carney's Liberals held a 2.7-point lead over Poilievre's Conservatives in national support, according to a CTV News-Globe and Mail-Nanos poll released Sunday. Nanos pegged the Liberals at 42.6% support and the Conservatives at 39.9%, in the poll.

An EKOS poll Sunday suggested the Liberals hold a six-point lead, and projected the Liberals to win a majority of seats in the 343-seat House of Commons and not need to rely on a smaller party to govern.

Trump re-emerged as a campaign factor last week, declaring that he might raise a 25% tariff on Canadian-made cars because the US does not want them. He said earlier he might



use "economic force" to make Canada the 51st US state.

"This is probably the most consequential election in my lifetime," said Kelly Saunders, a political science professor at Brandon University. "Everything has been so overshadowed

by the threats coming out of the United States."

Carney has emphasized his experience handling economic issues makes him the best leader to deal with Trump, while Poilievre has tapped into concerns about the cost of living,

TRUMP'S TARIFFS AND ANNEXATION MUSINGS BOOST CARNEY'S SUPPORT

LIBERALS AHEAD OF CONSERVATIVES IN LATEST POLLS

CARNEY EMPHASIZES ECONOMIC EXPERIENCE AGAINST TRUMP THREATS

TRUMP REPEATS CALL FOR CANADA TO BE 51ST STATE

CONSERVATIVES FOCUS ON COST OF LIVING, CRIME

crime and a housing crisis.

Trump, in a social media post Monday, reiterated his call for Canada to become the 51st state.

"Good luck to the Great people of Canada," he said. "Elect the man who has the strength and wisdom to cut your taxes in half, increase your military power, for free, to the highest

level in the World, have your Car, Steel, Aluminum, Lumber, Energy, and all other businesses, QUADRUPLE in size, WITH ZERO TARIFFS OR TAXES, if Canada becomes the cherished 51st. State of the United States of America. No more artificially drawn line from many years ago."

Standing Sunday in front of the Ambassador Bridge connecting Windsor's Canadian auto hub with Detroit across the border, Carney pointed to the bridge as a symbol of peace and cooperation between the two countries for almost a century.

"That has changed, and it wasn't us who did the changing ... President Trump, the guy over there," Carney said. "He's launched a trade war that has literally ruptured the global economy, and in the process, he's betrayed us."



of the day

Quote

Applications for women for enterprise roles didn't just rise, they saw a 92 per cent leap. Fresher applications crossed 66 lakh

NIRMIT PARIKH | FOUNDER & CEO, APNA

PV growth will moderate to 2-4 per cent this fiscal, but UVs will continue to cruise with around 10 per cent growth, supported by new launches. With UVs contributing 68-70 per cent of volumes and bulk of upcoming models, the shift toward premiumisation is structural

ANUJ SETHI | SENIOR DIRECTOR, CRISIL RATINGS

The majority operate in micro and small enterprises, lifting communities up, not just in urban centres, but beyond, as part of Viksit Bharat. Embodying the spirit of Nari Shakti, women entrepreneurs are redefining their role as they break down social and institutional barriers and gender biases

GURJODHPAL SINGH | CEO, TIDE INDIA

RESULTS CORNER

**UCO posts 24% jump**

**Kolkata:** UCO Bank Monday reported a nearly 24 per cent year-on-year jump in consolidated net profit to ₹665.72 crore for the quarter ended March. The state-owned lender's bottomline stood at ₹537.86 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago. Consolidated total income for the period under review was around ₹8,136 crore, up from ₹6,984 crore a year ago, it said. For the full year ended March 31, 2025, UCO Bank's consolidated net profit stood at ₹2,468 crore compared to ₹1,671 crore in the 2023-24 fiscal.

ATGL net profit drops

**New Delhi:** Adani-Total Gas Ltd, the city gas joint venture of Adani group and TotalEnergies of France, Monday reported a 10 per cent drop in its fourth quarter net profit on higher cost of gas while the revenue soared 15 per cent. Net profit of ₹149 crore in January-March - the fourth quarter of April 2024 to March 2025 fiscal year - compared with ₹165 crore earnings in the same period of the previous year, according to a company statement. Revenue from operations was up 15 per cent at ₹1,448 crore.

IDBI Bank profit up

**New Delhi:** IDBI Bank Monday reported 26 per cent increase in net profit at ₹2,051 crore for the March quarter of FY25. The LIC-controlled bank had posted a net profit of ₹1,628 crore for the year-ago period. Total income rose to ₹9,035 crore in the period under review from ₹7,887 crore in the January-March period of previous fiscal. Interest income marginally declined to ₹6,979 crore during the period under review from ₹6,990 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago. In the 2024-25 fiscal, net profit rose 33 per cent to ₹7,515 crore as compared to ₹5,634 crore in the previous year.

IRFC profit down 3%

**New Delhi:** Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) Monday reported a 3 per cent decline in its profit at ₹1,667 crore for the March quarter. The company under the Ministry of Railways had earned a profit of ₹1,717 crore during the fourth quarter of the FY24. The company's total income rose to ₹6,723 crore in the January-March quarter from ₹6,478 crore in FY24.



So I do believe that irrespective of the prevailing environment of tariffs, India will continue to be competitive because she has economies of scale behind her because innovation comes along with that economies of scale to be able to cater to such a large market. And therefore, even in comparison with other nations, India will remain to be competitive

JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | UNION MINISTER

Indirect Indian exports to Pakistan at \$10bn

Indian goods reach Pakistan every year indirectly through ports, such as Dubai, Singapore, and Colombo, bypassing trade restrictions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 28:** The government is collating data to figure out the quantum of indirect exports of Indian goods to Pakistan from third countries in a bid to check such rerouting of shipments to the neighbouring country, sources said.

The government is working with the industry to look into alternate routes for shipments of goods through air route in the backdrop of Pakistan closing its air space for Indian carriers, they said.

Goods like flowers, fruits and vegetables are exported through air routes to regions like Middle Eastern countries.

These restrictions have been imposed following the terrorist attack on tourists in Pahalgam last week. 26 people were killed in the horrific incident, evoking a sharp response from the government.

The export data is being collected from sources like customs, export promotion councils and other departments, the sources added.

According to the economic think tank GTRI, Indian goods worth over \$10 billion are reaching Pakistan every year indirectly through ports, such as Dubai, Singapore, and Colombo, bypassing trade restrictions.

Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) has stated that Indian firms send goods to these ports, where an independent company offloads the consignment and keeps the products in bonded warehouses, where goods can be stored without

paying duties while in transit.

"In the bonded warehouse, the labels and documents are modified to show a different country of origin. For example, Indian-made goods may be labelled as 'Made in UAE'. After this change, they are shipped to countries like Pakistan, where direct trade with India is not allowed," GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava has said.

This method, he said, helps firms to bypass India-Pakistan trade restrictions, sell goods at higher prices, using the third country route and avoid scrutiny since the trade appears to come from other countries.

One of the sources said the government is also examining the exports to Pakistan through online mode.

The trade between India and Pakistan is coming to a complete halt after both the countries announced closure of land routes.

The two-way trade between the countries was minuscule, following steps taken by both sides after the Pulwama terror attack in 2019.

After the terror attack in Pa-

halgam Tuesday, which killed 26 people, mostly tourists, India took a series of measures, including immediate shutting down of the Attari land-transit post, used for movement of certain kinds of goods.

In retaliation, Pakistan also announced that "all trade with India, including to and from any third country through Pakistan, is suspended forthwith". This move may affect India's exports to Afghanistan.

India's exports to Pakistan in April-January 2024-25 stood at \$447.65 million, while imports were meagre \$0.42 million. Exports and imports in 2023-24 were \$1.18 billion and \$2.88 million, respectively.

In 2022-23 and 2021-22, India exported goods worth \$627.1 million and \$513.82 million, and imported products worth \$20.11 million and \$2.54 million, respectively.

In April-January 2024-25, exports of organic chemicals and pharmaceutical products accounted for about 60 per cent of the country's total outbound shipments to Pakistan. It was \$129.55 million and \$110.06 million, respectively.

Gold declines ₹1K to ₹98,400/10 gm

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 28:** Gold prices declined ₹1,000 to ₹98,400 per 10 grams in the national capital Monday amid weak global trend, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had closed at ₹99,400 per 10 grams Thursday.

Gold of 99.5 per cent purity depreciated ₹1,000 to ₹97,900 per 10 grams against the previous close of ₹98,900 per 10 grams.

"Gold prices continued to decline as easing US-China trade tensions boosted investors' risk appetite, reducing demand for safe-haven assets like bullion while a stronger dollar added downward pressure on gold," Abans Financial Services' Chief Executive Officer Chintan Mehta said. On Friday, China announced it would exempt some US imports from its steep 125 per cent tariffs, though it denied that any formal trade talks were underway.

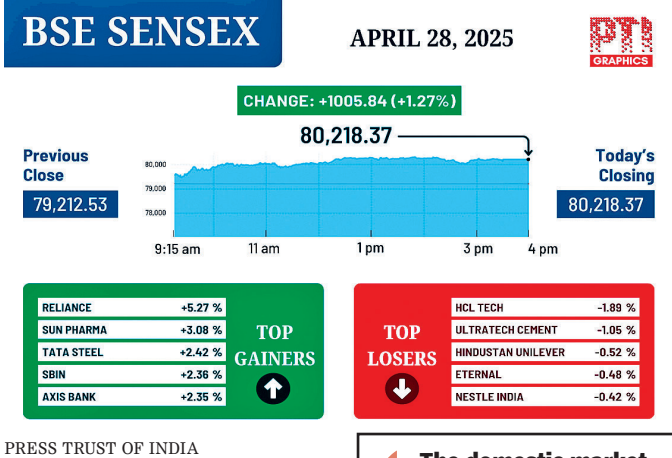
Meanwhile, the US Federal Reserve officials signalled that they see no immediate need to adjust monetary policy, choosing instead to monitor the economic impact of the Trump administration's tariffs.

This hawkish stance suggests that interest rate cuts may not materialise in the near term, further weighing on gold, which typically loses appeal as a non-yielding asset when interest rates stay elevated.

Mehta further said, "Rising geopolitical tensions could limit gold's downside. As war risks escalate and new conflicts emerge, investors are likely to seek refuge in gold." "With tensions brewing among major powers, and regional strains like the growing friction between India and Pakistan, demand for gold as a safe-haven asset is expected to rise, making it a preferred hedge against market volatility and uncertainty," he added.

Additionally, silver prices also plunged ₹1,400 to ₹98,500 per kg Monday. The white metal had settled at ₹99,900 per kg in the previous session.

Equities soar above 1% on foreign fund inflows



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, April 28:** Benchmark BSE Sensex soared by 1,006 points to close above 80,000 level Monday as a sharp rally in Reliance Industries and private banks, and foreign fund inflows helped stock markets cut short two days of fall amid India-Pakistan border tensions.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,005.84 points or 1.27 per cent to settle at 80,218.37 with 23 of its constituents ending with gains and seven in the red. During the day, it surged 1,109.35 points or 1.40 per cent to 80,321.88.

The NSE Nifty rallied 289.15 points or 1.20 per cent to close at 24,328.50.

All key sectors, barring IT, participated in the rally, with pharma, energy, and auto emerging as the top gainers.

Shares of Reliance Industries Ltd Monday jumped over 5 per cent, adding ₹92,629.1 crore to its market valuation, after the firm reported a 2.4 per cent rise in the March quarter net profit.

Mahindra & Mahindra spurted 2.29 per cent after the auto major announced a ₹555-crore acquisition of SML Isuzu and said that the buyout was a strong strategic fit for the company that would put it in a strong position. SML Isuzu Ltd shares, on the other hand, tanked 10 per cent.

**The domestic market recouped from the losses incurred during the last two days of the previous week, which stemmed from the border tensions**

VINOD NAIR | HEAD OF RESEARCH, GEOJIT INVESTMENTS

Sun Pharma, Tata Steel, State Bank of India, Axis Bank, Tata Motors, Larsen & Toubro and ICICI Bank were also among the Sensex gainers.

HCL Tech, UltraTech Cement, Nestle and Hindustan Unilever were among the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth ₹2,952.33 crore Friday, according to exchange data.

Foreign investors have infused ₹17,425 crore in the country's equity markets last week, supported by a combination of favourable global cues and strong domestic macroeconomic fundamentals.

This came following a net investment of ₹8,500 crore in the preceding holiday-truncated week ended April 18.

The BSE barometer Sensex tanked 588.90 points or 0.74 per cent to settle at 79,212.53 Friday. Falling for the second day, the Nifty tumbled 207.35 points or 0.86 per cent to 24,039.35.

Royal Enfield unveils Hunter 350 in City

Bhubaneswar:

The much-anticipated and technologically advanced all-new Hunter 350 from Royal Enfield is set to make its market debut soon. To mark the occasion, Royal Enfield's Odisha unit organised a special unveiling ceremony Sunday at the Esplanade Mall in Bhubaneswar, in collaboration with the company's authorised dealers.

The event was attended by Royal Enfield officials including Regional Business Manager Narendra Sa, Regional Manager Abdul Sajid Khan, Regional Retail Coordinator Chandan Gorai, Area Sales Manager Swadesh Praharaj, and dealer partners Harshat Lodha and Rajesh Gu gnani, among others. The 2025 Hunter 350 boasts a range of modern features. It is available in three vibrant new colours: Rio White, Tokyo Black, and London Red. Significantly, for the first time in the 350cc line-up, the Hunter 350 features a slip-assist clutch, ensuring smoother gear shifts and reducing rider fatigue. It is also equipped with LED headlamps, Tripper navigation pod, and a Type-C USB fast charging port, offering a connected and comfortable riding experience. Bookings for the Hunter 350 are now open at all Royal Enfield showrooms.



IIP growth steady at 3% in March

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 28:** India's industrial production growth remains almost flat at 3 per cent in March sequentially, though, on a year-on-year basis, it slipped from 5.5 per cent, mainly due to poor performance of the manufacturing, mining and power sectors.

The government also revised the industrial growth figure downward to 2.7 per cent for February 2025 from the provisional estimate of 2.9 per cent earlier this month, according to the official data released Monday.

In the fiscal 2024-25, the IIP decelerated to a four-year low of 4 per cent. It was 5.9 per cent

in 2023-24 and the previous low was recorded at -8.4 per cent in 2020-21.

The growth was 11.4 per cent in 2021-22 and 5.2 per cent in 2022-23.

The factory output, measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), rose by 5.5 per cent in March 2024, as per the data.

The data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) also showed that the manufacturing sector's output growth slightly decelerated to 3 per cent in March 2025 from 5.9 per cent in the year-ago month.

Mining production dipped to 0.4 per cent from 1.3 per cent growth a year ago.

Power output also slowed to 6.3 per cent in March 2025 against 8.6 per cent in the year-ago period.

As per use-based classifica-



tion, the capital goods segment growth decelerated to 2.4 per cent in March 2025 against 7 per cent in the year-ago period.

Consumer durables (or white goods production) grew 6.6 per cent during the reporting month against a growth of 9.5 per cent in March 2024.

In March 2025, consumer non-durables output contracted 4.7 per cent compared to a growth of 5.2 per cent a year ago.

According to the data, infrastructure/construction goods

Adding 50-GW RE yearly can end coal imports by 2029, save India \$66bn

Currently, India has about 151 gigawatts of renewable energy from solar and wind and around 200 gigawatts if hydro, small-hydro and biogas is included

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 28:** If India adds 50 gigawatts of renewable energy every year, it could completely stop importing thermal coal by 2029 and save about \$66 billion in foreign exchange between 2025 and 2029, according to a new report published Monday.

The total savings could be at least \$173 billion from 2025 to 2034, the report prepared by think tank Climate Risks Horizon said.

The climate and energy think tank said the country's elec-

tricity sector remains heavily dependent on coal imports, with around 20 per cent or 206 million tonnes of thermal coal imported in 2023-24 at a cost of \$21 billion.

Thermal coal imports have risen by 58 per cent between 2013 and 2023, but the value of these imports has increased by 124 per cent due to volatile global prices and a weakening rupee, it added.

The report said imports surge during the summer months, when cooling demand pushes up electricity consumption.

Over the said period (2013 to



2023), India imported around 2,128 million tonnes of coal, mostly thermal coal used for power generation.

The import of thermal coal

has been increasing steadily at 3.7 per cent annually and has gone up to 40 per cent since 2013.

The think tank said India's dependency on imported coal

poses both physical and financial risks.

Physical risks arise with any disruption in the supply of imported coal, either due to unforeseen political changes or natural disasters. The volatility in energy prices poses a significant financial risk to power companies and consumers dependent on imported coal, the authors of the study said.

The report warned that India's energy demand will continue to grow due to urbanisation, industrial growth and the greater use of electric technologies.

The per capita electricity consumption rose from 957 kilowatt-hour in 2013 to 1,331 kWh in 2022 and heatwaves linked to the climate crisis are further pushing up the power demand, it said. The think tank said

a focused plan to aggressively expand renewable energy could significantly reduce coal imports. In 2023-24, India updated its renewable energy targets and now aims to have 500 gigawatts of non-fossil fuel energy capacity by 2030.

To achieve this, the government plans to add 50 gigawatts of renewable energy every year until 2027-28.

Currently, India has about 151 gigawatts of renewable energy from solar and wind and around 200 gigawatts if hydro, small-hydro and biogas is included. To meet the 2030 goal, the country needs to add 50 gigawatts of renewable energy every year.

In 2024-25, India added 24 gigawatts, the highest amount added in a single year so far.



Jaipur, April 28: Fourteen-year-old boy wonder Vaibhav Suryavanshi walked into the collective consciousness of cricket fans by becoming the youngest ever to score a hundred in an IPL match where result became inconsequential in the wake of a batting carnage for the ages.

For the

HISTORIC KNOCK

101 runs off 38 balls

6s: 11

4s: 7

Strike rate: 265.78

# VAIBHAV IPL's youngest centurion

The 14-year-old Vaibhav Suryavanshi etches his name in history books, becomes youngest to score IPL ton, registers 2nd fastest century

fastest in IPL and est ever for any Indian after Chris Gayle's 30-ball knock for RCB. When other 14-year-olds across the country are busy completing middle-school assignments and being admonished by quietly sneaking in for a PlayStation session, the left-handed Suryavanshi, simply stood and delivered against Indian bowlers Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Siraj with a collective experience of 141 Tests between them. Ishant had made his Test debut back in 2006 when Suryavanshi wasn't even an idea but the "Gen Alpha" kid (all those born between 2010-2024) made a mockery of everything thrown at him. There were 11 sixes and seven fours in his 38-ball-101 that even made a regal Yashasvi Jaiswal (70 not out, 40 balls, 9x4s, 2x6s) look like a mere bystander. Even with baby fat refusing to leave the contours of his cheeks, the stable core and holding his shape are things that stand out.

The basics built through those hours of toil in Patna, playing 600 balls a day from the age of 10 did show its results. The days of facing 16-17 year old net bowlers for whom his father Sanjiv Suryavanshi, would pack 10 extra tiffin boxes haven't gone waste. The decision of the Suryavanshi family to put all their eggs in one basket and have no Plan B by selling farm land to fuel their son's cricketing ambitions will certainly become a part of cricketing folklores that will be spoken in years to come. The bat speed was astonishing and the manner in which he picked up Siraj over long-on and belted Ishant into the square leg stand was there to be seen. Even Test spinner Wash- ingtIndian cricket is replete with stories about how some incredible talents were lost as they couldn't handle limelight. Laxman Sivaramakrishnan, Maninder Singh, Sadanand Viswanath, Vinod Kambl and Prithvi Shaw in recent times have all failed to realise their potential.

Indian cricket has got an uncut diamond and it is now establishment's duty to preserve and help him shine.

**BRIEF SCORES**  
**Gujarat Titans:** 209/4 in 20 overs (Sai Sudharsan 39, Shubman Gill 84, Jos Buttler 50 not out; Maheesh Theekshana 2/35) lost to **Rajasthan Royals:** 212/2 in 15.5 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 70 not out, Vaibhav Suryavanshi 101, Riyan Parag 32 not out; Rashid Khan 1/24) by 8 wickets

IPL STANDINGS					
TEAM	M	W	L	NRR	PTS
RCB	10	7	3	0.521	14
MI	10	6	4	0.889	12
GT	9	6	3	0.748	12
DC	9	6	3	0.482	12
PBKS	9	5	3	0.177	11
LSG	10	5	5	-0.325	10
KKR	9	3	5	0.212	7
RR	10	3	7	-0.349	6
SRH	9	3	6	-1.103	6
CSK	9	2	7	-1.302	4

## SUPERBET RAPID AND BLITZ

# Debutant Aravindh in sole third position

ARAVINDH PLAYED A GREAT GAME WITH BLACK PIECES AGAINST TOPALOV

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Warsaw, April 28:** Making his debut in the Grand Chess tour, India's Aravindh Chithambaram had a good second day as he beat former world champion Veselin Topalov of Bulgaria and drew the last two games to find himself on the sole third spot in the Superbet Rapid and blitz chess tournament here.

With each win worth two points, Alireza Firouza of France and Vladimir Fedoseev of Russia share the lead on eight points each with Aravindh on seven points following them. As many as three players -- Levon Aronian of United States, Deac Bogdan Dianel of Romania and Duda Jan-Krzysztof of Poland share the fourth place on six points each, a full point ahead of R Praggnanandhaa, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France and David Gavrilescu of Romania. With just three rounds remaining in the rapid section, Topalov is at the bottom of the tables on just four points. If Aravindh had a great day, Praggnanandhaa could not really prove his true mettle. In the first game of the day, the Indian missed out an easy draw and had to pay the price for his over-ambitious approach

against Alireza. The Indian had a draw on hand with perpetual check but decided to pursue an elusive attack that proved disastrous. If this was not enough, Praggnanandhaa lost to Topalov in the final game of the day and his overnight tally of four points, just increased by one point thanks to his lone draw with Aronian. Aravindh played a great game with black pieces against Topalov. According to pundits, the game will definitely find its way in the many future books of chess especially due to a very tricky finish. It was a knight and pawns endgame wherein Aravindh sacrificed his last remaining piece to put Topalov under a zugzwang.

## SHORT TAKES

### Sudirman Cup Final: India face uphill task

**Xiamen:** Faced with a herculean task to trump a formidable Indonesia and stay afloat in the competition, an under-strength India will need its struggling singles stars to deliver the goods in a must-win Group D contest at the BWF Sudirman Cup Finals here Tuesday. India's campaign began on a disastrous start Sunday with a 1-4 defeat to Denmark, a result that put their qualification for the knockout stage in serious jeopardy. With only two teams progressing from Group D, India must secure a win against Indonesia to keep their hopes alive otherwise, their third and final group match against England will be reduced to just a formality. The poor form of their star singles players -- Lakshya Sen, HS Prannoy, and PV Sindhu have not helped the team. However, there is some hope for India. Lakshya has defeated Indonesia's top men's singles player Jonatan Christie in their last two encounters -- at the Paris Olympics and the All England Championships.

### Manchester City keep trophy hopes alive

**London:** Even Manchester City's worst season under Pep Guardiola could still end with a trophy. On the day it was officially deposed as Premier League champion, City reached the FA Cup final for the third year in a row by beating Nottingham Forest 2-0 at Wembley Stadium to maintain a chance of salvaging something from a dismal campaign. City scored early Sunday in each half as Rico Lewis put his team ahead in just the second minute and defender Josko Gvardiol doubled the lead in the 51st with a header from a corner. The win gives Pep Guardiola's team a chance to salvage something from a disappointing campaign where its hopes of a fifth straight Premier League title disappeared early and it failed to even reach the round of 16 in the Champions League. City will play Crystal Palace in the final May 17.

### Eves eye second win

**Colombo:** Their campaign off to a dominant start, a confident India will look to maintain momentum when they face South Africa in their second match of the women's tri-series here Tuesday. The Indian team extended its winning streak in ODIs to seven matches with a comprehensive nine-wicket victory over hosts Sri Lanka in the tournament opener Sunday. The 'Women in Blue' excelled across all three departments. The bowlers, led by the spinners Sneha Rana, Deepti Sharma and Shree Chaurani, restricted Sri Lanka to a sub-par total, while the top three -- Pratika Rawal, Smriti Mandhana, and Harleen Deol --- played fluent innings with the bat. India had beaten South Africa 3-0 the last time the two teams met in a 50-over series.

# AIFF asks Churchill to return I-League trophy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, April 28:** The All India Football Federation (AIFF) Monday asked Churchill Brothers to return the I-League trophy it presented to the club, even as Goa Football Association (GFA) questioned the rationale behind awarding the silverware despite a stay order from the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

On Sunday, hours after Switzerland-based CAS stayed AIFF's decision to declare Churchill Brothers as I-League champions and barred it from conducting any formal medal ceremony, the national federation awarded the winners' trophy to the Goan club. AIFF deputy Secretary General M Satyanarayan presented the trophy to Churchill Brothers players and later claimed that the federation learnt about the CAS order only after the ceremony was over as its secretariat was closed Sunday.

But Monday, the AIFF was forced to ask Churchill to return the trophy.

"On Monday, we have written to Churchill Brothers to return the I-League trophy," an AIFF source told PTI on condition of anonymity. "We are bound to obey CAS order. Let the CAS decide on the matter and we will hand over the trophy after the decision."

Meanwhile, GFA President Caitano Fernandes Monday wrote a letter to the AIFF Executive Committee members to hold an "urgent inquiry on the potential dis-

regard of the CAS order". "...the decision to proceed with the presentation in apparent disregard of a CAS directive brings serious embarrassment to AIFF. Ignoring a CAS order would undoubtedly have severe consequences for the AIFF and the reputation of Indian football on the international stage," Fernandes wrote in the letter. "Therefore, I implore the esteemed members of the Executive Committee to treat this matter with utmost seriousness it deserves. A comprehensive and impartial probe must be launched immediately to investigate...the rationale behind proceeding with the event." He also claimed that he was not provided any communication regarding the I-League trophy presentation after he was initially invited for the formal ceremony Sunday. He said by doing so, the AIFF has shown "unacceptable level of mistreatment towards the GFA". "On the evening of April 26th... I received an e-mail from

Mr Satyanaryanan inviting me in my capacity as GFA president and member of League Committee to attend the trophy presentation scheduled to take place in Goa on April 27th. The e-mail stated that the venue and specific schedule would be confirmed upon his arrival in Goa," he wrote.

Fernandes said he received no further communication regarding the trophy presentation and later came to know that the ceremony has already taken place "completely bypassing the involvement and presence of GFA".

He demanded a comprehensive and impartial probe on the reasons behind the failure to communicate the presentation details to GFA and the "utter disregard shown to the GFA".

Asked about Fernandes' claim, Satyanarayan said, "It was unintentional (development). The trophy was to be presented on April 26 initially but Churchill said to be done on April 27.

## STELLAR SHOW BY NEXT-GEN

### INDIA BAG 13 GOLD MEDALS AT SOUTH ASIAN YOUTH TT CHAMPIONSHIPS

**KATHMANDU:** India bagged 13 gold and three silver in an impressive medal haul in the South Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships here. The qualification event for this year's Youth Asian Championships saw the Indian contingent dominate the competition across various categories Sunday. The Indian teams grabbed three gold medals in the Under-19 girls, Under-15 boys, and Under-15 girls sections and made a clean sweep of all six golds in the U-19 and U-15 doubles, including the mixed doubles events. Additionally, India secured four gold medals in the U-19 boys and girls singles events. However, hosts Nepal claimed the fourth gold in the U-19 boys category. Despite a lone loss to Pakistan in the five-team league phase, Nepal finished on top with seven points, securing three wins and edging out Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, who took second and third place, respectively. India, having qualified for the Youth Asian Youth Championships last year, did not have to field its squad in the competition.

### 21 INDIAN BOXERS TO FIGHT FOR GOLD AT JUNIOR ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

**AMMAN:** India continued its strong showing at Junior Asian Championships with seven more boxers, including six women, booking their place in the U-17 finals here. India has secured 43 medals so far, with 21 boxers across the U-15 and U-17 categories set to fight for gold. The U-17 women boxers delivered an overall dominant display, led by Ahaana Sharma (50kg), who stormed into the final with a first-round knockout victory over Kyrgyzstan's Akmaral Amantaieva Sunday. Khushi Chand (44-46kg) edged Ukraine's Oleksandra Cherevata 3-2, while Jannat (54kg), Simranjeet Kaur (60kg), Harsika (63kg), and Anshika (80+kg) also registered commanding wins to confirm their places in the final bouts. In the men's U-17 section, Devansh (80kg) produced a composed performance to defeat Vietnam's Nguyen Trong Tien 4-1 and secure his spot in the final. This is the first event organised by Asian Boxing, endorsed by both the Olympic Council of Asia and the newly-formed World Boxing.

# Bloody fingers just part of game in this traditional sport

IT'S THOUGHT THAT FINGER WRESTLING, POPULAR IN GERMANY'S ALPINE REGION AND NEIGHBOURING AUSTRIA, ORIGINATED AS A WAY TO SETTLE DISPUTES

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Pang, April 28:** Men in short leather pants and embroidered suspenders risked dislocated digits Sunday as they vied for the top prize at Germany's championship in the sport of fingerhakeln, or finger wrestling. Around 180 competitors took part in Sunday's 64th German championship in Pang, about an hour's drive southwest of Munich. It's thought that finger wrestling, popular in Germany's Alpine region and neighbouring Austria, originated as a way to settle disputes. The earliest depictions of the sport go back to the 19th century. Participants Sunday wore the traditional Ba-

varian dress known as tracht. Two competitors sit on opposite sides of a table and each hooks one finger -- usually the middle finger -- through a

small leather loop. As soon as a referee signals the start, each contestant tries to pull the other across the table swiftly. The whole thing usually lasts a few

seconds, and dislocated fingers are common.

Special attendants sit behind each athlete to catch them should one of them suddenly

lose his grip and fly backwards. The winner moves to the next round. By custom, only men take part. Today fingerhakeln is highly organized and follows strict rules starting with exactly defined measurements for both the table and the leather loop. In Sunday's championship, there were several winners in different weight and age categories. There are nine clubs in Germany and another four in neighbouring Austria, says Georg Hailer, chairman of Germany's oldest and biggest club, Fingerhakler Schlierachgau. "It's not dangerous at all," Hailer said. "Of course, there will be open wounds and small injuries on the fingers from

time to time. It looks worse than it really is, because there's blood." It's not just brute force but skill too, said Maximilian Woelfl, a wrestler from the Bavarian town of Laufach. "There are different techniques -- how do I sit at the table?" he said. "How do I transfer my power as quickly as possible to the loop? And of course you need a well-trained finger." Competitors warm up by hoisting heavy blocks or pulling on cables with their competition finger. Later this summer, the Bavarian championships in Mittenwald will once again demand all the strength that the athletes can muster -- and perhaps a few patches of skin.

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