

# Dumani Mail

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## PM Modi extend warm wishes to newly appointed Bihar CM, Deputy CMs

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended heartfelt greetings to Samrat Chaudhary upon taking the oath as the Bihar Chief Minister, succeeding Nitish Kumar.

Taking it on X, he said that Choudhary's excellence, enthusiasm, and experience will benefit the state and drive it towards development.

"Heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Samrat Chaudhary on taking oath as the Chief Minister of Bihar! His energy, dedication to public service, and grassroots experience will prove extremely beneficial for the state. I am fully confident that under his

capable leadership, while fulfilling the aspirations of the people, Bihar will touch new heights of all-round development," he wrote.

PM Modi also congratulated Vijay Kumar Chaudhary and Bijendra Prasad Yadav on assuming charge as the Deputy Chief Ministers of Bihar.

In another X post, the Prime Minister exuded confidence on both the Deputy CMs of Bihar, saying, "Heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Vijay Kumar Chaudhary and Bijendra Prasad Yadav on taking oath as Deputy Chief Ministers of Bihar! I am fully confident that their ground-level experience



and commitment to public welfare will give a new direction and momentum to Bihar's development. Along with this, the state will establish ever-new standards of good governance, transparency,

and public welfare."

Earlier in the day, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Samrat Choudhary took an oath as Bihar Chief Minister.

Choudhary arrived at the Governor's residence,

Bihar Lok Bhavan, earlier in the morning to be sworn in as CM, succeeding Nitish Kumar, who had served as leader of the state for over a decade before deciding to go to the Rajya Sabha.

Bihar Governor Syed Ata Hasnain administered the oath of office to Samrat Choudhary at Lok Bhavan in Patna. He becomes the first Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Chief Minister of Bihar following the resignation of Nitish Kumar.

The 57-year-old faces a significant challenge as he prepares to succeed Nitish Kumar, who was sworn in as Chief Minister for a record 10th time in 2025

following the NDA's historic victory in the assembly elections.

His elevation marks the end of an era dominated by Nitish Kumar's "Sushasan" (good governance) and the beginning of a new chapter for the NDA in Bihar.

Choudhary's rise to power is notable, given his humble beginnings in politics. He started his career in the 1990s with the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and later joined the BJP in 2018.

Senior Janata Dal (United) leader and Bihar Finance Minister Bijendra Prasad Yadav and party leader Vijay Kumar Choudhary took oaths as the Deputy Chief Ministers of Bihar.

## Delhi HC allows sperm retrieval of soldier, treats prior IVF consent as valid

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has permitted the retrieval and cryopreservation of sperm of a soldier in a persistent vegetative state, directing authorities not to deny the procedure solely due to the absence of fresh written consent.

The Court held that the soldier's prior consent to undergo In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) treatment would be treated as valid under the law.

Justice Purushendra Kumar Kaurav, in an order dated April 13, 2026, further directed that the petitioner-wife's consent may be treated as sufficient for carrying forward IVF-related procedures, subject to statutory requirements and the medical condition of the soldier.

The case was filed by the wife of an Indian Army soldier who suffered a severe traumatic brain injury while on duty in Jammu and Kashmir and has since remained in a vegetative state.

The couple had earlier opted for IVF treatment to conceive a child.

A medical board at Army Hospital (R&R), Delhi Cantt, informed the Court that while sperm retrieval was technically feasible, the chances of obtaining viable sperm were minimal. It also noted that the soldier lacked the capacity to provide informed consent as required under the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021.

Addressing this, the Court emphasised that procedural

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requirements cannot override fundamental rights. It held that reproductive autonomy and the right to motherhood under Article 21 must be interpreted in a manner that advances justice.

The Court further noted that the soldier had already consented to IVF treatment before the accident, and such consent could not be rendered meaningless due to his subsequent incapacity.

Relying on judicial precedents, the Delhi High Court reiterated that Indian law does not prohibit such procedures where consent can be reasonably established. It accordingly directed authorities to proceed without insisting on fresh written consent from the soldier.

## Centre asked to clarify position on transgender identity in official records: Delhi HC

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has sought a detailed response from the Union of India on issues concerning the recognition and recording of transgender persons in educational and official documents, observing that the outcome of the case could have far-reaching implications

across multiple government records.

A Division Bench of Justice Prathiba M. Singh and Justice Madhu Jain, while hearing a batch of petitions, directed that the Secretary of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) be impleaded as a respondent and asked

the Centre to file its stand by way of an affidavit within six weeks.

The Court noted that the petitions raise questions regarding how transgender persons are identified in certificates issued by institutions such as the University of Delhi and the CBSE. It further observed

that any directions passed in the matter may also affect other official documentation, including birth and death certificates, passports, Aadhaar cards and driving licences.

During the hearing, counsel for CBSE referred to the Transgender Persons (Protection of

Rights) Amendment Act, 2026, highlighting changes in the statutory definition of a "transgender person." However, the petitioners argued that the amendment is yet to be notified and submitted that they would fall within the amended definition in any case. Taking note of the

broader ramifications, the Court permitted the Centre to consult other ministries, if required, to assist in framing comprehensive directions. It also directed parties to file written submissions addressing the effect of the amendment before the next date of hearing on July 15, 2026.

## Delhi launches 'safe school campaign' to boost fire safety awareness

New Delhi: Delhi Home Minister Ashish launched a city-wide fire safety awareness drive on Wednesday, including the "Safe School Campaign", aimed at strengthening safety mechanisms in schools and hospitals across the national capital.

The campaign, organised by the Education Department and the Delhi Fire Service as part of Fire Service Week, being observed from April 14 to 20, seeks to enhance public participation in promoting fire prevention and preparedness, according to a statement.

Addressing the programme virtually, Sood noted that ensuring safety is a collective responsibility and called upon citizens to



actively contribute towards building a safer environment.

Under the campaign, compliance with fire safety norms in both government and private schools will be reinforced, officials said.

Highlighting the significance of Fire Service Week, the minister paid tribute to 66 firefighters who lost their lives in a major fire

incident aboard a ship in Mumbai in 1944. He said the observance serves as a reminder of the importance of fire safety and preparedness.

Referring to this year's theme focusing on safe schools, hospitals and a fire-aware society, Sood stressed that the safety of children remains a top priority. He

said the Delhi Fire Service responded to over 36,000 emergency calls in the past year and is continuously upgrading its technology and training systems.

The minister also urged students to remain aware and prepared to deal with fire-related emergencies and encouraged participation in mock drills and safety

demonstrations. More than 1,000 awareness camps have been conducted so far, training over 50,000 people in fire safety measures, the statement mentioned.

Sood advised citizens to follow basic precautions such as keeping emergency exits clear, using electrical appliances safely and contacting emergency helplines like 101 or 112 in case of fire.

He also called on school authorities to ensure proper training of staff in handling fire safety equipment.

Appealing to parents, teachers and students to remain vigilant, the minister said awareness and preparedness are key to preventing fire-related incidents.

## Austria Chancellor Christian Stocker Arrives in India on First Official Visit

New Delhi: Austrian Federal Chancellor Dr. Christian Stocker arrived in India on Tuesday on a four-day official visit aimed at strengthening the 'Enhanced India-Austria partnership'. This marks his first visit to India as well as his first official trip to Asia.

On arrival, the visiting dignitary was accorded a warm welcome at the airport by Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Raksha Khadse.

In a post on X, the Ministry of External Affairs said, "A warm welcome to Federal Chancellor Dr. Christian Stocker of Austria on his first official visit to India. India and Austria share a warm and friendly relationship. Chancellor Stocker's visit will impart further momentum to the Enhanced India-Austria

partnership." During the visit, Prime Minister Modi and Chancellor Stocker will hold wide-ranging discussions covering key areas of bilateral cooperation. The talks are also expected to include exchanges on regional and global issues of mutual interest, including cooperation in multilateral fora.

The visit comes at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and is being accompanied by a high-level delegation, including Austria's Federal Minister of Economy, Energy and Tourism Dr. Wolfgang Hattmannsdorfer, along with senior officials and business leaders.

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The Prime Minister will host a lunch in honour of the visiting leader.

Chancellor Stocker is also scheduled to call on President Droupadi Murmu, while External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar will meet him separately.

India and Austria share longstanding, friendly and multi-faceted ties based on shared democratic values. The visit follows Prime Minister Modi's trip to Austria in July 2024, which gave fresh momentum to bilateral relations.

## Justice Sharma's children empanelled govt lawyers: Kerjwal in HC on recusal plea

New Delhi, Seeking recusal of Delhi High Court judge Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma, former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has claimed in an affidavit that the judge's children are empanelled central government lawyers who receive work through solicitor general Tushar Mehta who appeared for the CBI.

Kejriwal, in an additional affidavit filed in relation to his application seeking Justice Sharma to withdraw from hearing the probe agency's petition against his

discharge in the liquor policy case, said there was a "direct conflict of interest", which "amplified" his apprehension and constituted grounds for recusal.

He also prayed for time to make further oral and rejoinder submissions, fearing that continuing the case before Justice Sharma might not carry the "full appearance of judicial detachment, independence and neutrality that the law requires".

"a criminal case of this nature, where the prosecuting agency is the CBI, where the

Central government's highest law officers appear against me, and where the immediate family members of the Hon'ble Judge hold multiple live Central government panel engagements and receive government work through the same legal establishment and law officer, the apprehension becomes direct, grave and impossible for me to ignore," the affidavit dated April 14 claimed.

Relying on documents in the public domain, including information received under the RTI mechanism,

Relying on documents in the public domain, including information received under the RTI mechanism, Kejriwal alleged that substantial legal work was allocated to Justice Sharma's son.

"The RTI reply reported that the said social media post also mentioned that a total of 2,487 cases were marked to the son of the Hon'ble Justice in the year 2023; 1,784 cases in 2024 and 1,633 cases in 2025," the affidavit submitted.

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2023; 1,784 cases in 2024 and 1,633 cases in 2025," the affidavit submitted.

Kejriwal said he learnt about these "material facts" after filing the recusal application and emphasised that empanelment by the central government was not honorary but involved court

appearances and financial benefit.

In the affidavit, he further submitted that when Justice Sharma reserved verdict on the recusal application on April 13 after holding court till 7 pm, he was not given a fair and reasonable opportunity to

make rejoinder submissions.

The Chief also said that during the pendency of the recusal application, the court proceeded to pass "effective" orders that closed his right to file a reply to the CBI's petition if the same was not done within a week, which aggravated his apprehension.

Kejriwal raised several objections against the judge hearing the CBI plea on April 13, including that she had earlier denied him relief on his petition challenging his arrest, refused to grant relief on bail pleas of other accused, including Manish Sisodia and

K Kavitha, and also made "strong and conclusive" findings.

SG Mehta opposed the plea and urged Justice Sharma to initiate contempt action against Kejriwal and others for seeking her recusal.

Termining concerns by Kejriwal and others as "apprehensions of an immature mind," Mehta told the court it was a matter of "institutional respect" and Justice Sharma should not succumb to pressure as her recusal on "unfounded allegations" would set a bad precedent.

Pandit Basudev Mahapatra: An Guide for the Next Generation

Puri: The Odia New Year festival was celebrated at the Youth Hostel conference hall located on Chakratirtha Road under the auspices of the Pandit Basudev Mahapatra Memorial Committee.

At the beginning, Bijay Kumar Panda presented a devotional song dedicated to Lord Jagannath. The chief guest of the event was Professor Satyanarayan Acharya, Vice-Chancellor of Satyabadi Odia University.

In his address, Prof. Acharya said that Pandit Basudev Mahapatra was an ideal guide for the younger generation, offering a path not only for a meaningful life but also rooted in spiritual values. He emphasized that the Odia New Year is a matter of



pride and glory for all Odias. Our heritage, culture, and traditions have enriched us, and we must come together to preserve and promote them.

The Chief speaker, Santosh Kumar Sethi, Deputy Director of

the State Information and Public Relations Department, stated that the Odia New Year should be regarded as a festival of the Odia people. It is our responsibility to integrate it with our cultural traditions and

collectively celebrate it.

The meeting was presided over by Binay Nrusingha Mahapatra, President of the Memorial Committee. Other distinguished guests included senior advocate Rachita Rautray,

educationists Krishna Mahapatra and Harihar Mahapatra, and journalist Laxminarayan Pattnaik.

Participants in the discussion session included advocate Sudeshna Panda, Tribikram Mahapatra, Professor Sarat Chandra Sahu, Sarbani Das, Bipin Bihari Dalei, Sanjita Rath, Kamalini Panigrahi, Prabhasini Mishra, Umakanta Mahapatra, Soumya Ranjan Mallik, Purnnamasi Devi, Satyabhama Nayak, and Pooja Pradhan.

On this occasion, the spiritual book Sudashabrata authored by astrologer Meenaketa Patjosi was officially released by the guests. The event was supported by Rajkishore Mohanty, Debadatta Mahapatra, Tapan Kumar Sethi, and others.

District-Level Ambedkar Jayanti Celebrated in Puri

Puri: The district-level celebration of Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhim Rao Ramji Ambedkar's birth anniversary was held today at Sanskruti Bhavan. The Additional District Magistrate (Administration), Sarat Chandra Behera, attended as the chief guest and stated that Dr. Ambedkar, the architect of the Constitution, will always be remembered.

He said that despite coming from a poor Dalit family during difficult times, Ambedkar achieved success through his dedication to education and relentless struggle. While some countries do not have their own constitutions, India's Constitution is the largest in the world. It makes us aware of our duties, responsibilities, and rights. The benefits of building a prosperous society based on social justice, equality, and the eradication of untouchability are evident today in the presence of women and people from Dalit communities in the highest positions of society.

Sub-Collector Raj Kishore Jena, another guest, said that the Constitution ensures justice for all. He added that the way Dr. Ambedkar carefully drafted it is

unique and rare across the world. He also extended greetings on the Odia New Year.

District Welfare Officer Mamata Rani Parida said that strengthening the social system and ensuring justice for Dalits, persons with disabilities, and women through legal provisions was one of Dr. Ambedkar's greatest achievements. Deputy Director of Information and Public Relations Santosh Kumar Sethi presided over the event and said that Ambedkar is not only the architect of the Constitution but also a symbol of national consciousness, legal rights, protection, and equality.

Prizes were awarded to winners of various competitions held earlier among government employees (on administrative language knowledge) and among students of educational institutions.

Finally, District Culture Officer Hemanta Behera delivered the vote of thanks. As the day also marked the Odia New Year and Pana Sankranti, traditional pana was distributed to all.

Outstanding Performance by Aditya Uday Sports Club Girls' Team in CM Trophy.

Sambalpur.(DMS) : Aditya Aluminium, Lapanga, under its community development initiative, has launched the Lakshya Project aimed at promoting integrated sports development among tribal girls in nearby villages.

As part of the initiative, a talent identification programme was conducted in nearby government schools, through which 45 talented girls were selected and enrolled in the Aditya Uday Sports Club. To nurture their sporting potential, Aditya Aluminium has developed a football ground, engaged a full-time D-License football coach, and provided essential training equipment and facilities to enable the girls to participate in football



matches within the district and beyond.

Each girl has been provided with sports kits and jerseys, and the company has recently introduced monthly nutrition kits to support their health and fitness. The nutrition kits were distributed in the presence of their

parents, strengthening community engagement and encouragement. The girls undergo regular daily training as part of the programme.

With this dedicated effort, the Aditya Uday Sports Club girls' team recently participated in the Chief Minister's Trophy football

tournament organized by the Sambalpur District Administration and FAO. In the first round of the tournament, the team delivered an outstanding performance by defeating St. John's School with a remarkable score of 14-0. In the match, Barsha Munda from Katarbaga

village of Katarbaga Gram Panchayat, scored 9 goals, Neelam Oram scored 3 and Rita Khadia 2 goal from Lahamani village of Jangala Gram Panchayat showcasing exceptional talent and teamwork.

Parents of the players expressed their gratitude, stating that such opportunities were never available earlier. They acknowledged that, through the support of Aditya Aluminium, their daughters are now getting a platform to develop their sports talents and pursue new aspirations.

Aditya Aluminium remains committed to empowering rural and tribal youth through sports, education, and community development initiatives.

Veer Surendra Sai Museum Inaugurated in Sambalpur.



Sambalpur, April 15 (DMS): Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the "Veer Surendra Sai Museum" in Sambalpur, stating that it will inspire future generations to learn about their heritage and history.

The museum, dedicated to the legendary freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai, has been set up at Dalaipada in Sambalpur. Speaking on the occasion, Pradhan described Surendra Sai as a symbol of courage, patience, and valor, and said the museum is a tribute to the region's rich legacy of bravery and self-respect.

He highlighted that the museum has been developed through the joint efforts of the state's Culture and Tourism Department, district administration, and Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage. It showcases rare photographs, artworks, and exhibits reflecting Sambalpur's history, culture, and traditions, along with depictions of eminent freedom fighters and local heroes.

Pradhan noted that, according to the Archaeological Survey of India, Sambalpur's history dates back over 10,000 years, as

evidenced by ancient cave paintings and rock art. He also mentioned the cultural significance of the region, including the revered Samaleswari Temple and the Mahanadi river basin.

Emphasizing education, he said that through the National Education Policy, efforts are being made to bring the stories of regional freedom fighters to a national platform. He invited students and youth to visit the museum and connect with their roots.

During discussions with district officials, the Minister also revealed plans to establish an Art, Music, and Craft College in Sambalpur. He stressed the need to complete the ongoing auditorium project, which will provide a platform for local artists.

Pradhan further stated that Sambalpur's rich cultural traditions—such as Panchabadyam, Dalkhai dance, and the iconic folk song Rangabati—will be further promoted and strengthened, ensuring better opportunities and recognition for local artists.

Water Crisis Hits Makidia Community: 105 Families Struggle in Anand Nagar.

Sambalpur-15/04(DMS) While some regions face electricity shortages and others struggle with access to education, residents of Anand Nagar village in Jamankira block are battling a severe drinking water crisis. Despite its name suggesting happiness, life in the village is extremely difficult.

Anand Nagar, located under Kulundi Panchayat (Ward No. 16), is home to over 105 families belonging to the Makidia tribal community, with a population of more than 400 people. Locally known as "Makidiapada," the village lies just about 100 meters from Kadlupal Chhak along National Highway No. 53.

Even though there are four tube wells in the village, they are insufficient to meet the needs of the population. Villagers say the available water sources cannot provide adequate drinking water. As a result, residents depend on a nearby stream located between Kadlupal Chhak and Haldibahal road for their daily needs such as bathing and sanitation.

However, the condition of the stream has worsened. The water has become polluted with fallen leaves, turned black in color, and emits a foul smell. Villagers fear that using this contaminated water may lead to various skin diseases.

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According to locals, the stream usually dries up by February. This year, a small check dam has helped retain water for a few more days. But once it dries up, residents will be forced to cross National Highway 53 and travel nearly 2 kilometers to Kadlupal Kata to fetch water. This poses serious

risks, especially for women and children.

Villagers including Samari Hembram, Sunita Khadia, Sarojini Khadia, Shanti Munda, Umlan Kandolana, and others have demanded the construction of a permanent water source for basic needs like bathing and sanitation. They have urged the

Panchayat and block administration to take immediate action. What raises concern is that despite frequent movement of officials, leaders, and ministers along the nearby highway, the plight of Anand Nagar remains largely ignored. The villagers hope for urgent intervention, especially since the area falls under the constituency of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, and Drinking Water Minister Rabinarayan Naik. The ongoing water crisis in this tribal village highlights a serious gap in basic infrastructure and calls for immediate government attention.

Angul: Chhendipada Naini Mines (SCCL) faces difficulty despite all agreements and clearances from State Govt

The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), a Government coal company jointly owned by Telangana and the Government of India, was allotted the 10-million-tonne Naini Coal Mine in Chhendipada, Angul district, in 2015 to meet the fuel needs of its 1200 MW thermal power plant. SCCL, which operates 39 mines and contributes nearly 9% of India's domestic coal supply, has since completed all statutory formalities and invested heavily to operationalize the Naini project.

The Naini block lies in a greenfield zone of the Talcher coalfields, an area that currently lacks railway connectivity and a dedicated coal corridor. To

address this, a 68-km common rail line was planned by Mahanadi Coal Railway Ltd. (MCRL), a joint venture of MCL, IRCON and IDCO. However, after completing only 14 km of the Angul-Balaram stretch, the project stalled and the JV entered liquidation, leaving the remaining 48 km unfinished.

Pending the railway line, SCCL proposed to transport coal via the existing Chhendipada-Jarapada ODR road, as permitted in the approved Mining Plan and Environmental Clearance. Responding to SCCL's request, the district administration proposed strengthening the road



and constructing bypasses in three villages. SCCL deposited ₹35.23 crore in December 2021 as its share of the cost, but the road work has not progressed.

Meanwhile, villagers along the route—including Tentuloi, Balipata, Durgapur, Kosala and Jarapada—have been protesting against coal-laden truck

movement, citing safety hazards and pollution. Their resistance has blocked coal evacuation from the mine, despite police deployment by the District Administration. Ministry of coal, considering the logistic issues permitted to sell coal through auction route to power plants. Meenakshi Energy Limited, Jindal India power limited, Jindal steel and power limited and GMR Kamalanga collectively secured 17.60 Lakh ton of coal for offtake from the pit head of the mine. Meenakshi Energy Ltd planned for coal transportation under R-C-R mode utilising SH-63 road and Hindol Road and Kamakhyanager sidings but

transportation again faced road blockades by the resident of Kosala leaving trucks stranded for weeks.

Mining operations at Naini began on 1 May 2025, but due to evacuation issues and continuous local opposition nearly 80,000 tonnes of coal remain stocked at the mine, and operations had to be halted from 1 March 2026.

SCCL has already invested over ₹800 crore in grounding the project—more than ₹400 crore paid to the State Forest Department towards NPV, Compensatory Afforestation and statutory levies, and over ₹350 crore for private land acquisition and EC compliances. The company has also spent ₹4-5 crore

on CSR works such as drinking water, roads and solar lighting, and around ₹6.5 crore on large-scale plantation activities in partnership with the Forest Department.

Despite full compliance, clearances and substantial investment, SCCL remains unable to dispatch coal from the Naini mine. The continued blockade is causing heavy financial losses to the company and significant revenue loss to the State Exchequer of around Rs 1500 cr per annum through forgone royalty, DMF, reserve price and GST. The situation is also affecting coal availability for power plants, making it critical for both industry and the State.

## Odisha Implements OSWAS Across All Urban Local Bodies, Boosting Digital Governance

Bhubaneswar, 15 April (H.S.): In a major push towards digital governance, the Housing & Urban Development Department of Odisha has successfully implemented the Odisha Secretariat Workflow Automation System (OSWAS) across all 115 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in the state.

The rollout covers 5 Municipal Corporations, 48 Municipalities, and 62 Notified Area Councils, marking a shift from manual, paper-based processes to a unified digital workflow



system. Developed with support from Odisha Computer Application Centre in collaboration with Tata Consultancy Services,

the platform enables end-to-end digital file management with real-time tracking, role-based routing, and time-bound decision-making.

Housing & Urban Development Minister Dr. Krushna Chandra Mahapatra said the initiative will enhance transparency, speed, and accountability in urban administration, helping ULBs deliver improved services to citizens.

Earlier, municipal governance faced challenges such as manual file handling, lack of standardised processes, and limited monitoring. OSWAS addresses these issues through digital workflows, audit trails, and automated escalation mechanisms.

Additional Chief Secretary Usha Padhee described the rollout as a significant administrative reform that strengthens accountability and enables data-driven decision-making. With features like real-time dashboards for monitoring file movement and pendency, the system is expected to reduce delays, improve coordination, and enhance overall efficiency. The initiative is seen as a key step towards building transparent and technology-driven urban governance in Odisha.

## Mohan Charan Majhi Congratulates CBSE Class X Students, Wishes Them Success

Bhubaneswar, 15 April (H.S.): Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Wednesday congratulated students who cleared the Class X examinations conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), and extended his best wishes for their future.

In a post on social media platform X, the Chief Minister praised the students for their dedication and hard work. He encouraged them to remain confident and resilient, irrespective of their results, and to face life's challenges with determination.

"Students should move forward with confidence and continue striving to build a better future. Their efforts will bring pride to the state as well as the country," Majhi said.



## RDC-Level Probe Ordered into Death of Mayurbhanj Ashram School Student

Bhubaneswar, 15 April (H.S.): Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has ordered a Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC)-level inquiry into the death of Rupali Beshra, a Class V student of an Ashram School in Rasgovindpur area of Mayurbhanj district.

Rupali, daughter of Durga Beshra from Rasagobindapur tehsil, reportedly died due to suspected food poisoning at the school hostel. Several other students also fell ill

following the incident, raising serious concerns over food safety and hygiene at the residential institution.

The RDC of the Central Division has been directed to visit the spot on the morning of April 16 and conduct a comprehensive inquiry into the circumstances leading to the student's death and the sudden illness of others.

Expressing deep grief over the tragic incident, the Chief Minister conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family. He also announced an

ex-gratia assistance of ₹3 lakh from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) to the next of kin of the deceased.

Meanwhile, two medical teams have been mobilised to assess the health condition of the affected students. One team, comprising the Joint Director of the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) and a microbiologist, is already stationed in Baripada, while another team is scheduled to reach Rasgovindpur on Wednesday for further investigation and medical support.

## Odisha Plans Slot Booking System for Darshan at Shree Jagannath Temple

Bhubaneswar, 15 April (H.S.): The Odisha government is set to introduce a slot booking system for darshan at the revered Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri, aiming to streamline the movement of devotees and enhance overall convenience.

Informing about the development, Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan said on Wednesday that the proposed system will be rolled out shortly. He clarified that both the

existing queue-based darshan and the new slot booking facility will operate simultaneously.

"Efforts are being made to ensure that both line darshan and slot booking darshan continue in parallel to facilitate a hassle-free experience for devotees," the minister said.

Under the proposed system, devotees opting for slot booking will be required to wait in a designated holding area before being allowed entry for darshan of



the Holy Trinity. This arrangement is expected to help regulate crowd flow,

particularly during peak hours and festive occasions. The traditional 'Dhadi

darshan' system will continue alongside the new initiative.

Additionally, the government has initiated the tender process to install air-conditioning in the Nata Mandap to improve comfort for visitors.

The minister further informed that the slot booking facility will be introduced on a pilot basis initially, and necessary refinements will be made based on feedback and operational experience.

## Complaint Filed Over Alleged Missing Jewels from Ratna Bhandar of Shree Jagannath Temple

Bhubaneswar, 15 April (H.S.): A complaint has been lodged at the Singhadwara police station in Odisha's Puri district seeking an investigation into the alleged disappearance of three jewels from the outer chamber of the Ratna Bhandar of the Shree Jagannath Temple.

The complaint was filed by members of Shri Jagannath Sena, who have demanded a thorough probe into the incident and strict action against those found responsible.

The issue came to light after Justice Biswanath Rath, chairman of the temple's Jewels Monitoring Committee, informed the media that three ornaments were found missing from the outer Ratna Bhandar.

Reacting to the development, the organisation's convener Priyadarshan Patnaik questioned how the ornaments went missing and why a proper inventory was not conducted when the valuables were shifted from the outer chamber to a

temporary storage facility. "The incident has hurt crores of Jagannath devotees," he said.

Patnaik further alleged that despite the matter coming to light, there were attempts to suppress it. He urged the state government to order a detailed investigation and ensure stringent action against those responsible. The organisation also warned that if appropriate action is not taken, it will approach the Central Bureau of Investigation and stage protests on highways in the coming days.

## IMD Issues Yellow Warning for Heatwave and Thunderstorms in Odisha

Bhubaneswar, 15 April (H.S.): The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a series of weather alerts for Odisha, warning of heatwave conditions and thunderstorm activity over the next few days.

According to the IMD, hot and humid conditions are expected to prevail from Today to April 18 across several districts, including Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, and Gajapati. These conditions are likely to impact daily life and increase the risk of heat-related illnesses.

For April 16 and 17, heatwave conditions are likely in districts such as Bolangir, Jharsuguda,



Sambalpur, and Sonepur. At the same time, thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty winds (30-40 kmph) are expected in parts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, and Balasore.

By April 18, light to moderate rainfall or thunderstorms are likely at isolated places in southern and central districts, including Rayagada, Koraput, and

Malkangiri, which may bring some relief from the prevailing heat. However, thunderstorm activity with gusty winds is expected to continue.

The IMD further indicated that heatwave conditions may extend to districts like Sundergarh, Bargarh, and Angul in the coming days, with heat warnings likely to remain in place until April 21.

## Public Darshan at Shree Jagannath Temple to Remain Closed for Four Hours Today Evening

Bhubaneswar, 15 April (H.S.): Public darshan at the Shree Jagannath Temple will remain suspended for four hours this evening due to the observance of the sacred Banakalangi Niti ritual of the deities.

According to an official notification issued by the

Shree Jagannath Temple Administration, the ritual will be performed on Wednesday, marking the auspicious occasion of Baishakha Krishna Trayodashi.

As per the schedule, public access for darshan will be restricted from 6:00 PM

to 10:00 PM, following the completion of the second Bhogamandap Bhoga (offering of food to the deities).

Devotees are advised to plan their visit accordingly, as entry into the temple premises will not be permitted during this period.

## Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma Targets Rahul Gandhi During Odisha Visit, Expresses Confidence in BJP's Assam Prospects

Bhubaneswar, 15 April (H.S.): Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on Rahul Gandhi during his visit to Odisha, intensifying the political rhetoric between the BJP and the Congress.

Sarma, who arrived in Bhubaneswar in the morning, visited the Shree Jagannath Temple to seek blessings from Lord Jagannath and His siblings ahead of the upcoming assembly election results in Assam.

Interacting with mediapersons upon arrival, the Assam Chief Minister made remark against Rahul Gandhi. Responding to queries, he said, "Rahul Gandhi is a crazy person.



Why are you asking about him?"

Addressing allegations related to "golden visas," Sarma challenged his critics to present evidence. He stated that neither he nor his family members possess any such visa and dared opponents to make their documents public, asserting

transparency on his part.

On being asked about the recent raids by the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Sarma downplayed the issue, saying he had no information and refrained from further comment.

Speaking about his political engagements, Sarma said that after

offering prayers in Puri, he would travel to Kolkata for campaigning. Expressing strong confidence in his party's prospects, he asserted that the BJP would "definitely form the government" in Assam.

The Assam Chief Minister is on a day-long visit to Odisha and is scheduled to return to Bhubaneswar after his Puri trip before flying back to Assam later in the day.

Odisha CM Mohan Majhi Congratulates Samrat Choudhary on Becoming Bihar Chief Minister. Bhubaneswar, 15 April (H.S.): Mohan Charan Majhi has extended his heartfelt congratulations and

best wishes to Samrat Choudhary on assuming office as the Chief Minister of Bihar.

In a social media post, the Odisha Chief Minister expressed confidence that under the leadership of Samrat Choudhary, and with the visionary guidance of Narendra Modi, Bihar will achieve new milestones in development, good governance, and inclusive growth.

Majhi also wished the newly sworn-in Chief Minister a successful and impactful tenure ahead, expressing hope that the state will continue to progress on the path of prosperity and progress.

## Odisha AM/NS India Gymnastics High Performance Centre hosts elite gymnastics coaching program

Bhubaneswar : In a major step to elevate gymnastics coaching standards across Asia, Odisha AM/NS India Gymnastics High Performance Centre (HPC) proudly hosted the World Gymnastics Academy – Artistic Level 1 Coaches Education Program at Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar. This milestone marks the first-ever delivery of a globally benchmarked FIG Academy Coaches Education Program at the HPC, reinforcing its growing reputation as a regional hub of excellence. The five-day program brought together around 50 coaches from across Asia, who were selected for the course through online examination conducted by World Gymnastics.

Out of the nine coaches selected from Odisha, five are from the Odisha AM/NS India Gymnastics High Performance Centre namely Ankita Baidya, Mohit

Manro, Barindrita Roy, Sachin Sharma, and Pareswar Pushpalak.

The program was led by internationally acclaimed FIG Academy Experts, Men Artistic Gymnastics (MAG) specialists Damien Millot (Course Leader) from France and Jonathan Martin from Belgium along with Women Artistic Gymnastics (WAG) experts Andrei Levit from Poland and Monica Calabro from Argentina. Together, they imparted advanced, globally aligned coaching methodologies to participants. The intensive curriculum covered critical apparatus and disciplines including MAG & WAG Vault, MAG Pommel Horse, WAG Floor, WAG Beam and Floor combinations, and WAG Artistic Preparation, along with a wide range of technical skills essential for modern day gymnastics coaching. The program is expected to create a lasting impact by enhancing

coaching standards, fostering a culture of continuous learning, and contributing to the development of athletes capable of competing at the highest international level.

All the five coaches from HPC successfully completed the Level 1 certification program. Notably, in the men's category, Sachin Sharma emerged as the topper of the certification program, with Mohit Manro ranking third. This shows the advanced coaching expertise being nurtured at the centre.

Hosting this program marks a significant step forward for the Odisha AM/NS India High Performance Centre. Beyond immediate knowledge transfer, it enables direct access to international expertise, elevates the technical capabilities of in-house coaches, and strengthens the centre's position as a leading destination for elite gymnastics training in India and Asia.

## 61-Day Fishing Ban Comes into Force Along Odisha Coast to Safeguard Marine Life

Bhubaneswar, 15 April (H.S.): The state Fisheries Department has enforced a 61-day fishing ban along the entire coastline of Odisha from April 15 to June 14, 2026, as part of measures to protect marine biodiversity during the critical breeding season.

According to the government directive, all trawlers and mechanised fishing boats have been barred from venturing into the sea during this period. However, traditional and



motorised boats up to 8.5 metres in length have been exempted from the

restriction.

The annual prohibition is aimed at conserving marine

resources by allowing fish and other aquatic species to breed and spawn without disturbance. The ban also coincides with a period of rough sea conditions, making fishing operations potentially hazardous. By limiting large-scale fishing, authorities seek to promote the regeneration of fish stocks and ensure long-term ecological sustainability.

The restriction is likely to have a significant economic impact on fishing communities, particularly in

coastal districts such as Ganjam, where a majority of families rely heavily on daily fishing for their livelihood. With fishing activities suspended for two months, many households may face financial challenges.

Officials have cautioned that strict action will be taken against violators. Any breach of the ban will attract penalties, including seizure of vessels and legal proceedings under the Odisha Marine Fishing Regulation Act.

## Dhurandhar Duology Tops 3000 Crores Worldwide; Creates History For Indian Cinema By Becoming The First Film Series To Do So

Bhubaneswar : The two-part Dhurandhar film series has scripted history at the global box office. With the phenomenal performance of both instalments, the combined worldwide gross of the duology has now surpassed the 3000 crore mark, making it the first Indian film series ever to

achieve this extraordinary feat. It is produced by Jyoti Deshpande, Aditya Dhar, and Lokesh Dhar under the banner of Jio Studios and B62 Studios.

The journey began with Dhurandhar, which was released to massive expectations and went on to deliver a blockbuster run,

crossing the 1000 crore mark at the worldwide as well as domestic box office. The film established a strong foundation for what would eventually become one of Indian cinema's biggest franchises.

Dhurandhar – A Box Office Juggernaut and Foundation Stone

## WB Election

THE clock is ticking for lakhs of people whose appeals against the deletion of their names from West Bengal's electoral rolls are pending in appellate tribunals. The Supreme Court has refused to issue directions allowing aggrieved residents to vote, saying that their petition is "premature" and they must exhaust their remedies before the appellate authorities. The tribunals have their work cut out as two-phase polling will be held in the state on April 23 and 29.

From the outset, the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in the state has been marked by a bitter confrontation between the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Election Commission of India (ECI). The entire exercise has been under judicial scrutiny over the past few months amid allegations of "politically motivated" deletions of voters' names. The onus is on the tribunals to expedite the adjudication process. Even though many claims have already been dealt with, the scale of omissions and the anxiety among affected voters cannot be dismissed lightly. The right to vote, as the apex court noted, is not merely constitutional but deeply "sentimental"—a marker of belonging and citizenship. When individuals fear disenfranchisement or, worse, detention, the issue transcends procedural technicalities. Transparency in deletions and swift disposal of appeals are essential to ensure that no eligible voter is left out.

Making matters worse, the Centre-State conflict has not remained confined to the SIR row. The arrest of Vinesh Chandel, co-founder of the Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC)—a consultancy firm working for the TMC—by the Enforcement Directorate in a money-laundering case has emerged as a new flashpoint. With political tensions mounting by the day, free and fair polls in Bengal hinge on the credibility of Central institutions and the cooperation of the state authorities.

## Delhi-Dehradun

THE inauguration of the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway marks a significant milestone in India's infrastructure journey, promising to compress travel time between the national capital and Uttarakhand's gateway city to under three hours. More than a feat of engineering, the project signals a shift in how highways are imagined. They are not merely roads, but also economic corridors linking regions, markets and opportunities. At one level, the benefits are immediate and tangible. Faster connectivity is expected to boost tourism to Dehradun and Mussoorie, ease congestion on existing routes and stimulate economic activity across western Uttar Pradesh. Districts like Saharanpur and Shamli, often bypassed in earlier development cycles, could see gains in logistics, warehousing and real estate. In that sense, the expressway fits squarely within the Centre's broader push for integrated, high-speed corridors under programmes like Bharatmala.

What sets this project apart is its attempt to reconcile development with ecological sensitivity. The elevated wildlife corridor through the Rajaji landscape, complete with animal underpasses, reflects a growing recognition that infrastructure must adapt to nature, not the other way around. Karnataka's elephant corridors, linking Bandipur, Nagarhole and adjoining forests, similarly show how connectivity safeguards migration routes while reducing human-wildlife conflict. If effective over time, the new expressway could become a model for future projects in ecologically fragile zones.

However, concerns remain. Reports of last-minute construction fixes and earlier delays raise familiar questions about the quality of execution and the pressure of deadlines. Infrastructure must be judged not by inauguration timelines but by durability, safety and long-term environmental impact. Ultimately, the expressway embodies both promise and caution. It showcases India's ambition to build faster and smarter, but also underscores the need for rigorous standards and accountability. The true success of this project will lie in whether it sustains efficiency without compromising ecological and structural integrity.



# West Asia in Turmoil: Fragile Diplomacy

Tejeswar Patnaik

The ongoing conflict in West Asia has once again exposed the fragility of regional stability and the complexities of global diplomacy. The war involving Iran, the United States, and Israel has escalated into a wider geopolitical crisis with far-reaching implications for energy security, global trade, and international relations. The recent U.S.-Iran talks in Islamabad, following a temporary ceasefire, were driven by the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran had closed. This episode highlights shifting power dynamics in the region. At the same time, India, which currently chairs BRICS, chose to maintain silence on the West Asia crisis, raising concerns about its global standing.

The question remains: why did the talks fail? The 21-hour marathon negotiations between Iran and the United States, mediated by Pakistan, ended inconclusively without any concrete breakthrough. The deadlock centred around three core demands from Iran.

First, Tehran rejected the U.S. insistence on dismantling its nuclear programme and surrendering uranium enrichment capabilities, asserting that its

nuclear activities are strictly for civilian purposes and fall within its sovereign rights.

Second, Iran demanded control over the Strait of Hormuz, including the authority to levy transit fees on ships passing through this critical waterway. This was firmly opposed by the United States, which argued that such control would violate the principle of free navigation and disrupt global shipping.

Third, Iran sought a comprehensive regional ceasefire, including an end to Israeli strikes on Hezbollah in Lebanon. Additional demands—such as war reparations and broader security assurances—were also rejected. Analysts attribute the failure of the talks to a deep trust deficit, domestic political compulsions, and Israel's strategic considerations. U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance termed the outcome a failure, though Iranian officials indicated that diplomatic channels remain open. Meanwhile, President Donald Trump's threat of a naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz further escalated tensions.

The 40-day conflict witnessed intense military engagement between Iran and the U.S.-Israel axis before a fragile two-week ceasefire was

announced. Iran's broader demands—including sanctions relief, withdrawal of U.S. forces, release of frozen assets, and cessation of hostilities in Lebanon—reflect its attempt to reshape West Asian geopolitics.

At the heart of West Asian politics lies the Strait of Hormuz, a critical maritime chokepoint through which nearly 17 million barrels of oil pass daily, along with LNG and fertilisers. Its strategic importance extends beyond energy to global trade, with thousands of vessels carrying essential commodities such as food, medicines, and industrial goods passing through it every month.

Iran's ability to disrupt this route underscores its strategic leverage. The closure of the strait, coupled with the imposition of transit tolls, has far-reaching consequences for global energy prices and supply chains.

The conflict has also reinforced the dynamics of a war-driven global economy. A recent SIPRI report estimated that the United States spent around \$10,300 every second on air strikes against Iran, amounting to approximately ₹8,455 crore per day, including costs related to air operations, munitions, naval deployment, missile defence,

intelligence, and logistics.

Iran's resilience and defiance against joint U.S.-Israel pressure have elevated its stature in the region, projecting it as a dominant power among Islamic nations. At the same time, its missile attacks caused significant damage to oil refineries, infrastructure, and U.S. military bases in Gulf countries, exposing the limitations of American security assurances. Analysts suggest that such developments may prompt Gulf nations to reconfigure their strategic alignments in the future.

However, the most striking aspect of this crisis is India's muted response. As the world's fourth-largest economy and largest democracy, with substantial stakes in West Asia—from energy security to the welfare of its diaspora—India was expected to play a constructive and proactive diplomatic role. Instead, its silence raises concerns about a dilution of its long-standing commitment to strategic autonomy and balanced diplomacy.

In contrast, Pakistan, despite its internal challenges, seized the opportunity by positioning itself as a mediator in the U.S.-Iran talks. It enhanced diplomatic visibility and earned recognition from other nations. During the conflict, Pakistan also remained in contact

with China, which holds considerable influence over Iran, while Russia continues to be a longstanding strategic partner of Tehran.

India's reluctance to initiate or lead meaningful peace efforts risks diminishing its strategic relevance in the region. A civilisational nation that once championed non-alignment, dialogue, and peace now appears to be a passive observer in a crisis where it has significant stakes. In a rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape, silence is not neutrality—it is marginalisation.

The West Asian crisis highlights that enduring conflicts cannot be resolved through military means. They require sustained diplomatic engagement and credible mediation. While global and regional powers continue to negotiate and assert influence, India's absence from the diplomatic arena is increasingly conspicuous. India has long upheld the principle of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"—the world is one family. If it aspires to be a leading global power, it must move beyond cautious detachment and actively engage in conflict resolution. Otherwise, it risks being sidelined in the evolving global order.

Sri Patnaik is a columnist.

# Biju Patnaik: a Legendary Hero

Samir Samantray

A giant transference of energy had taken place between him and his people. He delighted the people by his youthfulness of spirit and body and the people were attracted to his spontaneity and utter freedom from pomposity. In the end, his great strength far outweighed his weakness. Therefore when he died, even his most partisan adversaries felt compelled to acknowledge the immensity of the man they had opposed.

Perhaps no other leader occupied the imagination of the people of Orissa like Biju Patnaik; freedom fighter, pilot, industrialist, politician and philanthropist. He was Orissa's restless son and became a legendary hero. His ability to create confidence among people and inspire them was phenomenal. He had a remarkable capacity to transmit his cheerful strength to others. Biju was basically a secular man and was an instinctively nationalist as his hero Napoleon. Like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, he navigated by the four immutably fixed stars of his convictions—national unity, democracy, secularism and the end of imperialism. Sir Julian Huxley,

UNESCO'S First Director General and also a Kalinga Prize Winner, had described Biju Patnaik as a "remarkable Indian whose adventures would fill a book".

Biju Babu was the first Indian leader who took bold steps towards grassroots level democracy and women's participation in Panchayati Raj system. He believed in the Gandhian ideal of Panchayati Raj as the bulwark of Indian democracy and made sincere efforts to bring it to life. He described every Sarpanch as the Chief Minister of his Panchayat. His policy had been to progressively delegate more and more functions and to fully assist the three-tier system of administration to develop into effective popular institutions for implementation of various developmental works, schemes and programs. As the then Chief Minister, he stated in 1961, "This is a movement of building up leaders of men from the lowest rung of our society and it is not going to be easy. It is almost a people's movement; we are only trying to give some hope, some other direction or some authorities. But the movement can only succeed if we give that authority to the people right from bottom of our social ladder who can exercise



effective leadership. It is a big question and we have in this house got to think with a far greater sympathy and prospective looking at distant future and planning from now how you want the future to be built."

Tales and anecdotes about him are a legion. There is a story that Pt. Nehru once asked Dr.B.C. Roy—'Have you met a man called Biju Patnaik?'. 'I have heard about him; but not yet met him', was the reply of the Bengal Chief Minister. Nehru said, "meet him sometimes.

I like such forward-looking, brave people. The only difficulty is that sometimes you don't know where he will land you".

A long, illustrious career came to an end on 17th April, 1997 when Biju Patnaik passed away at Delhi. His death was one of the worst tragedies that had ever happened to the State of Orissa and removed the greatest figure of our time at the very climax of his career. Grief and shock swept across Orissa as news of his death spread. It was perhaps a tryst with destiny that Patnaik

was cremated at Swargadwara, Puri. He was to rest in peace close to the abode of his Kalia (Lord Jagannath). Though he was not religious in the traditional sense, he had a sentimental attachment to Lord Jagannath. While addressing public meeting in front of the Puri Jagannath Temple, he used to enter into a monologue with the Lord.

Adventure indeed! It is in his blood from body hood. It is this love of adventure that goaded him to have a bicycle ride from Cuttack to Peshawar when he was a student and to change his profession of an aeronautical engineer to that of a pilot. It is this call of adventure that inspired him to undertake the risky jobs of flying the stranded Britishers in Burma to safety during the Second World War days and to carry on at the same time anti-British subversive activities which ultimately landed him into jail. In providing indispensable leadership, he emerged as the greatest political figure of his age. The story of his adventurous life still inspires the youth of Orissa.

**Ex. President, Odisha Sarapanch Maha Sangha & Ex. Member (Z.P., Korakora, Cuttack, Mob. : 9430702646**

## Amazing from Garbage: Plastic will make water and soil pure

Dr. Vijay Garg

In today's time, plastic pollution has become one of the most serious problems in the world. Rivers, lakes, seas and even land are being affected by plastic waste. But new research in the field of science and technology is now showing a ray of hope towards turning this problem into a solution.

In recent years, scientists have developed such new techniques with the help of which plastic waste can be not only reduced, but also converted into a useful resource. These techniques are also helpful in cleaning contaminated water and land.

Plastic to solution can be broken into small particles to become microplastics or nanoplastic, which are being used in water treatment. These particles absorb harmful metals and chemicals in contaminated water, which purifies the water. This process is called 'Desorption' technology.

Some special materials based on plastic are being used to remove toxic elements in the soil. These materials help improve soil quality and make it cultivable again. Thus, the plastic that previously caused pollution is now a means of land reform. This new direction is very important for environmental protection. This will not only reduce the amount of plastic waste, but also control water and land pollution. At the same time, it promotes a circular economy (circular economy) in which waste is reused.

Challenges and Future Although these techniques are still in the early stages and more research is needed to apply them on a large scale. Challenges such as cost, technical complexity and lack of awareness are also present. But if the government, scientist and society work together, this solution can be widely adopted. The conclusion is that plastic, which was once only a symbol of the problem, now seems to be part of the solution. If efforts continue in the right direction, plastic will not only reduce pollution in the coming time, but will play an important role in making contaminated water and land useful again.

Dr. Vijay Garg Retired Principal Malout Punjab

## Enriching Minds Through School Outings

Dr Vijay Garg

School outings are an essential part of a student's educational journey. While classrooms provide structured learning, outings offer real-world experiences that help students understand concepts more effectively. These trips go beyond textbooks, making education more engaging, practical, and memorable.

One of the most important benefits of school outings is experiential learning. When students visit places such as museums, historical sites, science centers, or nature parks, they can see and experience what they have learned in class. This hands-on exposure deepens their understanding and makes learning more meaningful. For example, a history lesson becomes far more interesting when students walk through an ancient monument rather than just reading about it.

School outings also play a vital role in developing social skills. Students interact with their peers and teachers in a less formal environment, which strengthens relationships and builds teamwork. Group activities during outings encourage communication, cooperation, and mutual respect. These experiences help students become more confident and socially aware.

Another significant advantage is the break from routine. Daily classroom learning can sometimes

become monotonous, leading to boredom and reduced interest. Outings refresh the mind and provide a change of environment, helping students return to school with renewed energy and enthusiasm. This balance between study and recreation is crucial for overall development.

Outings also help in building independence and responsibility. When students are outside their usual environment, they learn to manage themselves, follow instructions, and make decisions. They become more aware of safety, discipline, and time management, which are valuable life skills.

Moreover, school outings promote curiosity and creativity. Exploring new places inspires students to ask questions, think critically, and observe their surroundings more closely. This sense of curiosity often leads to a deeper interest in learning and discovery.

In conclusion, school outings are not just recreational trips but powerful educational tools. They enrich learning, develop social and personal skills, and create lasting memories. Schools should continue to organize well-planned outings to ensure students receive a balanced and holistic education.

Dr Vijay Garg Retired Principal? Educational columnist Eminent Educationist street kour Chand MHR Malout Punjab

# Supreme Court Halts Telangana High Court's Interim Bail to Pawan Kheda in Assam FIR Case

New Delhi, 15/4 (H.S.): Congress leader Pawan Kheda has suffered a setback from the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has stayed the one-week transit anticipatory bail granted to Pawan Kheda by the Telangana High Court. The Assam government had approached the Supreme Court against this Telangana High Court order, arguing that the Telangana High Court did not have territorial jurisdiction to hear this case. On the Assam government's petition, the Supreme Court has issued a notice to Pawan Kheda. The Court has directed Pawan Kheda to file his reply



within three weeks. The Supreme Court has clarified that

if Pawan Kheda so wishes, he may approach a court within the Assam jurisdiction for bail. Such a court can then pass an order on bail on the merits of the case; today's order of the Supreme Court will not stand as a bar. The Telangana High Court, on 10 April, had heard Pawan Kheda's petition and ordered one week of transit anticipatory bail. In fact, after an FIR was registered in Assam, the Assam Police conducted a raid on 7 April at Pawan Kheda's residence in Delhi, but he was not found at his residence at that time.

# Prime Minister Modi Congratulates Bihar CM Samrat Choudhary and Deputy Chief Ministers on Swearing-In

New Delhi, 15/4 (H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi has congratulated Samrat Choudhary on Wednesday for taking the oath as Chief Minister of Bihar and has expressed confidence that the state will achieve comprehensive development under his leadership. In a message posted on the social-media platform X, the Prime Minister said that Samrat Choudhary's energy, dedication to public service, and grassroots experience will play a significant role in Bihar's development. He expressed the



conviction that under his leadership the state will attain new heights by fulfilling the

aspirations of its people. The Prime Minister also extended heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Vijay Kumar Choudhary and Bijendra Prasad Yadav, who have taken the oath as Deputy Chief Ministers of Bihar. He said that the wide-ranging experience and strong commitment to the people's welfare of both leaders will impart a new direction and momentum to the state's development. He reiterated his confidence that the new government will set new benchmarks in good governance, transparency, and public welfare.

# PM Modi and Amit Shah's Blessings Illuminate Himachal Day Celebrations

New Delhi, 15/4 (H.S.): On the occasion of Himachal Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah extended heartfelt felicitations to the people of the state. These leaders hailed Himachal as the Land of Gods, commending its cultural splendor, traditions, and the industriousness of its inhabitants, while praying for the state's radiant future. On social media platform X, the Prime Minister remarked that Himachal Pradesh holds a distinctive identity owing to its rich traditions, unparalleled cultural heritage, and the diligence, duty-consciousness, and humility of its people. He

conveyed best wishes for a bright future to all families of the state, affirming that this divine land constitutes an integral part of the nation's cultural patrimony. Union Home Minister Amit Shah stated that Himachal Pradesh abounds in natural beauty and cultural magnificence. He described it as renowned for peace, simplicity, and the tradition of "Atithi Devo Bhava" (guest is god). Shah expressed hopes that the state will advance steadfastly on the path of development and good governance, while praying to Brijeshwari Mata for the welfare of its residents.

# "Adapt or Be Outmaneuvered": CDS Anil Chauhan and Navy Chief Dinesh K Tripathi Call for Future-Ready, Joint Maritime Force

New Delhi, 15/4 (H.S.): Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan has emphasized the need to adapt in line with changing geo-strategic realities and the evolving nature of warfare, including its economic and technological dimensions. Considering the rapidly changing character of war, he has urged the Navy to devise new strategies. Naval Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi has stressed the importance of continuously focusing on operational preparedness and leveraging emerging technologies to build a force that is "ready for the future." CDS General Chauhan addressed the Naval Commanders in relation to issues arising from shifting geo-political equations and held discussions with them. During these interactions, he commended the Indian Navy for its rapid deployment to safeguard India's energy security. The first day of the three-day Naval Commanders' Conference at Nau Sena Bhawan began with the inaugural address by Naval Chief Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi. He addressed the Navy's senior leadership, visiting operational and area commanders, command headquarters, and headquarters staff. He highlighted the Navy's



achievements in protecting India's maritime interests, including energy security, amid ongoing conflicts in West Asia, the increased pace of operations, and the improved synergy among the three Services. The Naval Chief reaffirmed Indian Navy's commitments in the Indian Ocean Region and beyond in the emerging geo-strategic landscape, and underscored the importance of a unified and credible posture through active participation in multilateral and bilateral

exercises. During the conference, key operational issues were discussed, including integration and jointness, capacity enhancement, maintenance and repair, multi-domain security architectures, training, foreign cooperation, relief and rescue operations, and indigenization. Speaking about the global balance of power, he said that within just five years, the world has moved from an era of competition to an era of confrontation. He emphasized the

economic and military consequences of ongoing conflicts, and explained how perceptions of conflict are being reshaped not merely by the outcome of on-ground operations, but also through "narrative warfare." The Naval Chief also highlighted the various factors that have brought the maritime security environment to a critical juncture, where collective actions are creating an increasingly challenging daily operating environment for the Indian Navy.

The Naval Chief shed light on the Indian Navy's achievements in its journey toward becoming "ready to fight, reliable, integrated, and ready for the future." While showcasing full readiness for both offensive and defensive operations, he also stressed that, over the past five to ten years, there has been a significant rise in the operational deployment of naval ships. Continuous enhancement and expansion of capabilities to wage war on, under, and above the surface have contributed substantially to the Navy's operational preparedness. He noted that the Indian Navy has played a crucial role in ensuring the safe passage of commercial vessels transiting out of the Persian Gulf. At the same time, the presence of Indian warships in the region has also served as a source of confidence for Indian mariners. The Naval Chief outlined priority areas that will ensure the Navy's collective efforts remain coherent, sustained, and clearly directed. He also highlighted various technology-intensive capability-development projects, some of which have already been completed while others are at various stages of development and induction.

# Artificial Intelligence is not merely technology, but a human revolution: Vice-President C.P Radhakrishnan

New Delhi, 15/4 (H.S.): Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan has said on Wednesday that artificial intelligence (AI) is not merely a technological revolution but a "human revolution," which must be adopted responsibly, with accountability and foresight, to strengthen good governance and build an inclusive society. The Vice-President was addressing the 72nd Foundation Day function of the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) as the chief guest. He also delivered the 5th Dr. Rajendra Prasad Annual Memorial Lecture on the theme "AI for Good Governance." Paying tribute to the country's first President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, he said that his life was a symbol of simplicity, integrity, and the values of public service. He stated that true governance is not a medium of power, but a medium of service. The Vice-President remarked that the world has now entered the age of AI, where



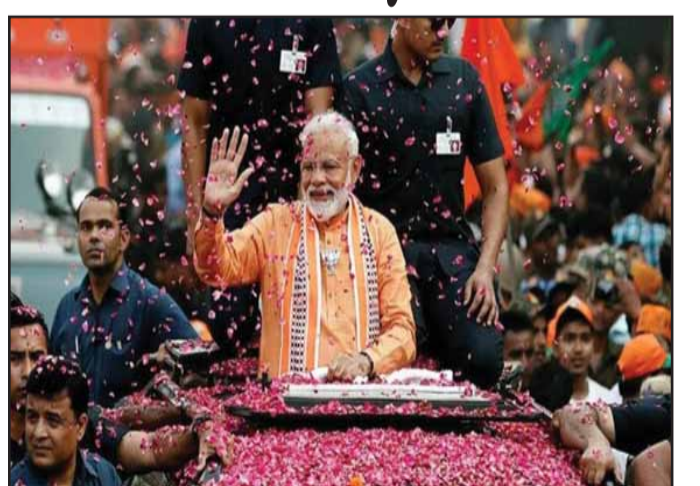
machines are learning and systems are beginning to think. AI is giving governments the ability to understand citizens' needs better and to deliver services in a more effective manner. He said that AI will play a crucial role in achieving the goal of a developed India by 2047. Governance is becoming faster, more transparent, and more accountable through AI, and its use is helping ensure that the benefits of schemes reach the last

person in the chain. Referring to the nation's progress, he stated that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country is making effective use of AI for inclusive governance. Mentioning AI-based language platforms such as "Bhashini," he said that language barriers are being overcome and citizens can access services in their own languages. Shedding light on AI's role in the health sector, he

explained that through TB screening, portable X-rays, and the telemedicine platform "e-Sanjeevani," healthcare services are reaching remote and far-flung areas. He urged the youth to adopt AI and new technologies, saying that this will open new opportunities and avenues for innovation. He also warned that the ethical use of AI must be ensured, with transparency, accountability, and moral responsibility at the core of its deployment. The Vice-President said that AI should be used to make society more just, inclusive, and sensitive, and not to deepen inequalities or deepen surveillance without safeguards. On this occasion, Union Minister and Chairman of the IIPA Executive Council Dr. Jitendra Singh, Director General of IIPA Dr. Surendra Kumar Bagde, distinguished guests, faculty members, and participants were present.

# PM Modi's Grand Roadshow to Electrify Nagercoil in Tamil Nadu Today

New Delhi, 15/4 (H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in a magnificent roadshow this evening in Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu. The roadshow will feature prominent leaders and candidates of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). With merely one week remaining until the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, Prime Minister Modi will arrive at Thiruvananthapuram airport in Kerala from Delhi via special aircraft. From there, he will proceed by special helicopter, departing at 3:30 p.m. and landing in Nagercoil at 4:10 p.m. Subsequently, at 4:15 p.m., he will travel by car from the helipad in Nagercoil to the Veppamoodu area. Prime Minister Modi will then join a grand roadshow from



Veppamoodu to Vadasseri, spanning approximately 1.5 kilometers, from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Thereafter, at 5:45 p.m., he will depart Nagercoil by helicopter for Thiruvananthapuram, proceeding from there to Delhi at 6:20 p.m. by special aircraft. Prime Minister's Public

Rally Scheduled in Coimbatore on April 18 Prime Minister Modi will also address a public rally in Coimbatore on April 18. Prior to this, the Prime Minister has already spoken at public meetings in Madurantakam, Chengalpattu district, and Madurai.

# PM Modi's Heartfelt Greetings Usher in Traditional New Years and Harvest Festivals

New Delhi, 15/4 (H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended warm felicitations to the nation on the occasion of various traditional New Year and harvest festivals. On the sacred occasion of Vishu, the Prime Minister congratulated everyone, posting on social media platform X: "Heartiest

greetings to all fellow citizens on the auspicious occasion of Vishu." The Prime Minister stated that this festival embodies hope and joy, emphasizing positivity and gratitude towards all. May the coming year brim with delight, prosperity, and robust health. May it herald new

opportunities, resounding success, and peace everywhere. The Prime Minister conveyed greetings to the people on the occasion of Rongali Bihu. In his message, he remarked that this vibrant festival celebrates new beginnings, prosperity, and a spirit of unity. It beautifully showcases Assamese culture,

which is gaining immense popularity far and wide. He prayed for a year replete with success, happiness, and splendid health for all. Greeting the nation on the occasion of Poila Boishakh, the Prime Minister wrote, "Shubho Noboborsho! Best wishes on Poila Boishakh." Praying for everyone,

he said that the coming year may symbolize the fulfillment of all aspirations. May the spirit of joy and brotherhood endure forever. I wish you excellent health and abundant happiness. This is also an occasion to celebrate the eternal richness of West Bengal's culture, which has profoundly shaped the nation's civilizational ethos.



## Bangladesh's Last Lifeline Falter: Eastern Refinery Grinds to Halt Over Crude Crunch

Dhaka, 15/4 (H.S.): Bangladesh's sole state-owned oil refinery, Eastern Refinery Limited, in Chittagong (now Chattogram) has been forced to halt production due to a shortage of crude oil. The two main processing units at the refinery were shut down on Tuesday afternoon, while the third unit continues to operate at partial capacity, producing only small quantities of petrol and octane. The Energy and Mineral Resources

Division's spokesperson, Monir Hossain Chowdhury, confirmed the suspension. No refinery official was willing to comment on the situation. According to Dhaka Tribune sources, the crisis stems from a shortfall in crude-oil supply, compounded by supply-chain disruptions related to the ongoing conflict in West Asia. A shipment of crude remains stuck in Saudi Arabia, causing inventories to dwindle since the beginning of the month. The refinery had been operating on alternative measures



since 5 April. Eastern Refinery typically processes about 4,500 tonnes of crude oil daily, yielding around 13 refined-fuel products, including octane, petrol, diesel, and furnace oil. Because of the crude shortage, output has already dropped to roughly 3,500 tonnes per day over the past

month. The current instability, fuelled by the U.S.-Israel-Iran conflict, has halted crude imports for nearly two months. The next shipment is expected to arrive in the first week of May. The refinery has a crude-oil storage capacity of about 150,000 tonnes and can store up to 250,000 tonnes of refined

fuel. The government insists that no immediate fuel shortage is expected even with the refinery shut down, as the country holds sufficient reserves of refined petroleum products. In fact, since the conflict began, authorities have purchased these products at higher prices to maintain stock levels.

## Tropical Cyclone Maila Kills 23 In Papua New Guinea

Melbourne: Authorities said on Wednesday that 12 more people have died after eastern Papua New Guinea (PNG) was hit by Severe Tropical Cyclone Maila, taking the total reported death toll to 23. Jelta Wong, the Member of Parliament for the Gazelle District in PNG's East New Britain Province, told The National newspaper that 10 people died when they were buried by a landslide in the remote Lamarain village on Sunday. He said that all 10 bodies were successfully recovered and described the loss as a "profound sorrow" for the community, reports Xinhua news agency. The landslide was caused by continuous heavy rainfall brought by Severe Tropical Cyclone, which hit eastern PNG over the weekend, causing widespread damage. Randal Ganisi, the disaster coordinator in



the Milne Bay Province, told The National that two deaths have been reported in the region. He said that teams have been deployed to island communities to assess how many people have been displaced and the extent of damage. It comes

after 11 deaths were reported on Monday in the autonomous Bougainville region, including eight who were killed in a landslide. PNG's state-owned National Broadcasting Corporation on Tuesday reported that a state of

emergency has been declared for the entire Bougainville region amid widespread destruction of infrastructure, mass displacement of communities and an escalating humanitarian crisis caused by the cyclone. Meanwhile, three people have been reported missing in the Solomon Islands. Australia's Bureau of Meteorology said that Tropical Cyclone Maila was a Category 5 storm in the Solomon Sea on Tuesday. The Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation reported that three people have been reported missing following severe weather from the cyclone in Choiseul Province, which neighbours Western Province to the north. The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force said that it has activated operations centres in Western and Choiseul provinces and urged all members of the public to take necessary precautions.

## Oil, Stocks Steady Despite Iran Crisis: Trump

Washington: US President Donald Trump has said the American economy remains resilient despite the ongoing conflict with Iran, asserting that oil prices and stock markets have held up better than expected during the crisis. In an interview with Fox News at the White House, Trump pointed to stable energy prices even as tensions escalated in the Gulf. "If you told me that we were gonna be at only 92 a barrel... I would've been very surprised," he said, noting that many had predicted a surge to \$200 per barrel. He expressed confidence that prices would fall sharply once the conflict ends. "Gasoline's coming down very soon and very big," Trump said, adding that energy costs would ease across the board.

The President acknowledged short-term disruption but downplayed longer-term risks to growth. "There's a hit because...



we go through it for whatever it is, six weeks. There's gonna be a hit, but it's gonna recover," he said. Trump also highlighted the relative stability of US financial markets, despite volatility earlier in the year. "If you told me that in the midst of it... we'd have a stock market that's almost as good as it was two months ago...

I think we're doing very well," he said. Looking ahead, he predicted a strong rebound once hostilities subside. "When this is over, I think the stock market is gonna boom," Trump said. The President tied economic performance to his broader geopolitical strategy, arguing that military action was necessary to prevent a larger

crisis. He warned that allowing Iran to develop nuclear weapons would have far more severe economic consequences. On domestic policy, Trump pointed to tax changes under his administration as cushioning households from rising costs. "People are getting refunds of 5,000, 8,000, \$11,000 that they had no idea they were getting," he said. He also maintained that energy costs would remain a central factor in economic stability. "It fuels sort of everything... it fuels the economy," Trump said, linking lower oil prices to broader economic gains. The comments come as global markets remain sensitive to developments in the Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant share of the world's oil supply passes. Any disruption in the region has immediate implications for global energy prices and inflation trends.

## Ambedkar's Constitutional Morality Can Strengthen Multilateralism In Fragmented World: P Harish

New York: B.R. Ambedkar's concept of constitutional morality can strengthen multilateralism in a world beset by conflicts and political fragmentation, according to India's Permanent Representative P. Harish. Speaking at the Ambedkar Jayanti observance here on Tuesday, he said that the Indian Constitution's architect's vision of morality and law, when applied to multilateralism, can help in reforming the UN and revitalise it. The Jayanti observed here on the 135th birth anniversary of Ambedkar was marked by a

discussion of "Dr B R Ambedkar's Vision of Constitutional Morality and its Relevance for Multilateralism". Raja Sekhar Vundru, a scholar of Ambedkar's work, said that having lived through two world wars and seeing the creation of the UN, he recognised the importance of multilateralism. Vundru, who is an additional chief secretary of the Haryana government, is the author of "Ambedkar, Gandhi and Patel: The Making of India's Electoral System." He said that the Indian constitution that Ambedkar drafted reflects the spirit of the UN's Charter in striving

for peace. Ambedkar's ideas of constitutional morality can promote multilateralism and adherence to the UN Charter. Santosh Raut, a visiting professor at Harvard Divinity School, said that Ambedkar viewed the Constitution as a vehicle for social justice and economic transformation, ideas that have relevance to the UN's goals in these areas. Morality is the force that enables the implementation of the spirit of written texts like the UN Charter and Ambedkar had foreseen it, said the scholar of Buddhism.

## First Round of Lebanon-Israel Talks Concludes in Washington, No Immediate Truce but Dialogue Opens Door

Washington, 15/4 (H.S.): The first round of direct US-mediated negotiations between Israel and Lebanon has concluded. The talks, held after roughly three decades of no direct contact, are being seen as an important step toward restoring regional peace, though no concrete agreement on a ceasefire has yet been reached. Israeli Ambassador to the United States, Yechiel Leiter, described his two-hour meeting with Lebanon's envoy, Nada Hamadeh, as "highly positive." He said several key proposals and ideas had been discussed and would now be presented to their respective governments. However, on the issue of a ceasefire, Israel has adopted a firm stance and refused to commit to any binding pause in hostilities. Leiter stressed that the priority remained the security of Israeli civilians and that military operations would



continue as long as attacks from across the border persisted. He described Hezbollah as weakened but added that Israel would not compromise on its security. At the same time, he did not rule out the possibility of improved and more formal relations between Lebanon and Israel in the future. According to Lebanon's state-run agency, the negotiations are an initial attempt

to reduce rising tensions along the border and move toward a lasting settlement. Both sides may meet again for further talks in the coming weeks. Even though the first round has not produced an immediate ceasefire, the restoration of dialogue itself is considered a positive signal, one that could pave the way for a more substantive peace process in the months ahead.

## Pakistan Reactivates 70 Terror Launchpads In PoK, 800 Terrorists Ready For Infiltration

New Delhi, 15/4 (H.S.): Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and its army have reactivated at least 70 terror launchpads across the Line of Control and International Border, planning a mass infiltration of nearly 800 terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir, intelligence sources revealed on Wednesday. The Pakistan establishment aims to exploit the current global focus on the Middle East conflict and the ongoing state elections in India to facilitate the infiltration, an official said. Global attention has largely been centred on developments in the Middle East following the conflict between the US, Israel, and Iran. Even as Pakistan attempted to facilitate talks between the US and Iran, which failed, its Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), along with the army, has directed the reactivation of terror launchpads in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Amid these global developments and the ongoing assembly elections in various states in India, the Pakistan establishment is believed to be seeking an opportunity to step up infiltration efforts, an official said. The numbers have been rising steadily, with several terrorists being moved into Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and kept ready on the launchpads for infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir. Intelligence inputs indicate that at least 70 launchpads are active across the border, including around 10 along



the International Border and the rest along the Line of Control (LoC). Estimates suggest that nearly 800 terrorists are currently waiting for an opportunity to infiltrate. An official from the Intelligence Bureau said that the infiltration strategy has been revised after several attempts to enter Jammu and Kashmir in recent months were foiled due to heightened vigilance by security forces along the borders. "The plan now is to attempt coordinated infiltrations from multiple entry points to stretch security forces. Groups of 10 to 15 terrorists may be pushed in simultaneously, with the expectation that at least a few will manage to get through," the official said. He added that Pakistan is seeking to take advantage of ongoing developments in India and abroad, in the hope that any

operational gap could be used to facilitate infiltration. A sense of urgency has reportedly set in after Operation Sindoor in May last year, in which Indian armed forces targeted and destroyed terror infrastructure in Pakistan and PoK. The operation was carried out in response to the Pahalgam attack in April last year that left 26 Indian tourists dead. Since then, Indian forces and security agencies have thwarted multiple infiltration attempts. Sources indicate that Pakistan's ISI and the army are facing pressure from terrorist groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba over the lack of operational activity in Jammu and Kashmir. Officials said Jammu and Kashmir remains central to the functioning of these groups, making continued unrest a key objective for the Pakistan establishment, particularly in the context of local dynamics

## Pakistan: Poor Medical Care Reason Behind Imran Khan's Deteriorating Health, Alleges PTI

Islamabad: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has once again raised concerns over the health condition of its founder and former Prime Minister Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi and senior party leader Ejaz Chaudhry, blaming neglect and restricted access to healthcare for their deteriorating medical condition.

The PTI stated that prolonged detention and restrictions to access medical facilities have worsened the issues faced by its leaders, causing serious complications in each case. Reportedly, Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi are suffering from serious eye ailments while Chaudhry's kidney disease has progressed to third stage. The party has called for shifting Imran Khan, his wife and Chaudhry to proper medical facilities and getting them treated by personal physicians so that they may be treated with more vigilance and care, an editorial in leading

Pakistani daily Dawn mentioned. According to the newspaper, the demands raised by the party are not unreasonable and the authorities must try to agree to them. It should not lead to something untoward happening to these lawmakers, including cancer survivor Yasmin Rashid, while they fully rely on the government for their well-being. "Regardless of whether one supports the PTI narrative of political persecution or the government's insistence on due process and the letter of the law, the health and well-being of prisoners must not be turned into a matter of contention," Dawn mentioned. "There is no extra 'justice' that can be extracted by subjecting an individual already deprived of their civil liberties to prolonged solitary confinement, or restricting their access to family and personal physicians, or delaying shifting seriously ill prisoners to proper medical

facilities. Such actions merely erode public trust in the entire system by sending the signal that the country's administrative and judicial mechanisms are operating well short of the minimum standards expected of a civilised state," it added. Last month, Imran Khan's son, Kasim, termed his father's detention "arbitrary" and raised serious concerns over treatment by the Pakistani authorities which he said breaches international human rights conventions. During the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) session in Geneva, Kasim Khan said that Imran Khan's case was not an "isolated incident" but it was the "most visible example" of a much wider pattern of repression in Pakistan since 2022. He spoke about the detention of political prisoners, trial and conviction of civilians by military courts and journalists being "silenced, abducted or driven into exile," Dawn reported.

## Vedanta Aluminium hosts 2nd National Karate Championship in Jharsuguda

Jharsuguda, 15/4(DMS): Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, organized the 2nd All India Vedanta Open National Karate Championship in Jharsuguda through its Vedanta Martial Arts Training Centre. The championship brought together 280+ young athletes from seven states across India and served as a competitive platform to promote discipline, physical fitness and sporting talent among youth. The event featured contests across Individual Kata, Kumite, Team Kata and Open Kumite categories, along with a women's self-defense demonstration. Students from the Vedanta Martial Arts Training Centre secured multiple medals across categories during the championship. Their performance reflects the structured training and regular coaching being provided under the project. Speaking on the occasion, C Chandru, CEO, Vedanta Jharsuguda, said, "Sports is an enabler of discipline, confidence and long-term



development of youth. Through the Vedanta Martial Arts Training Centre at Jharsuguda, we are creating opportunities for young people to access structured training and competitive exposure. The 2nd All India Vedanta Open National Karate Championship reflects this commitment and reinforces our focus on supporting grassroots talent through sustained

community initiatives." Sourav Das, a participant in the Championship, said, "The championship gave us an opportunity to compete at a national level and learn from a larger field of athletes. For many of us, platforms like this help improve confidence and boost our commitment to the sport." The company has been supporting

sports development in the region through focused interventions that create accessible training for young participants. The Vedanta Martial Arts Training Centre has enabled students from nearby communities to receive regular martial arts training under guided instruction. Over time, students supported under the initiative have participated in district, state and national-level competitions, with several securing recognition across categories. Other martial arts platforms have also been supported in the region, including the Odisha State SQAY Martial Arts Championship. Through such initiatives, Vedanta Aluminium continues to invest in community development in its operational vicinities by supporting structured opportunities in sports, education and youth engagement. Its continued focus remains on building access, encouraging participation, and creating pathways for growth at the grassroots level.

## Sensex and Nifty Surge in Early Trade Amid Trump's Iran Dialogue Optimism

New Delhi, 15/4(H.S.): Buoyed by US President Donald Trump's signal to resume talks with Iran to resolve the West Asia crisis, domestic stock markets mirrored global exuberance today, opening with robust gains. Trading commenced on a strong note, though profit-booking post-opening induced a mild dip in both Sensex and Nifty indices. Nevertheless, the market sustained vigorous upward momentum. After the first hour of trading, Sensex advanced 1.71 percent, while Nifty climbed 1.67 percent. Among heavyweight stocks post-initial hour, InterGlobe Aviation, HDFC Life, Max Healthcare, Larsen & Toubro, and TCS traded with gains ranging from 4.60 percent to 3.07 percent. Conversely, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, ONGC, Coal India, and ICICI Bank operated with declines between 1.38 percent and 0.21 percent. Up to this juncture, active trading encompassed 2,829 stocks, of which 2,639 advanced in green territory, while 190 declined in red. Of the 30 Sensex



constituents, 29 traded in green buoyed by buying support, with only one under selling pressure in red. Among Nifty's 50 stocks, 46 remained green, and four red. BSE's Sensex opened 1,133.53 points higher at 77,981.10. It swiftly surged to 78,270.42, before profit-taking pulled it to 77,849.52. Renewed buying then propelled it upward; by 10:15 a.m., after the first hour amid sustained buy-sell

activity, Sensex traded 1,313.62 points up at 78,161.19. Mirroring Sensex, NSE's Nifty debuted 321.15 points higher at 24,163.80, peaking over 115 points above opening at 24,280.90, then slipping to 24,145.80 on profit-taking. Fresh buying revived its ascent; by 10:15 a.m., post-initial hour amid ongoing transactions, Nifty advanced 397.65 points to 24,240.30. The previous trading day, Monday,

## Global and Asian Markets Rally on Hopes of Renewed US-Iran Talks



New Delhi, 15/4 (H.S.): Amid expectations of a swift resolution to the ongoing West Asia tensions, a buoyant atmosphere pervades global markets. US markets closed higher in the previous session, with Dow Jones futures trading in positive territory today. European markets witnessed sustained buying throughout the last session, while Asian markets display widespread strength. Signals of resuming dialogue with Iran sustained exuberance in US markets during the prior session. The Dow Jones leaped up to 600 points. Similarly, the S&P 500 Index concluded trading 81.14 points or 1.18 percent higher at 6,967.38. Additionally, Nasdaq closed 455.35 points or 1.96 percent up at 23,639.08. Dow Jones futures currently trade 80.74 points or

0.17 percent higher at 48,616.73. Echoing US markets, European bourses maintained vigor in the previous session. The FTSE Index closed at 10,609.06, up 0.25 percent. The CAC Index ended 91.88 points or 1.10 percent higher at 8,327.86. The DAX Index finished 301.78 points or 1.26 percent up at 24,044.22. Asian markets also exhibit broad-based gains today. Eight out of nine Asian indices traded in green. Thailand's Stock Exchange remains closed, so SET Composite shows no movement. Gift Nifty trades 335 points or 1.40 percent higher at 24,212.50. Likewise, Hang Seng Index has reached 26,136, up 263.68 points or 1.01 percent. Kospi Index registers a sharp surge, currently at 6,148.67, up 180.92 points or 3.03 percent.

## Markets Soar on West Asia Peace Hopes: Sensex and Nifty Record Strong Gains, Investors Gain 9.11 Lakh Crore

New Delhi, 15 April (H.S.): Domestic stock markets once again showed very strong strength today. Today's trading opened on a positive note with both major indices advancing from the first bell. Although the market witnessed intermittent profit-booking during the session, the underlying strength of both the Sensex and the Nifty remained intact throughout the day. Despite temporary bouts of selling pressure triggered by profit-booking, the Sensex continued to trade with a robust positive bias of over 1,000 points. Likewise, the Nifty also held a steady upside of more than 300 points. After the end of the full trading session, the Sensex closed 1.64 per cent higher and the Nifty ended 1.63 per cent up. Market sentiment improved sharply today on the hope that peace talks between the United States and Iran may resume in West Asia. As a result, global crude oil prices softened, while the Indian rupee strengthened against the dollar. These factors combined to sustain a bullish mood in the markets all day, which helped the Sensex and the Nifty to close with strong gains. Across the board, all sectoral indices traded in the green today. Heavy buying in stocks of the IT, capital goods, consumer durables, oil and gas, public sector enterprises, infrastructure, realty,



and media sectors pushed their respective indices higher by more than around two per cent. In addition, the banking, automobile, FMCG, healthcare, metals, and technology indices also closed more than one per cent higher. Even in the broader market, buying remained persistent, with the Nifty Midcap Index closing up 2.20 per cent and the Nifty Smallcap Index surging 2.35 per cent, reflecting strong risk appetite among investors. The sharp strength in the equity market today translated into a substantial wealth gain for

investors, with their total portfolio value rising by over 99 lakh crore. After today's session, the combined market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies climbed to 7458.25 lakh crore (provisional), up from 7449.14 lakh crore at the end of the previous trading session, which effectively added about 99.11 lakh crore to investor wealth in a single day. During the entire trading session, 4,513 scrips were actively traded on the BSE. Of these, 3,585 stocks closed higher, 802 ended with losses, and 126 remained unchanged. On the NSE,

3,007 stocks saw active trading, with 2,656 advancing and 351 retreating. Among the 30 constituents of the Sensex, 28 closed higher and only 2 ended in the red. Of the 50 components of the Nifty, 47 gained while 3 slipped. The BSE's Sensex opened at 77,981.10, up 1,133.53 points. Within minutes of the opening, it surged another 1,422.85 points to reach 78,270.42. This sharp rally, however, did not last too long. Soon, profit-booking set in and selling pressure emerged, causing a mild dip in the index. Thereafter, the Sensex continued to trade

within a relatively narrow band, fluctuating just above the 77,000-78,000 zone. At one point, it slipped to 77,849.52 as selling spread. The reassuring aspect was that even amid these pullbacks, the Sensex never lost its 1,000-point cushion of positive bias. Eventually, the index closed the day 1,263.67 points higher at 78,111.24. Mirroring this move, the Nifty on the NSE began the day by leaping 321.15 points to 24,163.80. Within minutes, it jumped a further 438.25 points from its opening level to 24,280.90. Profit-booking then triggered a brief dip, pulling the index down to 24,145.80. However, even after multiple corrections, the Nifty managed to hold a positive bias of more than 300 points for most of the session. At the close, it ended 388.65 points higher at 24,231.30, registering a 1.63 per cent gain. Among large-cap stocks, InterGlobe Aviation, AETERNA, Max Healthcare, Power Grid Corporation, and TPV emerged among the top gainers, rising 4.76 per cent, 4.42 per cent, 4.03 per cent, 4.03 per cent, and 3.59 per cent, respectively. On the other side, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Bharti Airtel, and ICICI Bank were among the top laggards, closing 1.46 per cent, 0.81 per cent, and 0.22 per cent lower, respectively.

## India's LPG Tanker Jag Vikram Docks Safely at Kandla Amid Hormuz Blockade Relief

New Delhi, 15/4 (H.S.): Amid the ongoing US blockade in the Strait of Hormuz, India's LPG tanker Jag Vikram successfully reached home soil. Carrying 20,400 metric tons of LPG, the tanker arrived at Gujarat's Kandla Port today—the first Indian vessel to traverse the strait following the two-week temporary ceasefire between the US and Iran. The LPG tanker Jag Vikram navigated the Strait of Hormuz on April 11. Since early March, it marks India's ninth ship to exit via the strait's western segment. Prior to the West Asia tensions, 28 Indian vessels were positioned around the Strait of Hormuz, with 24 in the western part and four stranded in the eastern segment. Before the two-week temporary ceasefire commenced between Iran and the US, eight Indian ships had safely exited the strait's western portion, while two more cleared



the eastern side. Now, LPG tanker Jag Vikram has also transited the western part and reached India safely. However, several Indian vessels remain stranded near the Strait of Hormuz, as do numerous foreign ships in the Persian Gulf, awaiting resumption of normal passage. Notably, India relies heavily on imports for its petroleum needs. The country imports approximately 88

percent of its crude oil requirements from international markets. Similarly, about 50 percent of natural gas and 60 percent of LPG are imported. Most supplies of crude oil and gas from Gulf countries transit via the Strait of Hormuz; however, since the West Asia conflict erupted, this route has nearly ground to a halt, severely disrupting India's LPG supply.

## India Ranks Among World's Most Advanced AI Markets: OpenAI

New Delhi: US tech giant OpenAI on Wednesday said that India ranks among the world's most advanced AI markets, mainly in coding, data analysis and complex reasoning. India ranks among the top five nations globally in thinking capability usage per person, measured using reasoning tokens used by ChatGPT Plus users, the release from OpenAI said. The country is one of the fastest growing AI builder ecosystems with four-fold growth in Codex users in just two weeks after the launch of the company's Codex app in February 2026. AI usage in India remains highly concentrated in a handful of cities, with advanced use even more unevenly spread, said the company, highlighting a significant opportunity to expand access beyond early adopters in the top few



cities. "The central question now is how quickly the benefits of AI can extend beyond early adopters and leading cities to the wider population. Closing this gap will require expanding access, building skills, and enabling more meaningful use across the country, an effort

shaped in large part by India's young, fast-adopting population", said Oliver Jay, Managing Director, International, OpenAI. Advanced capability is highly concentrated as the top 10 cities account for about 50 per cent of AI users, representing less than

10 per cent of the population. Delhi-NCR has the highest population penetration of ChatGPT in the country. While India has competitive AI capability, its deepest advantages are clustering in a small number of urban hubs, including Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Delhi, and Chennai, it noted. The Capability Gap findings highlight that beyond the top cities, some of the most meaningful use cases are emerging in areas like education and health, indicating how AI is already being used in everyday contexts. In advanced use cases, the company noted wide intra-regional gaps, with data analysis usage up to 30 times higher in leading cities compared to lagging cities. Coding usage was found to be four times higher and Codex developer usage nine times higher.



## Ranveer Singh Starrer Dhurandhar Duology Crosses 3000 Crore Mark Worldwide To Make History

Aditya Dhar's espionage franchise has officially shattered global box office records by becoming the first Indian film series to cross the ₹3,000 crore milestone. Data from trade analyst Sacnilk confirms that the combined earnings of Dhurandhar and its sequel, Dhurandhar: The Revenge, have reached an unprecedented ₹3,019.35 crore. This achievement places the duology ahead of legendary cinematic heavyweights like the Baahubali and Pushpa franchises. Ranveer Singh, who leads the series as undercover agent Hamza Ali Mazari, has steered this narrative into uncharted financial territory. While the first installment set a high bar with over ₹1,307 crore, the sequel has outperformed its predecessor by raking in ₹1,712 crore globally. Remarkably, the second film attained these figures despite facing theatrical bans in several Gulf nations and lacking a release in the lucrative Chinese market. Success for this series stems from its dominance in the domestic Hindi circuit. Dhurandhar 2 recently became the first film in Indian history to net over ₹1,000 crore in a single language within India. This specific regional triumph highlights a shifting trend where high-concept spy thrillers are now rivaling the mass-appeal masala entertainers of the South. Even with the ongoing excitement of the IPL season, the film maintains steady footfalls, recently outearning the fourth-week collections of blockbusters like Jawan and Stree 2. Adding to its commercial pull is the gritty realism of its setting. Most of the action unfolds in Lyari, Karachi, providing a raw backdrop that contrasts with the glossy aesthetics usually seen in Bollywood spy sagas. By intertwining fictional heroics with real-world events like the 26/11 attacks and the Kandahar hijack, the writers have created a sense of "Information Gain" that resonates with audiences seeking more than just stunts. This grounded approach has proven that Indian viewers are ready for sophisticated, geopolitically aware storytelling. Trade experts suggest the franchise still has room to grow before its eventual digital debut on JioHotstar. With the current momentum, the series is not just a commercial hit but a blueprint for future Indian cinematic universes. As the industry looks toward 2026, the benchmark set by Aditya Dhar and Ranveer Singh remains the ultimate goal for every major production house in the country.

## Govinda offers prayers at Jagannath Temple



Actor Govinda visited Shree Jagannath Temple at Puri in Odisha to seek the blessings of Lord Jagannath and expressed his happiness about the visit on Tuesday. After taking the blessings from Lord Jagannath, Govinda while talking to ANI, said, "It feel really happy after coming here. I visit this temple every year or two, but today I am really grateful to the Lord for the visit." The actor wore a red kurta and paired with a white pyjama for the visit. Shree Jagannath Temple is one of the most revered Hindu temples in India, dedicated to Lord Jagannath, a form of Lord Vishnu. It is a major pilgrimage site for devotees across the country. Govinda is one of Bollywood's most famous and admired actors, who made his acting debut in the 1980s and started his career in action and drama films. Over the years, the actor has acted in several Hindi films, becoming a household name for his excellent comic timing, and energetic dance moves. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, he delivered multiple hit films, including 'Ilzaam', 'Marte Dam Tak', 'Khudgarz', 'Dariya Dil', 'Jaisi Karni Waisi Bharni', 'Swarg' and 'Hum', which solidified his place as one of Bollywood's top actors. In 2024, Govinda was hospitalised when his licensed revolver accidentally misfired while he was putting it back in the cupboard, according to Mumbai Police. He was preparing to leave for Kolkata at the time. The actor is expected to make a comeback on television soon with his reality show.

## Femina Miss India contestants visit Puri, seek Lord Jagannath's blessings ahead of event



Ahead of the 61st edition of the Femina Miss India event scheduled in Bhubaneswar on April 18, contestants from across the country visited the Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri to seek divine blessings. A total of 30 state winners, who have qualified for the prestigious pageant, reached the temple, with 18 contestants arriving in the early hours along with officials. They offered prayers at the Arun Stambha near the Singhadwara and had darshan of Patitapabana before entering the temple through the Baishi Pahacha. After the Mangala Alati, the contestants had darshan of the deities seated on the Ratna Singhasan. The participants appeared deeply moved and described the experience as spiritually uplifting, with many calling it a long-cherished dream fulfilled. The temple and police administrations had made special arrangements for their smooth darshan. The contestants also prayed for the well-being of their respective states and the country. Dressed in traditional attire, the participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to seek blessings ahead of the national event. Following the visit, they also took part in a photo session. With the grand finale nearing, the contestants are now preparing for the competition, carrying the blessings of Lord Jagannath.

## SPORTS

## Italy Pioneers Grass-Court ATP Spectacle Ahead of Wimbledon from 2028

Rome, 15/4(H.S.):Bolstering its ascendant stature in global tennis, Italy will host a novel grass-court ATP tournament prior to Wimbledon starting 2028. The Italian Tennis and Padel Federation has acquired rights to the ATP 250-level event currently held in Brussels each October, relocating it to June in Italy. Federation President Angelo Binaghi announced Tuesday that while the venue remains pending finalization, climatic considerations favor northern Italy as the likely host. He hinted at Milan's iconic San Siro Stadium as a prospective site, where grass courts could be laid within the football pitch. Binaghi noted that practice courts inside Madrid's Santiago



Bernabéu for the Madrid Open render this concept far from unprecedented. Italy previously hosted a women's grass-court tournament in Gaiba from 2022 to 2024. Additionally, the nation will stage ATP Finals in Turin through 2030 and Davis Cup Finals in Bologna through next year. Meanwhile, preparations for the Italian Open intensify ahead of next month's edition. Jannik Sinner's recent Monte Carlo Masters final triumph over

Carlos Alcaraz fuels hopes he could become Italy's first men's singles champion there in 50 years. The federation revealed that construction of a retractable roof over the Italian Open's main 'Campo Centrale' court will commence immediately post this year's event, targeting completion by 2028. Stadium capacity will subsequently expand from 10,500 to 12,400 seats. Binaghi affirmed ambitions to elevate the Italian Open into tennis's fifth Grand Slam, alongside the Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon, and US Open. He declared, "We contemplate this goal daily. It represents a slender opportunity, yet securing it would yield enduring benefits for Italy. This is our dream."

## Sindarov Seals Candidates Glory One Round Early, Extends Unbeaten Streak to 50 Games

New Delhi, 15/4(H.S.):Rising Grandmaster Javokhir Sindarov delivered a masterclass in the FIDE Candidates 2026 Open section, clinching the title on Tuesday with one round remaining. Drawing against Anish Giri in Round 13 secured his lead and the championship. This triumph earns Sindarov the right to challenge reigning World Chess Champion D. Gukesh in the forthcoming FIDE World Chess Championship. Remarkably, Sindarov remained unbeaten throughout, extending his invincible run to 50 consecutive games. Sindarov held a two-point lead entering Round 13. Giri needed a victory to keep the contest alive until the final round, but the draw clinched the title for



Sindarov. Giri opened with 1.e4, met by Sindarov's robust response. By move 15, multiple exchanges led to a queenless middlegame favoring Sindarov's strategy. Giri pressed on the d-file, but Sindarov's precise defense neutralized every plan. The game transitioned to a rook-and-knight endgame offering no

## Kirori Mal College Clinches Dramatic Baba Deep Singh Basketball Title

New Delhi, 15/4(h.s):Kirori Mal College clinched the men's category title of the 5th PSPB Baba Deep Singh Basketball Tournament, organized at Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College of Delhi University on Tuesday night. The final match proved intensely thrilling, extending into extra time. Ultimately, Kirori Mal College defeated the host Khalsa College by a razor-thin margin of 79-78 to claim the championship. Dev Kapoor of Kirori Mal College was adjudged 'Man of the Match' for his stellar performance in the final, while Hardik Sharma of Khalsa College received the 'Player of the Tournament' award for his outstanding contribution throughout the event. South Campus Director Prof. Rajni Abbi graced the prize distribution ceremony as chief guest.

## Chaos at Vijay's Tiruppur rally: 15 faint in sweltering heat, campaign event cancelled

Tiruppur (Tamil Nadu), 14/4: A major election rally for Tamilaga Vetti Kazhagam (TVK) president Vijay was abruptly cancelled in Tiruppur district on Tuesday after at least 15 supporters collapsed due to severe heat and overcrowding. Following the incident and severe congestion, a scheduled six-kilometre roadshow by the leader was cancelled on police advice. The incident occurred as thousands of supporters gathered hours in advance to catch a glimpse of the actor-turned-politician during his intensive campaign tour for the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly Elections. The rally, which was expected to be a massive show of strength in the textile hub of Tiruppur, turned chaotic as the afternoon temperatures soared. The crowd began assembling at the venue from 10 a.m. in anticipation of the campaign. Vijay, who was expected to address the public at 4 p.m., arrived at approximately 4:45 p.m. Due to the scorching sun and high temperatures during the afternoon, 13 women and two men fainted. They were immediately transported to nearby hospitals via ambulance for medical treatment. Local volunteer teams and police personnel rushed the affected individuals to nearby primary health centres. Most are reported to be in stable condition. Upon receiving news of the medical emergencies and the deteriorating crowd conditions, Vijay and the TVK leadership decided to



cancel the address to prevent a repeat of the tragic 2025 Karur stampede. Following a campaign event at the Perumanallur Four Road junction, Vijay was scheduled to travel to Pooluvapatti as part of a roadshow. Although the police had granted permission, a massive influx of supporters along the Perumanallur-Tiruppur stretch led to severe congestion, making movement impossible. Based on police advice, the roadshow was called off, and Vijay subsequently left for Coimbatore via the Salem-Cochin National Highway. The incident follows a recent stampede in Karur, which resulted in the deaths of 41 people. Following a Supreme Court order emphasising the need for an independent probe, the Karur stampede case was transferred from a state-level Special Investigation Team (SIT) to the CBI.