

# Daily Kashmir Story

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## Rains lash Valley, hail storm wreaks havoc in South Kashmir



**SRINAGAR:** Rains lashed different parts of Valley on Friday, while the hailstorm wreaked havoc in South Kashmir.

Amidst two-day yellow and orange alert issued by the MeT Department the parts of Kashmir including Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir were lashed by the rainfall from late afternoon.

Reports of hailstorms in South Kashmir areas in Shopian district were also received, causing extensive losses to the orchardists and fruit growers.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the next three days upto April 21 would likely witness more rains and snow across Jammu and Kashmir as the weatherman has stated that an active Western Disturbance would likely affect the region, bringing widespread light to moderate rain in plains and snow in the higher reaches.

The MeT has issued a warning of heavy rain, snowfall, thunderstorms, and strong winds across Jammu and Kashmir from April 18 to April 20,

with peak intensity expected between the night of April 18 and late night of April 19.

The Pir Panjal range in Jammu and upper regions of Kashmir—especially Anantnag-Pahalgam, Kulgam, Sinthan Pass, Shopian, Pir Ki Gali, Sonamarg-Zojila, Bandipora-Razdan Pass, Gulmarg, and Kupwara-Sadhna Pass—are expected to receive heavy precipitation, reads the advisory.

The advisory warns of strong winds reaching 40-50 kmph, gusting up to 60-70 kmph, along with the possibility of hailstorms and lightning. The adverse weather may cause significant disruption to surface transport, particularly on the Jammu-Srinagar and Srinagar-Leh National Highways and other major roads in hilly areas.

The MeT has also cautioned about risks of landslides, mudslides, shooting stones, and a rise in water levels in rivers and streams. Waterlogging in low-lying areas is also expected.

Farmers have been advised to suspend all agricultural operations from April 18 until the afternoon of April 21—(KNO)

## LG Manoj Sinha flags use of crypto currency in narco dealings

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday said cryptocurrency is being used in narco dealings as the dark web is emerging as the new marketplace for drug trade.

Speaking at the passing out parade at Police Training School, Manigam, in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, Sinha said technology is changing at a very rapid pace and the use of new technology outside the training schools, and upgradation of skills to tackle the challenges put up by enemies are the need of the hour.

"The threat of drug smuggling has not remained conventional now. Smugglers and narco-terrorists are changing their ways of communication every day. Dark web is emerging as the new marketplace for drug trade, and cryptocurrency is being used in place of conventional transactions," Sinha said.

The LG said the misuse of new technologies has expanded organised crime and increased the number of cybercrime incidents as well.

"In such a situation, you have to implement a policy of continuous innovation to remain a step ahead of the criminals. I hope the J-K Police force is dedicated and ready to tackle all these



challenges," he said, assuring that the J-K administration and the central government stand with the security forces with full might.

Appreciating the security forces for curbing terror incidents in Kashmir to a large extent, Sinha said attempts were being made to revive terrorism in the Jammu region.

"In the last few years, J-K Police, Army and other security forces have succeeded to a large extent in controlling terrorism

in the Kashmir valley. Attempts are being made to revive terrorism in the Jammu region, which was peaceful in comparison. I have faith in J-K Police. It is the collective resolve of J-K Police and other security forces to make both Jammu and Kashmir regions terror-free," he said.

The LG said he was sure the way the security forces succeeded in putting brakes on terror incidents in the Kashmir valley, "you will repeat that resolve in Jammu".

"All the agencies have to come together

as a strong team to take a resolve to uproot the neighbouring country's conspiracy," he added.

He asserted that the Jammu and Kashmir Police has to be made a future-ready police force which is equipped technologically, and capable of tackling emerging challenges of terrorism and crime.

"J-K Police is very different from other forces in the country because it has a huge responsibility. On one hand, our brave soldiers face terrorism, and on the other, they have the responsibility to maintain law and order and help in creating a conducive atmosphere for development in J-K," he said.

In the last few years, Sinha said, the performance of Jammu and Kashmir Police in real-time intelligence sharing and swift response has been appreciable.

"I hope the combination of special strategy, advanced technology, and specific intelligence will put the last nail in the coffin of terrorism and its whole support system.

In future, the success of the anti-terror operations and (maintenance of) law and order missions will depend on the effective use of the technology," he added.

## Congress Team Meets Omar Abdullah In Jammu, Discusses Political Situation



**JAMMU:** A high-level Congress team led by national general secretary Syed Naseer Hussain on Friday called on Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah here and discussed the current political landscape in the Union

Territory.

Flanked by AICC general secretary G A Mir and Jammu and Kashmir Congress chief Tariq Hameed Karra, the Rajya Sabha MP met Abdullah at his residence, the party leaders said.

They were engaged in a productive meeting with the chief minister, they said.

"The discussion focused on the INDIA alliance and the current political landscape in Jammu and Kashmir, highlighting collaborative efforts and the importance of addressing contemporary challenges in the region," a senior leader said. The Congress is a coalition partner in the Omar Abdullah's government.

## Counter-terrorism grid being strengthened in J&K: DGP Prabhat

**SRINAGAR:** Jammu and Kashmir DGP Nalin Prabhat on Friday said the police force is strengthening its counter-terrorism grid and operational capabilities to fight terror in the Union Territory.

Addressing a passing out parade at the Police Training School (PTS) Manigam in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district,



he said, "We are strengthening the counter-terrorism grid and operational capabilities."

The director general of police (DGP) expressed his gratitude to the Central government for its continued support to the force.

"J&K Police is thankful for the continued support of the Government of India and the Union Home Ministry in our efforts," he added.

Prabhat said the Jammu and Kashmir Police is duty bound for welfare of its personnel and their families.

The DGP congratulated the passouts on becoming a part of one of the best police forces in the country.

A total of 438 recruits, including 86 women, completed their rigorous training at the PTS Manigam. Among them, 211 constables have previously served as Special Police Officers (SPOs).

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha attended the passing out parade as the chief guest.

## J-K StartUp 'O-Health' collaborates with US-based Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**JAMMU:** A Jammu-based digital healthcare StartUp, O-Health, has entered into a research collaboration with the US-based Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Founded by Arunoday Singh, O-Health is one of the country's earliest health StartUps of its kind which is at the forefront of leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and digital platforms to deliver healthcare in under-served and remote areas.

The StartUp has already reached over 30,000 patients through its tele-health services across the remote areas of Kathua, Hiranagar, Billawar, Doda and Ramnagar regions, bridging critical



healthcare gaps in difficult terrains, according to its founder.

The founder of this StartUp, Singh is

a "son of soil" who holds a Bachelor of Technology degree in engineering, an MBA and also a postgraduate degree in

health economics from the prestigious London School of Economics (LSE).

He served as a manager in the German Deutsche Bank before resigning from that job and bringing together a group of like-minded youngsters to raise the StartUp venture.

The new research partnership with MIT's Computer Science and AI Lab (CSAIL) will focus on co-developing cutting-edge AI tools for predictive diagnostics, remote patient monitoring and personalized healthcare delivery—designed especially for rural populations with limited access to doctors and hospitals.

"This collaboration marks a defining chapter not just for O-Health, but for

the entire region of Jammu & Kashmir," said Singh.

It's proof that world-class innovation can grow from the grassroots—and serve them, too, he added.

The agreement includes joint research projects and team engagement programs between

O-Health and MIT, with O-Health's initial implementation planned in high-altitude and remote regions of North India.

MIT is a premier research university in Massachusetts, United States. Established in 1861, MIT has played a significant role in the development of many areas of modern technology and science.

## Illegal parking by car dealer sparks public outrage in Barbar Shah



According to locals, the car dealer has turned portions of the public road into an unofficial extension of his showroom. Despite repeated complaints and a formal report lodged at the concerned police station on April 17, the issue remains unresolved.

On Friday, traffic department officials visited the spot to tow the illegally parked vehicles. However, the dealer reportedly resisted the operation. Shockingly, shortly after the officials left, the dealer resumed parking vehicles at the same location, disregarding the warnings and enforcement efforts, the locals, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

"This is a public road, not private property," said a local resident. "We support the administration, but such blatant defiance of the law must not go unchecked."

Locals are urging the traffic department and Srinagar Municipal Corporation to take strict and sustained action against the violator.

They have also demanded regular monitoring of the area to prevent recurrence of such violations.

Illegal parking has been a growing menace in several areas of Srinagar, causing traffic jams and posing safety hazards for both pedestrians and motorists. Residents hope that this time, the authorities will act decisively—(KNO)

**KNO Correspondent**

**SRINAGAR:** Residents of Barbar Shah area here have raised serious concerns over persistent illegal parking by a local car dealer, who continues to occupy public roads with multiple vehicles, obstructing movement and violating traffic norms.

## 'Happy to be back', says Bollywood actor Emraan Hashmi in Srinagar

Hails cinema revival in Kashmir at 'Ground Zero' premiere, urges more filmmakers to work in valley

**SRINAGAR:** Bollywood actor Emraan Hashmi on Friday said it was a joy to be back in Srinagar as he attended the red carpet premiere of his upcoming film 'Ground Zero', calling the event a "symbolic moment" for Kashmir and a fresh chapter in the revival of cinema culture in the valley.

The premiere, held at Shivpora PVR in Srinagar, marked the first red carpet movie screening of actor Imran Hashmi in the city.

The event, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), witnessed the presence of filmmakers, actors and dignitaries, who walked the red carpet and hailed the significance of the occasion.

Earlier in the day, speaking to reporters outside City Walk Mall Srinagar, Hashmi said he is very happy to be back in Srinagar. "We shot for Ground Zero here for about 30 days. The weather is



fabulous—much better than Mumbai," he said.

Reflecting on the importance of the screening, he termed it a positive and symbolic step for the people of Kashmir. "After years, a red carpet premiere like this has happened here. I request other filmmakers to follow suit and bring their

movies to Kashmir," he said.

The actor praised the hospitality and spirit of the Kashmiri people. "They are good, respectable, and hospitable. I have always wanted to come here again and again," he said.

"Yeh yaha ki kahani hai, yaha se judi hui kahani hai (This is a story of this

land, a story connected to Kashmir)," Hashmi said, referring to the emotional connect of Ground Zero with the region.

He shared about the creative potential of Kashmiri youth. "The valley has incredible talent. They just need the right opportunities to enter film, television, or other creative fields," he said.

It is worth mentioning, the film, set against the backdrop of the 2001 Parliament attack, follows a BSF officer's pursuit of the mastermind Ghazi Baba, culminating in India's largest anti-terror operation.

As per the details, the screening was attended by co-producers Arhan Bagati, Abhishek Kumar and Nishikant Roy; actors Emraan Hashmi and Sai Tamhankar; director Tejas Prabha Vijay Deoskar; and producers Ritesh Sidhwani and Farhan Akhtar—(KNO)

## SCREEN ADDICTION

## The Declining Trend Of Reading

MOHD ISHAQ SHAH

*'Reading makes a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man; and, therefore, if a man writes little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not.'*

-FRANCIS BACON in 'Of studies'

During my 20 years of teaching experience, I have observed that the students we teach exhibit various behavioral tendencies in the early 20s when I started teaching and more especially in the 1990s when I was a student book reading was considered a prime concern in schools and the students who could read a book were given a big hand in class and great appreciation by teachers. This trend was in vogue till the end of 2010 and started declining with the advent of computer technology. And it vanished totally from the scene with the advent of smartphones and in today's schools and colleges book reading seems just a nightmare to students. They are as afraid of book reading as Bacon in another essay - Of Death says that men fear death, and children fear to go in the dark.

Screen addiction has given children many problems like blurring of vision, headaches, mental disorders, and physical fatigue. The most dangerous thing is that it has given them access to social media apps that result in a waste of time, mental frustration, and the development of immoral tendencies. These apps give access to obscene videos and photography hence derailing them from the main track. The children being innocent and immature and especially teenagers fall prey to such activities. Ultimately, screen addiction has snatched from children the opportunity to enjoy book reading and the subsequent uses of book reading. The importance of book reading has been acknowledged and appreciated by various scholars of global repute and stature for instance Ernest Hemingway- 1954 Nobel Laureate puts: books are the most loyalist friends in the world as they remain with us when every relation stops working. The most acknowledged and read philosopher essayist Francis Bacon says "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested" is a quote by Sir



Francis Bacon that means some books are only worth a quick read, while others are important enough to be read thoroughly."

"Francis Bacon wrote in his essay Of Studies that "reading maketh a full man". He also said that "conference a ready man; and writing an exact man". Bacon believed that if someone reads little, they need to be cunning to appear as if they know what they don't. Bacon also believed that writing is both a creative and scientific process. He thought that writing helps people become "exact" or "precise" in their actions. He also believed that following the rules of grammar and punctuation is important to avoid destroying the meaning of writing."

According to Bacon: Reading of good books gives a person relating to various topics. Through reading, he is able to enter and explore areas that are too difficult to be explored by a common person. It expands the imaginative aspect of the mind. Seuss once wrote, "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go." Diving into a good book opens up a whole world of knowledge starting from a very young age.

Boosts Brainpower: "Not only does regular reading help make you smarter, but it can also actually increase your brainpower. Just like going for a jog exercises your cardiovascular system, reading regularly improves memory function by giving your brain a good workout. With age comes a decline in memory and brain function, but reading may help slow the process, keeping minds sharper longer."

Makes You More Empathetic: Getting lost in a good read can make it easier for you to relate to others. Literary fiction, specifically,

has the power to help readers understand what others are thinking by reading other people's emotions.<sup>5</sup> The impact is much more significant on those who read literary fiction as opposed to those who read nonfiction.

Helps You Better Understand the Content: When it comes to actually remembering what you're reading, you're better off going with a printed book than an e-book. The feel of paper pages under your fingertips provides your brain with some context, which can lead to a deeper understanding and better comprehension of the subject you're reading. So to reap the benefits of a good read, opt for the kind with physical pages.

Reduces Risk of Alzheimer's: Reading puts your brain to work, and that's a very good thing. Those who engage their brains through activities such as reading, chess, or puzzles could be 2.5 times less likely to develop Alzheimer's disease than those who spend their downtime on less stimulating activities.<sup>7</sup> Research suggests that exercising the brain may help because inactivity increases the risk of developing Alzheimer's.

Helps You Relax: There's a reason snuggling up with a good book (and maybe a glass of wine) after a long day sounds so appealing. Research suggests that reading can work as a serious stress-buster, reducing stress by as much as 68 percent.<sup>8</sup> It really doesn't matter what book you read, by losing yourself in a thoroughly engrossing book you can escape from the worries and stresses of the everyday world and spend a while exploring the domain of the author's imagination." Cognitive neuropsychologist David Lewis said.

Improves Sleep: Reading a physical book before bed helps you relax more than zoning out in front of a screen. Screens like e-readers and tablets can keep you awake longer and even impair sleep. That applies to kids too: Fifty-four percent of children sleep near a small screen, and clock 20 fewer minutes of shut-eye on average because of it. Instead of your phone or tablet, reach for a literal page-turner before switching off the light.

Increases Your Life Span: You may be surprised to learn that research shows reading printed books can help you live longer. People who read books (as opposed to other content) showed a 20% reduced risk of death. So while reading is generally beneficial, it seems reading books—specifically printed books—has an advantage.

Encourages Life-Long Reading: Eighty-two percent of parents wish their children would read more for fun, and those who want to encourage their children to become bookworms can start by modeling reading at home. Scholastic's biennial survey of families shows that having adults in their lives who read inspires children to become frequent readers (reading five to seven days per week). While most children say they have someone in their life who enjoys reading (95 percent), those with a lot of reading role models have a higher chance of becoming frequent readers themselves. What does this mean? Storytime offers a good way to spark an interest in reading, leading to a life-long hobby. Seeing adults read and having adults read to them can help children gain a love for reading that lasts a lifetime.

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## Trump says Ukraine-Russia talks 'coming to head', 'no one is playing' him in push to end war

President Donald Trump on Friday said negotiations between Ukraine and Russia are "coming to a head" and insisted that neither side is "playing" him in his push to end the grinding war.

Trump spoke after Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned earlier in the day that the US may "move on" from trying to secure a Russia-Ukraine peace deal if there is no progress in the coming days, after months of efforts have failed to bring an end to the fighting.

"Now, if for some reason, one of the two parties makes it very difficult, we're just going to say you're foolish. You are fools, you horrible people," Trump said. "And we're going to just take a pass. But hopefully, we won't have to do that."

Rubio's dour assessment about the state of negotiations came after landmark talks in Paris among US, Ukrainian and European officials produced outlines for steps toward peace and appeared to make some long-awaited progress.

Another meeting is expected next week in London, and Rubio suggested it could be decisive in determining whether the Trump administration continues its involvement.

"We are now reaching a point where we need to decide whether this is even possible or not," Rubio told reporters in Paris. "Because if it's not, then I think we're just going to move on. It's not our war. We have other priorities to focus on."

He said the US administration wants to decide "in a matter of days."

The State Department said Rubio issued the same warning in a phone call Friday with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, telling him that "if a clear path to peace does not emerge soon, the United States will step back from efforts to broker peace."

Trump said "Marco is right" that the dynamic of the negotiations must change, but stopped short of saying he's ready to walk away from peace negotiations.

"Well, I don't want to say that," Trump said. "But we want to see it end."

Rubio's comments stepped up pressure on both sides to reach a peace deal, even as the US and Ukraine made progress on a minerals agreement that Trump has sought to recoup billions of dollars in military assistance that Washington has sent Kyiv since Russia's full scale invasion in February 2022.

They also indicated the road to a complete truce will be long and mired with contention, despite Trump repeatedly claiming on the campaign trail that he could end the war within a day. Trump said last month that he was "being a little bit sarcastic."

Coming out of the Paris talks, the Americans are ready to use

both carrot and stick strategies with Russia and understand the need for "a relationship of force that allows them to get commitments from both sides," said a French diplomatic official who took part in the talks but was not authorised to comment publicly.

The Americans and Europeans discussed sanctions but "not the question of easing sanctions" on Russia. The official said the European Union needs to use "all instruments at our disposition," notably to have levers of influence over the Russians to ensure they commit to eventual promises.

US Vice President JD Vance struck a more hopeful tone in Rome

The deal, which Ukrainian Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said she signed with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, is expected to pave the way for significant investments, infrastructure modernisation and long-term cooperation.

The framework of the mineral deal had stalled in February following a contentious Oval Office meeting between Trump, Vance and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Negotiations have since resumed.

Russia says its 'open to dialogue' Despite apparent impatience with the peace efforts, Rubio

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on Friday, ahead of talks with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.

"We think we have some interesting things to report on, of course in private," he said. On the negotiations, "I won't prejudge them, but we do feel optimistic that we can hopefully bring this war, this very brutal war, to a close."

He didn't give more details. Progress on minerals deal

The US and Ukraine are nearing a long-delayed deal granting the US access to Ukraine's vast mineral resources, which has been intertwined with Trump's peace push.

Trump said Thursday: "We have a minerals deal." Ukraine's economy minister said Friday that the two countries signed a memorandum of intent ahead of a possible fuller agreement later.

called Thursday's Paris talks constructive. He didn't single out Russia or Ukraine as blocking peace efforts. He said he informed Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov about the outlines that emerged, but wouldn't say how Lavrov reacted.

When asked about Rubio's comments on Friday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that "fairly complex" negotiations are ongoing between Russia and the US. He did not give details, but said no direct talks between Trump and Putin are scheduled in the coming days.

"Russia is striving toward resolving this conflict, securing its own interests, and is open to dialogue. We are continuing to do this," he said.



## *Prominent Shia Scholar* **Aga Syed Baqir** *Passes Away*

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Prominent Shia cleric and religious scholar Aga Syed Mohammad Baqir Al-Moosavi passed away early Friday here after a brief illness, family sources said. He was 90. Head of the prominent Aga clan of Budgam,

Moosavi is survived by two sons, the sources said. They said Moosavi was not keeping well for the last few days. He was rushed to the SMHS Hospital here after his health deteriorated. He breathed his last at the hospital.

A revered Shia scholar, theologian, and author, Moosavi was a close relative of National Conference (NC) leaders Aga Syed Mehmood and Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, and religious-separatist leader Aga Syed Hassan Mosavi Al-Safavi.

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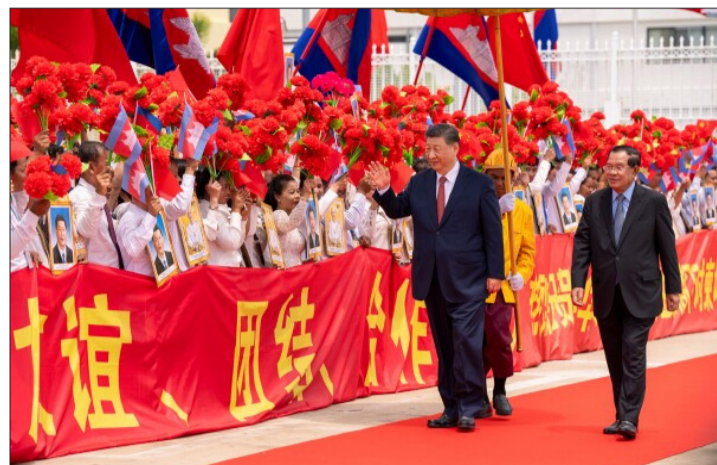
# China's leader concludes visit to Cambodia at end of 3-nation Southeast Asia tour

PHNOM PENH (Cambodia), Apr 18: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday completed a two-day state visit to Cambodia, capping a three-nation tour that included stops in Vietnam and Malaysia at a time when all three Southeast Asian countries are facing economic challenges from US President Donald Trump's tariff proposals.

China has been strongly increasing its influence in the region over the past decade, largely by exercising its substantial economic leverage. Beijing is now presenting itself as a source of stability and certainty as Trump's tariffs threaten the region's export-oriented economies whose largest market is generally the United States.

Cambodia faces among the highest reciprocal tariff rates proposed by Washington. In addition to Trump's universal 10% tariff, it faces the threat of a 49% tariff on exports to the US once his 90-day pause expires. For Vietnam, the tariff would be 46%, and for Malaysia, 24%.

"The timing of the visit is extraordinarily auspicious for China, falling just in the wake of the announcement of Trump's tariffs that have caused managed consternation in Cambodia and Vietnam... and upset in Malaysia," Astrid Norén-Nilsson, a senior lecturer in the Study of Contemporary



South-East Asia at Sweden's Lund University, commented in an email interview on Thursday.

"Xi Jinping can now carry out the tour equipped with the moral authority and goodwill of a singularly constant friend and reliable trading partner."

A summary of the visit issued Friday by Cambodia's Foreign Affairs Ministry barely mentioned the trade crisis, focusing instead on bilateral relations.

"This milestone visit not only reaffirmed the unwavering commitment to the iron-clad friendship between Cambodia and China, but also further strengthened and deepened the

Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and win-win cooperation between the two countries," said the statement.

During his stay, Xi was granted a royal audience by King Norodom Sihamoni, and held meetings with Prime Minister Hun Manet and Senate President Hun Sen, who is Hun Manet's father and predecessor as prime minister. The visit was Xi's first to Cambodia since 2016.

Xi and Hun Manet also presided over the signing of 37 documents covering investment, trade, education, finance, information, youth work, agriculture, health, water resources, tourism, women's affairs and other subjects.

Cambodia's rapid growth in recent decades has been fueled largely by Beijing.

China has been Cambodia's largest trading partner for 13 consecutive years, with two-way trade in 2024 reaching \$17.83 billion, though greatly in China's favor. It has also been Cambodia's largest source of foreign investment for 13 consecutive years, as well as a major aid donor.

Beijing's strong support allows Cambodia to largely disregard Western criticisms regarding its government's human rights record and suppression of political opposition. Cambodia for its part generally supports China's stance on its widely disputed territorial claims in the South China Sea and other controversial issues.

"The Cambodian side reiterated its resolute adherence to the one-China policy and that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory," said the Cambodian Foreign Ministry statement. "Cambodia also expressed opposition to any attempts of interference in the internal affairs of China" — a reference to Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Referring to social and development issues, the statement implicitly made a contrast to positions held by the United States, saying "both sides acknowledged the global threat posed by climate

change and committed to strengthening environmental protection (and) advancing clean energy collaboration."

It mentioned as well China's help in dealing with Cambodia's problem of clearing land mines left over from armed conflicts decades ago, and cooperation in the health sector. The Trump administration's foreign aid cuts have affected those and other sectors.

The statement also declared that "both sides agreed to further strengthen the cooperation mechanism between the armed forces of the two countries."

Beijing helped fund an expansion of the Ream Naval Base on Cambodia's southern coast, raising worries it could become a strategic outpost for the Chinese navy in the Gulf of Thailand.

The statement did not mention the base issue. Cambodia has repeatedly denied any agreement granting China special privileges or the establishment of a foreign military base.

Cambodia has stated that warships from all friendly countries are welcome to dock at its new pier, provided they comply with certain conditions. Japan announced on Tuesday that two of its minesweepers will visit the Ream base this weekend in the first foreign navy visit since the expansion project was completed.

## No amnesty for heinous crimes committed during Maoist conflict: Nepal PM Oli

KATHMANDU: Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli on Thursday asserted that individuals responsible for heinous and inhuman crimes committed during Nepal's decade-long Maoist insurgency will not be granted amnesty, as he emphasised the need to uphold justice and expedite the transitional justice process.

Inaugurating the Sixth National Convention of the National Ex-Army and Police Organisation of



Nepal (NEAPON) here, Oli, who also chairs the ruling Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML), said transitional justice mechanisms must ensure justice for victims of the conflict that lasted from 1996 to 2006.

Oli emphasised the importance of two transitional justice bodies — the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons (CIEDP) — in investigating conflict-era crimes and delivering justice. He acknowledged the delay in their effective functioning but asserted that further postponement would not be tolerated.

He said these two panels would work towards providing justice to the conflict victims.

Asserting that there will be no further delay in the formation of these commissions, Oli said, "Any acts of murder, violence, activities that disturb religious harmony and anarchy would not be acceptable."

He reiterated that such crimes are incompatible with the democratic system Nepal has embraced after years of political struggle and the fall of authoritarian rule.

The Maoist insurgency sought to overthrow the monarchy and establish a people's republic. The violent conflict resulted in the deaths of more than 17,000 people, including civilians, Maoist combatants, and security forces, before culminating in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord in 2006.

This agreement formally ended the conflict and paved the way for Nepal's transformation into a democratic republic.

"We have a history of nation-building and unity. We are committed to handing over a prosperous, undivided Nepal to the next generation. We will not allow our borders to shrink and our national pride to be harmed. Our goal is to move forward while preserving our civilised and cultured society," the prime minister said.

The transitional justice process in Nepal has faced criticism from conflict victims, human rights organisations, and the international community for its slow pace and alleged political interference.

## Students, journalists stand trial in Turkey over protests sparked by mayor's arrest

ISTANBUL, Apr 18: Dozens of people including journalists appeared before a court in Istanbul on Friday, accused of attending banned demonstrations and disobeying police orders to disperse during anti-government protests that were triggered by the jailing of the city's opposition mayor, Ekrem Imamoglu.

Imamoglu, seen as the main challenger to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's 22-year rule, was arrested on March 19 and jailed days later on corruption charges.

His imprisonment has been widely viewed as politically



motivated and sparked nationwide protests. The government insists Turkey's judiciary is independent and that the courts operate independently.

A total of 189 defendants, most of them university students, began defending themselves over charges of participating in banned protests and non-compliance with orders to disperse. Some have also been charged with carrying arms.

Four photojournalists and three reporters who were covering the demonstrations were also on trial. The court, however, on Friday decided to separate their case from the main trial.

The defendants are among more than 2,000 people were detained for taking part in the country's largest mass demonstrations in more than a decade.

## Israeli strikes kill at least 17 in Gaza; Huckabee makes first appearance as US ambassador

DEIR AL-BALAH (GAZA STRIP): Israeli airstrikes across Gaza killed at least 17 people early Friday including children, hospital workers said, as the new US ambassador to Israel made his first public appearance in Jerusalem.

Among the dead were 10 people in the urban Jabaliya refugee camp, including eight from the same house, according to the Indonesian Hospital, which received the bodies. In the southern city of Khan Younis, seven people were killed, one of them a pregnant woman, according to Nasser Hospital, where the bodies were brought. The strikes came a day after more than two dozen people died in Gaza as Israel ramps up attacks, pressuring Hamas to return the hostages and disarm.

US Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee on Friday appeared at the Western Wall, the holiest Jewish prayer site in Jerusalem's Old City. Huckabee inserted a prayer into the wall, which he said was handwritten by US President Donald Trump. "Those are his initials, DT," said Huckabee while showing the note to the media.

In his first act as ambassador, Huckabee said Trump told him to take his prayer and pray for the peace of Jerusalem, he said. Huckabee also said every effort was being made to bring the



remaining hostages held by Hamas home.

A one-time presidential hopeful, Huckabee has acknowledged his past support for Israel's right to annex the West Bank and incorporate its Palestinian population into Israel but said it would not be his "prerogative" to carry out that policy.

During his first term, Trump recognised Jerusalem as Israel's capital over Palestinian objections and moved the embassy from Tel Aviv. Palestinians seek the eastern part of the city that Israel captured in the 1967 Mideast war as their future capital.

Huckabee's arrival comes at a pivotal time in the 18-month war, as international mediators including the US are trying to get a broken ceasefire back on track. Israel is demanding that

Hamas release more hostages at the start of any new ceasefire and ultimately agree to disarm and leave the territory. Israel has said it plans occupy large "security zones" inside Gaza.

Khalil al-Hayya, head of Hamas's negotiating delegation, said Thursday the group had rejected Israel's latest proposal along those lines. He reiterated Hamas's stance that it will return hostages only in exchange for the release of more Palestinian prisoners, a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a lasting truce, as called for in the now-defunct ceasefire agreement reached in January.

Hamas currently holds 59 hostages, 24 of whom are believed to be alive.

The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel on October 7, 2023 killing

some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 251. Most of the hostages have since been released in ceasefire agreements or other deals.

Israel's offensive has since killed over 51,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants.

The war has destroyed vast parts of Gaza and most of its food production capabilities. The war has displaced around 90 per cent of the population, with hundreds of thousands of people living in tent camps and bombed-out buildings.

On Thursday, aid groups raised the alarm over Israel's blockade of Gaza, where it has barred entry of all food and other goods for more than six weeks. Thousands of children have become malnourished, and most people are barely eating one meal a day as stocks dwindle, the United Nations said.

Israel's Defence Minister says the blockade is one of the "central pressure tactics" against Hamas, which Israel accuses of siphoning off aid to maintain its rule. Aid workers deny there is significant diversion of aid, saying the UN closely monitors distribution. Rights groups have called it a "starvation tactic."

## Trump administration seeks explosive expansion of nation's immigration detention system

JENA (US): Amid rural Louisiana's crawfish farms, towering pine trees and cafes serving po'boys, nearly 7,000 people are waiting at immigration detention centers to learn whether they will be expelled from the United States.

If President Donald Trump's administration has its way, the capacity to hold tens of thousands more migrants will soon be added around the country as the US seeks an explosive expansion of what is already the world's largest immigration detention system.

Trump's effort to conduct mass deportations as promised in the 2024 campaign represents a potential bonanza for private prison companies and a challenge to the government agencies responsible for the orderly expulsion of immigrants. Some critics say the administration's plans also include a deliberate attempt to isolate detainees by locking them up and holding court proceedings far from their attorneys and support systems.

The acting director of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, Todd Lyons, said at a border security conference in Phoenix last week that the agency needs "to get better at treating this like a business" and suggested the nation's deportation system could function "like Amazon, trying to get your product delivered in 24 hours."

"So trying to figure out how to do that with human beings and trying to get them pretty



much all over the globe is really something for us," Lyons said.

ICE takes steps to add more immigration beds

This month, ICE invited companies to bid on contracts to operate detention centers at sites around the country for up to \$45 billion as the agency begins to scale up from its current budget for about 41,000 beds to 100,000 beds.

The money isn't yet there, but contracts are already being awarded. The House narrowly approved a broad spending bill that includes \$175 billion for immigration enforcement, about 22 times ICE's annual budget. The agency's 100-plus detention

centers nationwide currently hold about 46,000 people, causing overcrowding in locations including Miami.

ICE last week awarded a contract worth up to \$3.85 billion to Deployed Resources LLC to operate a detention camp at the Fort Bliss Army base in Texas. The little-known company is shifting its business from Border Patrol tent encampments for people arriving in the United States — most of which are now closed — to ICE facilities for people being deported.

The Geo Group Inc. got a contract for 1,000 beds in Newark, New Jersey, valued at \$1 billion over 15 years and another for 1,800 beds in Baldwin, Michigan. CoreCivic

Inc., won a contract to house 2,400 people in families with young children in Dilley, Texas, for five years.

The stock market has rewarded both of these private corrections companies. Geo's stock price has soared 94% since Trump was elected. Shares of CoreCivic have surged 62%.

Louisiana ranks No. 2 in the nation in immigration detention space.

Louisiana, which has relatively few immigrants and doesn't border Mexico, may not seem like an obvious choice to establish an immigration detention hub. But circumstances converged toward the end of the last decade that allowed ICE to take over five former criminal jails in the state in 2019 alone.

Now the state is second only to Texas in the amount of bed space it offers for detained immigrants. ICE was drawn to the state in part by relatively low labor costs, a generally favourable political environment and a ready supply of recently emptied jails.

State laws in 2017 lowered criminal penalties, reducing the need for jail and prison beds. In rural areas, where a corrections facility is often a main driver of the local economy, officials were eager to sign contracts for immigration detention.

"Because Louisiana was a top incarcerator in the world, it's not as though you have local legislators who are against prisons or against having a for-profit prison industrial complex come in and actually ensure that

these continue to run," said Nora Ahmed, legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana.

Conservative federal courts in the Western District of Louisiana and at the 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals make it tougher for people in Louisiana immigration jails to challenge detention conditions or to appeal immigration court rulings, said Mary Yanik, a professor and co-director of the Immigrant Rights Clinic at Tulane University Law School. "ICE gets to choose, basically, the courts where their cases are heard by locating detention centers in particular places," she said. Detention centers are often hours away from cities and lawyers.

Louisiana's nine immigration detention centers are in the rural north or western parts of the state. That means a drive of several hours from its largest cities, where immigration advocates and lawyers are clustered. Detainees have long complained of isolation. Being held in "deplorable conditions" and isolated from their families and support networks can cause people to stop fighting their deportation and make it easier for ICE to remove them, said Carly Pérez Fernández, spokesperson for Detention Watch Network, which helped organize nationwide protests against ICE detention on Thursday.

"Detention really plays a crucial role in enabling Trump's cruel mass deportation agenda," she said. "Increased detention capacity will exacerbate the detention

conditions that we already know are inhumane."

Most detention facilities are a relatively short distance from Alexandria, where ICE converted a former military base into a 400-bed, short-term holding centre with an adjacent airstrip for deportation flights.

One facility is in Jena, which is home to 4,200 people, about 220 miles (355 kilometers) from New Orleans. The community has only a single advertised hotel called the Townsman Inn.

The Jena detention center, operated under contract with the Geo Group, is surrounded by "no trespassing" signs, fencing with layers of razor wire and armed guards.

Homero Lopez, a lawyer at Immigration Services and Legal Advocacy, which provides free representation in Louisiana detention centers, said the faraway location "makes it a lot more difficult to protest and organize."

The introduction of video links for immigration court has softened — but not eliminated — criticism that ICE is deliberately trying to distance detainees from their families, attorneys and other forms of support.

Lopez said he's happy to use video conferencing for quick preliminary matters, but he prefers to make the drive to appear in person for substantive hearings. He said video links can be "dehumanizing" and may lead judges to fail to appreciate what's at stake when they are not facing immigrants in person.

## The Electric Revolution in Automobiles

By : Sheema Javeed

As the world grapples with the twin imperatives of climate change and energy security, electric vehicles (EVs) have surged from niche novelty to mainstream contender. Once dismissed as underpowered curiosities, EVs now account for nearly one-quarter of new light-vehicle sales—projected to reach 23.5 percent by 2025—on the back of rapid technological advances and robust policy support. According to Deloitte, global EV sales are set to climb from 2.5 million in 2020 to 11.2 million by 2025, reflecting a compound annual growth rate of 29 percent—a trajectory that promises to redefine mobility as we know it.

### Technology and Infrastructure

Key to this crescendo is the relentless improvement in battery technology. While early EVs struggled with limited range, modern models routinely exceed 300 miles on a single charge, assuaging “range anxiety” and widening consumer appeal. Concurrently, public and private investment in charging infrastructure has mushroomed: global charging points doubled in just two years, laying the groundwork for seamless electric mobility. Europe and China led the charge in March 2025, where EV and plug-in hybrid sales jumped 24 percent and 36 percent year-on-year respectively, thanks in part to generous incentives and stringent emissions regulations.

### Competition and Supply Chains:

Tesla’s pioneering efforts ignited the EV market, but its 8.6 percent sales decline in Q1 2025—dropping its U.S. market share from 51 percent to 44 percent—illustrates the intensifying competition. Giants like General Motors and Volkswagen, alongside challengers such as BYD and Xpeng, have ramped up production, broadening choices across price points. Yet this boom brings geopolitical complexity: China dominates critical mineral processing for lithium, graphite, and rare earths, and recent export curbs threaten to disrupt Western EV supply chains despite over \$130 billion in U.S. investments.

### Economic and Environmental Imperatives

Beyond consumer convenience, EV adoption carries profound economic and ecological stakes. Transportation accounts for roughly 24 percent of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; electrification, powered increasingly by renewables, can slash this footprint. Moreover, the EV market’s rapid expansion—forecast to be worth over \$1 trillion by 2029 at a 23.4 percent CAGR—promises job creation in manufacturing, infrastructure, and R&D, offsetting declines in internal-combustion sectors.

Government action remains pivotal. Incentives like tax credits and rebates have proven effective, but the most transformative levers are regulatory: tightening tailpipe standards, phasing out new petrol and diesel sales, and mandating zero-emission vehicle quotas. Such measures not only spur domestic industry but also signal to investors that the EV transition is irreversible.

As automakers unveil ever-sleeker electric models and battery prices continue to fall, the onus shifts from innovators to consumers, policymakers, and financiers. Drivers must embrace new refueling habits, governments must ensure equitable infrastructure rollout, and investors must back sustainable supply chains. Only through coordinated action can the promise of cleaner, smarter, and more accessible transportation be fully realized.

Electric vehicles are no longer the future—they are the present. The next decade will determine whether this momentum coalesces into a wholesale transformation or fizzles under the weight of complacency. For newspapers and policymakers alike, the message is clear: it’s time to accelerate, not stall, on the road to an electrified tomorrow.

# Climate Shock: The Battle For Water, Stomach, And Identity

BY: MUKHTAR AHMAD QURESHI

When we talk about climate change, the discussion often confines itself to melting glaciers, rising sea levels, and changing weather cycles. But its human face—particularly that of rural Indian women—is often forgotten. The Beijing India Report 2025 once again makes it clear that the climate crisis is not a “gender neutral” disaster. Its impacts are deep,

in the non-agricultural sector fell by an average of 33% during extreme climate events in 2023-24. This is not just an economic loss but also a blow to self-reliance and confidence.

Climate-induced displacement, falling family incomes, and traditional thinking—all three are hampering the education of adolescent girls. When families have limited resources, girls’ education is one of the first to be cut short. They are pulled out of school and put into domestic work

State-level climate plans must incorporate women’s specific needs. States like Odisha have begun incorporating gender indicators into their climate strategies, but this initiative needs to be replicated in every state. Gender-based data collection by village, caste, and economic status is essential for policies to be effective at the ground level. Creating a climate vulnerability index with a gender component at the panchayat level can be an effective step. Self-help groups



unequal, and misogynistic. Millions of rural women in India are already burdened by resource scarcity, social limitations, and unpaid domestic responsibilities. Climate change makes this burden even heavier—sometimes in the form of droughts, sometimes in the form of floods, and sometimes in the form of a slow, toxic combination of malnutrition and exhaustion.

The Beijing Report shows that the climate crisis is not only degrading the quality of women’s lives but also depriving them of their biological, social, and economic dignity. Health facilities for rural women are already limited, but the nutrition crisis and heat stress caused by climate change severely impact their reproductive and maternal health. According to the report, persistent dehydration and anemia have led to a rise in the incidence of premature hysterectomies among women. This is not just a medical procedure but an assault on their bodily autonomy and dignity. Infertility, complicated childbirth, and difficulties in conceiving are now becoming common problems—and climate insecurity is clearly behind them.

Most of India’s rural women either work in the fields or engage in small agricultural work, but they do not own the land. When rains are unseasonal, when crops dry up, or when soils turn barren, these women are the first and the worst hit. In regions like Bundelkhand, persistent droughts have not only led to a drop in production but also increased seasonal unemployment among women. Being cut off from the field means an empty kitchen, girls leaving school, and another round of debt. Women who were engaged in handicrafts, food processing, or small-scale businesses other than agriculture are also not spared by extreme weather. The Beijing report shows that women’s incomes

The Beijing Report shows that the climate crisis is not only degrading the quality of women’s lives but also depriving them of their biological, social, and economic dignity. Health facilities for rural women are already limited, but the nutrition crisis and heat stress caused by climate change severely impact their reproductive and maternal health...

or prepared for early marriage. This broken chain of education limits their lifelong opportunities. Adivasi and Dalit women in particular—who are already socially marginalized—are most vulnerable during climate disasters. During the 2020 cyclone Amphan, Dalit women in the Sundarbans region reported being excluded from relief centers and had no say in shelter decisions. Social discrimination becomes even more acute during a climate crisis.

The Beijing India Report not only highlights this crisis but also suggests clear ways to address it—most importantly, putting gender sensitivity at the center of climate strategy.

and women’s cooperatives can be strengthened by providing skills in areas of climate-resilient agriculture, green jobs, renewable energy, and agro-processing.

Better resourcing of primary health centers, especially for reproductive and maternal care, is imperative—especially in areas affected by the climate crisis. Women-run Jal Samitis in Gujarat have proven that when women are part of policymaking and resource management, solutions are more sustainable and responsive. Women’s participation should be made mandatory in local disaster management, forest rights committees, and water management. Missions under the National Climate Action Plan—such as Ujala Yojana, PMUY, etc.—should be redefined with a women-centric approach. Expansion of these schemes in climate-sensitive areas will not only strengthen health and livelihoods but will also promote gender justice.

Rural women are not just victims of climate change—they can also be agents of change. But this requires us to see them as partners, not just “objects for help.” This is the message of the Beijing report—that if we are to tackle climate change effectively, gender and climate must be understood together, not separately. When a woman scrapes drinking water for her child from the mud of a drying pond, she becomes not just motherhood but the most tragic image of the climate crisis. It is time for policy, science, and society to listen to her voice seriously.

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## WE HAVE TO ADAPT TO TOUGH SURFACES: Vettori After Loss To MI

Urging his batters to suitably tweak their approach on "difficult" surfaces, Sunrisers Hyderabad coach Daniel Vettori said they cannot expect belters at every venue and need to up their game after being outgunned by a wily Mumbai Indians in their IPL clash here.

Mumbai Indians produced a perfect show on a tricky pitch here at the Wankhede Stadium which had assistance for spin and pace for the seamers, especially with the slow and short balls to win the contest by four wickets on Thursday.

SRH could only post 162 for five after struggling to find their flow with the bat. MI pacers and right-arm off-spinner Will Jacks (2/14) set up the win.

"I feel like no one really has control over their surface, so there's a little bit of luck involved in terms of coming up against wickets that don't suit

us," Vettori told the media after SRH failed to win another away game in this IPL.

SRH features big-hitters like Abhishek Sharma, Travis Head, Heinrich Klaasen, Ishan Kishan and Nitish Reddy. Barring Abhishek (40 off 28 balls), and Klaasen (37 off 28 balls), the other batters could not make a noteworthy contribution.

"There has to be more to it from our side that we have to adapt. We know that conditions like this exist in Chennai, sometimes (in) Ahmedabad. We're not expecting to go over around the country and come up on belters, so the ball's in our court to realise that," the former New Zealand spinner said.

Vettori said it was MI bowlers who made the job extremely tough for SRH batters in the first half of the game, especially in the middle overs.

"It was just incredibly tough through those middle stages," he said.

**It was not what we've seen in the past here, but it was definitely still a good wicket. We felt when there was pace on the ball, we thought we could play our shots freely as long as we weren't trying to over-hit the ball," he said.**

"It was a difficult surface. Mumbai read the conditions exceptionally well...they really relied on that slow ball, but it was mainly effective because of their execution and there's some supreme exponents of it in (Jasprit) Bumrah and Trent Boult and even Hardik Pandya."

"The way they bowled, particularly through those middle stages, really stifled us. We were 66 for three through those 10 overs, and in these sort of conditions you probably need more than that," he added.

Jacks, who also scored 36 after an impactful bowling show, acknowledged the pitch was tricky but his team's plans were clear.

"It was not what we've seen in the past here, but it was definitely still a good wicket. We felt when there was pace on the ball, we thought we could play our shots freely as long as we weren't trying to over-hit the ball," he said.

"I knew there was going to be a bit of spin assistance so as long as I wasn't floating the ball up there and bowling aggressively and bowling hard, using the wicket, that's what I was trying to do."

Jacks also revealed that MI spinner Kam Sharma suffered an injury to his finger webbing in the second half of the game.

"He has got a slight finger-webbing issue. I'll be honest, I haven't seen him but hopefully it's not too bad and he can bounce back quickly," Jacks said.

Jacks said the pitch did not change much from first to the second innings with SRH struggling to put bat on the ball but MI were not facing any such challenges given the nature of the surface.

"There was hold when people bowled slower balls into the wicket. There wasn't much dew either so I don't think there was massive change in conditions as such," he said.

### We bowled smartly, were squeezing them: Pandya

Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya credited his bowlers for using variations effectively and executing plans smartly on a sluggish wicket as his side registered a four-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in their IPL match here on Thursday.



MI restricted SRH to 162 for five before chasing down the target with 11 balls to spare, reaching 166 for six in 18.1 overs.

"I think the way we bowled today was very smart and spot on. We stuck to simple basic plans. Certain balls were not easy to hit. Credit to the bowlers that we made them hit some

good shots. We were kind of squeezing them," Pandya said at the post-match presentation.

The MI skipper said the surface offered some assistance early on and the bowlers adjusted accordingly.

"If you look at it, had a nice green grass look to it. The first couple of overs that Deepak (Chahar) bowled, couple of balls got stuck in.

We decided to use change of pace balls. As soon as we figured out, we trying to mixing it up.

"We executed the yorkers very smartly well."

Will Jacks was the standout performer for MI, returning figures of 2/14 before scoring a quick-fire 36 off 26 balls to help the team clinch their second straight win of the season.

"That is the beauty of Jacks. He can be a gun fielder. Bowl those gun overs. Today it came off for him.

"When we needed 42 off 42, it was tricky. We wanted to take our time."

SRH skipper Pat Cummins admitted his team fell short of a competitive total on a sluggish surface.

"It wasn't the easiest wicket. Few runs short, we would have liked a couple more with the bat. Tricky wicket, when you come here you expect it to be really fluent and fast, just wasn't that," he said.

MI bowlers were clinical as they kept the SRH batting line-up in check, not allowing them to break free at any stage of the innings.



**Sana's all-round heroics take Pakistan to ODI World Cup**

Pakistan confirmed their participation at the Women's ODI World Cup after beating Thailand by 87 runs to secure their fourth win of the qualifier. Pakistan, with eight points, are at the top of the table and can only be matched by Bangladesh, who they play on Saturday and are in pole position to take the second World Cup spot.

Two other teams - Scotland and West Indies - are also in contention. In order to qualify, Scotland and West Indies need to win their matches against Ireland and Thailand respectively by big margins and hope Bangladesh lose badly enough to Pakistan to dip below them in net run rate terms. Bangladesh can qualify for the World Cup even if they lose to Pakistan and both Scotland and West Indies win their final matches because of

their net run rate advantage.

Pakistan will be thrilled to have avoided the intricacies of calculations like these after they booked their World Cup places with a game to spare. They are also unbeaten on home turf and have rediscovered their form. Before the qualifiers, Pakistan had last won an ODI in December 2023 and were on a five-game losing streak. In the last week, they put that right and reeled off four straight wins, albeit not always easily, and will now play in their fifth successive World Cup.

Their participation will require additional logistics for the tournament, scheduled for India from late September. In keeping with the hybrid model agreed by the BCCI and PCB ahead of this year's Champions Trophy, Pakistan are unlikely to travel to India for the tournament and will play their matches at a yet-to-be-decided neutral venue.

Pakistan will not worry about that for now as they celebrate their qualification run led by their captain Fatima Sana. She injected energy into a pedestrian innings that was meandering at 119 for 4 after 40 overs - a scoring rate of under three runs an over - with a quickfire unbeaten 62 off 59 balls. Sana and Sidra Amin, who posted her third fifty-plus score of the qualifiers with 80 off 105 balls, shared a run-ball 97-run stand and Pakistan scored 86 runs in the last ten overs to give themselves a defendable total.

Take nothing away from Thailand's bowlers, who were disciplined for the bulk of the innings and created several chances. Two of them were off Sana's bat and she was caught twice off the bowling of off-spinner Onnicha Kamchomphu but the deliveries were judged no-balls and Sana continued batting. Without her contribu-

tion, Pakistan may have been concerned especially as Thailand's batting has improved as the campaign has gone on.

They scored 259 chasing 306 against Ireland two days ago which was their highest ODI score and would have believed that even though they had never successfully chased a target above 200, they could give it a good go. Thailand were hard done by when opener Chanida Sutthiruang was given out stumped off Sadia Iqbal when replays seemed to suggest her foot was grounded behind the line when Sidra Nawaz broke the stumps. But they could not complain when Sana, who came on to bowl in the tenth over, sent down a delivery on a perfect offstump line and Nattaya Boochatham edged behind. Two balls later, Nannapat Koncharoenkai was bowled by offspinner Rameem Shamim and at 44 for 3, Thailand's chances looked grim.



# Healthcare System In Cuba



Renee L. Quarterman

In the heart of the Cuban capital, the Dr. Cosme Ordoñez Carceller Teaching Polyclinic stands as a testament to the nation's unique approach to healthcare: universal, free of charge, accessible, regionalized, community-centered, and deeply rooted in preventive medicine. Unlike the profit-driven models that dominate much of the world, Cuba's system prioritizes equitable access, public health education, and early intervention.

At the core of this approach is a commitment to health promotion through education, disease prevention through habit management, and the integration of medical care and rehabilitation. By emphasizing proactive healthcare rather than reactive treatment, the system ensures that communities receive continuous, comprehensive support to maintain overall well-being.

During a recent visit to the Dr. Cosme Ordoñez Carceller Teaching Polyclinic in Havana, the staff detailed how the system was developed and how it ensures that no Cuban, regardless of income, is left without medical care.

#### The Structure of Cuba's Healthcare System

Cuba's National Health System operates as a hierarchical, state-run model designed to ensure seamless coordination of care. At the top, the National Assembly oversees the Ministry of Public Health, which sets national policies and directs specialized health institutes that tackle broader public health concerns.

Below the Ministry, provincial governments, answering directly to the Assembly, oversee provincial health departments, which manage larger hospitals and specialized medical facilities. These provincial bodies, in turn, delegate responsibilities to municipal governments, which run the municipal health departments and smaller hospitals that serve local populations. At the community level, municipal health departments manage Cuba's extensive polyclinic network, the cornerstone of the country's healthcare system. These polyclinics not only provide specialized care, diagnostics, and emergency services, but they also coordinate closely with family doctor-and-nurse teams, who serve as the first point of contact for Cuban citizens.

These frontline providers play a crucial role beyond immediate treatment, emphasizing preventive care, home visits, and alternative therapies such as nutrition counseling, acupuncture, and plant-based medicine. Despite supply shortages exacerbated by U.S. sanctions, this integrated, top-down approach ensures that resources are distributed efficiently,

maintaining consistent healthcare access nationwide.

Founded in 1974, the Dr. Ordoñez Carceller Polyclinic serves approximately 13,000 residents, offering care in medical specialties such as cardiology, orthopedics, fertility consultations, and genetic testing. The clinic is named after Dr. Cosme Ordoñez Carceller (1927–2019), an epidemiologist and pioneer of Community Medicine, who championed the polyclinic model that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. He played a key role in training young physicians in comprehensive general medicine and launched innovative programs like the Grandparents' Circles, a senior care initiative so effective that it was replicated nationwide.

Unlike the profit-driven models that dominate

Cuba takes the opposite approach. Medical education is fully state-funded, allowing students to focus on patient care instead of profit. Training begins immediately after secondary school, with students placed in community clinics early in their careers. By the time they specialize, they have already served in primary care settings, ensuring that the system produces physicians committed to public health, not private wealth.

much of the world, Cuba's system prioritizes equitable access, public health education, and early intervention. The country's healthcare approach is rooted in promoting health through education, preventing disease by managing habits, and ensuring comprehensive medical care and rehabilitation. Unlike the fragmented, for-profit U.S. healthcare model, Cuba's integrated, community-based approach ensures better health outcomes and higher patient satisfaction. At polyclinics like Ordoñez Carceller, primary care is not just about treating illness but about education, prevention, and holistic well-being. This commitment to accessible, people-centered medicine reflects Cuba's broader philosophy: that healthcare is not a privilege, but a fundamental human right.

Cuba's Healthcare Achievements: A Global Leader in Public Health

Despite enduring over six decades of economic embargo, Cuba has achieved remarkable public health milestones. The following list highlights key accomplishments of both the Ordoñez Carceller Polyclinic and the Cuban healthcare system as a whole:

**AIDS:** Cuba identified HIV in 1983 and quickly set up a system to track and treat it. By 2014, it eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis, a milestone the U.S. has yet to reach.

**COVID:** Cuba developed two COVID vaccines, kept infections low, and even sent vaccines abroad.

**Diabetes:** The nation has developed an effective medication that treats diabetic ulcers (skin wounds that result from poor blood sugar control)

**Alzheimer's Research:** Cuba developed a drug that



may help reverse Alzheimer's effects.

**Maternal-fetal medicine:** 99% of Cuban children are vaccinated, and the country has a lower infant mortality rate than the U.S.

**Nutrition:** While obesity is not an issue in Cuba, malnutrition is an increasing concern due to shortages caused by the U.S. embargo

**Home health:** Doctors make house calls to care for the elderly and new mothers.

**Profit vs. Public Health:** How Medical Education and Healthcare Delivery Differ in Cuba and the U.S.

The paths to becoming a doctor in Cuba and the United States could not be more different. In the U.S., medical students take on crippling debt, often exceeding \$200,000, before ever treating a patient. The pressure to repay loans steers many toward high-paying specialties, leaving primary care and rural communities underserved. The system is structured around financial incentives rather than public need, reinforcing the idea that medicine is a business first, a service second.

Cuba takes the opposite approach. Medical education is fully state-funded, allowing students to focus on patient care instead of profit. Training begins immediately after secondary school, with students placed in community clinics early in their careers. By the time they specialize, they have already served in primary care settings, ensuring that the system produces physicians committed to public health, not private wealth.

A Focus on Prevention, Not Just Treatment

Cuba's prevention-first model stands in stark contrast to the reactive nature of U.S. healthcare. While American medicine often prioritizes treatment over lifestyle interventions, Cuban doctors routinely incorporate nutrition, exercise, and disease prevention strategies into care plans. The country's polyclinic system ensures patients receive consistent, community-based healthcare rather than navigating a fragmented, for-profit system that often leaves them behind.

#### The U.S. Blockade: An Unjust Barrier to Health

The U.S. embargo continues to hinder Cuba's healthcare system by restricting access to essential medicines, medical equipment, and scientific research. Pharmaceutical and shipping companies, fearing U.S. penalties, avoid business with Cuba—leading to severe shortages of everything from aspirin to cancer treatments.

Even medical journals and online resources are blocked due to U.S. restrictions, forcing Cuban researchers to work under constraints that most Western physicians never encounter.

Yet, rather than succumbing to these barriers, Cuba has turned to self-sufficiency, investing in biotechnology, vaccine development, and herbal medicine research to compensate for limited imports. If freed from economic sanctions, Cuba's contributions to global healthcare innovation could expand exponentially.

For decades, Cuba has exported medical expertise worldwide, sending doctors to disaster-stricken and underserved regions. These global medical brigades have provided care to millions, particularly in Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean. Yet, rather than supporting these humanitarian efforts, Washington has sought to dismantle them. In February 2025, the U.S. expanded sanctions on Cuba's international medical program, further restricting its ability to send doctors abroad. The move reflects a deeper failure to understand Cuba's model of solidarity-driven healthcare, a stark contrast to the U.S. system, where medicine is often dictated by profit rather than public service.

It is within this profit-driven framework that Cuba's medical missions are misunderstood, labeled as "forced labor" by those who cannot imagine doctors choosing service over salary. The very idea of healthcare as a human right, rather than a commodity, challenges the U.S. worldview, leading to efforts to discredit and sanction those who practice it differently.

#### What Could Be If the Embargo Were Lifted

Cuba's healthcare system is a model of resilience and innovation, but its full potential remains hindered by decades of U.S. sanctions. If given access to global resources and technology, Cuban researchers could expand medical advancements in infectious diseases, chronic illness treatment, and disaster response. For now, Cuban doctors continue their work—undaunted by external pressures, committed to the principle that healthcare is a right, not a privilege. (CC)

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**SALEEM TRADING CO**

Main Market Bandipora Near Gurudwara. Mobile: 9469322124 - 9596447558 - 01957225628

طاٹا شکتی اپناؤ  
شان سے جو

**TATA SHAKTEE**

**SALEEM TRADING CO**      **MAIN MARKET BANDIPORA NEAR GURUDWARA**      **MOBILE: 9469322124**

شان سے جو

Dealer name:

Location:

Contact No.: