

Dumani Mail

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Delhi draft EV Policy 2026 proposes subsidy up to Rs 30,000 for e-two-wheelers

New Delhi: As the Delhi government rolled out the draft Electric Vehicle Policy 2.0 (2026-2030) on Saturday, it offered a mix of financial benefits, tax waivers and phased restrictions aimed at accelerating the shift to cleaner mobility in the national capital. Issued by the Transport Department's EV Cell, the draft has been opened for public consultation for 30 days and is aimed at tackling Delhi's persistent air pollution while boosting

electric vehicle (EV) adoption. The draft lays out strict timelines for transitioning to electric mobility. The government has proposed a 100 per cent exemption on road tax and registration fees for electric vehicles until March 31, 2030. While electric cars priced up to Rs 30 lakh will enjoy full waivers, strong hybrid vehicles will get a 50 per cent concession, and EVs priced above Rs 30 lakh will not be eligible for tax benefits.

Registration of new petrol-powered two-wheelers, which account for nearly 67 per cent of Delhi's vehicle population, will be banned from April 1, 2028. It also stated that electric three-wheelers will become mandatory from January 1, 2027, while aggregators and commercial operators will not be allowed to add new petrol or diesel two-wheelers and light goods vehicles (up to 3.5 tonnes) to their fleets from January 1, 2026. In terms of incentives,



the policy proposes time-bound benefits to encourage early adoption, with support reducing over three

years. For electric two-wheelers priced up to Rs 2.25 lakh, buyers can avail incentives of Rs 10,000 per kWh (capped at Rs 30,000) in the first year, declining to Rs 6,600 per kWh (up to Rs 20,000) in the second year and Rs 3,300 per kWh (up to Rs 10,000) in the third year. Electric three-wheelers will receive incentives of Rs 50,000 in the first year, Rs 40,000 in the second year and Rs 30,000 in the third year.

For electric light commercial vehicles (N1 category), incentives start at Rs 1 lakh in the first year, reducing to Rs 75,000 in the second and Rs 50,000 in the third year. For electric cars, buyers of vehicles priced up to Rs 30 lakh (ex-showroom) will be eligible for a scrappage-linked incentive if they scrap older BS-IV or earlier vehicles registered in Delhi within six months. The benefit will be available to the first one lakh applicants. Similar

incentives will apply to buyers of electric N1 goods vehicles replacing older polluting vehicles. Additionally, scrappage incentives of Rs 10,000 for two-wheelers, Rs 25,000 for three-wheelers and Rs 50,000 for N1 goods vehicles have been proposed for replacing older BS-IV or earlier vehicles. According to officials, incentives will be disbursed through direct bank transfer upon online claims, in line with guidelines under the PM E-DRIVE scheme.

India invested in Lebanon's peace, security: MEA, says "protection of civilians foremost priority" amid continued strikes by Israel

New Delhi: India on Friday expressed deep concern over the rising number of civilian casualties in Lebanon amid continued strikes by Israel despite the two-week ceasefire imposed to halt the month-long conflict in West Asia, reiterating that the protection of civilians remains its foremost priority. Addressing an Inter-Ministerial Briefing on recent developments in West Asia in New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that the current situation is "very disturbing", particularly given India's longstanding commitment to peace and stability in the region. He further said that there are about 1000 Indian nationals living in Lebanon. "We are deeply concerned by reports of a

large number of civilian casualties that have been reported in Lebanon. As a troop-contributing country to United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)—which is invested in Lebanon's peace and security—the trajectory of events is very disturbing," Jaiswal said. He underscored that India has consistently emphasised the importance of safeguarding civilian lives during conflicts and called for adherence to international norms. "India has always emphasised the protection of civilians as the foremost priority. Observing international law and respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states is essential," he added. The MEA spokesperson also noted that the Indian government



is closely monitoring the situation and remains engaged with its nationals in Lebanon. According to official estimates, around 1,000 Indian citizens are currently residing in the country. "Our Embassy in Lebanon remains in close touch with the Indian community regarding their safety and security, and we have around 1,000 Indian nationals in Lebanon," Jaiswal said.

The developments come as the fragile ceasefire agreement between the United States and Iran hangs in the balance, with Tehran stating that the truce also includes the halt to Israeli military operations in Lebanon. However, both Washington and Israel have maintained that the ceasefire does not extend to Hezbollah targets, a disagreement that has further complicated diplomatic efforts and

heightened the risk of the truce collapsing. Lebanon's Prime Minister Nawaf Salam is set to travel to the US capital of Washington DC, in the coming days, following Israel's request for direct negotiations with Lebanon, a Lebanese government source told CNN on Friday. The development comes amid a fragile two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran, which continues to hold for now but faces mounting strain. A key point of contention remains whether ongoing hostilities in Lebanon fall under the scope of the truce. According to CNN, despite the ceasefire, Israel has continued its strikes targeting Hezbollah positions in Lebanon. Lebanese authorities

reported that a major wave of attacks earlier this week resulted in at least 300 deaths, raising concerns over further escalation in the region. Earlier, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asserted that there is "no ceasefire in Lebanon" and vowed to continue military operations with "full force" against Hezbollah. "I wish to inform you: There is no ceasefire in Lebanon. We are continuing to strike Hezbollah with full force, and we will not stop until we restore your security," he said. Netanyahu further stated that he has instructed the Cabinet to open direct negotiations with the Lebanese government to achieve "disarmament of Hezbollah" and "historic peace agreement".

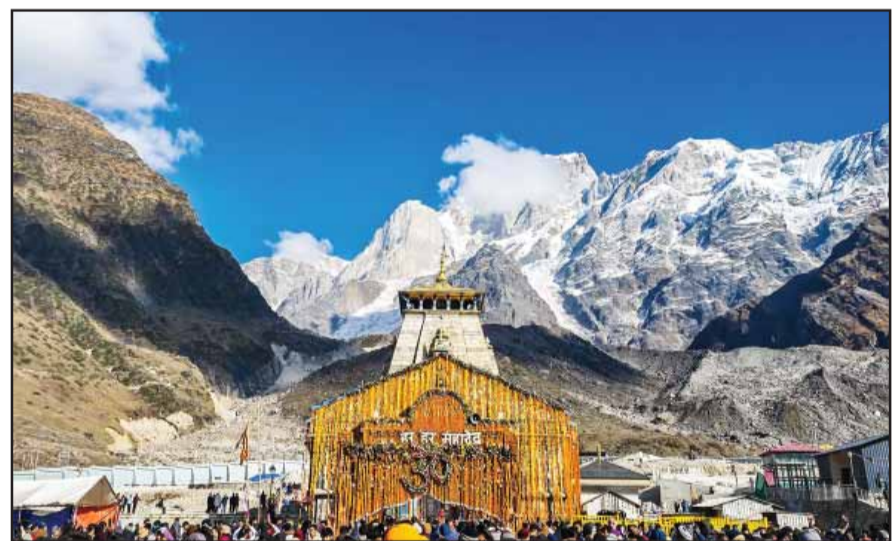
Delhi schools to ensure 10 per cent electrification of bus fleets within 2 years: Draft EV policy



New Delhi: Delhi schools must ensure that at least 10 per cent of their bus fleets transition to electric within two years, according to the government's draft EV policy. The new policy looks to stipulate a clear timeline for adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) across institutions. As per the

draft, this target will increase to 20 per cent by completion of the third year of notification of the policy, and to 30 per cent by March 31, 2030. The mandate will apply to the entire school bus fleet, including leased, owned, or hired vehicles, ensuring the transition covers all types of operations

Bookings for helicopter services for Shri Kedarnath Yatra to start today



New Delhi: Booking for helicopter services for the Shri Kedarnath Dham pilgrimage will begin on Saturday evening, at 6 P.M. According to officials, the administration and relevant agencies have completed all preparations to ensure a smooth and convenient journey for devotees. In the initial phase, bookings for helicopter tickets will be available for the travel period from April 22 to June 23. These tickets can be booked exclusively through the official IRCTC website. Online booking is mandatory to ensure transparency and prevent fraud. Meanwhile, earlier on April 2, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama was paid a courtesy visit by the "Rawal" (head priest) of Shri Kedarnath Dham, Shri Shri Shri 1008 Bhimashankar Ling, to

discuss the preparations for the Char Dham Yatra. Welcoming the revered shrine's head priest, Chief Minister Dhama expressed gratitude for the visit and shared detailed updates on the ongoing reconstruction and development works at Shri Kedarnath Dham. He noted that the state government has been consistently working to enhance infrastructure, safety measures, and facilities for pilgrims visiting the revered shrine. Chief Minister Dhama highlighted that special emphasis is being placed on ensuring a smooth and well-organised Char Dham Yatra season this year. He stated that authorities are focussing on crowd management, improved connectivity, medical facilities, and disaster preparedness, taking into account the

increasing influx of devotees each year. The Chief Minister also underlined that lessons learned from previous pilgrimage seasons are being incorporated into current planning, with coordination among various departments to ensure seamless arrangements. He added that the state government is committed to providing a safe, comfortable, and spiritually fulfilling experience for all pilgrims. During the discussion, both sides deliberated on key aspects related to pilgrimage management at Shri Kedarnath Dham, including logistics, accommodation, sanitation, and emergency response systems. The growing number of devotees was also taken into account while reviewing preparedness for the upcoming season.

Delhi Metro conducting week-long awareness campaign on safety of lifts, escalators

New Delhi: The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation is organising a week-long awareness campaign on safety in using Lifts and Escalators across the Delhi Metro network. The Delhi Metro, at present, is operating and maintaining 965 Lifts, 1297 escalators, and 42 Travelators in its total network, a press release said. The Kashmere Gate Metro station holds the distinction of having the highest number of escalators anywhere in the world in a

In addition, Nukkad Nataks (street plays) are also being organised at select stations with high ridership to make the passengers aware of the importance of safety. Leaflets are also being distributed to passengers with important messages on the safe use of these facilities. Metro station with a record 53 escalators. This activity, which is being done as a part of the Safety Awareness Week for Lifts and Escalators, is a one-of-a-kind campaign as the Delhi Metro is the only Metro system in India organising such an awareness drive for the benefit of the

passengers. As a part of the drive, in progress from April 7 to 13, scout and guide volunteers, along with DMRC staff, are being deployed near lifts and escalators at some of the stations with placards to make the passengers aware of the safe use of these facilities. In addition,

attention is being given to accessibility, ensuring that elderly passengers and those with disabilities receive tailored guidance and support. DMRC accords very high priority to the proper functioning of its lifts, escalators and travelators across the network. However, it has been noticed that sometimes accidents happen because of the lack of adequate care and precautions by the passengers. Therefore, this week-long activity has been taken up this year.

Delhi HC grants bail to accused in Rajmandir Hypermarket firing for extortion

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has granted bail to one Pravesh Rathee, who is accused in the Rajmandir Hyper Market firing for the extortion case of November 2024. He is accused in a case against members of the Nandu Gang. It is alleged that 10 rounds were fired at the gate by two co-accused. It is alleged that a protection money of Rs 5 crore was demanded in the name of Kapil Sangwan alias Nandu Gang from the owner of the shop. An FIR was lodged at Paschim Vihar West Police Station on November 6, 2024.

Justice Prateek Jalan on Friday granted bail to Pravesh Rathee alias Pulkit. He has been granted bail subject to furnishing a bail bond of Rs 50,000 and one surety in the like amount, including other conditions. The court noted that Pravesh Rathee has been in custody since November 29, 2024. "Having regard to the above factors, I am of the view that his continued incarceration pending trial is not appropriate," Justice Jalan said in the order of April 10. The court also noted that the Accused was identified on the basis of a

"Having regard to the above factors, I am of the view that his continued incarceration pending trial is not appropriate," Justice Jalan said in the order of April 10. CCTV camera installed five kilometres away from the place of the incident. "The CCTV footage upon which the prosecution relies merely shows the applicant and two co-accused riding a motorcycle. The Investigating officer confirmed that the said CCTV footage was

recorded at a location approximately five kilometres from the place of the incident," Justice Jalan observed. On November 3, 2024, the owners of Rajmandir Hypermarket, namely Suresh Mittal and Pradeep Mittal, lodged a complaint stating that they had received an extortion call on their mobile phones and WhatsApp demanded a sum of Rs 5 crores as protection money and threatened attacks on their residence and workplace. An FIR was lodged on their complaint. The present FIR was registered on November 6,

2024, at the instance of Mohd. Sirtaz, Manager of Rajmandir Hypermarket. He stated that on November 6, 2024, at about 2:15 pm, three people came to the store on a black motorcycle and fired several gunshots at the store while he was sitting at the counter. When he came out, he saw that unknown persons had fired at the glass door of the store. Two people committed the offence by firing at the store, while one of them remained with the motorcycle on the other side of the road. The police recovered ten empty cartridges and two fired leads from the spot.

Hard work and discipline key to success, MLA, Prasanta Jagdev

Khordha-9/4- The 36th annual prize distribution ceremony of Binapani Sisu Bidya Mandir, was held at Gandhi Padia, Khordha .The meeting was chaired by the senior member of school management committee, Biranchi Kumar Sahu.MLA, and chairman khordha district planning committee Prasanta Kumar Jagdev was graced the occasion as the chief guest.

Chandra Sundaray in his speech, said that,school is an important medium for building good character in students. This annual festival is for everyone a happy day.This is a platform to showcase our cultural talent. They said that schools do not only teach lessons but also teach discipline, truth and how to be a good human being.

to be the chief guest in the annual function of this school.I am delighted to see the presentation, dance, singing and talent of the children on the stage.Today is a day to encourage the self-confidence and creativity of the children. My dear students, you are the future of the country. Along with studying, you also move forward in sports, art and culture. Hard work and discipline are the keys to success.

IFFCO Launches Nationwide Nano Fertilizer Awareness Mega Campaign : Dileep Sanghani

New Delhi/Paradip - Nationwide Nano Fertilizer Mega Awareness Campaign was launched by Mr. Dileep Sanghani, Chairman, IFFCO at New Delhi on Saturday. Mr. Sanghani flagged off five Nano promotion vans from Delhi, marking the historic beginning of the campaign.

The campaign will be conducted extensively across 560 districts and 3,477 tehsils in 19 states and union territories, said Mr. Dileep Sanghani. Nano NPK Liquid (8-8-10) and Nano NPK Granular (20-10-10) have been formally included in India's Fertilizer Control Order (FCO). The campaign will adopt a multi-media approach, including print, television, radio, outdoor, and digital platforms.

IFFCO, India's largest fertilizer cooperative, today officially launched the Nano Fertilizer Awareness Mega Campaign. Addressing a press conference, Chairman Mr. Dileep Sanghani said that this is a comprehensive national campaign aimed at promoting the use of Nano fertilizers among Indian

farmers. The campaign has been initiated with the inspiration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah, in alignment with national missions such as "Atmanirbhar Bharat" and "Sahkar Se Samridhhi."

The inclusion of Nano NPK Liquid (8-8-10) and Nano NPK Granular (20-10-10) in the Fertilizer Control Order (FCO) is a significant milestone in India's agricultural innovation journey. IFFCO's innovation hub at IFFCO-Nanoventions in Coimbatore and the upcoming nano fertilizer plant in Brazil, expected to be operational by June 2026, highlight India's growing global strength in nano technology in agriculture.

Mr. Sanghani stated that India is at a historic point where tradition and technology are coming together to reshape agriculture. The campaign reflects the vision of "Sahkar Se Samridhhi" and supports the goal of self-reliant agriculture.

He described the nano fertilizer



revolution as a transformative moment for Indian agriculture.

The campaign has four key objectives like Promotion of Nano Urea Plus, Nano DAP, Nano NPK, Nano Zinc, and Nano Copper. Training farmers in proper usage through foliar spray, Reducing dependence on conventional fertilizers, Ensuring last-mile reach through cooperative networks.

He emphasized that awareness must be driven at the grassroots level through PACS and field demonstrations so that farmers can see results and build trust. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Sanghani called for making the campaign a mass movement. He said

nano fertilizers are not just products but tools to protect soil, improve the environment, and increase farmers' income.

He urged everyone to adopt the vision of lower cost, higher productivity, and a healthier environment, stating that nano fertilizers in every field represent the future of a self-reliant India.

IFFCO has recorded sales of over 21.8 million bottles of Nano Urea Plus Liquid and 6.426 million bottles of Nano DAP Liquid. Nano Zinc and Nano Copper have also achieved strong first-year sales of 5.7 million and 0.2 million bottles respectively.

Celebration of "Odia Pakhya" Helps Strengthen Odia Identity



Puri: On the occasion of the eleventh day of the "Odia Pakhya" celebrations, an Amrutapidhi Literary (Saraswat Samaroha) was inaugurated at the Youth Hostel premises. The event was jointly organized by the District Administration (District Culture Council), Puri, and the Shree Gundicha Spiritual Trust, Odisha, Puri.

The chief guest, Vice-Chancellor of Odia University, Professor Satyanarayan Acharya, stated that the celebration of Odia Pakhya is a remarkable initiative. He said it will help the younger generation understand and take pride in our rich language, literature, and culture. He added that this celebration can serve as an effective guide in promoting Odia identity and also invited participants to Odia University for literary discussions.

Among the distinguished guests, Additional District Magistrate (Administration) Sarat Chandra Behera mentioned that Odia Pakhya is being observed from April 1 to April 14. In Puri district, daily programs are being conducted as per government guidelines. He noted that the theme of the eleventh day, the Amrutapidhi Literary event, is aimed at encouraging youth and nurturing their talents. He described it as a commendable initiative that will promote new opportunities.

District Culture Officer Hemant Behera presided over the event. Other honored guests included writer Laxmidhar Jena, advocate Binay Nrusingha Mahapatra, storyteller Badri Mishra, Trust Secretary Laxmi Narayan Pattnaik, and Deputy Director of District Information & Public Relations Department Santosh Kumar Sethi, among others.

The program was coordinated by Sarbani Das. Participants in the discussion session included Professor Dr. Kartik Kumar Das, Ms. Krishna Mahapatra, Bijay Kumar Panda, Bipin Bihari Dalai, Pathani Jena, Jogeshwar Praharaj, Subhashree Mahapatra, Biswabandhu Das, Sanyasi Nayak, Ananta Pradhan, Minati Mishra, Prabhasini Mishra, Manaswini Behera, Om Prasad Mohanty, Ramesh Behera, Bichitra Ranjan Mahapatra, Santoshini Behera, and others. On this occasion, noted litterateur Laxmidhar Jena was felicitated by the guests. The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by Sandeep Karmakar.

Villagers Protest Against Proposed Ethanol Plant, Submit Memorandum to Collector.

Sambalpur-08/04(DMS) Residents of Deogaon village in Sambalpur district staged a protest opposing the proposed ethanol plant near the banks of the Mahanadi River. The villagers held a demonstration in front of the District Collector's office and submitted a memorandum demanding immediate cancellation of the project.

The protesters alleged that the plant is planned just 40 meters away from a reserved forest area and along the riverbank, which they described as highly inappropriate. They also pointed out that the area serves as an elephant corridor, raising serious concerns about the impact on wildlife, environment, and local livelihoods.

Villagers further stated that a case regarding the issue has already been filed in court, but the verdict is still pending. They warned that setting up the ethanol plant in such an ecologically sensitive zone could cause long-term environmental damage.

Earlier, on April 6, under the leadership of Sudhir Pradhan, locals had protested against the ongoing work at the site. During the protest, they alleged that some workers at the site misbehaved with women and tribal residents

The protesters alleged that the plant is planned just 40 meters away from a reserved forest area and along the riverbank, which they described as highly inappropriate. They also pointed out that the area serves as an elephant corridor, raising serious concerns about the impact on wildlife, environment, and local livelihoods.

and even assaulted them.

The protest saw participation from hundreds of villagers, along with local leaders including Asaf Ali Khan, former Deogaon Sarpanch Manabodh Bhoi, Jharu Kumbhar, Pallabi Danta, Asali Seth, and Pratap Kumar Deep. The memorandum was submitted to Additional District Magistrate Ashok Kumar Bhoi, addressed to the District Collector, demanding immediate steps to stop the establishment of the ethanol plant and resolve the issue.

Samaleswari Bardhan Memorial Lecture Held

Balasure, April 10 (Krushna Kumar Mohanty): Discovering the 'self' within is the essence of identity. If the younger generation abandons selfishness and the culture of sycophancy and learns to value the self, it can lead to national progress and the building of a healthy society. This was stated by retired Professor Baishnab Charan Samal while delivering the keynote address as chief guest at the 5th Samaleswari Bardhan Memorial Lecture-2026 and Saraswat function, held on Thursday at the Golden Jubilee Hall of Kuntala Kumari Sabat Women's College.

At the outset, the guests paid floral tributes to the statue of Kuntala Kumari Sabat on the college premises and to the photograph of Samaleswari Bardhan at her ancestral residence. Principal Dr. Jhansi Jena presided over the meeting and delivered the welcome address.

Eminent educationist and

former Principal of KKS Women's College, Professor Samaleswari Bardhan, was remembered for her contributions, and gratitude was expressed to her family for donating ancestral land and a house for the college hostel. Dr. Sanjeebita Das invited the guests to the stage, while Dr. Sasmitha Sethi and the students recited Vedic chants. IQAC Coordinator Dr. Narayan Surajit Behera introduced the chief guest.

In his lecture on "Odia Identity and the Responsibility of the Next Generation," Prof. Samal emphasized that recognizing one's own self is the foundation of identity. He noted that the term "Asmita" was used by poet Radhanath Ray in his poetic work Chilika. He expressed concern that many Odias today are unaware of their own identity and glorious history, making the preservation of identity a serious challenge. Citing Madhubabu, he urged the younger



generation to give up selfishness and sycophancy and rediscover a sense of self that embraces society and the nation.

On this occasion, meritorious students from higher secondary and undergraduate levels, along

with toppers from various departments, were awarded cash prizes and certificates. Dr. Sabita Das and Lecturer Mahasweta Pandey conducted the award distribution ceremony. Former Principal Rashmirekha Pati was

also present. The vote of thanks was delivered by faculty member Rajkishore Pandit.

To mark "Odia Pakhya," a book fair was also organized by "Bahighar" in front of the college library.

Water Crisis in Saipriya Nagar: Supply Disrupted for 2 Days, Residents Suffer Amid Summer Heat

Rayagada: Residents of Saipriya Nagar in Rayagada town are facing severe hardship as water supply by the Public Health Department (PHD) has remained disrupted for the past two days. The situation has worsened due to the intense summer heat, making daily life extremely difficult.

According to locals, even minor issues like small leakages are not being addressed promptly by the department. As a result, water supply gets halted for days,

causing unnecessary inconvenience to the public.

Residents have also alleged that repeated calls to the concerned departmental engineers have gone unanswered, highlighting a serious lack of responsibility and responsiveness from the authorities.

The ongoing water shortage has badly affected household activities, drinking water availability, and sanitation. Children, elderly people, and

women are the worst affected in this situation.

Local residents have urged the district administration to take immediate action and restore regular water supply in the area. They have warned that if the issue is not resolved, they may be forced to resort to protests.

The incident raises serious concerns over the efficiency and accountability of the PHD in ensuring essential services during critical times.



Recruitment of 45 thousand new teachers in the state is underway - CM

Keonjhar: Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi arrived in Keonjhar district for a four-day visit and joined various programs today. On the first day the Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi attended the centenary celebrations of Chandrasekhar Government High School. Addressing the gathering the CM said the government has implemented many schemes and programs to bring about a major change in the education sector. In the last one and a half years, about 20,000 teachers have been appointed, while the process of appointing another 45,000 new teachers is underway in the coming days. Similarly, 13,000 schematic teachers have been regularized, he further said. The CM in his address, said that in the financial year 2026-27, a provision of more than Rs. 31,997 crore has been made for the School and Mass Education Department, which is 10.3 percent of the total budget. Steps have been taken to establish one Adarsh Primary School in each panchayat of the state and work has started in 2,200 panchayats during the first



phase. On this occasion, the Chief Minister announced a grant of Rs. 3 crore for the development of infrastructure of the centenary school, while an announcement was made regarding the provision of Rs. 10 crore rupees and 7 acres of land to be included in the Godabarish Mishra Adarsh Primary School Scheme. Similarly, he said that under the PM Shri Yojana, 800 schools in the state are being converted into centers of excellence and emphasis is being placed on developing basic literacy and numeracy skills of students through the Skilled Odisha Mission. On the first day he landed in a helicopter at Bodapalasa village

in Sadar block and first proceeded by road to inaugurate the 100-meter-long bridge built over the Ardei river. Later, the CM went to Lanagalkanti village under Ghatagaon block where he inaugurated an underpass on the Panikoili-Rimuli section of National Highway 20. Among those present were District Planning Commission Chairman and Telkoi MLA Dr. Fakir Mohan Nayak, Patna MLA Akhil Chandra Nayak, Keonjhar District Special Development Council Chairperson Mamita Nayak, and Keonjhar Collector Vishal Singh. (EOM)

Odia Pakhya celebrate in PN Autonomous College

Khordha : Odia pakhya was celebrated in Pranannath Autonomous College, Khordha. On this occasion, a seminar was organized on the "Paika Rebellion" the first freedom struggle of Odisha. Principal of the college, Dr. Purnima Nayak presided over the seminar and in her speech, she spoke about many aspects of the paika rebellion and said that she herself comes from a freedom fighter family. The chief guest, former Vice-chancellor of North Odisha, University ,Maj. Khirod Prasad Mohanty, joined the event and narrated the heroic story of Bakshi Jagabandhu and the stories of Jayee Rajguru, Pindiki Bahubalendra, Surendra Sai. The keynote speaker of the event columnist and editor of Margdarshi, Uma Shankar Prasad, said that among the few Odias who fought with the Britishers to maintain the last independence of Odisha, Bakshi Jagabandhu Vyidyadhar Bhramarabar Ray was one of them. His sacrifice, bravery and courage in the Indian freedom struggle are unparalleled. Similarly, Tapang Dalabehera, Madhab Chandra Rautraya's self-sacrifice for a helpless fisherman has given him a place in the history of the country. He was such an incarnation of compassion that the British government bowed down to him for his life of sacrifice and everyone took him to his village Tapang. Another distinguished speaker, senior Prof. of physics, Subodh Kumar Jagdev narrated the glorious story of Raghu Dibakar along with many other heroic stories. At the beginning, the Head of the Odia Department, Ms. Manini Jena gave an introductory speech on the blood-stained chapter of the revolution. Asima Satapathy, Head of the History Department, gave a welcome speech and brief introductions. Senior Administrative Officer Pramod Kumar Samal, Dr. Pradipta Kumar Mahapatra, Dr. Truptirekha Panda, Head of Biology Dept. Dr. Anil Kumar Ray, T. Akshay Kumar, Ashish Kumar Nayak, NCC Officer and Lecture of Odia Department Bhagban Khilar, Priyadarshini Nayak, Kalpana Malik and all the students of History and Odia Department were present in this seminar. Ms. Manini Jena presided over the seminar while Prof. Subodh Kumar Jagdev proposed the vote of thanks.

RDE Bhubaneswar Directs Colleges to Form Internal Complaints Committees Within 7 Days

Bhubaneswar, 11 April (H.S.): The Regional Directorate of Education (RDE), Bhubaneswar, has issued a directive to all government, aided, unaided, and professional colleges under its jurisdiction to constitute Internal Complaints Committees (ICC) and submit compliance reports within a stipulated timeframe.

In an official letter issued by Regional Director of Education Dr. Saroj Laxmi Singh, institutions have been instructed to form ICCs in accordance with government guidelines to address complaints and grievances of students and staff.

The directive applies to all higher educational institutions, including those under the 488 and 662 categories. Colleges that have not yet formed their ICCs are required to constitute the committees and submit a copy of the report to the RDE office either by hand or via post within seven



days of the issuance of the letter.

Institutions that have already established ICCs have also been asked to submit relevant documentation within the same timeframe.

The RDE has cautioned that failure to comply with the directive may result in restrictions on admissions for the 2026-27 academic session or other appropriate action as deemed necessary.

Describing the matter as urgent, the Regional Director has urged all institutions to act promptly and ensure compliance within the stipulated deadline.

Youth with Suspected Pakistan Links Picked Up by Delhi Police

Bhubaneswar, 11 April (H.S.): In a major and sensational development, a youth from Bhubaneswar has been detained by a Special Branch team of the Delhi Police over alleged links with Pakistan and suspected involvement in anti-India activities.

The accused, identified as Imam, was picked up from the Capital Police Station area in Bhubaneswar following a coordinated operation. According to sources, Delhi Police had been monitoring his activities for some time before tracing his location.

Preliminary investigations indicate that the youth was allegedly spreading anti-India propaganda through various social media platforms. He is also suspected of having been in contact with extremist elements, raising serious concerns among security agencies.

Acting on specific intelligence inputs, a special team from Delhi arrived in Bhubaneswar, conducted the operation, and detained him for further questioning. He has since been taken to Delhi, where agencies are

expected to interrogate him in detail to determine the extent of his alleged network and activities.

The incident has raised alarm over the increasing misuse of digital platforms for anti-national



activities and the possibility of cross-border connections. Security agencies are now investigating whether more individuals are linked to the case.

In a press statement, the Commissionerate Police said the probe began about a week ago when Delhi Police detained a group of young individuals in Delhi for suspicious activities linked to social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Signal. During interrogation and analysis of their online presence, investigators uncovered links extending to Odisha.

Spread across 30 acres in two phases, the BonV Drone Park involves a planned investment of ₹300 crore and is expected to generate 1000+ direct employment opportunities across

“Service is the Ultimate Goal”: DMET Director Lauds Centurion University’s Unified Health Model

Bhubaneswar – Aligning with the global mandate of “Together For Health, Stand with Science,” Centurion University celebrated World Health Day 2026 by transforming its campus into a live demonstration of a unified, multidisciplinary healthcare ecosystem.

The event moved beyond traditional celebrations, featuring a comprehensive health camp that successfully treated 450 patients. The initiative stood as a testament to the university’s commitment to “Integrated Care,” bringing together specialists from Allopathy, Ayurveda, Naturopathy, Nursing, Physiotherapy, and Allied Health Sciences under a single roof.

Bridging the Gap Between Science and Service

The program was inaugurated by Prof. (Dr.) Durga Madhab Satpathy, Director of Medical Education & Training (DMET), Government of Odisha. In a

powerful keynote address, Dr. Satpathy lauded universities’ unique inter-sectoral coordination.

“A degree or a certificate is not the end,” Dr. Satpathy remarked. “Practice, continuous upgradation, and serving the health needs of communities—that is our ultimate objective. Centurion University’s ability to translate scientific knowledge into meaningful grassroots service is a benchmark for the future.”

A Collaborative Medical Ecosystem

The health camp showcased a seamless patient-flow model, utilizing diverse departments to provide holistic care:

- Diagnostics: High-end Radiology and Diagnostic services provided immediate data for clinical decisions.

- Vision & Special Care: The Optometry department offered specialized screenings.

- Holistic Recovery: The



Ayurveda and Physiotherapy departments provided rehabilitative consultations, proving the efficacy of combining traditional and modern medical systems.

Distinguished Voices in Public Health

The event featured a galaxy of experts, including Mr. B. K.

Subudh Singh (CEO, Utkal Healthcare), Dr. Rudra Das (State RMNCHA Consultant, NHM), and Dr. Subhashree Sethi (Utkal Hospital). Discussions focused on the importance of “Integrated Medicine” in solving India’s complex public health challenges.

Centurion Universities Prof. (Dr.) Ajay Kumar Nayak, Pro-

Vice Chancellor, and Prof. Sunil Kumar Jha, Director of the School of Allied and Healthcare Sciences, also addressed the gathering, outlining the university’s roadmap for advanced healthcare education.

Honoring Community Impact
The celebration also served as a platform to recognize selfless service. Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to students and faculty of the Optometry department for their tireless work in peripheral vision care camps in Rourkela under the RSP CSR project. The day concluded with a student-led short play highlighting the daily challenges and the essential role of empathy in the medical profession.

By integrating diverse medical disciplines with a mission of community service, Centurion University has set a new standard for healthcare delivery and education in the region.

BonV Aero Launches Odisha’s First Drone Park in Khordha as Odisha CM Attends Groundbreaking & Inauguration Ceremony

Bhubaneswar: In a significant boost to Odisha’s emerging aerospace and defence manufacturing ecosystem, BonV Aero today marked a landmark milestone with the inauguration of its BonV Drone Park in Khordha. The ceremony was graced by the Hon’ble Chief Minister of Odisha, Shri Mohan Charan Majhi, alongside Shri Sampad Chandra Swain, Minister of State for Industries, Skill Development & Technical Education; Smt. Aparajita Sarangi, Member of Parliament, Bhubaneswar; and Shri Prasant Kumar Jagadev, Member of Legislative Assembly, Khordha. The event was also attended by many senior representatives of the Government of Odisha and company officials.

Spread across 30 acres in two phases, the BonV Drone Park involves a planned investment of ₹300 crore and is expected to generate 1000+ direct employment opportunities across

advanced manufacturing, R&D, pilot training, and operations. The facility marks BonV’s transition from R&D-led innovation to scalable UAV manufacturing, aligning with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

The BonV Drone Park will encompass an advanced drone assembly line with the capacity to manufacture thousands of drones to meet India’s rising UAV demand and will target the expanding global market. It will also include an advanced UAV assembly lines, Centres of Excellence (CoE), a dedicated skilling centre. It will also support ecosystem development through partnerships with MSMEs, component manufacturers, and academic institutions.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Satyabrata Satapathy, Co-Founder & CEO, BonV Aero, highlighted the company’s commitment to Odisha, stating that the initiative goes beyond manufacturing and focuses on

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The event also witnessed the showcasing of BonV Aero’s flagship aerial platforms, demonstrating cutting-edge indigenous heavy-lift UAV capabilities. Designed for high payload capacity, extended endurance, and all-terrain operability, these platforms

feature modular architecture and advanced navigation systems, GNSS denied, catering to defence, logistics and critical infrastructure sectors.

BonV Aero lauded the progressive industrial policies of the Government of Odisha, particularly the Aerospace & Defence Manufacturing Policy 4.0 and initiatives such as the B-MAAN Scheme, which are fostering innovation and investment in future-ready technologies. The company emphasized that Odisha is rapidly emerging as a preferred destination for deep-tech

industries, supported by strong policy frameworks and infrastructure.

Looking ahead, BonV Aero reaffirmed its long-term vision to transform Odisha into a global hub for UAV innovation and manufacturing. In partnership with key stakeholders, the company is developing a state-of-the-art UAV test and validation facility in Rangelunda — a dedicated facility that will accelerate drone testing, certification, and advanced trials while attracting UAV companies from across the country. Paired with targeted skilling initiatives, BonV aims to build a future-ready drone workforce, cementing Odisha’s position as a self-sustaining center of UAV excellence. The ceremony marks a new chapter in Odisha’s industrial growth story, reinforcing its ambition to become a leading player in India’s aerospace and defence sector.

Mahanadi Water Dispute: Odisha, Chhattisgarh CMs to Hold Talks as Tribunal Tenure Extended

Bhubaneswar, 11 April (H.S.): The long-pending Mahanadi river water dispute is poised for fresh developments, with the Chief Ministers of Odisha and Chhattisgarh set to hold discussions under the mediation of the Central Government.

The update was shared on Saturday by Odisha Advocate General Pitambar Acharya, who also confirmed that the tenure of the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal has been extended by one year. The tribunal will now continue its proceedings until January 13, 2027.

Acharya further informed that



the next hearing in the matter is scheduled for April 20. He noted that a key development emerged during the latest proceedings, with the tribunal expressing satisfaction over the ongoing

dialogue between the two states aimed at reaching an amicable resolution.

In the coming days, both Chief Ministers are expected to engage in formal talks facilitated by the

Centre. The tribunal has also directed that field inspection reports be included as part of the ongoing proceedings.

“Technical teams from both states have already held discussions regarding the total water yield of the Mahanadi river. Considering the dependability of the river waters for both Odisha and Chhattisgarh, detailed data on their respective water requirements have been presented. The tribunal has expressed satisfaction with these discussions, which are focused on achieving a mutually agreeable settlement,” Acharya said.

BJD Urges President Murmu’s Intervention in Sijimali Row, Alleges Atrocities Against Tribals

Bhubaneswar, 11 April (H.S.): The Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) on Monday urged the intervention of President Droupadi Murmu in connection with the alleged police action against tribal communities in the Sijimali area of Rayagada district, while strongly condemning what it termed as “atrocities” by the district administration.

Addressing a press conference at Shankha Bhavan in Bhubaneswar, senior BJD leaders accused the state government of pursuing anti-tribal policies, alleging that the incident reflects a broader pattern of disregard for tribal rights. Rayagada district BJD president Jagannath Saraka said a party delegation visited the affected

region and interacted with local residents following reports of alleged excesses. According to him, villagers claimed they were protesting against a road being constructed by a mining company when administrative authorities allegedly used force to disperse them. Saraka described the alleged actions as condemnable, asserting that industrial development should not come at the cost of tribal rights and interests. He also emphasized the need for due process, including proper Gram Sabha consultations and statutory approvals to safeguard constitutional protections for tribal communities. Koraput district BJD president Jhinna Hikka alleged that the manner in which police and

administrative officials acted was unacceptable in a civilised society. He claimed that villagers were holding peaceful protests over alleged violations of the PESA Act and forest laws in connection with mining-related activities in the region. He further alleged that electricity supply was cut off during the night before a crackdown was carried out by the administration while villagers were asleep. He described the incident as reflective of an anti-tribal approach by the state government. Noting that both the Chief Minister of Odisha and the President of India belong to tribal communities, Hikka appealed to President Murmu to intervene and ensure justice for the affected people.

National Seminar on Developed India Based on Rural Development

Bhubaneswar/Anugul: A national seminar on developed India based on rural development and sustainable development has been organized to fulfill the goal of Viksit Bharat 2047 at Nilakantheshwar degree Mahavidyalaya, south Balanda, Talcher. This seminar was inaugurated by the Honourable Member of Parliament, Dhenkanal Rudra Narayana Pani. He guided students and researchers to work and research on the prosperity of the rural economy to achieve Prime Minister Modi’s dream of Viksit Bharat 2047. Later, the President of the Central Cooperative Bank, Angul Sri Santish Kumar Pradhan, advised that the outcomes of

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the seminar should be transformed into plans with proper supervision. Professor Dukhabandhu Sahu from IIT Bhubaneswar gave his opinion on the rural economy. Professor Biswambhar Mishra from NEHU Silang, provided

insightful suggestions for building a developed India. The event was conducted under the leadership of Principal Dr. Balabhadra Jena, Research Forum India National Vice president Dr. Susil Pattanayak, a Rashtriya Awardee from the RISE Foundation, Professors Lalaetahu Gadnayak, Sumanta Majhi, and Shubhadashini Mahapatra managed the sessions. 81 researchers from across the country presented their papers. In the afternoon, the concluding session was successfully organized, awards are given to the scholars.

All staff and students cooperated in smooth organisation of the National conference.

XVth Convocation Ceremony of ODM Business School

Bhubaneswar : A center of excellence in management studies and autonomous Institution under the banner of ODM Educational Group - ODM Business School held its XVth Convocation Ceremony on 10th April 2026 in Bhubaneswar. Students who have completed PGDM in 2025-26 were awarded degrees and those who have topped were given Gold and Silver Medals. PGDM Program offered by the Institute is approved by AICTE, Education Govt of India. The Institute has been relentlessly consistent in its endeavor to provide quality oriented value based education to the students aspiring Management as a career. The selection process for PGDM admission is based on scores on written test (CAT/XAT/MAT/CMAT/ATM), personal Interview and career marks.

The Convocation ceremony was attended by Vice Chancellor of Sambalpur University Dr. Bidhubhusan Mishra as Chief Guest, Ex CMD NALCO Dr. Tapan Chand as key note speaker, Dr. SatyabrataMinaketan Chairman ODMEG as guest of honour



, Dr. Kamallesh Mishra Director OBS and Dr. SatyabrataBhuyan Dean and a host of eminent invitees like Padmashree Dr. AK Mahapatra, PK Mohanty Ex VC Khalikot University, PK Dash a renowned academician, Parents, Professors, Professionals, Students and large number of well wishers.

In his key note address Dr. Tapan Chand said Industry is on the threshold of 5th Industrial revolution driven by

AI & a cluster of high end technology. He further added that there are four major trends of change - 4Ds- Digitalization, Disruption, Democratization and Decarbonization sweeping across the industry. Traditional model of management is giving way and data based decision making is enhancing the success rate of the decision. Management is becoming more rational, transparent & people centric. Empathy, Employee

wellbeing, Work Ethics, Work life balance etc are getting valued more. Dr. Chand also informed that biggest change in industry and business ecosystem is the transformational journey to Viksit Odisha @2036 & Viksit Bharat @2047. Explaining the model for development, he told it is not based on western model of development leaning on capitalism or communism. Viksit Bharat model is based on Integral humanism focusing on development of Individual and development touching the last individual in the last row. In Viksit Bharat there will be no gap between education, employment and entrepreneurship. Youth will be the drivers of development express and there will be huge opportunities for engagement and entrepreneurship. In Odisha itself the size of the economy will increase 5 times from \$100 Billion to \$500 Billion and in that logic there will be at least five time increase in opportunities from the existing level. Dr. Chand called up on the youth and young management professionals to fully participate in the journey of Odisha to Viksit Odisha and the journey for Viksit Bharat.

A Well-crafted Biography

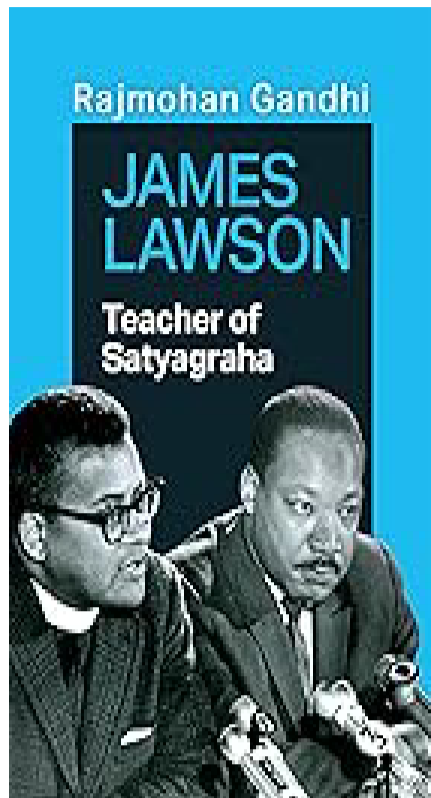
BhaskarParichha

Rajmohan Gandhi's *James Lawson: Teacher of Satyagraha* is a thoughtful and deeply humane work that brings overdue attention to a relatively under-recognized figure of the American Civil Rights Movement. Known for his meticulous biographies and moral clarity, Rajmohan Gandhi once again demonstrates his ability to weave together personal narrative and larger historical currents with quiet authority.

The book's central subject, James Lawson, emerges not merely as a supporting figure in the orbit of giants like Martin Luther King Jr. and Bayard Rustin, but as a foundational architect of nonviolent resistance in the United States. Gandhi's portrayal is both corrective and celebratory: corrective in that it restores Lawson to his rightful place in history, and celebratory in its admiration for a life defined by disciplined courage and ethical commitment.

One of the book's major strengths lies in its narrative structure. Gandhi moves fluidly between archival material, personal recollections, and Lawson's own voice, creating a layered and intimate portrait. The account of Lawson's early life in Massillon, Ohio, his principled stand as a conscientious objector during the Korean War, and his formative years in India—particularly in Nagpur—are handled with sensitivity and depth. These experiences are shown not as isolated incidents but as crucial stages in the evolution of Lawson's philosophy of nonviolent direct action, deeply influenced by Mahatma Gandhi.

The Nagpur episode, in particular, stands out as a turning point. Gandhi



effectively highlights how Lawson's immersion in Gandhian thought and his interactions with Indian and African students shaped the techniques he would later deploy in Nashville. This transnational exchange of ideas becomes one of the book's most compelling themes, illustrating how philosophies of resistance can travel, adapt, and transform societies across continents.

Stylistically, the prose is elegant and

restrained, avoiding both hagiography and excessive dramatization. Gandhi's admiration for Lawson is evident, yet he resists the temptation to romanticize his subject. Instead, he presents a portrait of "courage without theatrics, and faith without platitudes," allowing readers to appreciate the quiet power of Lawson's methods. This tonal balance is one of the book's most commendable features.

However, the book is not without limitations. Readers seeking a more detailed analysis of the broader Civil Rights Movement or a critical engagement with its internal tensions may find the scope somewhat narrow. Gandhi's focus remains firmly on Lawson, occasionally at the expense of situating his contributions within a more contested or complex historical framework.

James Lawson: Teacher of Satyagraha is an important and timely work. In an era marked by polarization and renewed struggles for justice, the book's exploration of nonviolence, discipline, and moral conviction feels particularly relevant. Gandhi not only recovers an overlooked hero but also reintroduces readers to the enduring power of Satyagraha as both a philosophy and a practice.

This is a compelling, well-crafted biography that succeeds in illuminating a life of profound significance. It is as much a historical account as it is a meditation on ethics, resistance, and the possibilities of transformative change.

James Lawson: Teacher of Satyagraha
Rajmohan Gandhi
Speaking Tiger
New Delhi

Alcohol in a Historical Framework

Dharma Raj

Madira: India's Forgotten Spirits and Cocktail Revival by Parag A. Shastry is an ambitious and imaginative work that transcends the conventional boundaries of a cocktail book. Rather than focusing solely on recipes, Shastry positions alcohol within a broader cultural and historical framework, offering readers a nuanced exploration of India's diverse and often overlooked drinking traditions.

The book's persuasive strength is its conceptual clarity. From the outset, *Madira* establishes itself as more than a manual for mixology—it is a cultural archive that seeks to reclaim India's indigenous knowledge systems around fermentation and distillation. Shastry's framing of alcohol as a "cultural marker shaped by memory, ritual, and community" is both original and persuasive.

This perspective allows the book to move fluidly between regions, from the forests of Central India to the coastal landscapes of Goa, capturing the geographical and emotional diversity that informs India's drinking cultures.

The structure of the book, built around 101 recipes interwoven with cultural notes, is particularly effective. Each drink is not presented in isolation but anchored in a story—whether it is tied to a seasonal ritual, a local ingredient, or a community tradition. This narrative approach elevates the act of making a cocktail into an act of cultural engagement. The reader is encouraged to see the glass not merely as a vessel, but as a medium of storytelling, carrying echoes of history and identity.

Another notable strength is the emphasis on indigenous ingredients and sustainable practices.

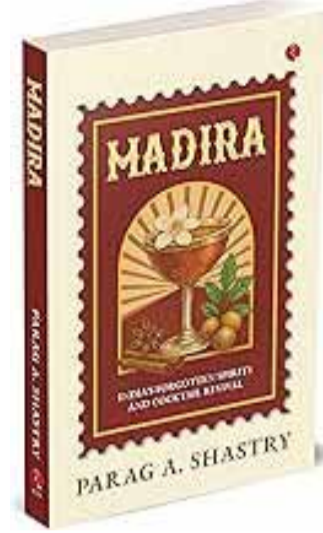
Shastry's commitment to an "India-first" approach to mixology is evident in his focus on local spirits, forgotten fermentation techniques, and region-specific flavours. In an industry often dominated by Western templates and imported aesthetics, this insistence on rootedness feels both refreshing and necessary. It also aligns with broader global trends that value authenticity, locality, and sustainability in food and drink cultures.

The prose is evocative without being overly ornate. Shastry strikes a careful balance between professional expertise and accessible storytelling, making the book appealing to a wide audience—from bartenders and mixologists to casual enthusiasts and culturally curious readers. His dual identity as a practitioner and a storyteller lends credibility to the work, allowing him to seamlessly blend technical insight with cultural reflection.

Madira succeeds in carving out a distinctive space in contemporary Indian food and beverage literature. It challenges readers to rethink their relationship with alcohol—not as a mere indulgence, but as a repository of memory, place, and identity. In doing so, Shastry not only revives forgotten traditions but also reimagines the future of Indian mixology.

This well-laid out book is a bold, thought-provoking, and culturally resonant work. It stands as both ansoiculation and a provocation—urging readers to rediscover India's spirits in every sense of the word, and to recognize the stories that lie within each sip.

Madira
Parag A. Shastry
Rupa Publications
New Delhi



A Novel of Emotional Resonance

Arun Mishra

Mrs Happily Single by ShubhaSarma is a contemporary relationship drama that explores the emotional terrain of marriage, separation, and selfhood through the lens of a woman determined to reclaim her life. At its core, the novel is less about romantic resolution and more about the complexities of choice—particularly a woman's choice to walk away, rebuild, and redefine happiness on her own terms.

The narrative revolves around Malini, a character shaped by resilience and quiet strength. Her decision to leave her marriage following a mysterious disappearance and an unexplained pregnancy sets the tone for a story that resists conventional romantic tropes. Instead of centering reconciliation as an inevitability, Sarma places emphasis on Malini's journey as a single mother raising her daughter, Sonali. This focus on independence and emotional survival is one of the novel's most compelling aspects, especially in a cultural context where marriage is often portrayed as a woman's ultimate anchor.

The plot gains momentum when Sonali's convent school demands the presence of her father, forcing Malini to confront a past she has deliberately buried. This narrative device works effectively, not just as a trigger for external conflict, but as a catalyst for internal reckoning. The re-entry of Aakash into Malini's life introduces tension that is both emotional and moral. Their fractured relationship, once idealized as a "fairy tale," is gradually unpacked, revealing the fragility and ambiguity that



Sarma's writing is accessible and emotionally grounded. She avoids melodrama, opting instead for a restrained style that allows the characters' dilemmas to unfold organically. The prose reflects the everyday realities of middle-class life, making the story relatable without being overly simplistic. The metaphor introduced early on—contrasting "sturdy" individuals with "trailing vines"—serves as a thematic anchor, subtly reinforcing the novel's exploration of dependence versus self-reliance.

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One of the book's strengths lies in its refusal to offer easy answers. Malini's dilemma—whether to forgive Aakash and rebuild their marriage or continue her independent life—is presented with nuance. Sarma does not rush toward resolution but instead lingers in the discomfort of indecision, mirroring the real-life complexity of such choices. This ambiguity adds depth to the narrative, inviting readers to engage with the story rather than passively consume it.

Mrs Happily Single succeeds in delivering a meaningful and thought-provoking narrative. It challenges traditional notions of marriage and fulfillment, offering a perspective that is both modern and introspective. Sarma's portrayal of a woman who dares to choose herself—despite societal expectations—gives the novel its emotional resonance.

This is a sensitive and engaging exploration of love, loss, and autonomy. It may not provide definitive answers, but it asks the right questions—about what it means to forgive, to move on, and ultimately, to be "happily single."

Mrs Happily Single
ShubhaSarma
Niyogi Books
New Delhi

A Devotional Guide

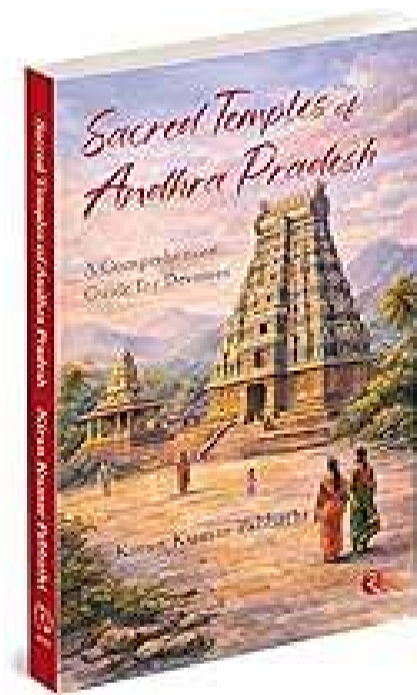
The prose is warm and devotional, reflecting Pabbathi's personal connection to the subject. His writing avoids excessive academic density, instead favoring clarity and emotional resonance. This makes the book accessible to a wide readership, from devout pilgrims to culturally curious travelers. The author's dual identity—as a seasoned IT professional and a spiritual seeker—adds an interesting dimension, lending the work both discipline in structure and sincerity in tone.

Arun Mishra

Sacred Temples of Andhra Pradesh by Kiran Kumar Pabbathi is a devotional travel companion that blends spiritual reflection with practical guidance. Rooted in the author's personal pilgrimages, the book offers readers an accessible yet reverent introduction to twenty-five of Andhra Pradesh's most significant temples, making it both a guidebook and a work of spiritual storytelling.

One of the book's chief strengths lies in its immersive quality. Pabbathi does not merely catalogue temples; he invites readers into a lived experience of devotion. From the sacred hills of Tirumala, home to Lord Venkateshwara, to Tiruchanoor, associated with Goddess Padmavati, the narrative is imbued with a sense of sacred geography. Similarly, the detailed accounts of Ahobila—with its nine forms of Lord Narasimha—and the powerful shrine of Kanaka Durga Temple on Indrakeeladri Hill reflect the diversity and depth of the region's temple traditions.

The structure of the book is another notable strength. Each chapter is carefully organized, offering not just mythological background but also architectural insights, prescribed mantras, and practical travel information.



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This makes the book particularly useful for pilgrims who seek both spiritual enrichment and logistical clarity. The integration of Puranic lore with contemporary travel guidance ensures that the book functions

effectively as a "trusted companion," as intended by the author.

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professional and a spiritual seeker—adds an interesting dimension, lending the work both discipline in structure and sincerity in tone.

Another area where the book could have been enhanced is visual documentation. Given the architectural grandeur and visual richness of Andhra Pradesh's temples, the inclusion of detailed photographs, maps, or illustrations would have significantly enriched the reader's experience and made the guide even more practical.

Sacred Temples of Andhra Pradesh succeeds in its primary aim: to inspire and guide. It captures the spiritual essence of the region's temples while providing readers with the tools to embark on their own journeys. The book stands as a heartfelt tribute to Andhra Pradesh's sacred landscape and a testament to the enduring power of pilgrimage.

This is a sincere and well-crafted work that will resonate deeply with devotees and travelers alike. It may not aspire to be an academic treatise, but as a devotional guide infused with personal insight and cultural richness, it fulfills its purpose admirably.

Sacred Temples of Andhra Pradesh
Kiran Kumar Pabbathi
Rupa Publications
New Delhi

BhaskarParichha

OdiaByanjana by DebasishPatanaiik is both a culinary archive and a cultural intervention. Positioned against the long-standing marginalization of regional cuisines in mainstream Indian food discourse, the book makes a persuasive case for why Odia food deserves national—and even global—recognition. In doing so, it not only documents recipes but also reclaims a culinary identity that has too often remained in the shadows.

One of the book's most striking strengths is its scope. Rather than presenting a singular authorial voice, it brings together a collective of food writers, chefs, and experts, resulting in a

diverse and layered representation of Odisha's food traditions.

This collaborative approach enriches the narrative, ensuring that the recipes are not merely instructional but embedded within lived experiences and regional nuances. The inclusion of fifty iconic dishes strikes a careful balance between comprehensiveness and accessibility, making the book appealing to both novices and seasoned cooks.

The selection of recipes itself is a major highlight. Staples such as Pakhaala and Dalma sit

comfortably alongside more elaborate preparations like PodaaMaansa and festive delicacies such as EnduriPithaa. This range reflects the true spirit of Odia cuisine—rooted in simplicity yet capable of remarkable complexity. Particularly noteworthy is the attention to temple food and tribal dishes, areas often neglected in mainstream cookbooks, which adds depth and authenticity to the collection.

Equally commendable is the book's focus on ingredients. By introducing readers to traditional

elements like PanchaPhutana and Aambula, Patanaiik goes beyond recipes to offer a sensory and cultural education. These sections help demystify Odia cooking techniques while preserving knowledge that risks being lost in an era of homogenized tastes. For readers unfamiliar with the cuisine, this contextualization is invaluable.

Elegantly brought out, the book is appealing and informative without being overly technical. The language is clear, and the emphasis on accessibility ensures that even complex dishes feel achievable. At the same time,

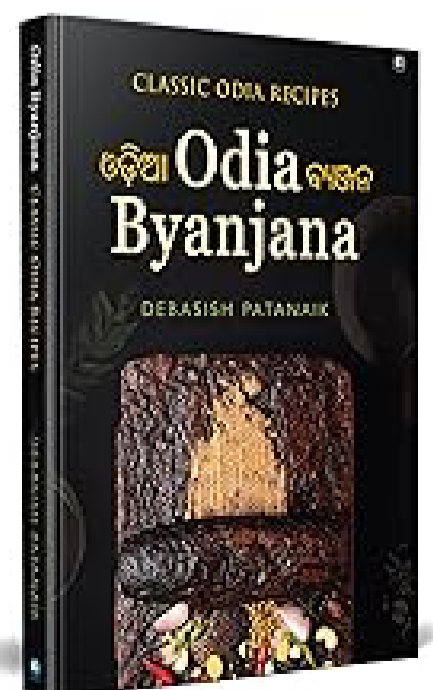
the narrative subtly weaves in the cultural significance of food—its connection to seasons, rituals, and everyday life—thereby elevating the cookbook into a broader commentary on heritage.

OdiaByanjana succeeds in its primary mission: to bring Odia cuisine into the spotlight. It is as much a statement of pride as it is a practical guide, reflecting Patanaiik's long-standing commitment to promoting the state's culinary heritage through ventures like the Dalma restaurant chain.

This is an important and timely contribution to Indian

food literature. It invites readers to explore, appreciate, and celebrate a cuisine that has long been overlooked, making it an essential addition to the shelves of anyone interested in regional Indian cooking and cultural diversity.

OdiaByanjana
DebasishPatanaiik
Aleph Books
New Delhi



Celebrating Odia Cuisine

Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam' and Other Schemes Align with Jyotiba Phule's Ideals: Nitin Nabin

New Delhi, 11/4 (H.S.): Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) National President Nitin Naven paid floral tribute to Mahatma Jyotiba Phule on his 200th birth anniversary. He stated that Phule's ideas on education, women's empowerment, and social equality remain profoundly relevant today.



Nabin said that the nation still remembers Jyotiba Phule's contributions. He noted that Jyotiba Phule undertook several

historic initiatives, from establishing the first girls' school to abolishing the practice of sati, which remain relevant even

today. He emphasized that the Narendra Modi government is continuously working towards women's empowerment. He referenced initiatives from the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' campaign to making women self-reliant and advancing them in the field of education. While mentioning the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, National President Naven stated that it provides 33 per cent reservation to women, which aligns with Jyotiba Phule's ideals. He affirmed that the government's objective is to ensure equal participation and respect for women in society.

Bangalore's Ayurvedic Institute Wins International Accreditation

New Delhi, 11/4 (H.S.): The clinical laboratory of the Central Ayurveda Research Institute (CARI), Bengaluru, under the Ministry of Ayush, has received international accreditation under ISO 15189:2022. This makes CARI Bengaluru the first institute under the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) to achieve this distinction. This accreditation certifies the quality, accuracy, and reliability of the tests conducted at the laboratory at a global level, which will enable patients to receive better and more trustworthy diagnostic services. In a statement on Saturday, the Ministry of Ayush said the institute has received accreditation from the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) for 50 types of tests. The laboratory offers facilities for blood sugar, liver, kidney, thyroid, and other key investigations, conducts over 1.5 lakh tests annually, and serves thousands of patients, with reports available



via SMS, email, and WhatsApp. Reacting to this achievement, Ayush Minister Prataprao Jadhav said that recognition under international standards such as ISO 15189:2022 ensures that patients receive reliable and accurate diagnostic services, which are essential for effective treatment and better health outcomes. He added that this accomplishment highlights how the Ministry is transforming the Ayush infrastructure to meet global standards of quality and reliability. Ayush Secretary Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha said, "CARI Bengaluru becoming the first CCRAS institute to receive ISO 15189:2022 accreditation in both

biochemistry and haematology is a significant step towards integrating high-quality diagnostics with traditional systems of medicine. It reinforces our focus on evidence-based practice, research, and patient-centred care." Dr. Sulochana Bhat, Director of CARI Bengaluru, said that obtaining ISO 15189:2022 accreditation is a matter of pride for the institute, reflecting its commitment to providing high-quality, reliable, and patient-centred clinical services. She added that this achievement not only strengthens the institute's diagnostic capabilities but also consolidates its role as a leading body within the CCRAS network.

ED Registers Case in Alleged NPCIL Contract-Linked Bribery and Money Laundering

New Delhi, 11/4 (H.S.): The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered a case against several individuals in connection with alleged money laundering and bribery linked to contracts worth around ₹60.30 crore awarded by the National Projects Construction Corporation Limited (NPCC); the investigation in the matter is still ongoing. In a statement on Saturday, the ED said the ED's Guwahati zonal office has filed a prosecution complaint before a special PMLA court in Assam against multiple persons and entities, including former NPCC officials and contractors. The central investigative agency stated that this case pertains to alleged bribery in infrastructure-related contracts along the India-Bangladesh border and the subsequent money-laundering arising from it. The ED added that

the case stems from a First Information Report (FIR) filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which alleges that bribes were illegally demanded and received in connection with the award and processing of contracts worth approximately ₹60.30 crore for Border Out-Post infrastructure. The agency further said that the ED's Guwahati zonal office has filed a prosecution complaint under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002, before the Special Court (PMLA) in Guwahati against Rakesh Mohan Kotwal, retired Zonal Manager, NPCIL, Sylhet; Latiful Pasha, Officer in Charge of NPCC's Jalpaiguri Project Office; Anish Baid and Binod Singh, directors of Shri Gautam Construction Company Limited; other associated persons; and the company itself. The investigative



agency explained that the case relates to a bribery-linked matter involving contracts of about ₹60.30 crore given by NPCC Limited (on behalf of the BSF) to Shri Gautam Construction Company Limited for the construction of nine border outposts (Group C and D) along the India-Bangladesh border. Initial ED probe has revealed that bribes

were allegedly demanded for the clearance of pending bills and that the money was sent via hawala channels. Subsequently, during raids, some amount of cash was recovered. The ED said that the proceeds of crime were allegedly distributed among the accused and that further investigation into the entire network is still underway.

NH-927 Set to Boost India-Nepal Trade as Detailed Impact Assessment Is Released

New Delhi, 11/4 (H.S.): The Central Government has released a detailed assessment of the impact of the Barabanki-Bahraich highway project on India-Nepal trade. The report estimates that this stretch of National Highway-927 will emerge as a key lifeline for cross-border trade. According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, connectivity to the Rupaidiha land port will become faster and more reliable through this highway. The assessment notes that freight movement along the Nepalgunj corridor in Nepal is

likely to rise. Once the project is completed, travel time between Barabanki and Bahraich is expected to fall from about 150 minutes to around 75 minutes, while the average speed will increase from 40 km/h to 80 km/h. This will particularly reduce losses in perishable goods such as vegetables and dairy products. The Centre has projected that the supply of food grains, medicines, and consumer goods will become smoother via this corridor. In the past, congestion and delays at the border had repeatedly disrupted

supply chains, forcing traders to incur losses running into crores. An increase in truck traffic at the Rupaidiha area is anticipated, which will create new opportunities in logistics, warehousing, and the transport sector. The Union Cabinet approved the project on 18 March, and it is to be developed as a 4-lane access-controlled highway under National Highway-927. Land-based trade between India and Nepal is the most active in South Asia, with over 60 per cent of Nepal's total trade taking place with India.

PM Modi Shares Video of Massive Katwa Rally Crowd, Delivers Message to Opposition

New Delhi, 11/4 (H.S.): Addressing a rally in Katwa during the West Bengal Legislative Assembly elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the massive turnout at the public meeting to illustrate the state's mood. He remarked, "You can gauge this state's temperament by looking at the crowd." Prime Minister Modi, during a public meeting in Katwa, Purba Bardhaman district of West Bengal, recorded a video of the surging crowd at the venue and shared it on the social media platform X. In this video, he showcased the scene before the address. While recording the video, he stated that the crowds thronging BJP rallies are a glimpse of the May 4 results, and West Bengal is ready for change. He said, "Behind me, you can see Bengal's mood. It's only 11 to 11:30 in the morning, and this is my first public meeting of the day. Thousands are already present at the helipad itself. This is extraordinary."



CBI Secures Extradition of Fugitive Gangster Sahil Chauhan from Thailand

New Delhi, 11/4 (H.S.): The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) extradited Sahil Chauhan, a long-wanted accused of Haryana Police, from Thailand on Friday. He faces charges in multiple cases involving murder, attempted murder, robbery, and illegal arms use. CBI revealed that Chauhan, an active member of the Bhuppi Rana gang, was convicted in a 2017 gang rivalry shootout at Yamunanagar's Jagadhri court premises. Released on bail, he fled abroad. With support from the Home Ministry and Ministry of External Affairs via Interpol channels, CBI traced him in Bangkok, deported him, and brought him to Delhi's international airport, where Haryana Police took custody. On



January 4, 2017, Chauhan fired at rival Monu Rana inside Jagadhri court during a hearing for pending criminal cases. A chargesheet followed, leading to a 10-year sentence; post-bail, he absconded

overseas. At Haryana Police's request, CBI's New Delhi branch secured an Interpol Red Notice. Traced in Bangkok, he was deported and handed over upon arrival.

PM Modi Pays Tribute to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule on Birth Anniversary, Launches 200th Jayanti Celebrations

New Delhi, 11/4 (H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid homage to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule on his jayanti and formally inaugurated the year-long 200th birth anniversary celebrations, hailing him as a visionary social reformer who devoted his life to the ideals of equality, justice, and education. In posts on X today, available in Hindi, Gujarati, Marathi, and other languages, the Prime Minister described Phule as a staunch advocate for women's and marginalised communities' rights, positioning education as the paramount tool for empowerment. "Phule's thoughts continue to guide society's progress," he affirmed. Popularly known as Mahatma Phule, the 19th-century luminary dedicated himself to eradicating social and economic inequalities. In 1873, he founded the Satyashodhak Samaj to curb exploitation and liberate victims of discriminatory practices. Serving on the Pune Municipal Council from 1876-1882, he earned the titles "Mahatma" and "India's Booker T. Washington" in 1888 for uplifting the poor and deprived. The 12-foot bronze statue of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule in Parliament House complex—crafted by Ram V. Sutar and unveiled by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on December 3, 2003—graces the Prerna Sthal within the premises.

Shashi Tharoor Champions Peace in West Asia Ceasefire; Congress Urges Government to Revise Policy

New Delhi, 11/4 (H.S.): Congress leader Shashi Tharoor emphasised the imperative of peace amid the fragile ceasefire between Iran and the US-Israel axis in West Asia, now over a month old, asserting that the source of peace matters less than its establishment itself. Speaking to journalists here on Saturday, Tharoor stated, "India's core interest lies in peace, and we must monitor developments with utmost caution. Rather than remaining isolated, India should engage proactively, hoping these efforts cement lasting stability." He noted that the Prime Minister, External Affairs Minister, and Petroleum Minister maintain constant contact with regional leaders,



aligning with national interests. "Who brings peace is immaterial—peace arriving is paramount," Tharoor reiterated. "Should peace falter, we must deeply analyse its causes

and explore how India can contribute to divergent outcomes in future. Our fundamental stake is in sustaining peace and regional order, as vacuums breed peril and inflict collateral damage." Positioning

India as a leading voice of the Global South and responsible architect of regional-global frameworks, Tharoor argued against passivity: "We cannot spectate while fire rages next door. Active involvement is essential, calibrated thoughtfully to maximise utility—sometimes, silence proves most efficacious." He praised heightened Indian activism—"two ministers on tour, the PM on constant calls, three physically present"—urging amplification: "Such engagement empowers us for pivotal future roles." Notably, a Congress resolution issued Friday night condemned assassinations of heads of state, wars outside international law, and attacks on civilians/infrastructure as atrocities against humanity and rules-based

order. Any viable resolution must anchor in Geneva Conventions, ICCPR, Paris Accords, and UN Charter tenets—especially prohibiting force against territorial integrity/political independence (Article 2(4)) and mandating peaceful dispute settlement (Article 2(3)). The resolution implored the BJP government to prioritise national interest over electoral-ideological agendas, heed foreign policy experts, and—consulting opposition—promptly revise policy for a unified national approach. This would restore India's historic mantle as a principled, proactive, credible voice for peace and equitable global order.

Leaders Across Spectrum Pay Tribute to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule on 200th Birth Anniversary, Recall Education and Social Justice Legacy

New Delhi, 11/4 (H.S.): On the 200th birth anniversary of great social reformer Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, leaders nationwide paid floral tributes and commemorated his monumental contributions to education, equality, and social justice. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla bowed to Phule, stating he transformed education into society's most potent catalyst for positive change, opening new vistas of opportunity for the deprived, oppressed, and women. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh remarked that Phule dedicated his entire life to uplifting the underprivileged, exploited, and backward classes, with his crusade for education and social justice remaining an enduring inspiration. Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah noted Phule viewed education as the most effective instrument of social reform, pioneering unprecedented efforts for women's education and founding the Satyashodhak Samaj to advance equality and justice. Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan observed that Phule's ideals resonate in contemporary visions like 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' and 'Antyodaya'. Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadhkar hailed him as the father of India's educational revolution, remembering his devotion to Dalit upliftment and women's empowerment. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge dubbed Phule the 'Krantisurya' (Sun of Revolution), emphasising that raising voice against injustice forms the core of his philosophy.

US–Iran Talks in Islamabad: Ceasefire Deal on the Table, World Watches for Outcome

Islamabad, 11/4 (H.S.): High-stakes talks between the United States and Iran have begun at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad, Pakistan, with the aim of securing a permanent end to the ongoing military conflict in West Asia. The American delegation is led by Vice President JD Vance, while the Iranian side is headed by Parliamentary Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf. The world is closely watching the negotiations and their possible outcomes. According to Pakistani media reports, discussions on the ceasefire agreement are taking place in Islamabad's Serena Hotel following the earlier announcement of a two-week truce. On the US side, the talks are being led by Vice President JD Vance, accompanied by Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner. The Iranian delegation is being led by Ghalibaf, with Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also present. The United States and Israel carried out a major joint military attack on Iran on 28 February, targeting nuclear sites and military installations. During



that strike, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed. In retaliation, Iran struck back at Israel and at all Gulf states hosting US military bases. The US sought help from NATO members, but NATO countries showed no interest in joining the conflict. Iran then gained control over the Strait of Hormuz, forcing the United

States and Israel to the negotiating table. Its move triggered a global energy crisis, sharply disrupting gas and oil supplies worldwide. Later, on 8 April, the United States announced a ceasefire, and the negotiations on the ceasefire agreement are now being held in Islamabad, with Pakistan acting as the mediator. However, US President Donald Trump has

warned that if the talks fail, Washington could resume military action against Iran. Trump's main priorities are reopening the Strait of Hormuz and gaining control over Iran's nuclear programme. Iran, in turn, has set preconditions for the talks, including a ceasefire in Lebanon, the unblocking of Iranian assets, and the easing or removal of sanctions.

Islamabad Peace Talks: US and Iran Convene Amid Fragile Ceasefire, Eyes on Nuclear Red Lines and Regional Stability

Islamabad, 11/4(H.S.): On this crisp spring Saturday, delegations from the United States and Iran will convene with profound resolve in Pakistan's capital, poised to negotiate a durable ceasefire or confront the peril of renewed conflagration across the Middle East. The distinguished Iranian delegation, honorably designated "Minab 168" in solemn tribute to the 168 souls—including over 160 cherished children—lost in the US-Israel airstrike on a girls' elementary school in southern Iran's Minab town on 28 February, will arrive imminently under the esteemed leadership of Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf. Their poignant symbolism bloodstained school bags and children's shoes adorning aircraft seats—shall serve as a dignified testament to the human toll fueling Tehran's steadfast determination. US Vice President JD Vance, dispatched with President Donald Trump's unwavering mandate, will engage Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi and Speaker Ghalibaf. This pivotal summit follows a fragile two-week ceasefire meticulously brokered

on Tuesday, mere hours before Trump's resolute deadline to target Tehran's critical infrastructure. Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir merit profound commendation from both nations for their exemplary mediation, elevating Islamabad to a beacon of impartial diplomacy. The accord stems from Trump's principled "deal or strikes" imperative, with both leaders graciously acknowledging Pakistan's indispensable stewardship. Yet, cautious optimism prevails amid critical flashpoints. Iran will advocate for a concomitant truce in Lebanon where Israel maintains operations against Hezbollah—and the prompt unfreezing of its overseas assets. Tehran has indicated readiness to honor select preconditions, as affirmed by its embassy in South Africa, though Speaker Ghalibaf will emphasize that asset releases must precede core deliberations. Washington's confidential 15-point blueprint will require Iran to irrevocably renounce nuclear armament, dismantle its highly enriched uranium reserves, constrain

military capabilities, and restore full navigation through the Strait of Hormuz—a linchpin for global energy security. President Trump has pledged to safeguard the strait "with or without" compliance, reaffirming his administration's non-negotiable stance on Tehran's nuclear aspirations. An adapted version of Iran's dignified 10-point proposal will underpin the discussions, according to White House previews, even as Israel's absence and Prime Minister Netanyahu's insistence on Lebanese operations present formidable challenges. The conflict's genesis lies in intensifying US-Israel operations, including the indelible Minab tragedy that Iran vows eternally to commemorate. Symbolic reverence abounds: Iran's embassy in Sierra Leone invokes the silenced joy of children, while Speaker Ghalibaf will honor his traveling companions as avatars of Minab's innocents. Esteemed analysts characterize this as a "make-or-break" watershed, where the ceasefire's endurance will depend on Israel's forbearance and reciprocal magnanimity amid mutual proclamations of triumph.

Trump unveils 250-foot Washington arch in major overhaul of capital

Washington, 11/4(H.S.): President Donald Trump has proposed a towering new triumphal arch for the U.S. capital, a monument he says would become one of the city's defining landmarks on Friday. According to the plan released by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts and reported by AP, the arch would rise 250 feet, feature a gilded winged figure with a torch and crown, and be decorated with two eagles and four lions. The monument is designed to stand between the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery, within a traffic circle linking Washington with northern Virginia. At that height, it would dramatically exceed the Lincoln Memorial, which stands 99 feet tall, and would carry the inscriptions "One Nation Under God" and "Liberty and Justice for All" in gold. Trump said on social media that the arch would be "the GREATEST and MOST BEAUTIFUL Triumphal Arch" anywhere in the world, framing it as a long-overdue addition to Washington. He has argued that the capital was once meant to have such a monument, saying the idea was interrupted by the Civil War and later never completed. The proposal is part of a broader effort by Trump in his second term to reshape the capital's appearance, alongside a planned White House ballroom, Oval Office changes, and the conversion of the Rose Garden into a stone-covered patio. Supporters may view it as an ambitious civic statement, while critics are likely to see it as another highly personal imprint on federal architecture.



JD Vance lands in Islamabad as US and Iran test fragile ceasefire in high-stakes talks

Islamabad, 11/4 (H.S.): US Vice-President JD Vance arrived in Islamabad on Saturday to lead Washington's delegation in critical peace negotiations with Iran, marking one of the most significant direct diplomatic encounters between the two countries since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The talks, hosted by Pakistan under tight security, are aimed at shoring up a fragile ceasefire in the Middle East and defining the terms of a more durable truce. Vance stepped off Air Force Two at Islamabad's airport alongside President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff and adviser Jared Kushner, underscoring the high political weight Washington is placing on the mission. Satellite footage and local reports show a heavy security presence around the Serena Hotel, where the negotiations are expected to take place, with thousands of security personnel deployed and a strict "red zone" around the venue. Iran's delegation is led by powerful parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, flanked by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and key security



and financial figures, including members of Iran's Supreme National Security Council and the central bank governor. Pakistan's army chief, Asim Munir, and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif have positioned themselves as central mediators, with Sharif describing the talks as "make or break" for any chance of a lasting ceasefire. Publicly, the agenda focuses on several intertwined

issues: the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, which has been effectively shut since the war began; Iran's uranium enrichment programme; the status of Lebanon under the ceasefire; and the lifting or easing of US-imposed sanctions. Iran has insisted that a Lebanon truce and the unfreezing of its blocked overseas assets must be secured before substantive negotiations can proceed, while Washington

has so far refused to extend the ceasefire to Israel's operations in Lebanon. Before departing, Vance told US media that he believes the discussions can be "positive" if Iran shows genuine flexibility, but he also reiterated that Washington will not accept a deal that allows Iran to advance a nuclear weapons capability. President Trump has publicly warned that the US is preparing fresh military options

if the talks fail, telling the New York Post that American warships are being loaded with what he described as the "best weapons" as a contingency. Even as diplomats converge in Islamabad, the human cost of the conflict remains stark. Lebanese authorities have raised the death toll from Israeli strikes since early March to over 1,950 people, with more than 6,300 wounded, as another round of brutal attacks killed hundreds in a single day. Meanwhile, Hezbollah leaders have denounced any direct Lebanon-Israel talks as a violation of Lebanese law and national unity, warning that such negotiations could deepen domestic fractures at a moment of intense pressure. In the coming hours, the focus will be on whether Vance and his Iranian counterparts can translate their public posturing into concrete measures—particularly around the Strait of Hormuz, Lebanon, and sanctions—that could, at least temporarily, lower the temperature of a conflict that continues to ripple across the wider Middle East.

Iranian Envoys Touch Down in Islamabad as Trump Declares Tehran 'Alive Only to Negotiate' on Historic Saturday

Islamabad, 11/4 (H.S.): On this pivotal Saturday morning, a formidable Iranian delegation has arrived in Pakistan's capital, setting the stage for high-stakes peace negotiations with the United States amid a fragile two-week ceasefire that teeters on the brink of either resolution or rupture. Spearheaded by the venerable Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf also rendered as Baqer Qalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, the extensive entourage of officials and technical experts underscores the intricate gravity of the impending parleys. Their advent follows President Donald Trump's announcement earlier this week of a temporary truce, suspending a harrowing six-week conflagration marked by U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran, Tehran's retaliatory blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, and persistent skirmishes involving Hezbollah in Lebanon. Upon disembarking, Speaker Ghalibaf articulated Tehran's tempered disposition,



blending diplomatic openness with profound wariness forged by history. "Our experience of negotiations with the Americans has always been met with failure and breach of promise. They attacked us twice in the middle of the negotiations. We have goodwill but no trust," he avowed, while affirming Iran's

readiness for a bona fide accord that honors its sovereign prerogatives. Tehran has stipulated preconditions for substantive discourse, encompassing the expeditious unfreezing of its sequestered overseas assets and ironclad assurances of a parallel cessation in Lebanon. Ghalibaf

emphasized that deliberations will not advance absent fulfillment of these imperatives, reflecting Iran's strategic calculus in a conflict that has disrupted global energy arteries and inflicted widespread devastation. From Washington, Vice President JD Vance helms the American delegation, exuding measured optimism

tempered by vigilance. "If they're going to try to play us, then they're going to find the negotiating team is not that receptive," he cautioned, signaling resolve against perceived gamesmanship. President Trump, in characteristically forthright remarks, amplified the asymmetry of leverage, proclaiming on social media: "The Iranians don't seem to realize they have no cards, other than a short term extortion of the World by using International Waterways. The only reason they are alive today is to negotiate!" This unyielding rhetoric arrives as U.S. naval assets linger in the Gulf, poised to enforce the Strait's reopening—a non-negotiable red line amid Iran's 10-point proposal and Washington's counter-framework demanding nuclear renunciation and military curtailment. Islamabad, fortified into a high-security bastion with its Red Zone sealed, owes its improbable role to the deft mediation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and military stewards.

Washington, 11/4 (H.S.): Lebanon's leadership announced on Friday that diplomats from Beirut and Jerusalem will convene next Tuesday at the U.S. State Department to negotiate a ceasefire in the protracted Israel-Hezbollah conflict, alongside the groundwork for formal bilateral talks under American mediation. The development, confirmed through an official statement from Lebanese President Joseph Aoun's office, follows a landmark telephone consultation earlier on Friday involving the Lebanese and Israeli ambassadors to Washington, as well as the U.S. ambassador to Lebanon. This trilateral exchange marked a tentative agreement to prioritize an immediate truce declaration before advancing to substantive negotiations between the neighboring states. President Aoun has consistently advocated for direct engagement with Israel since Hezbollah's rocket assaults on Israeli territory on March 2, which

propelled Lebanon into the broader Middle East conflagration backed by Iran. The incursion prompted Israel's robust aerial and ground response, exacerbating a humanitarian crisis that has claimed over 1,950 Lebanese lives in recent weeks, with Wednesday's strikes alone inflicting 357 fatalities. Complicating matters, a nascent U.S.-Iran ceasefire—brokered this week and holding for two weeks—remains ambiguous in its applicability to Lebanon. Israel has persisted with intensive operations against Hezbollah strongholds, while the militant group has retaliated symmetrically, including claimed barrages on Israeli positions and a missile strike on a naval facility in Ashdod. Israeli Ambassador to Washington Yechiel Leiter, in a post-meeting declaration, categorically rejected any ceasefire discourse involving Hezbollah, whom he designated a terrorist entity, underscoring Tel Aviv's precondition for disarming the group prior to de-escalation.

India, Saudi Arabia Take Stock of West Asia Situation, Reaffirm Push for Supply-Chain Continuity

New Delhi, 11/4 (H.S.): Amid the crisis in West Asia, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal held a virtual discussion on Saturday with Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qassabi, Minister of Commerce of Saudi Arabia, during which both sides underscored the need to ensure the continuity of existing supply chains. According to a statement by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Minister Piyush Goyal spoke virtually with Saudi Arabia's Commerce Minister Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qassabi and expressed hope that the recently announced ceasefire would pave the way for lasting peace and security in the region. The Ministry said he



praised the indomitable courage of the Saudi people, who have remained steadfast in their resolve to keep supply chains

strong despite rising challenges and regional instability. Goyal also condemned recent attacks on the country and appreciated

Saudi Arabia's efforts to safeguard the Indian community. The Ministry stated that both sides acknowledged the stress the ongoing conflict has placed on regional supply chains and stressed the importance of coordinated efforts to normalise the situation quickly and ensure smooth trade flows. Piyush Goyal highlighted steps taken by India to boost exports to Saudi Arabia and the wider Gulf region. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to strengthening bilateral trade and expressed optimism that India-GCC free trade agreement negotiations would make early progress.

Over 12 Lakh 5-Kg LPG Cylinders Sold To Students, Vulnerable Communities Since March 23: Centre

New Delhi 11/4 (H.S.): More than 51.5 lakh domestic LPG cylinders were delivered on April 10, the government said on Saturday, adding that about 1 lakh 5-kg FTL cylinders were sold across the country on the same day, against a daily average of 77,000 in the month of February 2026. Since March 23, 2026, more than 12 lakh 5-kg Free Trade LPG cylinders have been sold to students and vulnerable communities including migrant labourers, informed Petroleum Ministry. The government has conveyed that daily quantity of 5-kg FTL cylinders in each state available for disbursement to migrant labourers is being doubled based on the average daily supply (number of cylinders) to migrant labourers during March 2-3, "beyond the limit of 20 per cent mentioned in letter dated 21.03.2026". These 5-kg FTL cylinders will be at disposal of the state government for supplying only to migrant labourers in their state with assistance of Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs). PSU OMCs



have organised around 2,900 awareness camps for 5-kg FTL cylinders during last 8 days, wherein more than 29,000 5-kg FTL cylinders were also sold, said the government. "Citizens are advised to avoid panic purchase of petrol, diesel and LPG and rely only on official sources for information. LPG consumers are requested to use digital booking platforms and avoid visiting distributors. Citizens are encouraged to use alternate fuels such as PNG and electric or induction cooktops. All citizens are urged to conserve energy in their daily use during the current

situation," according to the ministry. Despite the ongoing geopolitical situation, the government has prioritised domestic LPG and PNG supply, along with high priority for hospitals and educational institutions. "The government has already implemented several rationalisation measures on both the supply and demand side, including enhancing refinery production, increasing the booking interval from 21 to 25 days in urban areas and up to 45 days in rural areas and prioritising sectors for supply," the statement further said.

Delhi EV Policy 2.0 Offers New Roadmap For 2-Wheeler Owners, Cab Aggregators, Car Buyers

New Delhi, 11/4 (H.S.): As the Delhi government rolled out the draft Electric Vehicle Policy 2.0 (2026-2030) on Saturday, it offered a mix of financial benefits, tax waivers and phased restrictions aimed at accelerating the shift to cleaner mobility in the national capital. Issued by the Transport Department's EV Cell, the draft has been opened for public consultation for 30 days and is aimed at tackling Delhi's persistent air pollution while boosting electric vehicle (EV) adoption. The draft lays out strict timelines for transitioning to electric mobility. The government has proposed a 100 per cent exemption on road tax and registration fees for electric vehicles until March 31, 2030. While electric cars priced up to Rs 30 lakh will enjoy full waivers, strong hybrid vehicles will get a 50 per cent concession, and EVs priced above Rs 30 lakh will not be eligible for tax benefits. Registration of new petrol-powered two-wheelers, which account for nearly 67 per cent of Delhi's vehicle population, will be banned from April 1, 2028. It also stated that electric three-wheelers will become mandatory from January 1, 2027, while aggregators and commercial operators will not be allowed to



add new petrol or diesel two-wheelers and light goods vehicles (up to 3.5 tonnes) to their fleets from January 1, 2026. In terms of incentives, the policy proposes time-bound benefits to encourage early adoption, with support reducing over three years. For electric two-wheelers priced up to Rs 2.25 lakh, buyers can avail incentives of Rs 10,000 per kWh (capped at Rs 30,000) in the first year, declining to Rs 6,600 per kWh (up to Rs 20,000) in the second year and Rs 3,300 per kWh (up to Rs 10,000) in the third year. Electric three-wheelers will

receive incentives of Rs 50,000 in the first year, Rs 40,000 in the second year and Rs 30,000 in the third year. For electric light commercial vehicles (N1 category), incentives start at Rs 1 lakh in the first year, reducing to Rs 75,000 in the second and Rs 50,000 in the third year. For electric cars, buyers of vehicles priced up to Rs 30 lakh (ex-showroom) will be eligible for a scrappage-linked incentive if they scrap older BS-IV or earlier vehicles registered in Delhi within six months. The benefit will be available to the first one

lakh applicants. Similar incentives will apply to buyers of electric N1 goods vehicles replacing older polluting vehicles. Additionally, scrappage incentives of Rs 10,000 for two-wheelers, Rs 25,000 for three-wheelers and Rs 50,000 for N1 goods vehicles have been proposed for replacing older BS-IV or earlier vehicles. According to officials, incentives will be disbursed through direct bank transfer upon online claims, in line with guidelines under the PM E-DRIVE scheme.

India Increasingly Signing Targeted FTAs To Accelerate Economic Momentum

New Delhi 11/4 (H.S.): India is increasingly signing free trade agreements (FTAs) with economies where trade corridors are already expanding, and supply chains are already forming, a new report has said. These FTAs are functioning as accelerators of existing economic momentum, said the report in Trade Finance Global. In a fragmented global trading system, this targeted approach appears to be particularly resilient. "While tariff threats become common ground elsewhere in the world, India is focusing on approaching trade with care and commitment, expanding its services provisions and translating its investment pipelines into new industrial capacity," writes Anna Mahjar-Barducci. The report states that between fiscal year 2020-21 and

FY 2024-25, India's trade with strategic FTA partners grew by 92 per cent — more than double the 41.5 per cent increase in India's overall merchandise trade with the rest of the world. The country has steadily expanded its network of free trade agreements over the past few years to reach nine FTAs spanning as many as 38 countries. Starting with India-Mauritius in 2021, the India-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement followed in May 2022. The India-Australia Economic and Trade Agreement was implemented in December 2022. India then signed the EFTA TEPA on March 10, 2024, which entered into force on October 1, 2025. The India-UK CETA was signed in July 2025, and the India-Oman CEPA in December 2025. The India-New

Zealand FTA was announced on December 22, 2025, followed by the India-EU FTA on January 27, 2026. With the United States, we have delivered a framework for an interim agreement on 7th February 2026 and cemented our global trade footprint, according to an official statement. These agreements are aimed to benefit farmers whose products now have access to the developed world. They are for entrepreneurs, women-led MSMEs exporting garments, leather and handicrafts with new competitiveness. The interests of all sensitive sectors — dairy, agriculture, farmers, and domestic industry — have been protected, and market access has been safeguarded. India has negotiated from strength to usher in an age of transformation in trade.

India Accounts For 49 Pc Of Global Real Time Digital Payments As UPI Turns 10



New Delhi: 11/4 (H.S.): As India's Unified Payments Interface marks its 10th anniversary on Saturday, the government informed that the country now accounts for 49 per cent of global real-time payment transactions. The instant payments system processed 21.70 billion transactions in January 2026 alone, with Rs 28.33 lakh crore in value. UPI accounted for 81 per cent of all retail digital transactions in India. The International Monetary Fund has called UPI the world's largest real-time payment system by volume, and it was built in under 10 years, an official statement said. UPI has grown 12,000-fold in volume and over 4,000 times in value since launch. The government said UPI's real transformation is beyond the

volume of transactions, but its reach spans domestic informal markets from autorickshaw drivers to village mandis and street vendors. "A domestic worker can send money across states in seconds using a basic smartphone. In this system, the divide between urban and rural, formal and informal, steadily disappears—marking a decisive shift towards financial inclusion," the statement said. India's digital payments ecosystem has also emerged as a reference model globally. Institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have acknowledged its scale, efficiency, and inclusiveness. Its operations expanded to the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius and

Qatar, facilitating cross-border transactions and remittances. "A homegrown system, built in under a decade, now leads the world. What began as an effort to include the unbanked has become the global gold standard for real-time payments. From queues to QR codes, India's journey reflects the power of inclusive innovation," the statement noted. Meanwhile, UPI is evolving into a broader financial platform, with UPI Lite supporting quick, small-value payments, while UPI AutoPay streamlines recurring expenses such as utility bills and subscriptions. Credit on UPI expanded by enabling access to pre-approved credit lines, with NBFCs and fintech firms delivering loans, enabling repayments, and offering tailored financial products.

India Remains Among Fastest-Growing Major Economies Despite Global Slowdown

New Delhi 11/4 (H.S.): India remains among the fastest-growing major economies in the world despite the global slowdown — likely to clock 6.6 per cent in FY27 — as higher energy prices caused by the Middle East conflict and supply chain disruptions weigh on economic activity. According to the latest World Bank's latest economic update, despite significant downside risks stemming from the conflict, the economy's strong macroeconomic fundamentals and policy buffers offer some insulation. Substantial foreign reserves, low inflation, predominantly rupee-denominated public debt, a healthy financial sector, and trade diversification efforts play a major role in providing resilience from external headwinds. Boosting private sector-led growth will be critical to strengthening economic resilience and supporting more young people to enter the workforce, says Paul Procee, World Bank Acting Director for India. To achieve Viksit Bharat, a predictable, business-enabling environment will help to unlock investment and create jobs at scale in priority



sectors like energy and infrastructure, manufacturing, tourism, healthcare, and agribusiness, Procee adds. The latest South Asia Economic Update projects growth in South Asia to slow to 6.3 per cent in 2026 — from 7 per cent in 2025 — due to disruptions in global energy markets. Despite the slowdown, South Asia continues to grow faster than other emerging markets and developing economies.

Growth is expected to recover to 6.9 per cent in 2027. Global growth could be lowered by 0.3 to 0.4 percentage point in a baseline scenario, with an early end to the war, and by as much as 1 percentage point if it endures. Global inflation could increase by 200 to 300 basis points, with a much higher impact — of up to 0.9 percentage point — if the war continues. The World Bank report also includes an in-depth analysis

of the region's use of industrial policy — the range of policy tools governments are using to shape what an economy produces, rather than leaving it to markets alone. Governments around the world are increasingly using industrial policy, and in South Asia industrial policies are implemented at roughly twice the rate of other emerging economies. But these measures have delivered mixed results in South Asia, said the report.



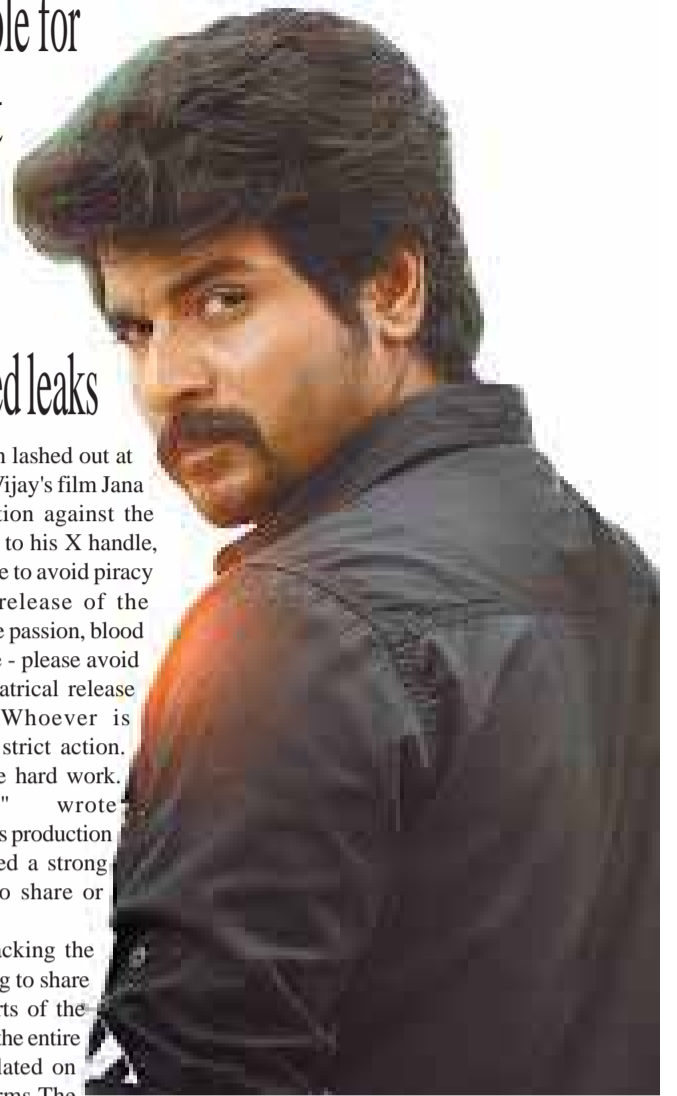
'Mera Jee Nahi Bhara' song from Salman Khan's 'Maatrubhumi' out now

Bollywood superstar Salman Khan on Friday unveiled the new song from his upcoming film 'Maatrubhumi'. Titled 'Mera Jee Nahi Bhara', the track features new actors Zeyn Shaw and Abhishri Sen. It is sung by Shreya Ghoshal and Vishal Mishra. Check out the song's video here. "Welcome to the silver screen..... @zeynshaw @abhishri.sen #MeraJeeNahiBhara," he captioned the post. Produced by Salman Khan under the banner of Salman Khan Films, with Apoorva Lakhia directing, 'Maatrubhumi: May War Rest in Peace' will be released soon. The film also stars Chitragada Singh in a pivotal role. Earlier in March, the makers announced the film's title change. The film was earlier titled 'Battle of Galwan'. The film is based on the 2020 Galwan Valley clash between India and China. A teaser released in December last year offered a first look at Salman Khan in the role of an Indian Army officer. In the upcoming months, Salman Khan will be seen in an action film with director Vamshi Paidipally. The film will be produced by Dil Raju. Nayanthara is also a part of the film



Whoever is responsible for this must face strict action: Sivakarthyayan on 'Jana Nayagan's alleged leaks

Renowned actor Sivakarthyayan lashed out at the alleged leaks of Thalapathy Vijay's film 'Jana Nayagan', calling for strict action against the people responsible for it. Taking to his X handle, Sivakarthyayan urged the people to avoid piracy and wait for the theatrical release of the film. "Every film is made with the passion, blood and sweat of hundreds of people - please avoid piracy. Kindly wait for the theatrical release and watch it in theatres. Whoever is responsible for this must face strict action. Respect the talents. Respect the hard work. Respect the industry," wrote Sivakarthyayan. Earlier, the film's production house, KVN Productions, issued a strong statement asking people not to share or watch the leaked content. KVN Productions, which is backing the film, took to X on Friday evening to share a statement confirming that parts of the movie, and in some cases almost the entire film, have been illegally circulated on social media and other platforms. The team called it a serious case of "digital piracy" and said they are taking the matter very seriously. "It has come to our notice that certain scenes and clips from the said film and in some cases most of the film have been illegally accessed, copied and circulated by unidentified persons, posing a serious threat of digital piracy." "We hereby notify that downloading, viewing, storing, forwarding, sharing, uploading or circulating of such leaked content through WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, Facebook, X, YouTube, websites, torrents or any other medium constitutes a criminal offence and a violation of copyright laws," the statement further read. The team also warned people that even watching or forwarding such content is a crime. Stressing that every online movie is "traceable", they said strict steps are already being taken. "Every digital action is traceable, and we have already initiated necessary investigations, including forensic investigations and complaints against persons involved, and are actively identifying all others in the chain of circulation. Strict civil and criminal proceedings will be pursued against every offender without exception," it read.



SPORTS

Badminton Asia Championships: Ayush Shetty Scripts History by Beating World No. 1 Kunlavut Vitidsarn

New Delhi, 11/4 (H.S.): In the men's singles category of the Badminton Asia Championships, India's young shuttler Ayush Shetty delivered a stunning performance and pulled off a major upset. On Saturday, he defeated current champion and world No. 1 Kunlavut Vitidsarn to book his place in the final. With this victory, Ayush has become only the second Indian to reach the men's singles final at this continental championship. Earlier, Dinesh Khanna had won the gold medal for India at the 1965 edition of the tournament. Since then, Suresh Goel, Prakash Padukone, P. Gopichand, Anup Sridhar, and H. S. Prannoy have all won bronze medals in different years, but until now no Indian



player managed to reach the final. World No. 25 Ayush won the match in one hour and fifteen minutes by 10-21, 21-19, and 21-17. In the title clash, he will face either China's Shi Yuqi or Chinese Taipei's Chou Tien-chen. This was

the second encounter between Ayush and Vitidsarn. Their previous meeting came at the Arctic Open, where the Thai player had emerged victorious. In this match too, Vitidsarn claimed the first game comfortably, but Ayush staged a

remarkable comeback. In the second game, Ayush displayed solid defensive play and gradually built up a lead. Although his opponent tried to stage a revival, Ayush held his nerve and clinched the deciding points to take the contest into a third game. In the final game, Ayush maintained the upper hand from the outset and sealed the historic win with a powerful smash. Earlier in the tournament, Ayush had beaten world No. 7 Lee Shi Feng in the early rounds and then defeated Chi Yu-jeen in straight games. In the quarterfinals, he overcame world No. 4 Jonathan Christie to secure a semifinal berth. Now, the entire country's gaze is fixed on Ayush, who will step onto the final court with the aim of scripting even more history.

Bangladesh Names Same 15-Man Squad for First Two ODIs Against New Zealand

Dhaka, 11/4 (H.S.): Bangladesh's new selection committee, led by Habibur Bashar, has retained the same 15-member squad for the first two One Day Internationals against New Zealand that was used to defeat Pakistan 2-1 at home last month. The opening two matches of the series will be played in Dhaka on 17 and 20 April, while the third game will be held in Chittagong on 23 April. The team will be led by Mehidy Hasan Miraz. Despite recent success, however, the performances of certain batters have drawn question marks. Saif Hassan and Afif Hossain scored at averages of 17.33 and 19 respectively in three innings against Pakistan, which fell short of expectations. No changes have been made in the pace-bowling unit, as the selectors have retained Nahid Rana, Taskin Ahmed,



Mustafizur Rahman, and Shoriful Islam. This decision is being viewed as a move towards greater stability in the attack, in contrast to the recent practice of frequently rotating bowlers. Five

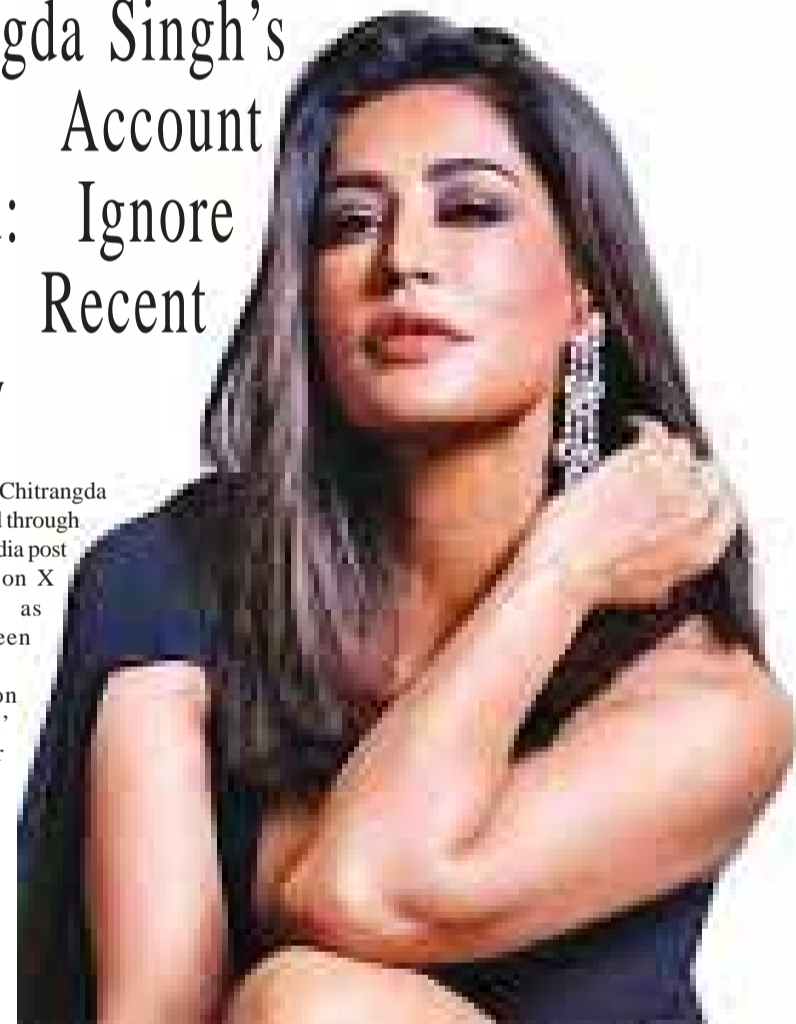
players from the Bangladesh squad are currently participating in a league currently underway in Pakistan. All of them are scheduled to join the national team on 12 April. According to reports,

after the ODI series ends, only Mustafizur Rahman will return to the league, while the rest will stay with the national side. Following the three ODIs, both countries will also play a three-match Twenty20 series.

Chitragda Singh's Twitter Account Hacked: Ignore Any Recent Activity

Mumbai: Actress Chitragda Singh has informed through her latest social media post that her account on X (Earlier known as Twitter) has been hacked.

The 'Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi' actress further revealed that they are in the process of retrieving her account. Until then, she has requested the netizens to ignore any recent activity or messages from her handle. Taking to the Stories section of her official Instagram handle, Chitragda wrote, "Hi everyone, my account on Twitter has been hacked. We are in the process of retrieving the same. Please ignore any recent activity or messages from it until it's resolved. Thank you (sic)." Talking about her professional commitments, Chitragda will next be seen sharing screen space with Salman Khan in "Maatrubhumi", which was previously called "Battle of Galwan". Earlier, talking about being a part of the much-awaited drama, she termed the experience as "truly special". She took to her official Instagram handle and penned a note expressing her gratitude for being a part of the war drama. "Posted @withregram • @skfilmsofficial Simplicity and Elegance personified... Welcoming @chitragda to the Battle Of Galwan team Thank you so much for making me part of this .. it is truly special ! I look forward to working with the whole team," she went on to write on the photo-sharing app. Under the direction of Apoorva Lakhia, "Maatrubhumi" is a cinematic adaptation of the real-life events of June 15, 2020, when our Indian soldiers clashed with Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley. The drama will reportedly share the tale of Colonel Santosh Babu (played by Salman Khan) and the 16 Bihar Regiment, who were tasked with enforcing a disengagement agreement along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The core cast of the movie also includes Abhilash Chaudhary and Ankur Bhatia in prominent roles, along with others.



Raza Murad Remembers 'The One Man Acting Institution' Dilip Kumar

Mumbai: Veteran actor Raza Murad decided to pay a heartfelt tribute to the late legendary actor Dilip Kumar through his latest social media post. Recalling one of the most memorable moments of his life with the 'one man acting institution', Raza Murad posted a picture with Dilip Kumar on his official Instagram handle. He pointed out that Dilip

Kumar managed to keep an entire nation hooked with his acting prowess for almost 6 decades, bringing to life every character he decided to play on screen. Expressing his admiration for the legend, Raza Murad wrote on the photo-sharing app, "The most memorable moment of my life with my ideal, my

idol, inspiration of all actors, the one man acting institution, one and only, the thespian, Dilip Kumar Sahab. Dilip Sahab had kept the entire nation spellbound with his matchless histrionics for more than six decades. He has immortalized all the characters he has played on the silver screen. My millions salute to the immortal legend, Dilip Sahab (sic).