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English Daily



## Woman cannot be forced to undergo virginity test: Chhattisgarh HC

**Raipur, (HS) :** A woman cannot be forced to undergo a virginity test as it violates Article 21 of the Constitution, which guarantees her fundamental right to protection of life and liberty, including the right to dignity, the Chhattisgarh High Court has said. Emphasising that Article 21 is the "heart of fundamental rights", the HC said granting permission for a virginity test would be against the "fundamental rights, cardinal principles of natural justice and secret modesty of a female". Justice Arvind Kumar Verma made the observation in response to a criminal petition filed by a man who demanded his wife's virginity test, alleging she was in an illicit relationship with another man, challenging a family court's order dated October 15, 2024 which rejected the interim application. The wife had alleged her husband was impotent and refused to cohabit. The HC said if the petitioner wants to prove the allegations of impotency are baseless, he can undergo the medical test concerned or produce any other evidence. "He cannot possibly be permitted to subject the wife to undergo her virginity test and fill up the lacuna in his evidence," said the HC order passed on January 9 which was made available recently. The high court noted the petitioner's contention demanding a virginity test of his wife is unconstitutional as it violates Article 21 of the Constitution, which includes the right to dignity of women. "Article 21 of the Constitution of India not only guarantees the right to life and personal liberty but also the right to live with dignity, which is crucial for women," it said. "No woman can be forced to conduct her virginity test. It is a violation of fundamental rights guaranteed under Article 21. It has to be borne in mind that Article 21 is the 'heart of fundamental rights'," the high court stated. Justice Verma further said the virginity test is a violation of the basic right of women to be treated with decency and proper dignity. "The right to personal liberty enshrined under Article 21 is non-derogable and cannot be tinkered with in any manner. The petitioner cannot possibly be permitted to subject the wife to undergo her virginity test and fill up the lacuna in his evidence in this regard," the HC said.

## India, Chile announce start of negotiations for comprehensive trade pact

**New Delhi, (HS) :** India and Chile on Tuesday announced they will begin negotiations for a comprehensive trade pact as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chilean President Gabriel Boric explored new avenues for cooperation in defence, critical minerals and technology. The proposed comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA) will build on a Preferential Trade Agreement that India concluded with Latin America's fifth-largest economy in May 2017. The move is also in line with New Delhi's focus on South America, where India has expanded its diplomatic footprint in recent years.

At a media interaction after his talks with Boric, Modi described Chile as India's "valued friend and partner country" in Latin America and said there is untapped potential in trade and investment. "Today, we have instructed our teams to initiate discussions on a mutually beneficial comprehensive economic partnership agreement," he said, speaking in Hindi.

Boric cited India as a priority



partner in the global economy and said the diversity of Chile's economy and the country's natural resources such as lithium and copper create grounds for economic cooperation at a time when "there are threats at the world level". He added, "We are going to have a CEPA and work together in a collaborative manner to strengthen our mutual benefits, which are going to be fundamental in a world that is evolving and talking about free trade." Two-way trade between India and Chile was worth \$2.6 billion in 2022-23, with India's

exports valued at \$1.16 billion. India currently ranks ninth among Chile's export partners. Modi said the two sides identified several initiatives to strengthen cooperation in the coming decade, including partnerships in critical minerals and establishing resilient supply and value chains. "In agriculture, we will collaborate to enhance food security by leveraging each other's strengths," Modi said, adding that India is ready to share its expertise in digital public infrastructure, renewable energy, railways and space with Chile. "We see Chile

as the gateway to Antarctica. We welcome today's agreement on the letter of intent to strengthen cooperation in this vital region," he said. Boric, the first Chilean head of state to visit India in 16 years, invited Modi to visit Antarctica, where India has maintained two research stations since 1989. He also backed India's bid to become a permanent member of a reformed UN Security Council.

Besides the letter of intent for cooperation in Antarctica, Hindustan Copper and the National Copper Corporation of Chile (Codelco) signed a memorandum of understanding for cooperation. There were also agreements for cooperation in disaster management and cultural exchanges. A joint statement said the two sides will explore "substantial areas for bilateral defence cooperation", including capacity building and defence industrial collaboration. They agreed to share knowledge under an existing formal defence cooperation agreement. "Increasing cooperation in defence is a symbol of our deep

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## Occasion to Celebrate Rich Cultural Heritage: Prez



**Bhubaneswar, (DMC) :** President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday extended heartfelt greetings to the people of Odisha on the occasion of Odisha Day, also known as Utkal Dibasa, praying for the state's peace and prosperity. Taking to X, the President wrote, "Warm greetings to the people on Odisha Day! It is an occasion to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of Odisha and remarkable contribution of its people in various fields. The warm and hospitable people of Odisha have worked hard for the progress of the state while preserving its glorious traditions."

Highlighting Odisha's role in

India's independence movement, she added, "Odisha has played an important role in the freedom struggle and produced several makers of modern India. I pray to Mahaprabhu Jagannath for peace and prosperity of Odisha!" President Murmu hails from Odisha and was born into a Santali family in Uparbeda village. She began her political journey in the state and was honoured with the Nilkanth Award for the Best MLA of the Odisha Legislative Assembly in 2007. Odisha Day is observed annually to commemorate the formation of the state on April 1, 1936. The day is a tribute to

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## Odisha to Roll Out Ayushman Bharat Yojana Within Two Weeks: CM Majhi



**Cuttack, (DMC) :** Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi announced on Tuesday that the state will implement the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana within the next two weeks. Majhi made the announcement during the state's foundation day celebrations at Satyabhamapur in Cuttack district, marking a significant step toward expanding healthcare access for millions. Initially slated for launch on April 1 alongside the Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana, the rollout was deferred, though Majhi did not elaborate on the reasons for the delay.

He emphasized that the scheme would benefit approximately 3.52 crore people across Odisha, offering cashless treatment at 29,000 hospitals nationwide. This extensive network includes facilities both within the state and beyond, ensuring specialized care for those in need. Highlighting the scheme's transformative potential, Majhi noted its focus on economically weaker sections, rural populations, and others unable to afford costly medical services. He took a swipe at the previous Biju Janata Dal (BJD) government, accusing it of rejecting the Ayushman Bharat initiative during its tenure. He pointed out that the earlier Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) covered only 900 hospitals, while the new scheme vastly expands coverage to 29,000 facilities.

## Odisha Day Celebrations: CM Lays Out Roadmap for State's Development

**Bhubaneswar, (DMC) :** Odisha marked its 90th foundation day today with vibrant celebrations of Odia identity, pride, and ambition. For the first time, the state government hosted the state-level Odisha Day program at Satyabhamapur, the birthplace of Utkal Gaurav Madhusudan Das, fondly known as Madhubabu, who spearheaded the movement for Odisha's creation as a separate state in 1936. The historic shift from the capital underscored the day's focus on honoring the state's roots and envisioning a prosperous future.

According to an official press release, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, the event's chief guest, described Satyabhamapur as a "sacred pilgrimage site" for Odias and announced plans to transform it into a hub of Odia nationalism. "We are celebrating Odisha Day on the village soil of Madhubabu, honoring the transformation brought by our people with a focus on Odia identity and self-respect," he said in his address. A key highlight was the foundation stone-laying for the "Integrated Development of Madhusudan Das' Birthplace" project, backed by a Rs. 21 crore investment. The initiative will enhance Madhubabu's birthplace with an interpretation center, a renovated ancestral home (Entudishala), a statue, a guest house, a library, and a light-and-sound system at a nearby water body. "The sacrifices of our great sons are debts we can never repay, but by building a prosperous Odisha, we will fulfill their dreams," Majhi declared. The Chief Minister rallied Odisha's 4.5 crore residents to unite in this transformative journey, asserting that no force could halt their collective resolve. He outlined ambitious



economic goals: a \$500 billion economy by 2036, Odisha's centennial, and a \$1.5 trillion economy by 2047, positioning the state as a growth engine for a developed India. To deepen cultural ties, Majhi launched an "Odia Fortnight" from April 1 to 14, urging citizens to embrace traditional Odia food, attire, language, and literature. "Odia identity flows in every drop of our blood. Our true wealth is our people," he said, emphasizing the state's unique essence. Reflecting on history, Majhi paid tribute to luminaries like Madhusudan Das, Gangadhar Meher, Fakir Mohan Senapati, and others who fought for Odisha's linguistic and cultural awakening. Quoting Madhubabu's stirring call—"Utha re Utha Utkala Santana, Uthibu tu kete dine; Puruba Gaurava Puruba Sahasa, Padiba ki kebe mane!" ("Arise, arise, sons of Utkal, how long will you sleep; will the glory and courage of the past ever stir your mind!")—he celebrated Odisha's legacy as India's first linguistically formed state, a model for the nation. The 1817 Paika Rebellion, led by Buxi Jagabandhu, was also hailed as a pioneering people's uprising against British rule. The government's roadmap for prosperity

rests on three pillars: identity, aspiration, and relentless effort. Alongside cultural preservation evident in projects like the Odia Asmita Bhavan and Paika Rebellion Memorial—progress is underway in education, healthcare, and infrastructure. The National

Education Policy 2020 is driving educational reform, supported by schemes like Shishu Batika and the Chief Minister's Poshan Yojana, which will provide midday meals to students in classes 9 and 10 starting tomorrow. Healthcare initiatives, including Ayushman Bharat and Gopabandhu Jan Arogya Yojana, aim to benefit over 3.5 crore Odias.

Infrastructure plans include 75,000 kilometers of world-class roads under the "Odisha Rajpath Pradhikaran," while women's empowerment through the Subhadra Yojana has already created over 10 lakh "Lakshmi Didis," with a target of 25 lakh by 2027. Youth development is also in focus, with the "Utkarsha Odisha-Make in Odisha 2025" summit securing Rs. 17 lakh crore in investments, promising 13 lakh jobs. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Purvodaya" vision was credited as a vital boost, with Odisha at its core. Earlier today, Majhi offered floral tributes at Madhubabu's statue in Bhubaneswar before inaugurating a photo exhibition in Satyabhamapur. Messages from the President and Vice-President were read.

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## President Murmu Approves Promotion of 30 OAS Officers to IAS Rank



**Bhubaneswar, (DMC) :** President Droupadi Murmu on Tuesday approved the promotion of 30 Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) officers to the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), filling vacancies determined by the Centre for 2023 and 2024. As per the official notification, the promoted officers will serve under probation until further directives. They have been assigned to the Odisha Cadre in accordance with Rule 5(1) of the Indian Administrative Service (Cadre) Rules, 1954.

## ISRO Satellite Images Show Damage after Earthquake Rattled Myanmar

**New Delhi, (HS) :** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has released satellite images of the widespread damages caused by the 7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck Myanmar and rattled neighbouring countries on Friday. Using its most sophisticated Earth imaging satellite, the Cartosat-3, which can help with images at a resolution of less than 50 centimetres, the ISRO has managed to capture photos from a 500 kilometre altitude above the earth. The images show how a huge bridge over the Irrawaddy River collapsed. The damages to the Mandalay University and collapse of the Ananda Pagoda are also highlighted.

According to the space agency, Cartosat-3, which was launched in 2019, is a third



generation agile advanced earth imaging satellite. ISRO rarely releases images from this highly sophisticated satellite. The National Remote Sensing Centre,

a part of ISRO, said the post-disaster Cartosat-3 imagery was acquired on Saturday, over the cities of Mandalay and Sagaing in Myanmar. Additionally,

Cartosat-3 data acquired on March 18, covering the same area, was referred for change analysis and assessment of damage. Significant damage to

infrastructure in Mandalay city was observed. An earthquake of magnitude 7.7 struck Myanmar on Friday, followed by a strong aftershock of magnitude 6.4. The epicentre was located at a depth of 10km near Sagaing-Mandalay border. Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city, registered severe damage. The earthquake also rattled the Myanmar capital Naypyidaw and other regions, resulting in the collapse of infrastructure, roads and residential buildings. The tremors were felt not only in Myanmar but also in neighbouring countries and as far as Chiang Mai and northern parts of Thailand, where some places reported damages. The images showed significant damage to infrastructure in Mandalay city, with major

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