

Dumani Mail

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Harivansh re-elected as Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha for third time



New Delhi: Harivansh Narayan Singh has been elected unopposed as the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha for a third consecutive term, reflecting broad consensus across political parties. The motion for his election was moved by Jagat Prakash Nadda, Leader of the House.

In his address, Harivansh emphasized that healthy debate is central to democracy, but disruptions undermine parliamentary functioning. He assured members that he would uphold the dignity of the House while safeguarding their rights within the framework of the Constitution and established rules. He expressed gratitude to Droupadi Murmu for nominating him, as well as to members across party lines for their continued trust.

Narendra Modi congratulated Harivansh, praising his experience and

balanced leadership, noting that his tenure has made the House more effective and constructive. He expressed confidence that the Upper House would continue contributing significantly to India's development goals under his guidance.

Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge also extended his congratulations, highlighting Harivansh as the first nominated member to hold this post. He raised concerns about the vacant Deputy Speaker position in the Lok Sabha since 2019 and urged fair allocation of time for the Opposition.

Other leaders, including Tiruchi Siva and Sandosh Kumar P, praised Harivansh's balanced and fair approach. They expressed hope that his leadership would continue to ensure inclusivity, allow all parties to voice their views, and maintain democratic values in parliamentary proceedings.

Supreme Court refuses protection to Congress leader Pawan Khera in Assam FIR case



New Delhi: The Supreme Court today refused to grant Congress leader Pawan Khera protection from arrest and declined his plea to extend the duration of transit anticipatory bail in connection with the FIR lodged in Assam over his alleged defamatory remarks against the wife of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. The Bench has also asked Pawan Khera to approach the competent court in Assam for anticipatory bail,

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refusing his request to extend relief till Tuesday. The Justice Maheshwari-led Bench also clarified that if the jurisdictional court is not functioning, a request can be made for urgent listing, which will be considered in accordance with law.

PM Modi, Macron agree on urgently restoring freedom of navigation in Strait of Hormuz

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday received a phone call from French President Emmanuel Macron with both leaders discussing the situation in West Asia and agreeing on the need to urgently restore safety and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

The two leaders had earlier spoken on March 19 regarding the situation in West Asia and the urgent need for de-escalation and return to dialogue and diplomacy.

"Received a phone call

from my dear friend President Emmanuel Macron. We discussed the situation in West Asia and agreed on the need to urgently restore safety and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz. We will continue our close cooperation to advance peace and stability in the region and beyond," PM Modi posted on X after the phone call on Thursday.

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar had called on President Macron during his visit to Paris, last month.



In February, the French President had paid an official visit to India which focused on strengthening the strategic partnership

between India and France. Both leaders had inaugurated the India-France Year of Innovation 2026 and later attended the AI Impact

Summit 2026 in New Delhi.

Earlier this week, Prime Minister Modi had received a call from US President Donald Trump with the two leaders reviewing the substantial progress achieved in bilateral cooperation across various sectors and expressing commitment to further strengthening the Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership in all areas.

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Heatwave alert for Delhi-NCR, temperature to cross 40 degrees: IMD

New Delhi: Temperatures across the Delhi-NCR region are set to rise sharply over the next few days, according to the latest forecast issued by the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The mercury is expected to cross the 40-degree Celsius mark soon, intensifying heatwave-like conditions across the region.

Thursday turned out to be the hottest day of the season so far in Delhi-NCR.

At Safdarjung, the base weather station, the maximum temperature was recorded at 40.3 degrees Celsius—about 3.4 degrees above normal. Other areas also reported high temperatures, including Lodhi Road at 40.1 degrees Celsius, Palam at 39.4 degrees Celsius, and the Ridge area touching 41.4 degrees Celsius,



significantly above normal levels.

On Friday, the maximum temperature in Delhi was recorded at 37 degrees Celsius, while the minimum stood at 21 degrees Celsius. The weather is expected to remain clear in the coming days. The maximum temperature is likely to rise to 38 degrees Celsius (minimum 22 degrees) on April 18, followed by 39 degrees (minimum 23

degrees) on April 19. Similar conditions are expected to persist on April 20, with the temperature hovering around 39 degrees and the minimum remaining at 23 degrees Celsius.

According to the Meteorological Department, the temperature is expected to touch the 40-degree mark by April 21 and 22. On both days, clear skies are forecast, with maximum temperatures reaching 40 degrees Celsius

and minimum temperatures around 24 degrees Celsius. The rapid rise in temperature signals the onset of peak summer conditions in the region.

Cloud movement is expected to continue on April 18, but rainfall is unlikely. The India Meteorological Department has predicted mostly clear weather for the next seven days, with only occasional light clouds.

With no significant rain expected, Delhi-NCR residents have limited chances of respite from the heatwave conditions.

Authorities and health experts have advised residents to limit outdoor exposure, stay hydrated, and take necessary precautions as both heat and pollution levels continue to rise.

India and China hold SCO bilateral consultations in New Delhi

New Delhi: India and China held Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Bilateral Consultations in New Delhi. India's delegation was led by SCO National Coordinator Ambassador Alok A Dimri, and China's delegation was led by National Coordinator Ambassador Yan Wenbin. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on the implementation of SCO Leaders' Decisions and the

future course of the organisation. The External Affairs Ministry said that both sides agreed to continue and consolidate mutual cooperation and consultations in SCO matters. The Ministry said that both delegations jointly called on Secretary (West) Sibi George to review cooperation within the SCO framework, including in the areas of security, trade, connectivity, and people-to-people ties.

Vice President to visit Sri Lanka on two-day official trip from April 19

New Delhi: Vice President C P Radhakrishnan will be on a two-day visit to Sri Lanka from the 19th of this month. This will be the first bilateral visit by the Vice President to Sri Lanka. During his visit, Mr Radhakrishnan will call on the President of Sri Lanka, Anura Kumara Dissanayaka. He will also meet Sri Lankan Prime Minister, Dr Harini Amarasuriya, as well as other dignitaries and Indian diaspora leaders.

Sri Lanka is a key partner in India's Vision MAHASAGAR as well as its Neighbourhood First Policy. The visit of the Vice President to Sri Lanka follows recent high-level engagements between the two nations and will further reinforce the millennia-old people-to-people ties that bind India and Sri Lanka.

Delhi CM flags off 200 e-buses in push for pollution-free public transport

New Delhi: Chief Minister Rekha Gupta on Friday flagged off 200 electric buses at the East Vinod Nagar Depot and said her government is working in mission mode to fully transition Delhi's public

transport to electric vehicles (EVs).

With the addition of these buses, 4,550 of the 6,300 public transport buses in the capital are now electric buses, the chief minister said at the

event. Gupta also flagged off the Delhi-Rohtak intercity bus service and inaugurated the Madanpur Khadar bus terminal and a new building at the East Vinod Nagar Depot.



NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE WEEK CELEBRATED AT BJB, HIGH SCHOOL.

Two wanted criminals held after exchange of fire in Delhi's Dwarka

New Delhi: Two habitual offenders, wanted in an attempt to murder, were arrested after an exchange of fire with the police in southwest Delhi's Dwarka, an official said on Friday.

The accused, Jatin Sharma, 27, and Pawan Bhandari, 26, are alleged to be associated with the Vicky Takkar gang and were involved in a recent stabbing incident in which a man was critically injured in the Dabri area, the officer said.

Police said the case pertains to an incident reported on April 8, when a person, Mahender Singh, was stabbed and left grievously injured.

Delhi: Patient rescued after attempting to jump from hospital balcony in Karkardooma

New Delhi: A patient climbed onto the fifth-floor balcony and threatened to jump from the balcony at Deepak Kailash Hospital in the Karkardooma area of Delhi on Friday morning, officials said.

According to the Delhi Fire Department, at around 8:35 am, the fire station at Connaught Place received an emergency call reporting that a patient was sitting on a fifth-floor balcony of the hospital and attempting to jump.

"The patient had been sitting on the balcony for nearly half an hour and was repeatedly saying that he would jump," an official added.

Hospital staff and others present at the spot attempted to pacify and counsel the patient during the tense situation. Meanwhile, the fire station immediately dispatched a rescue vehicle and team to the location.

Fire and rescue personnel, along with hospital staff, managed to bring the situation under control and successfully rescued the patient safely from the balcony, officials said. No injuries were reported in the incident.



SpiceJet flight clips Akasa plane at Delhi airport; probe ordered

New Delhi: Two aircraft — operated by SpiceJet and Akasa — clipped wings while taxiing at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) on Thursday afternoon, damaging both planes, airport officials said, adding that all the passengers were safe.

Later in the day, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said a probe has been launched, and an air traffic controller and the SpiceJet pilots have been de-registered pending investigation.

The incident occurred around 2.15pm near Terminal 1, when a SpiceJet flight arriving from Leh was taxiing to its parking bay and struck an Akasa aircraft that was stationary and preparing for departure to Hyderabad.

An airport official said there was visible damage to both aircraft, with a portion of the SpiceJet wing lodged in the Akasa aircraft.

"The Akasa flight QP-1406, heading to Hyderabad, had taxied out of the bay, while the SpiceJet

flight SG-124 had arrived from Leh and was taxiing into the stand when the wings of the two aircraft clipped," the official said.

Akasa said its Delhi-Hyderabad flight had to return to the bay following the accident.

"Preliminary information indicates that Akasa's aircraft was stationary when another airline's aircraft made contact with it. All passengers and crew were safely disembarked, and our

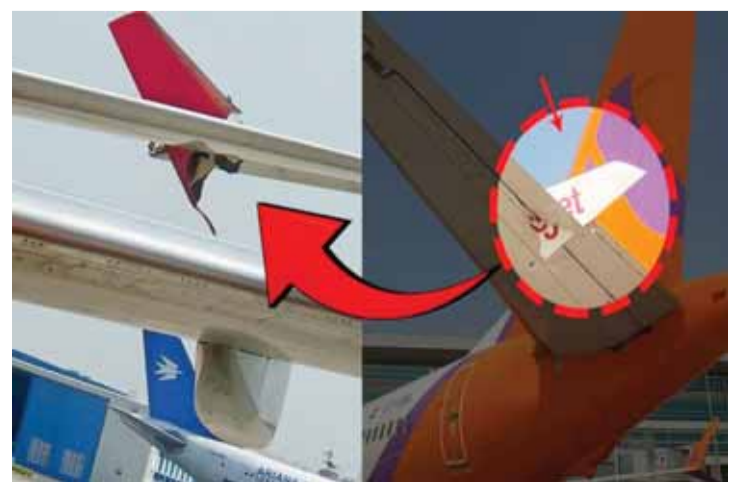
ground teams are making alternative arrangements to fly our passengers to Hyderabad at the earliest," an Akasa spokesperson said.

"In line with established protocols, the relevant authorities have been informed, and the matter is under investigation. At Akasa Air, the safety and security of our passengers and crew remain our highest priority," the spokesperson added.

The DGCA, in a release,

stated, "The winglet of a SpiceJet aircraft, which was taxiing to the allocated parking bay after operating flight SG-124 (Leh-Delhi) at Terminal 1, hit the horizontal tail surface of an Akasa aircraft positioned on the apron after push-back for operating a Delhi-Hyderabad flight. Due to the impact, the right-hand side winglet of the SpiceJet aircraft and the horizontal stabiliser of the Akasa aircraft were damaged."

It was not known how many passengers were there in the both the flights.



After assuming office, Vice-Chancellor Professor Prabhat Mahapatra met the Governor



Puri: After taking charge, the Vice-Chancellor of Shri Jagannath Sanskrit University, Professor Prabhat Mahapatra, met the Hon'ble Governor at the Raj Bhavan today.

During the meeting, the Vice-Chancellor discussed ways to promote development in the university's academic, infrastructural, and research sectors. The Hon'ble Governor expressed his commitment to making all possible efforts for the overall growth of the Sanskrit University.

The Vice-Chancellor also apprised the Governor of various challenges currently faced in the field of Sanskrit education. They held meaningful discussions on strengthening, promoting, and expanding India's traditional knowledge systems.

On this occasion, the Vice-Chancellor invited the Hon'ble Governor to visit the university campus. Professor Dattatraya Murthy, Chairman of the Postgraduate Council of the university, was also present during the meeting.

100% success of O.P. Jindal School in CBSE Class 10th exams



16th April, Angul: The students of O.P. Jindal School, Angul have achieved extraordinary success in the recently released CBSE Class 10th exams. A total of 94 students of the school appeared for the Class 10th examination, and 47 students have made the school proud by scoring more than 90 percent marks.

Dibyana Dibyansha Dehury has topped the school by scoring 98.4%. Similarly, Abigail Dungdung, Shreyas Makkad, Pulkit Dhull, Astha Aditi Sahoo, Swastik Shivam Nayak, Sai Deepti Mishra, Aditi Patnaik, Shrawani Rohit Bisane, Keshav Agrawalla, Sanskriti Narayan, Krishal Jain, Bishnu Prasanna Tripathy, Soham Kumar Sahu, Anuska Banerjee, Janhvi Kashyap Akshit Agarwal, Akshara Garg, Saiswarup Swain, Priyanshu Sahu, Ekansh Deshmukh, Bishal Pani, Ujjwal Kumar, Anvesha Pradhan have topped the school in various subjects.

Extending his best wishes, Angul Location Head and Executive Director, Mr. P. K. Biju Nair, congratulated the students of O.P. Jindal School for their excellent performance. He appreciated the role of teachers and parents in shaping their success and expressed confidence that the students will excel in life with strong values and discipline.

These exceptional results stand as a testament of O.P. Jindal School and speaks about their commitment for quality education, holistic development, and academic rigour. For this success of the school, the school Principal Dr. Ashwini Kumar Sahu has expressed his gratitude to the Jindal Foundation, all the esteemed members of the School Management Committee and has congratulated all the teachers, parents and students of the school.

Major Crackdown on Timber Smuggling: 45 Sal Logs Seized in Rayagada Forest Raid



Rayagada, April 17: In a significant crackdown on illegal timber smuggling, forest officials carried out a high-intensity joint raid in the Mantrajhali Revenue Forest under Gudari Range of Rayagada Forest Division.

Acting on credible intelligence inputs, a 38-member team comprising forest squad personnel and staff launched a well-coordinated operation deep inside the forest area. During the raid, officials seized as many as 45 sal logs, measuring approximately 24.375 cubic feet, suspected to have been illegally felled and stored for smuggling.

The swift and strategic action by the forest department is being seen as a strong message to timber mafias operating in the region. Sources indicate that the seized timber was likely part of a larger illegal network involved in

deforestation and black-market trade.

Officials have intensified surveillance across vulnerable forest zones, and combing operations are expected to continue in the coming days. "We are committed to safeguarding our forest resources. Strict and exemplary action will be taken against those involved," a senior forest officer stated.

A detailed investigation is currently underway to identify and apprehend the culprits behind the illegal felling and transportation racket.

The Rayagada Forest Division has been facing increasing challenges related to illegal logging, and this operation marks a decisive step toward strengthening enforcement and conservation efforts in the district.

Clarification on reported cavity formation in Talcher

Sambalpur, April 16, 2026: In reference to recent media reports describing a "subsidence" incident near Dera Colliery, Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) clarifies that the information being circulated is factually incorrect and misleading.

A small cavity (approximately 1 ft diameter and 1 ft depth) was reported last morning on the Handidhwa-Dera road. MCL acted promptly,

prioritising public safety and community concerns, and undertook immediate remedial measures in coordination with local authorities.

Detailed preliminary investigations have confirmed that the underground mine workings beneath the location are more than 80 meters deep, well below any zone that could influence surface stability.

While the strata in this area

are strong and competent, ensuring structural integrity, the observed cavity was not found related to any underground mining activity.

Technical assessment has established that the cavity resulted from a localised road surface failure caused by improper drainage in the specific patch and obstruction in the nearby culvert, which led to water accumulation and

subsequent erosion of soil beneath the road surface.

This was strictly a surface-level infrastructure issue, unrelated to mining-induced subsidence.

Based on public feedback, the affected stretch across the entire width of the road was excavated and the area was stabilised and backfilled with durable cement-concrete material.

Necessary precautions,

including temporary traffic diversion, were implemented to allow proper setting of the road, which is now fully restored and normal traffic movement has resumed.

It is reiterated that MCL is committed to safe and scientific mining practices with continuous monitoring of ground stability. Local citizens are requested to rely on verified official information.

Former Manager of Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. arrested in fraud case

Keonjhar : Keonjhar Police has arrested one accused person namely Banothu Ravi Kumar (44), former Manager of Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd., Naranpur Sub-Station, in connection with large-scale financial irregularities and fraudulent activities committed during his tenure from April 2021 to January 2025.

Police said that after receiving a written complain from POWERGRID authorities, police registered a case in Town P.S. on 15 of April, 2026 and arrested him.

During the investigation police revealed that the accused, by misusing his official position, was involved in systematic financial fraud by creating forged contracts, fake purchase orders, and fabricated bills, police said. He allegedly bypassed standard procurement procedures, misused



SAP credentials, and processed payments without execution of actual work. In several instances, contracts were issued in favour of selected vendors, including a firm linked to his spouse, and

payments were fraudulently encashed, police found during the investigation.

It is further revealed that the accused manipulated official records, including E-Office documents, to facilitate repeated payments against single works, causing wrongful loss to the organization amounting to approximately Rs. 18.66 lakhs.

"During investigation, relevant documents including forged contracts, purchase records, billing documents, and departmental enquiry reports have been seized, and statements of key witnesses have been recorded. The accused was arrested today" said Srikanta Sahu, IIC Town police station. Investigation is continuing to ascertain involvement of other persons and to trace the flow of funds, police said.

Champua girl honoured during Odia festival

Champua 16/04 (DMS) Tejaswini, a daughter of Champua in Keonjhar district, has been honoured with a prestigious state-level award during the Odia Fortnight festival observation programme held in Bhubaneswar. She is a +3 2nd year student of Chandrasekhar College in Champua. Her Odia poem "Bharat Barsha" has secured first place in Odisha in the creativity competition. For this achievement, the state government presented her with a cash prize of Rs 5,000 and a certificate of excellence. The student's family, Chandrasekhar



College Principal Rajendra Kumar Kar, other faculty members of college and other dignitaries of the

locality have expressed their happiness over this success of Tejaswini.

ADITRI SAIKRITI JENA CLAIMS GOLD AT YONEX-SUNRISE OSBA



Jajpur : Aditri Saikriti Jena, a promising young shuttler from Bari, Jajpur, clinched the gold medal at the Yonex-Sunrise OSBA All Odisha Mini [U-9 & U-11] and Sub-Junior [U-13] State Ranking Badminton Tournament organised by the District Badminton Association Sambalpur, at Sambalpur.

Along this remarkable achievement, she secured the top rank in the state in her category, bringing pride to her family and

coaches. She is the younger daughter of Mr. Biswajit Jena and Mrs. Shikha Samantaray and trains at Panipat Refinery Township Officers' Club under the guidance of Coach Suman Kumar Mishra.

Her dedication, discipline, and consistent hard work continue to mark her as one of Odisha's rising badminton talents.

Post this news goes viral locals, friends, and nearby area people have wished her in this regard.

House Enumeration Begins in Rayagada District

Rayagada, : The house enumeration process has commenced in Rayagada district from April 16. As part of the initial phase, all houses are being numbered between April 16 and April 18, along with the preparation of maps for each enumeration block.

On the first day, enumerators and supervisors visited all villages and hamlets under Rayagada block. They carried out house numbering based on location and prepared a blueprint for the enumeration process.

According to Tahasildar and Charge Officer Mrs. Priyadarshini Swain, a total of 244 enumerators and 42 supervisors have been deployed for 410 enumeration blocks in Rayagada block. Nearly one-third of the work was completed on the first day, and the house listing is expected to be completed by April 18. The actual population enumeration will begin thereafter. Prior to the enumeration, awareness is being created among villagers about the importance of the census and the use of data in national planning and development. The entire house enumeration process is targeted to be completed by May 15. Meanwhile, Tahasildar Mrs. Priyadarshini Swain.

ICG seizes two boats carrying smuggled Betel Nuts off Paradip Coast



Paradip: The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) seized two fishing boats allegedly engaged in the illegal transportation of betel nuts off the Paradip coast in Odisha on Wednesday.

According to ICG official, during a routine patrol in the Bay of Bengal, Coast Guard personnel intercepted two fishing vessels and conducted a search operation. The boats, identified as Maa Ayesha-1 and Maa Ayesha-2, were found carrying 710 sacks of smuggled betel nuts.

The estimated value of the seized consignment is around ₹8.52

lakh, according to sources. The vessels were traced to West Bengal and were operating without valid registration and essential documentation, indicating violations of maritime and transport regulations. The seized boats along with their crew have been handed over to the Kasafal Marine Police Station for further investigation.

In a statement, the Coast Guard said it continues to maintain heightened vigilance in maritime zones to prevent, detect and deter illegal activities at sea.

Hyva Truck Hits Two wheeler in Khariar Road : Bike rider Critically injured

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD, April 16 : A tragic road accident occurred at Amsena Chowk Khariar Road in Nuapada District on NH-353, when a Hyva truck hits two wheeler on Thursday. The crash left the bike rider critically injured. After accident the driver fled away from the spot with hyva truck.

The injured person has been identified as Kaththa Prashad Sahu (60) of village Haldi in Nuapada District. Every day he used to go Khariar Road for selling milk on his two wheeler bearing registration No. OR26 9223. On Thursday an unidentified Hyva truck hits him from behind and he got injured. Sahu suffered a fractured leg and was rushed by ambulance to Khariar Road Community Health Centre. Doctors later referred him to Nuapada for advanced treatment. Till the writing of this news, no case had been made in the police station.

Former District Labour Officer Nuapada Convicted in Bribery Case

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD, April 16 : Odisha Vigilance secured the conviction of Sarat Kumar Panigrahi, former District Labour Officer (DLO) of Nuapada at Khariar Road, in a bribery case.

On April 16, 2026, the Special Judge, Vigilance, Bhawanipatna, sentenced him to three years of simple imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs.80,000.

Panigrahi, who retired from service, faced charges under Koraput Vigilance PS Case No.3 dated January 7, 2021. Investigators proved that he demanded and accepted Rs 40,000 from a trainer for registering 200 labourers. The case was filed under

Section 7(a) of the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act, 2018. The court's verdict marked a significant step in Odisha Vigilance's ongoing efforts to curb corruption in government offices. Officials confirmed that the agency will now move the competent authority to stop Panigrahi's pension following his conviction.

The investigation revealed that Panigrahi exploited his position to demand illegal gratification, undermining trust in labour administration. Vigilance officers gathered evidence and presented a strong case, leading to his conviction.

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**Dharmendra Pradhan
Congratulates
Harivansh on Re-
election as Rajya
Sabha Deputy
Chairman**



Bhubaneswar, 17 April (H.S.): Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has congratulated Harivansh Narayan Singh on his re-election as the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha for a third consecutive term.

In a social media post, Pradhan lauded Harivansh's journey from journalism to public life, describing it as an example of "quiet dignity, intellectual integrity, and unwavering commitment to parliamentary values." He said Harivansh's balanced and impartial conduct has strengthened the credibility of the Upper House and enhanced trust in democratic processes.

The Union Minister further stated that Harivansh's presence in the Rajya Sabha is not only a matter of pride for the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) but also a valuable asset for Indian democracy as a whole.

CM Mohan Majhi Reviews Kharif Fertilizer Supply, Orders Strict Action Against Hoarding and Black Marketing

Bhubaneswar, 17 April (H.S.): Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Friday chaired a high-level review meeting at Lok Seva Bhawan to assess the availability and distribution of fertilizers for the upcoming Kharif season, stressing the need to ensure timely supply to farmers across Odisha.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister held discussions with district collectors through video conferencing and directed officials to prioritize last-mile delivery, particularly for small and marginal farmers. He also highlighted concerns over potential global supply disruptions due to the ongoing conflict in West Asia and urged authorities to

remain vigilant.

Agriculture Commissioner-cum-Secretary Sachin Ramchandra Jadhav informed that the Centre has allocated 1.14 million metric tonnes of fertilizers to Odisha for the current year. Against the estimated requirement of 79,630 metric tonnes for April, the state already has a stock of 3,61,490 metric tonnes as of April 15. The distribution network includes 1,029 wholesale dealers and 12,093 retail dealers, with supply from fertilizer companies continuing smoothly.

Officials also reported that inspections at dealer points have led to the cancellation of six licenses due to irregularities. The



Chief Minister was apprised of the implementation of the Integrated Fertilizer Management System (IFMS), introduced by the Union Ministry of Fertilizers, which facilitates real-time

monitoring of fertilizer availability and allocation. Reviewing district-wise stock positions, Majhi noted that the state currently has around 1.77 lakh metric tonnes of urea and over 60,000 metric

tonnes of DAP in reserve. However, he cautioned against complacency, emphasizing that ensuring accessibility at the grassroots level remains the top priority.

Issuing clear directives,

the Chief Minister called for stringent action against black marketing and hoarding. He instructed officials to conduct surprise inspections, register FIRs against violators, and cancel licenses where necessary. He also directed enhanced surveillance at interstate border check posts to prevent diversion of fertilizers, with joint monitoring by police and agriculture departments.

Expressing concern over the misuse of subsidized urea for industrial purposes, Majhi asked district-level task forces to take strict measures to curb such practices. He further directed that Vigilance

Committees be constituted in all Gram Panchayats within the next few days to strengthen monitoring at the local level.

On the digital front, the Chief Minister emphasized the need to expedite the creation of Digital Farmer IDs. He noted that 15 lakh farmers have already been covered out of a total of 44 lakh and said the initiative would enhance transparency and ensure targeted delivery of benefits.

Additionally, he called for awareness campaigns to promote balanced fertilizer use and encouraged farmers to adopt alternatives such as organic manure and Nano Urea to ensure sustainable agricultural practices.

World Hemophilia Day Observed in Bhubaneswar; Advanced Treatment Facilities Introduced in Odisha



Bhubaneswar, 17 April (H.S.): World Hemophilia Day was observed at the Hemophilia Day-Care Centre located at Capital Hospital and PGIMER, Bhubaneswar, with a focus on enhancing awareness and strengthening treatment facilities for patients in Odisha.

On the occasion, improved medical services and new treatment options were introduced, marking a significant step toward better care for hemophilia patients in the state.

Odisha's Health and Family Welfare Minister Mukesh Mahaling attended the event as the chief guest. He reaffirmed the state government's commitment to supporting hemophilia patients, highlighting initiatives such as free treatment, availability of clotting factors, and awareness programmes across Odisha.

Observed annually on April 17, World Hemophilia Day aims to raise awareness about this rare genetic disorder. This year's theme, "Diagnosis: First Step to Care," emphasizes the importance of early detection and timely treatment.

Hemophilia is a hereditary disorder in which the blood does not clot properly due to the deficiency or absence of clotting factors. As a result, even minor injuries can lead to prolonged bleeding, and in some cases, internal bleeding may occur, posing serious health risks. The condition not only affects patients but also places a significant burden on their families.

The Minister announced that Non-Factor Therapy, an advanced and more effective treatment method, will soon be made available in the state. This therapy is expected to

significantly reduce the risk of recurrent bleeding episodes, enabling patients to lead healthier and more normal lives.

In a major development, Odisha has introduced Extended Half-Life Factor VIII and Von Willebrand Factor therapies for the first time. These modern treatment options are designed to reduce the frequency of injections, improve patients' quality of life, and allow them greater independence.

Senior officials, including the Director of Capital Hospital and PGIMER, Director and Additional Director of the Blood Safety Department, Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent of Capital Hospital, the Principal of PGIMER, and representatives from the Hemophilia Society, were present at the event.

Darshan Temporarily Suspended at Puri Jagannath Temple for 'Bada Mahasana' Ritual

Bhubaneswar, 17 April (H.S.): Public darshan at the Jagannath Temple was temporarily suspended on Friday morning following the detection of blood drops near the Bhitara Katha (inner chamber) area.

The incident came to light shortly after the Mangala Alati ritual in the early hours. Servitors promptly alerted the temple administration and senior priests, after which it was decided to conduct the 'Bada Mahasana'—a grand purification ritual of the sibling deities—to restore the sanctity of the sanctum sanctorum. As per protocol, general public entry for darshan inside the temple was halted for a brief period. During the ritual, access was strictly limited to a few authorised servitors, as the ceremony is conducted under 'Gupta Niti', a confidential and traditional practice of the temple. Following the completion of the purification rites, normal darshan resumed. The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration confirmed that all rituals were carried out in accordance with the age-old traditions of the Srimandir.

Heatwave: Schools and Colleges in Odisha's Balangir to Remain Closed from April 18–21

Bhubaneswar, 17 April (H.S.): In response to the prevailing heatwave conditions and a sharp rise in daytime temperatures, the district administration in Balangir, Odisha, has ordered the closure of all educational institutions from April 18 to April 21.

The decision was taken by the District Collector as a precautionary measure to safeguard students from the adverse effects of extreme heat, which has made outdoor movement and classroom attendance increasingly difficult and potentially hazardous.

According to the official announcement, all schools, colleges, and other educational institutions



across the district will remain shut during the specified period. Authorities have stated that the situation will be closely monitored, and a decision on whether to extend the closure will be taken based on the evolving weather conditions.

Balangir, along with several other regions of Odisha, has been

witnessing severe heatwave conditions over the past few days, with rising temperatures affecting normal life and prompting precautionary administrative measures. Officials have advised residents to take necessary precautions during peak afternoon hours and stay hydrated as the heatwave persists.

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

New Delhi, Seeking recusal of Delhi High Court judge Justice Swarana 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, Kejriwal alleged that substantial legal

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.

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 A 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

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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.

Probe Ordered After IRS Officers Allegedly Evicted from Lok Bhavan During Courtesy Visit

Bhubaneswar, 17 April (H.S.): A formal probe has been ordered following allegations that two Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officers were forcibly evicted from Lok Bhavan in Bhubaneswar and taken to a police station during a scheduled courtesy visit to Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati. The incident, which occurred on Thursday, has triggered strong reactions within administrative circles.

The matter came to light after a written complaint was submitted by D. Sudhakar Rao, Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax, Odisha, to the Governor's Secretary. In his complaint, Rao detailed the alleged mistreatment of two IRS officers—Manish Kumar (2015 batch) and



Satyra Prakash Mishra (2023 batch)—who were part of the visiting delegation.

According to the complaint, Rao, along with his wife and three other officials, was granted permission to meet the Governor. Meanwhile, the two officers were asked to wait in a designated hall within the Lok Bhavan premises. However, the situation reportedly escalated when, acting on the instructions of the ADC

(Police), the officers were allegedly removed from the premises and taken to Capital Police Station in a police vehicle.

The complaint further stated that one of the officers was accused of being in an inebriated condition. However, this allegation was later found to be unsubstantiated after verification at the police station.

Rao described the incident as a serious breach of

protocol and expressed concern over the treatment meted out to the officers. He noted that unfounded allegations had been made regarding their sobriety, which were subsequently proven baseless. The complaint termed the episode as an affront to the dignity of senior civil servants.

In his communication, Rao emphasized that the visit had been pre-coordinated, and that the officers had duly informed the Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to the Governor as well as the ADC (Navy) about their presence in the waiting area. Despite this, they were allegedly subjected to what he described as "unprovoked and inappropriate treatment."

The letter further stated that, at the behest of the ADC (Police), the officers were forcibly escorted out of Lok Bhavan and taken to the police station without sufficient cause. Rao urged authorities to examine the conduct of the security personnel and the ADC (Police) involved in the incident to ensure that such occurrences are not repeated in the future.

Following the complaint, authorities have initiated an inquiry into the matter. Officials indicated that the probe would examine all aspects of the incident, including adherence to protocol, the actions of security personnel, and the circumstances under which the officers were removed from the premises.

Man convicted life sentenced in a murder case

Keonjhar: Keonjhar District and Sessions Judge Gopal Chandra Behera on Friday sentenced Ramsingh Munda to life imprisonment and a fine of Rs 10,000. For non payment of the court sentence 1 year more in jail. According to the public prosecutor Pradeep Kumar Das who was handling the

case for the government the incident took place in the year 2025. On January 7, 2025, Manoj Kumar Mahanta (28) of Raikala village, Keonjhar Sadar police station, and Tarini Prasad Mahanta of Baneikala village, on a motorcycle bearing registration number OD09-AA-0504, went to Ramsingh

Munda, Aahikala village under Nayakot police station, to collect the outstanding finance dues. When they reached there, while talking about the due, Ramsingh Munda shouted at the them without giving the money and threatened them. Later, Ramsingh Munda told them to go to

Jana Seva Kendra with their bike and he will give the money there after collecting from the Jana Seva Kendra. Manoj and Tarini Prasad were went to the Jana Seva Kendra located in the village on their bike and Ramsingh Munda followed them in his Bolero jeep. After some distance Ramsingh drive the

Bolero jeep at a high speed bearing registration number OR19-D-5599 and ran over them at a deserted place near Shukramunda Sahi. As a result, Tarini Prasad Mahanta died on the spot, while Manoj Kumar Mahanta was seriously injured and undergoing treatment in the hospital.

Nashik Case

THE shocking allegations of sexual harassment and attempts at forcible religious conversion at the Nashik branch of a major IT firm have turned the spotlight on a much-ignored issue: safety in the workplace. The claim that a group of male employees functioned like an "organised gang" to target female colleagues suggests utter laxity that allowed such misconduct to go unchecked. The HR manager allegedly discouraged a victim from submitting a complaint, saying that "these things happen", and sided with the accused.

The case points to a deeper, systemic failure within a corporate setting that is meant to ensure the safety and dignity of employees. When individuals holding top positions - tasked with upholding the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) framework - are accused of normalising or trivialising abuse, the institutional safeguards crumble. It's a dangerous trend when victims are silenced not just by perpetrators but also by those who are entrusted with their protection.

Several aggrieved employees gathered courage to come forward only after police intervention and counselling, leading to the registration of a bunch of FIRs. An uncomfortable question arises: how many such cases remain buried in workplaces across the country due to fear, stigma or institutional apathy? While the probe must proceed without any prejudice, the bid to communalise or politicise the Nashik matter risks eclipsing the core concerns. Framing such incidents through a religious or ideological lens diverts attention from the urgent need for corporate accountability and gender-sensitive reforms. Harassment is not a community-specific crime; it is an abuse of power that thrives in environments lacking transparency and enforcement. The response from the authorities, including the formation of a special investigation team and an independent inquiry by the National Commission for Women, is laudable. However, lasting change will happen only if companies go beyond declarations of "zero tolerance" and proactively strengthen internal mechanisms that empower employees to speak without fear.

Federal question

THE Centre's decision to amend the rules governing the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) has triggered predictable outrage in Punjab and Haryana. But the issue goes far beyond routine political protest. At its core lies a fundamental question: how far can Central authority extend into institutions that were designed to embody cooperative federalism? By ending the longstanding convention that key technical posts in the BBMB would be held by officers from the partner states, the Centre has altered the delicate balance that underpins the management of crucial river waters. For Punjab and Haryana, whose agrarian economies depend heavily on these waters, the move is being seen as a dilution of their rightful stake.

The timing is equally significant. With summer approaching and water demand set to rise, any perception of reduced state control risks fuelling inter-state tensions, particularly against the backdrop of the unresolved SYL canal dispute. Trust, once eroded in water-sharing arrangements, is difficult to rebuild. The Centre may argue that broad-basing appointments enhances efficiency and professionalism. Yet, governance structures in a federal polity cannot be judged by technocratic logic alone. They must also inspire confidence among stakeholders. In river water management, where history, geography and politics intersect, legitimacy is as important as competence.

What is needed is not unilateral change but consultation and consensus. The BBMB has long been a symbol of negotiated coexistence between riparian states. Undermining that symbolism risks reopening old fault lines. A course correction is still possible. The Centre must engage with the states to evolve a framework that balances efficiency with federal sensitivity. In matters of shared resources, cooperation cannot be commanded; it has to be cultivated.

The case points to a deeper, systemic failure within a corporate setting that is meant to ensure the safety and dignity of employees. When individuals holding top positions - tasked with upholding the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) framework - are accused of normalising or trivialising abuse, the institutional safeguards crumble. It's a dangerous trend when victims are silenced not just by perpetrators but also by those who are entrusted with their protection.

Bhubaneswar's Tax Limbo: Holding or Property Tax?

Prasanna Mishra

Bhubaneswar is expanding at an impressive pace. New housing colonies are spreading across its peripheries, commercial complexes are rising, and land values are steadily climbing. Yet beneath this visible growth lies a quieter and more troubling reality: the city's municipal revenues are not keeping pace with its expansion. This mismatch is not accidental. It stems from a long-pending transition that never fully materialised: the shift from the old holding tax system to a modern property tax regime under the Orissa Municipal Corporation Act, 2003. More than two decades after the law came into force, Bhubaneswar continues to function within a hybrid, legally fragile, and fiscally inefficient framework. The 2003 Act envisioned a clear reform. It sought to replace the opaque holding tax-based on notional rental value and often subject to discretion-with a more rational system based on objective criteria, such as area, usage, and location. Such a system would be more transparent, equitable, and capable of expanding the tax base as the city continues to grow. But there was a catch. The Act required detailed Rules to operationalize this new regime-

rules governing valuation, assessment, and procedure. These Rules were never fully framed and implemented. The result is a familiar administrative paradox: the law exists, but the machinery to implement it does not. This vacuum led to inevitable conflict. The municipal corporation, continuing under the legacy holding tax system, attempted to revise and enhance taxes without a properly prescribed statutory framework. This was challenged before the High Court, most notably in *The core question was simple but fundamental: how can taxes be revised under a new law when the Rules required to implement that law are absent?* The Orissa High Court, under Chief Justice S. Muralidhar, answered with clarity. In the absence of Rules, it held, tax enhancement lacked legal validity. This was a sound legal position. A taxing statute must operate strictly within its framework; without Rules, the machinery fails. Yet the judgment also had a wider consequence. It effectively froze the system. The new property tax regime could not be implemented, and the old holding tax system could not be meaningfully revised. What followed was a prolonged administrative stalemate.

The impact of this impasse is now visible across Bhubaneswar. The municipal corporation currently collects roughly ₹100 crore annually from holding tax. By any reasonable estimate, a properly implemented property tax system could yield between ₹150 crore and ₹250 crore. This implies a recurring annual loss of ₹80-150 crore-resources that could have been invested in roads, drainage, sanitation, and public services. But the problem goes deeper than lost revenue. It is also a question of fairness. As the city expands, many new properties are not effectively brought into the tax net. High-value commercial and premium residential properties are often under-assessed. Meanwhile, compliant taxpayers-those already within the system-continue to bear the burden. The result is a structurally inequitable system: growth without corresponding contribution. This raises an uncomfortable but necessary question-who benefits from the status quo? The continuation of the holding tax system, with its opacity and discretion, favours those whose properties are undervalued or insufficiently recorded. A shift to a transparent property tax regime would standardize valuation, widen the tax base, and increase

liabilities for high-value properties. It is therefore not unreasonable to suspect that the persistence of the current system is not entirely accidental. Diffuse but real vested interests may be at work. In recent years, the municipal corporation has attempted to compensate for this weakness by introducing user charges for services such as waste management and sanitation. In principle, such charges are legitimate. They are recognized under law and are an accepted component of modern urban finance. However, in Bhubaneswar's current context, their introduction raises concerns. User charges are valid when they are linked to specific services and do not duplicate existing taxes. But where the underlying tax system itself is unclear and incomplete, the distinction between tax and fee becomes blurred. Citizens begin to perceive these charges as an additional burden rather than a rational service fee. There is also a legal risk. If services like sanitation are already embedded within holding tax, a separate user charge may be seen as double recovery. This makes such charges vulnerable to challenge and weakens their legitimacy.

What Bhubaneswar is currently attempting, in effect, is a piecemeal approach-retaining an outdated tax system while layering service charges on top. This is neither sustainable nor defensible. The solution is neither complex nor unknown. It requires completing the reform that began in 2003. The State must urgently frame and notify the necessary Rules under the Act. A transparent valuation system-such as the unit area method-must be implemented. All properties must be systematically mapped and brought into the tax net. And user charges must be clearly structured as supplements to, not substitutes for, a robust property tax system. At its core, this is a question of governance. A city's progress is not measured only by the buildings it constructs, but by the systems that sustain them. Bhubaneswar today stands at a crossroads. It can continue with a system that is convenient for a few but costly for the many, or it can move towards one that is transparent, equitable, and fiscally sound. A city that cannot measure its properties cannot govern them. And a system that hesitates to tax fairly will inevitably fail to serve fairly. (The writer is a former IAS officer)

Asha Bhonsle :Her Rootedness in Classical Music

Satya Narayan Misra

Asha came to the music scene in the 50s, when Lata, GeetaDutt&Shamshad Begum were the top three. Growing under the shadow of Lata, her main rival, however, was GeetaDutt. It was her association with OP Nayaar, who did not like Lata's thin voice, that she bridged the gap with the song AaiyeMeherbanin Howrah Bridge made in 1958. A year earlier, she paired with Rafi in NayaDaur, with lilting numbers like MaangKeSaathThuma, SaathiHaathBadhana&Ude Jab, Jab ZulfeTere. The association with OP Nayaar culminated in the haunting number YehHaiReshmiZulfokiAndhere in Mere Sanam in 1965 before they parted company in 1974. YehReshmi oozed modernity, swing and attitude to singing of Asha, a far cry from the staid, lyrical numbers being peddled around that time. However, her association with RD Burman and her song Dum Maro Dum in HareRam Hare Krishna in 1971 broke the glass ceiling of Hindi film music. Asha made the chillum smoking ZeenatAman sound unapologetically sensuous. Lata was to originally sing Dum MaroDum. But RD put his foot down & brought Asha in. When DevAnand heard it, he developed cold feet as he thought that it will swamp other songs in the film. It was only when Asha

pleaded with him, he relented. The rest is history. Given its carefree, anti-establishment refrain, AIR banned it, Doordarshan cut it, as it was apprehended it will corrupt the youth. However, AmeenSayani carried it in BinacaGeet Mala where it remained No1 for 12 consecutive weeks, becoming SartajGeet. When Apple launched iPhone 13, Dum Maro Dum was its opening guitar riff. It played in the background in the highly popular movie Durandar in 2025. By common consent, she sang better than what Lata would have & made an anthem for the youth. With RD Burman in consort they introduced rock, jazz & Western Cabaret to Hindi cinema in the 70s. Quick on the heels of Dum MaroDum, Asha sang another iconic rock number PiyatuAbto Aja in the movie Caravan. She followed it with a soulful romantic number Churaliya Re in Yadoo Ki Barat in 1973. In 1980 she sang a lovely number 'PiyaBawri', composed by Gulzar for Rekha in Khubsoorat. But the film that defined the best of Asha-RD - Gulzarcombine isIzaajat, adapted from the Bengali film Jatagriha. A forlorn wife, played with rare sensitivity and dignity by Rekha, Asha's rendering of 'Khali Haath Sham Ayi' takes one's breath away. Even better is the number 'MeraKuchSamanTumari Pas

Even better is the number 'MeraKuchSamanTumari Pas PadiHai', which is both minimalistic and haunting. It broke conventional song structure and brought sublime musicality to a strikingly conversational lyric of Gulzar. Asha met RD fortuitously in SD Burman's house, where Burman Da because of a misunderstanding with Lata asked Asha to sing that superb song 'Kali GhataChaye' for Nutan in the film Sujata(1959). Asha again sang a haunting number 'AbKeBarasBhejBhaiya' in Bandini (1963). It was a perfect melodic partnership, prompting Burman Da to observe 'Asha's voice is no less sweet than Lata'. But the greatest singer-composer partnership was UmraoJaani directed by Muzaffar Ali in 1981, based the story of a Lucknow courtesan. Asha was to sing one song with Lata to sing the rest. However, Muzaffar Ali felt it would be too much like Pakeezah made in 1972, with similar story of a Lucknow courtesan. When Asha read the novel, she fell for it. But she found in Khayam, a very difficult composer, who would not let her sing in her usual high octave but drop her pitch by 1.5 scale, 'lower sur'. It was pure rendering of rare Ghazals penned by Shahryar. The songs of UmraoJaani was pure magic. DilCheez Kya Hai was based on Raga Bihag, 'In AnkhonkiMasti' was based on BhupaliYehJagahaiDosto, on Bihag and ZustujuJiskiThi on raga YamanKalyan. Both Pakeezah and Umrao Jan are gold standard courtesan films. While Lata rendered lilting numbers like ChalChalte and ThadeRahio with heavy classical base, Asha fared no less in the raga based Ghazals of UmraoJaani under the exacting watch of Khayam. No wonder, the trioka of Rekha, Khayam and Asha won the National award in 1981 for best actor, composer and singer. In UmraoJaani Asha lingered like Ittar on a silk dupatta. Music was sparse, unhindered, and almost

fragile. Asha stepped in not as a singer chasing notes but as a mehfil holding back line. This was not her usual space, no playfulness, no cabaret sparkle. Just Tehzeeb, adda and a quite heartbreak that never announces itself. With Asha some of the voices entertain, some voices seduce, but with UmraoJaani, her voice becomes poetry. In 1984, she sang with Ghulam Ali an unforgettable ghazal 'Dargare DilKiRaatiMein Charag Sa Jab Goya' (In the night of the heart's court yard, some one lit a lamp). In public appearance Asha cultivated a distinct style, embellished silk sarees, boldbindis and statement jewellery, standing in visual contrast to her sister's austere simplicity. Her power lay not just in her prolific output but on her insistence on being seen and heard on her own terms. Serendipitously, both the icons passed away at the same age. Both of them had very solid grooming in classical music under the watchful eyes of their father. More than any other singer, their solid rootedness in classical music showed, beyond the fluff and light heartedness of popular music. Bade Ghulam Ali Khan used to say that if classical music had been taught in each household, India would not have been partitioned. The heartfelt tribute of Ghulam Ali on Asha Tai's passing away is a vindication of that message. (The writer is a film & music buff)

Society, the planet and cosmos

Manasij Das

Each of us is a portal of mutual exchange between human consciousness and the environment. We can make a significant difference to society, the planet and cosmos. The Sanskrit word for 'world' is 'loka'. It shares its root sound with the word 'locana' meaning 'to see'. However, the eyes are only one of the ten interfaces, between you and the animated, intelligent universe. These ten faculties of give and take between man and the jagat are the indriya, senses. The word 'indriya' is derived from the word 'indra', who is the universal archetype of leadership. The mind perceives the truth precisely when it is not a slave of temptations, memories, and momentum of past actions. Such a mind is Indra, the master of indriya. The information of the external world pours into the mind through the jnana indriya - ears, eyes, nose, skin and tongue. The vibrations channelled from the

surroundings are - shabd, sound; rupa, sight; gandha, smell; sparsha, touch; and rasa, taste. Further interaction with the environment occurs through one's five karma indriya - hands, feet, mouth, anus and genitals. Thus, a give and take is brought into play guided by one's past experiences and personality. Thus, the eternal cycle of karma is self-perpetrated. shapes your destiny. Each vibration you create is an autonomous, infallible energy which impacts the cosmos and rebounds back to you. This cycle follows a universal rhythm called Rtam, which maintains dharma. 'Rtam vadishyami' is a resolution one makes to respect Rtam and uphold dharma not just in actions but in thought and speech as well. Sound as Shabd Brahmn, the logos, becomes akshara, syllables; varna, letters; and vakya, sentences, and evolves through four layers of speech. All speech already exists as a potential within you. This is para vaak, transcendental sound. From this sprouts pashyanti vaak,

inspired speech. This is the realm of fluidly inclusive abstract visions, which are a precursor of contemplative thoughts. Speech further evolves to pondering and evaluating, by thought and counter thought - madhyama vaak. This culminates in the final stage, which is vaikhari vaak, articulate speech. The vaikhari vaak is generated by air passing over the vocal cords and the tongue touching various parts of the mouth. Like an arrow once released from the bow cannot be brought back, a word once uttered

cannot be annulled. Indra, the illumined mind, integrates all the stages of speech to engender sagacious speech. However, the weakness of Indra is the ego. Ego is your identity. Its designated purpose is to make you a strong individual. However, it also blurs the line between self-assertion and aggressiveness leading to the arrogance of King Indra. It is not a cosmic coincidence that Brihaspati, Jupiter, is the master of both - buddhi, wisdom and speech. When speech is aligned with wisdom, ego is

subjected to the triple filter of satyam, truth; hitam, beneficial; and priyam, pleasant, and this can result in conscious, appropriate speech. A couplet from the Subhashitas says: Lakshmi, goddess of prosperity and harmony, resides on the tip of your tongue, as do friends and relatives. Through the tip of your tongue, you can get bondage, and it is certain that through the tip of one's tongue, one can even face death. Gurugram, Hariyana, E-mail : manasijdas@rediffmail.com

India, China Discuss Implementation Of SCO Leaders Decisions, Organisation's Future Course

New Delhi 17/4 (H.S.): India and China held Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Bilateral Consultations in New Delhi, discussing the implementation of the SCO Leaders' decisions and the future course of the organisation. The two sides agreed to continue and consolidate mutual cooperation and consultations in SCO matters, according to a statement released by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Friday. India's SCO National Coordinator, Ambassador Alok A Dimri and China's National Coordinator, Ambassador Yan Wenbin, led the respective delegations during the

meeting held in New Delhi on April 16-17. "Both delegations, jointly, called on Secretary (West) Shri Sibi George to review cooperation within the SCO framework, including in the areas of security, trade, connectivity, and people-to-people ties. Both sides agreed to continue mutual consultations in future," the MEA release said. The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was established on June 15, 2001, with its founding members being China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. In 2017, India and Pakistan joined it. In 2023, Iran became a member, followed by

Belarus in 2024, bringing the total number of SCO member states to 10. The SCO has two observer states — Afghanistan and Mongolia — and 14 dialogue partners — Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia, Nepal, Turkey, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Bahrain, the Maldives, Myanmar, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait. Kyrgyzstan holds the SCO chairmanship for 2025-2026. Kyrgyzstan President Sadyr Japarov announced the theme of the presidency: "25 Years of the SCO: Together Towards Sustainable Peace, Development, and Prosperity."

Vice President Radhakrishnan to Embark on Landmark Sri Lanka Visit

New Delhi, 17/4 (H.S.): India's Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan will undertake his maiden bilateral visit to Sri Lanka on April 19-20, reinforcing the deep-rooted people-to-people bonds that have defined the two nations for centuries. The Ministry of External Affairs announced the trip as a timely sequel to recent high-level engagements, poised to further invigorate bilateral ties. During the sojourn, VP Radhakrishnan will engage with Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara



Dissanayake, Prime Minister Dr. Harini Amarasinghe, and other dignitaries, alongside interactions with Indian diaspora leaders.

Women Oppn MPs Disapprove 'Linking' Of Women's Reservation And Delimitation Bills

New Delhi 17/4 (H.S.): Amid the ongoing debate in the Parliament, women MPs from the Opposition on Friday voiced their disagreement over the Centre's move to pass the Women's Reservation Bill and the Delimitation Bill during the three-day extended Budget session, alleging that both the measures were being "linked" together for the BJP's "benefit". However, they said that they are in favour of implementing the Women's Reservation Act of 2023. Speaking to IANS, Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra noted: "The Women's Reservation Bill has already been passed. Women of this country are not so naive that an Act which has already been passed is now being linked with something else to increase their (BJP's) seats by 50 per cent." She accused the BJP-led Central government of trying to give more weightage to Hindi-heartland



states. "The states which have improved their education and controlled their population are being punished," she said. Giving an example, Moitra said: "The share of south Indian states is being reduced from 24 per cent to 20 per cent, and you are trying to link both issues. Delimitation has nothing to do with women's reservation." "You yourself had said that the Women's Reservation Bill will be after the

census and after delimitation. And today you are saying that we will not wait for the (current) census (to complete) and will do so based on the 2011 census," she alleged. About the proposal to increase the total number of Lok Sabha seats, the Trinamool MP said: "Where are these 850 or 815 figures coming from? Delimitation will decide the number. How can you decide the number?" "There is no

Delhi HC Dismisses Plea For Age Relaxation To EWS Candidates In Civil Services Exam

New Delhi 17/4 (H.S.): The Delhi High Court has dismissed a plea filed by candidates belonging to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) seeking age relaxation and additional attempts in the Civil Services Examination on a par with the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC). A Division Bench of Justices Anil Kshetrapal and Amit Mahajan held that the policy decision of the Centre not to extend such relaxations to EWS candidates does not suffer from arbitrariness or unconstitutionality and falls outside the scope of judicial review.

The petitioners had challenged the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) Office Memorandum dated January 31, 2019, the 2022 FAQs, and the Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2024 notification issued by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), contending that denial of age and attempt relaxations to EWS candidates violated Articles 14 and 16 of the Constitution. They sought directions to grant EWS candidates the same concessions as available to SC/ST/OBC candidates in direct recruitment to posts under the Union government. Rejecting the plea, the Delhi High Court held that matters relating to the grant of



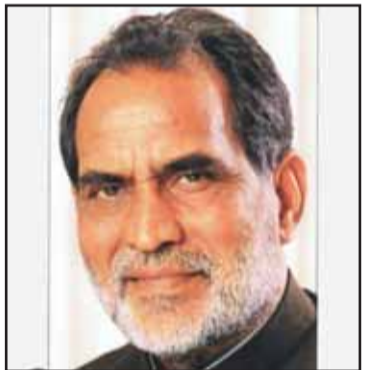
relaxations in age and number of attempts are part of policy formulation, which lies within the domain of the executive and legislature. "At the outset, it is imperative to appreciate that while exercising jurisdiction under Article 226 of the Constitution, Courts do not enact laws or frame policies and the same is in the domain of the Legislature and Executive," the Justice Kshetrapal-led Bench observed. It further held that judicial review in such cases is limited to examining whether a policy violates fundamental rights or is manifestly arbitrary, and not its wisdom or fairness. "The Executive is entrusted with the task of formulation and implementation of policies... To subject such policy decisions to judicial substitution merely because a different view appears more prudent or equitable would violate the doctrine of separation of powers," observed the Delhi

High Court. On the claim of parity, the Justice Kshetrapal-led Bench said that the EWS category, introduced through the 103rd Constitutional Amendment in 2019, stands on a distinct footing compared to SC/ST/OBC categories. "The hardship faced by individuals in this category arises from lack of financial resources. It does not stem from social stigma or historical exclusion," it said. In contrast, the Delhi High Court observed that SC, ST and OBC categories are rooted in "deep and long-standing social and educational backwardness" arising from caste-based discrimination. The judgment emphasised that economic disadvantage is inherently fluid and can change over time, unlike caste, which is determined by birth and carries lasting social consequences. "Since the handicaps faced by socially backward classes and

economically deprived classes are not the same, different ancillary concessions and relaxations can be provided to both categories," the Justice Kshetrapal-led Bench held. It added that EWS candidates cannot claim automatic parity with SC/ST/OBC candidates in matters such as age relaxation or number of attempts. The Delhi High Court also rejected the argument that some states and Union Territories, including Jammu and Kashmir, have granted such relaxations to EWS candidates. "No claim of parity can be sustained between policies framed by the Union and those adopted by individual States or Union Territories," the Justice Kshetrapal-led Bench said, adding that service conditions fall within the exclusive domain of the respective recruiting authorities. It further noted that similar pleas had earlier been rejected by the Delhi High Court and the Madhya Pradesh High Court. Holding that the petitioners failed to demonstrate any violation of constitutional or statutory provisions, the Delhi HC declined to interfere with the existing policy framework. "In such circumstances, the assailed policy decision falls squarely outside the permissible scope of judicial review and warrants no interference," the Justice Kshetrapal-led Bench said, dismissing the petition.

Leaders Honor Chandra Shekhar: Legacy of Simplicity and Steadfast Principles

New Delhi, 17/4 (H.S.): Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, and Union Ministers paid poignant tribute Friday to former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar on his birth anniversary, evoking his visionary leadership, fearless parliamentary interventions, and unyielding commitment to democratic values. At a prayer meeting in Jan Nayak Sthal, Radhakrishnan hailed Chandra Shekhar as a prescient leader and robust advocate for democracy. Birla lauded him as an emblem of intrepid, principle-driven politics, centering public welfare and social justice throughout his career. Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari reminisced on his humility and nation-building zeal, while Giriraj Singh portrayed him as the archetype of simplicity, struggle, and ideological integrity—best known as a "Young Turk" who boldly challenged malgovernance, most notably through his defiance of Indira Gandhi that reshaped national politics. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat extolled Chandra Shekhar's courage and self-respect, always prioritizing national interest. Leaders collectively recommitted to emulating his ideals of valor, modesty, and selfless service to the republic.



PM Modi Honors Chandra Shekhar: A Centenary Call to Embody Courage and Justice

New Delhi, 17/4 (H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid heartfelt tribute on Friday to former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar on his birth anniversary, marking the dawn of the leader's 100th centenary year as a poignant moment to reaffirm India's pursuit of prosperity and equity. In a poignant X post, PM Modi lauded Chandra Shekhar as a quintessential mass leader, embodying unyielding courage, steadfast conviction, and profound



loyalty to democratic ideals. PM Modi evoked the late statesman's deep-rooted connection to India's soil and his empathy for the common citizen's aspirations, qualities that infused public life with simplicity and clarity. He fondly recalled personal encounters where they exchanged views on national development, underscoring Chandra Shekhar's enduring legacy. Urging India's youth to delve into the leader's ideas and endeavors, PM Modi positioned this milestone as a catalyst for advancing the nation's progress.

Cracked Homes, Unkept Promises: Wayanad Landslide Survivors Await Relief

Wayanad: Delays in repairing cracked houses in landslide-hit Chooralmala and the slow pace of handing over rehabilitation housing have triggered concern in Wayanad, with the district administration stepping in to fast-track works ahead of the monsoon. The Wayanad landslide disaster, triggered by relentless monsoon rains in the high-range regions of the district, left widespread devastation in areas such as Mundakkai and Chooralmala on July 30, 2024. Over 200 people lost their lives, with several others reported missing, as massive landslips buried homes, destroyed infrastructure, and displaced entire communities. Following this, the Kerala government stepped in to rehabilitate the people. However, it's at the project site that cracks have been reported in government-built houses at Chooralmala. This has drawn sharp criticism from a few



quarters and those who fear that construction delays could compromise safety. The District Collector has directed that there should be no lapses in relief and rehabilitation measures. Scientific repair work, including cement grouting, is currently underway to seal structural cracks. However, adverse weather and shortage of labour have slowed

progress. After a site inspection, the Collector warned that at the current pace, repairs may not be completed before the onset of heavy rains, prompting a high-level meeting with officials from the Revenue, Geology and Public Works Departments. The delays have forced many affected families to continue living in relief camps and rented homes. "It has

been days since repairs began, but the work is still incomplete. If rains intensify, fear will return," residents said. At the same time, survivors of the Mundakkai-Chooralmala landslide have demanded that houses being built for them at the government township in Elston Estate be handed over by May 20. In Phase One, 178 houses are under construction, but only 40 have been made ready so far. Though keys and land titles were distributed on March 1 with assurances that occupancy would begin before Vishu (April 15), pending infrastructure works have delayed relocation. Survivors have made it clear they will shift only after all houses in the phase are fully ready. Work on sewage treatment plants and drinking water pipelines is still in progress, with 10 plants planned across five zones. Finishing works are ongoing in multiple zones.

PM Modi Invokes Divine Feminine: Nari Shakti as Beacon of Empowered India

New Delhi, 17/4 (H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday extolled India's women as the quintessential hallmark of a robust nation, invoking a timeless subhashitam to honor mothers, sisters, and daughters for their unwavering resolve, devotion, and service ethos across all domains. In a poignant X post, he proclaimed, "Our Nari Shakti embodies a mighty India—today, the nation's mothers, sisters, and daughters are elevating Bharat's glory through their indomitable spirit." Delving into sacred tradition, PM Modi cited a profound shloka from the fourth chapter of Shri Durga Saptashati (Shakambhari Stuti): "Deva yaya tatamidam jagadatma-shaktiya nisheshha-devagana-shakti-samuhartya; tam ambikam akhila-deva-maharshipujyam bhaktiya natah smarata etad aham api shubham karaya." He elucidated its essence: the Divine Mother, manifesting as the collective potency of all deities, crafted the cosmos through her primordial energy, revered equally by gods and sages alike. "All divinities and great seers worship the Mother," Modi reflected, "and before her we bow in reverence, beseeching her auspicious blessings upon us."

Inferno Engulfs Family: Gas Pipeline Blast Claims Eight Lives in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Islamabad, 17/4 (H.S.): A catastrophic gas pipeline explosion in Haripur ignited a ferocious blaze at the Hattar Industrial Estate, killing eight members of a single family—including women and children—and leaving five others in critical condition on Thursday. The tragedy unfolded near Kot Najibullah's Colony Mor, ensnaring residents in flames that spread rapidly to adjacent homes and a nearby factory, prompting a multi-district firefighting response. Haripur Deputy Commissioner Waseem Ahmed confirmed the toll, noting three children, two young girls, two elderly women, and one man among the deceased, with six individuals rescued amid seven to eight hours of grueling efforts. Rescue 1122 teams, bolstered by seven fire vehicles from Mansehra, Abbottabad, Mardan, and Swabi, battled the inferno's intensity before extinguishing it and



suspending gas supplies across the Hazara Division. Eyewitnesses described chaos as factory workers fled, but nearby residents—trapped in the residential enclave—suffered the brunt, with five bodies taken to

Kot Najibullah Hospital and three to a trauma center. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afreyidi expressed profound grief, vowing comprehensive aid and premium medical care for survivors.

District Police Superintendent Shafullah Gandapur highlighted the ongoing probe into the blast's cause, as authorities prioritize support for the bereaved family amid this heartrending industrial calamity.

Hindu Saint Chinmoy Krishna Das Secures Bail in Fresh Bangladesh Case

Dhaka, 17/4 (H.S.): A court in Chattogram has granted bail to prominent Hindu spiritual leader Chinmoy Krishna Das Brahmachari in a long-pending land encroachment case, offering a glimmer of relief amid his protracted legal battles since November 2024. Judicial Magistrate Shakhawat Hossain issued the order on Thursday, though the approximately 40-year-old monk remains in judicial custody at Chattogram Jail due to multiple outstanding charges. The case, filed in 2023 by BNP leader and former minister Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin, accuses Brahmachari and five others of seizing land, issuing threats, and assaulting locals in Hathazari's Mekhla area. This development follows the Dhaka High Court's earlier approval of bail in a high-profile sedition case stemming from an alleged national flag desecration on November 26, 2024—an incident that ignited



widespread violence, including the mob lynching of lawyer Saiful Islam Alif Brahmachari, a native of Satkania and head of Chattogram's Pundarik Dham since 2007, founded the Sanatan Jagaran Manch to champion Hindu rights amid reported minority persecutions. His November 25, 2024 arrest at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport by the

Detective Branch sparked protests in Shahbagh and Chattogram, drawing India's expressions of deep concern over minority safety. At least six other cases persist against him, encompassing the lawyer's murder—formal charges filed July 1, 2025—assaults on police, vandalism, and obstructing justice, with prior bail pleas repeatedly denied.

Trump Signals Breakthrough: Iran Deal Nears as Pakistan Visit Looms

Washington, 17/4 (H.S.): US President Donald Trump announced Thursday that negotiations with Iran are "very close" to a landmark agreement, spotlighting Tehran's concessions on its nuclear program and enriched uranium stockpiles. Speaking to reporters at the White House before departing for Las Vegas, Trump expressed optimism that a deal could materialize imminently, potentially over the weekend, with Pakistan emerging as a pivotal host for final talks. He underscored Iran's readiness to surrender its "nuclear dust," affirming that key barriers to preventing Tehran from acquiring atomic weapons have been surmounted. Trump's buoyant assessment follows marathon discussions, including a recent 14-hour session in Islamabad led by Vice President JD Vance, where progress was noted despite lingering disputes over issues like the Strait of Hormuz and frozen assets. The president lavished praise on Pakistan's leadership—Prime



Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief Asim Munir, whom he called "field marshal"—for facilitating the dialogue, crediting their efforts with propelling the process forward. This comes amid broader US diplomatic maneuvers, including a fragile Lebanon-Israel ceasefire and overtures to regional players. In a striking gesture, Trump revealed he is likely to visit Islamabad personally if the pact is sealed there, signaling high-level commitment to consummating the accord. "If a deal is signed in Islamabad, I might go," he stated, highlighting Pakistan's role as a prospective "peace hub" in the volatile Middle East equation.

Such a trip would mark a bold diplomatic flourish, echoing Trump's penchant for personal summits while underscoring Islamabad's unexpected centrality in defusing nuclear tensions. These developments cap months of fraught US-Iran parleys, initiated in Oman in 2025 and accelerated by recent escalations, including US strikes on Iranian assets and Tehran's oil shipments as goodwill gestures. Yet skeptics, including Iranian officials who have downplayed formal progress, caution that core sticking points persist, with no final text confirmed.

Russia Unleashes Fury: Deadliest Barrage in Months Claims 18 Lives Across Ukraine

Kyiv, 17/4 (H.S.): Russia hammered Ukraine with over 700 drones and missiles in relentless overnight waves, inflicting the most devastating aerial assault in months and killing at least 18 civilians. The onslaught shattered a fragile Easter truce, targeting key cities and leaving rescuers silhouetted against raging fires in Kyiv, Odesa, and Dnipro. At 02:30 local time on Thursday in Kyiv, mere hours into the pre-dawn darkness, warning sirens pierced the silence, heralding the first thunderous explosions that jolted residents awake. In the capital's central Podil district, a 16-storey residential block partially collapsed, claiming four lives including a 12-year-old boy, with Mayor Vitali Klitschko reporting 45 injuries and harrowing rescues of a mother and child from the rubble. Odesa bore the heaviest toll with nine dead in its southern port, while Dnipro mourned five—its count rising as another body emerged from the debris—and Kharkiv saw two elderly residents



wounded. Ukraine's air defenses, strained by dwindling Patriot missile stocks diverted to Middle East conflicts, intercepted 636 drones and 31 missiles yet suffered direct hits across 26 sites, plunging Mykolaiv and Kherson into blackout. President Volodymyr Zelensky decried the barbarity on X, insisting it validates unyielding Western sanctions: "Russia is betting on

war... we must protect lives with all our might and press for peace." Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha branded it a "war crime," pleading for expedited \$90 billion in EU aid now unblocked by Hungary's political shift. Russia countered with its own grievances, reporting two deaths—a 14-year-old girl among them—in a Ukrainian drone strike on Tuapse in the

Krasnodar region. This escalation, erupting post-Orthodox Easter weekend despite mutual accusations of truce breaches, underscores the war's fifth year: Kyiv demands a stable ceasefire as a peace precursor, while Moscow prioritizes a comprehensive pact amid stalled US-mediated talks overshadowed by Middle East priorities.

Trump's Rebuke to Pope: 'Nasty World' Demands Realism Amid Iran Crisis

Washington, 17/4 (H.S.): In a pointed yet tempered exchange that underscores deepening rifts over global conflict, US President Donald Trump urged Pope Leo XIV on Thursday to grasp the harsh realities of a "nasty world," particularly Iran's brutal crackdown on unarmed protesters. The remarks, delivered to reporters before Trump's departure for a western swing, mark a subtle pivot from his earlier outright dismissal of the pontiff as "weak" and "wrong," even as their public sparring intensifies. Trump, navigating a volatile Middle East landscape marked by Iran's alleged aggression and US threats of retaliation, emphasized the pontiff's need for unvarnished perspective. "The pope has to understand Iran has killed more than 42,000 people over the last few months," he stated firmly. "They were totally unarmed



protesters. The pope has to understand that. This is the real world, it's a nasty world." The figure aligns with UN estimates and human rights monitors documenting mass casualties in Iran's suppression of dissent since late 2025, fueling Trump's justification for potential strikes on Iranian nuclear and military

sites. Pope Leo XIV, the US-born leader of the world's 1.4 billion Catholics, has positioned himself as a moral counterweight, invoking a "moral duty" to decry war's toll. In recent addresses from the Vatican, he labeled Trump's warnings of targeting "Iranian civilization" as "unacceptable," echoing broader papal calls for

peace amid ceasefires in Lebanon-Israel hostilities and US-Pakistan diplomatic overtures. This clash revives echoes of prior Vatican tensions with US presidents, from John Paul II's opposition to the Iraq War to Francis's rebukes of Trump's border policies—yet Leo's American roots add a uniquely personal edge. Despite the friction, Trump extended an olive branch, insisting he harbors "nothing against" the pope and denying any outright "fight." "He can say what he likes about world issues," the president allowed, "but needs to understand the realities." The conciliatory tone arrives as Trump touts breakthroughs, including a Lebanon-Israel truce and hints at Iran conceding enriched uranium stockpiles, though skeptics question the veracity amid ongoing proxy skirmishes.

Google Search Restored in Iran After 48-Day Blackout, Gmail Remains Blocked

Tehran, 17/4 (H.S.): Iran partially lifted its stringent internet curbs after nearly 48 days, restoring Google Search access via fixed-line and mobile networks. Connectivity remains unstable with intermittent outages in several areas. Selective Thaw Amid Ongoing Restrictions Local reports confirm Gmail and other key services stay inaccessible, signaling incomplete normalization of digital activities. The phased restoration follows U.S.-Israel-Iran tensions and military clashes prompting nationwide shutdowns, limiting access primarily to VPN users and government



networks. Economic Toll from Prolonged Disruptions Restrictions inflicted an estimated \$1.8 billion economic hit, crippling

e-commerce, digital services, and small businesses. Full recovery timelines remain unclear, though this step signals cautious easing.

10-Day Ceasefire Between Israel, Lebanon Goes Into Effect

Jerusalem: A 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon took effect at midnight between Thursday and Friday, following an earlier announcement by US President Donald Trump. The truce aims to end more than a month of deadly escalation between Israel and Hezbollah, which has claimed over 2,000 lives. In a statement, Israel's military said that it struck more than 380 Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon over the past day, including militants, launchers and headquarters, Xinhua news agency reported. Israel's rescue service

Magen David Adom claimed that Hezbollah launched rockets into Israel during the final hours before the ceasefire went into effect, resulting in three injuries. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a videotaped statement that Israel will maintain a 10-km security zone in southern Lebanon during the ceasefire period. He cited security needs, rejected withdrawal, and highlighted a historic opportunity for peace between Israel and Lebanon, alongside a demand to disarm Hezbollah.

Trump Brokers 10-Day Ceasefire Between Israel and Hezbollah-Backed Lebanon

Washington/Beirut/Tel Aviv., 17/4 (H.S.): Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon agreed to a 10-day ceasefire, announced U.S. President Donald Trump Thursday. Effective 5 p.m. ET (2:30 a.m. IST Friday), it follows Trump's direct talks with Lebanese President General Joseph Aoun and Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu. Strategic Coordination and White House Summit Trump tasked VP JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco

Rubio, and Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Dan Cane with aiding permanent peace. He invited both leaders to the White House. Hezbollah, Iran's proxy, has clashed intensely with Israel. Lebanese President Aoun thanked Trump for advancing regional stability. Netanyahu assured security cabinet troops stay in strategic zones sans formal vote: "Trump is our friend; Israel stands with him fully." Opposition leader Yair Lapid criticized

Netanyahu for renegeing promises. Hezbollah MP Ibrahim al-Moussawi affirmed compliance if Israel halts attacks, crediting Iranian pressure akin to Hormuz Strait threats. PM Nawaf Salam hailed the truce, congratulating citizens and global leaders. Army spokesperson Charles Jbour urged using the pause for Hezbollah disarmament. France's Élysée Palace and EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen welcomed the development as positive.

Sensex, Nifty Edge Higher Amid Volatile Open: Buyers Gain Upper Hand by 10 AM

New Delhi, 17/4 (H.S.): India's benchmark indices navigated early-session turbulence on Friday, opening weakly before buyers wrested control, propelling the Sensex up 0.19% and Nifty 0.12% by 10 AM amid a tug-of-war between bulls and bears. The BSE Sensex debuted at 77,976.13—down 12.55 points—swinging from a low of 77,726.23 to a high of 78,169.61, settling at 78,139.77 with a 151.09-point (0.19%) gain. Similarly, the NSE Nifty commenced at 24,165.90 (off 30.85 points), fluctuating between 24,096.05 and 24,238.55, closing the period at 24,225.55—up 28.80 points (0.12%). This rebound followed Thursday's close, where Sensex fell 0.16% to 77,988.68 and Nifty 0.14% to 24,196.75. Among



Sensex heavyweights, Adani Ports, Maruti Suzuki, ITC, Trent, and TMPV advanced 0.46–1.60%, offsetting losses in

HDFC Life (down 3.51%), Wipro, Hindalco, HCL Tech, and Bajaj Auto (0.66–3.51%). Trading activity spanned 2,696 stocks,

with 1,966 in green versus 730 in red; Sensex's 30 components saw 17 gainers and 13 decliners, while Nifty's 50 had 26 up and 24 down.

Global Signals Muted: Asia Faces Selling Pressure Amid Mixed Cues

New Delhi, 17/4 (H.S.): Global markets presented a bifurcated landscape on Friday, with US indices extending measured gains from the prior session while European bourses concluded on a tepid note, and Asian counterparts grappling with pervasive selling. Dow Jones futures traded 0.10% higher at 48,625.27 points, signaling continuity in American optimism even as regional disparities underscored investor caution. In the United States, the S&P 500 advanced 0.26% to close at 7,041.28, with the Nasdaq Composite following suit by rising 0.36% to 24,102.70, buoyed by sustained buying within confined ranges. Europe's performance proved uneven: London's FTSE index climbed 0.29% to 10,589.99, and Frankfurt's DAX surged 0.36% to 24,154.47, yet Paris's CAC 40



dipped 0.14% to 8,262.70. Asia, however, bore the brunt of downside momentum, with seven of nine major indices in the red—Hang Seng plummeting 1.19% or 309.26 points to 26,085, Shanghai Composite sliding 0.30% to 4,043.45, and Nikkei shedding

0.89% or 525.34 points to 58,993. Exceptions included GIFT Nifty's modest 0.11% gain to 24,217 and Jakarta Composite's 0.35% rise to 7,647.89, though Straits Times, SET Composite, KOSPI, and Taiwan Weighted also faltered amid broader risk aversion.

Gold Glints Higher, Silver Dims: Domestic Bullion Surge Amid Global Uptick

New Delhi, 17/4 (H.S.): India's domestic bullion markets opened with gold prices climbing sharply by ₹200 to ₹220 per 10 grams on Friday, mirroring a 0.63% international advance that lifted spot physical gold to \$4,809.16 per ounce, while silver edged marginally lower by ₹200 per kilogram to trade at ₹2,69,900 in Delhi. Across major centers, 24-carat gold fetched ₹1,55,580–₹1,56,670 per 10 grams, with Delhi at ₹1,55,730, Mumbai and Kolkata at ₹1,55,580, Chennai peaking at ₹1,56,670, and others like Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Lucknow, Patna, Jaipur, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Bhubaneswar hovering at ₹1,55,580–₹1,55,730. The 22-carat variant mirrored this



firmness, ranging ₹1,42,610–₹1,43,610 per 10 grams—Delhi and Jaipur at ₹1,42,760, Chennai at ₹1,43,610, and most cities at ₹1,42,610. Silver's subdued tone contrasted gold's resilience, with global prices steady at \$79.61 per

ounce, as early trading reflected cautious sentiment amid mixed equity cues and geopolitical tensions. This divergence underscores gold's safe-haven allure persisting in domestic sarafas nationwide.

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Indian Rupee Strengthens 25 Paise As RBI Curbs Dollar Demand From Oil Firms

Mumbai, 17/4 (H.S.): The Indian currency strengthened by 25 paise to 92.95 against the US dollar in early trade on Friday, supported by easing pressure on the currency after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reportedly asked state-run oil refiners to use a special credit line instead of buying dollars. The domestic currency opened stronger after closing at 93.20 in the previous session, amid improved sentiment in local equities and hopes of easing geopolitical tensions. However, the currency remained somewhat constrained by a firm US dollar in global markets. Meanwhile, precious metals — gold and silver — witnessed a choppy session on Friday. Gold futures (June 5) were trading at Rs 1,53,250, up Rs 98 or 0.06 per cent. The yellow metal touched an intraday high of Rs 1,53,301, rising Rs 149 or 0.09



per cent, while at the lower end, it slipped to Rs 1,53,010, down Rs 142 or 0.09 per cent. On the other hand, silver futures (May 5) gained 0.83 per cent or Rs 2,088 to hit an intra-day high of Rs 2,50,716. The white metal touched an intraday low of Rs 2,49,300, up Rs 672 or 0.27 per cent. According to commodity market experts, the bias remains cautiously positive,

with macro factors offering some support. "However, a decisive move above resistance levels is needed to strengthen momentum further," they said. For silver, they added that the tone remains cautious, with macro factors providing support, though momentum is still developing and requires confirmation for a sustained uptrend.

Toing, the Affordable Food App, Now Available in Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar, 17/4 (DMS): Toing, the affordable food delivery app, today announced its launch in Bhubaneswar. Over the last 7+ months, Toing has expanded its network to 25 cities across India and promises the lowest item prices across food/beverages on its app, guaranteeing to match or beat restaurant table menu prices. In addition to this, there are no packaging charges or platform fees on any order placed on Toing. This makes Toing the most affordable food delivery app available in the market. Users can order a range of dishes including biryanis, burgers and bowls for under Rs. 99. Toing, which was launched in the second half of 2025 with Pune as the first city, is also live in and is live in Agra, Vadodara, Guwahati, Nashik, Nagpur, Patna, Aurangabad, Bhopal, Delhi, Meerut, Gurugram, Noida, Faridabad, Ghaziabad, Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Kolkata, Jaipur, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai and Indore. Speaking on the expansion, Mr. Sidharth Bhakoo, Chief Business



Officer, Toing said, "Toing is creating a new category of customers food delivery and is targeting the Gen Z, college goers and the value conscious customers. Over the last few months, we launched Toing, the affordable food delivery app, which guarantees lowest prices to its customers, in key cities and educational hubs across India, including Guwahati, Nashik, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Delhi NCR. Toing's launch in Bhubaneswar reflects both the strength of the value proposition and our commitment to serve the evolving needs of young consumers. Bhubaneswar has a large

base of Gen Z and college goers and hence, offers the perfect landscape for Toing."

In Bhubaneswar, Toing has gone live with the city's famous restaurants already listed on the platform. Toing's affordable and accessible pricing model has strongly resonated with first-time jobbers and college students, accelerating its expansion to newer cities. By focusing on everyday affordability, Toing ensures unmatched value and reliability for its users. The app features Bhubaneswar's popular restaurants such as Biryani Box, Garam Masala, Hotel Shirose, V Dumpling Dynasty, Scholars, Burger King, Bikkane Biryani, Wow Momo, NIC Ice Creams, Burger Singh, IGP Cakes, Kouzina Kafe - The Food Court, Chicago Pizza, Biryani Blues, Uncle Peter's Pancake, Giani, and Cream Stone Ice Cream, offering a wide range of food options across cuisines including North Indian dishes, South Indian food, Chinese, Biryani, Desserts and fast-food options like Pizzas, Burgers, and Momos.

CCI Gives Adani Group Clean Chit In SECI Tender Case

New Delhi: The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has given a clean chit to Adani Enterprises and Adani Green Energy in a SECI tender case, finding no prima facie case of contravention of fair market competition norms warranting an investigation. "Upon consideration of the facts and circumstances of the present case, the Commission is of the view that there is no prima facie case of contravention of provisions of Sections 3 and 4 of the

Competition Act warranting an investigation into the matter. Therefore, the matter is directed to be closed forthwith under Section 26(2) of the Act," the CCI ruling stated. Regarding the allegation of abuse of dominant position by the Adani Group, the Commission noted that power in India is generated through various sources such as coal, solar, wind, hydro and nuclear. It added that both private and public sector companies operate in the power generation market. The

Commission observed that the Informant had not placed on record any evidence to establish why solar power, or public and private power generation companies, should be treated as distinct markets. It further noted that the power generation market in India comprises several significant players, including National Thermal Power Corporation, Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd., Tata Power Co. Ltd., Torrent Power and Reliance Power.

EAST COAST RAILWAY DELIVERS A TRANSFORMATIONAL YEAR: SAFER TRACKS, FASTER TRAINS, AND A NEW BENCHMARK IN PASSENGER EXPERIENCE

Bhubaneswar, 17/4 (DMS): East Coast Railway has recorded significant progress during the financial year 2025–26 across infrastructure development, safety, speed enhancement, and passenger amenities, reinforcing its commitment to a safer, more efficient, and passenger-centric railway network. Elevated Passenger Experience passenger amenities witnessed wide ranging improvements across the zone. Concrete surfacing was completed on 73 platforms, while 69 high level platforms were constructed to enable safer and more convenient boarding. Shelter extensions were provided at 38 stations, and over 1,073 benches were installed to enhance passenger comfort. Twenty new Foot Over Bridges improved passenger movement, while circulating areas and waiting halls at several stations were modernised. Four stations were also redeveloped under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme, improving the overall travel

environment. Inclusive Infrastructure Accessibility remained a key focus, with 41 stations made Divyang friendly. Facilities such as ramps, tactile pathways, and accessible toilets were provided at various stations, ensuring a more inclusive travel experience for passengers with disabilities. Operational efficiency improved notably, with the track upgradation enabled 130 kmph operations over 236 km and 110 kmph operations over 266 km. Loop line speeds were enhanced at nine stations, and 22 permanent speed restrictions were removed, contributing to smoother and more reliable train services. Safety at the Core Safety continued to remain central to operations. Ultrasonic Flaw Detection testing was carried out over 28,146 track kilometres. Track renewal works were undertaken extensively, covering 390 km of rail, 567 km of sleepers, and 544 km of fastenings. In addition, 239 bridges were rehabilitated and 64 bridge

approaches strengthened. Staff Welfare and Sustainability On the welfare front, 103 staff quarters were constructed and Periodical Medical Examinations were conducted for 1,354 employees. The zone also advanced its sustainability efforts through installation of rainwater harvesting systems at 65 locations. Scrap disposal exceeded 39,000 metric tonnes, while land management revenue of Rs. 67.30 crore surpassed the annual target. East Coast Railway's performance during 2025–26 reflects a strong alignment of infrastructure strengthening, safety prioritisation and passenger focused initiatives. The consistent improvements across key operational areas not only enhance service reliability and travel experience but also lay a robust foundation for future growth. With a clear focus on safety, speed and inclusivity, the zone continues to move forward with renewed momentum, contributing significantly to the overall advancement of Indian Railways.

crude oil, UAE-based Indian national sanctioned by US for smuggling Iranian oil

Mumbai, 17/4 (DMS) International crude oil benchmarks declined about 2 per cent on Friday on hopes of an end to the West Asia conflict that began on February 28. Brent crude futures traded at \$97.99 per barrel, hitting an intra-day low in early trade and declining over 1 per cent. At the same time, US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude fell nearly 2 per cent to an intraday low of \$92.91. However, in the previous session, the global benchmark settled around 5 per cent higher at \$99.39. Similarly, US WTI finished over 2 per cent higher at \$93.32. Meanwhile, on the domestic Multi Commodity

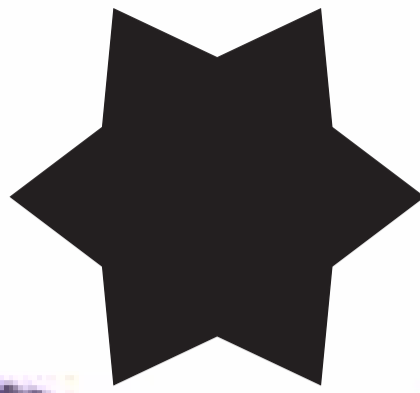


Exchange (MCX), crude oil declined as much as 2.6 per cent

to Rs 8,625. Traders were buoyed by the US President's announcement of a 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon. The President also said Tehran had offered to refrain from possessing nuclear weapons for more than 20 years. "I hope Hezbollah acts nicely and well during this important period of time. It will be a GREAT moment for them if they do. No more killing. We must finally have PEACE! Thank you for your attention to this matter," he said on the social media platform Truth Social. Speaking to the media, Trump said, "We will see how things unfold, but I believe we are very close to a deal with Iran."

Delhi HC to pass orders on actor Allu Arjun's plea to protect personality rights

The Delhi High Court on Friday said it would pass orders on a plea filed by Telugu actor Allu Arjun seeking protection of his personality rights, including his name, image, voice and likeness. The matter was heard by Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, who at the outset questioned the maintainability of the petition before the Delhi High Court, noting the actor's connection to Telangana. "Why are you here?" the Court remarked, expressing concern over territorial jurisdiction. In response, counsel for Arjun argued that the alleged misuse of the actor's identity is occurring across the country, thereby justifying the invocation of the Court's jurisdiction. Senior Advocate Swathi Sukumar, appearing for Arjun, submitted that the situation is increasingly concerning, particularly due to technological misuse. She informed the Court that one of the defendants has created an application that allows users to interact with an AI-generated version of the actor. Describing this as "truly frightening," she highlighted that Arjun has proactively secured legal protection over his identity. Meanwhile, counsel for the intermediaries requested that no global injunction be granted at this stage, pointing out that the issue is already pending before a Division Bench. Accepting this submission, the Court indicated that it would pass appropriate orders. The plea is part of a growing trend of high-profile personalities approaching the Delhi High Court seeking safeguards against unauthorised use of their identity, particularly in the context of digital platforms and artificial intelligence. Arjun's suit seeks to restrain entities from exploiting his personality traits, including his name, image, voice and likeness, for commercial purposes such as merchandise and online content without his consent.



Ayushmann Khurrana, Sara Ali Khan to be seen together in 'Udta Teer', spy comedy to release in September

Sara Ali Khan and Ayushmann Khurrana have come on board for a spy comedy 'Udta Teer'. The film is expected to be released on September 11. Written and directed by Akash A Kaushik, 'Udta Teer' is produced by Karan Johar, Adar Poonawalla, Apoorva Mehta, Guneet Monga Kapoor, and Achin Jain. More details regarding the film have not been disclosed yet. Sara and Ayushmann will also be seen in 'Pati Patni Aur Woh Do'. Wamiqa Gabbi and Rakul Preet Singh are also a part of the film, which is directed by Mudassar Aziz and produced by Bhushan Kumar and Renu Ravi Chopra. The upcoming film, titled 'Pati Patni Aur Woh Do', which was initially slated to hit theatres on March 4, 2026, around Holi, has now received a new release date. The makers have pushed the date forward, and the film is now set to release on May 15, 2026. The first Pati Patni Aur Woh hit theatres in 2019, starring Kartik Aaryan, Bhumi Pednekar, and Ananya Panday. It was a modern remake of the 1978 film of the same name and also featured Ayushmann Khurrana's brother, Aparshakti Khurrana, in a supporting role.

SPORTS

Stuttgart Open 2026: Rybakina, Gauff Storm into Quarters

New Delhi, 17/4 (H.S.): Muchova Mounts Comeback Top seed Elena Rybakina of Kazakhstan and world No. 3 Coco Gauff powered into the quarterfinals of the Stuttgart Open 2026 on Friday, showcasing clay-court prowess at the prestigious indoor event in Germany. Rybakina dispatched Russia's Diana Shnaider 6-2, 6-4 in 1 hour and 12 minutes, leveraging a dominant service game capped by her ninth ace, despite Shnaider's improved second-set resistance undermined by crucial double faults. Gauff, the reigning French Open champion, overcame a tentative start to dismantle Liudmila Samsonova 7-5, 6-1, setting up an anticipated clash with Czech Karolina Muchova. Muchova herself staged a stirring comeback, rallying from a set down to thrash Elise Mertens 1-6, 6-3, 6-0. Gauff



credited 14-time Roland Garros king Rafael Nadal for inspiring her forehand aggression on clay, quipping, "Rafa is clay's greatest; I try to channel his forehand magic." Rybakina next faces Leylah Fernandez or Zeynep Sonmez, as the tournament's elite bracket intensifies on the red dirt.

Safe Haven Beckons: Iranian Footballers Thank Australia, Eye Career Revival

New Delhi, 17/4 (H.S.): Iranian women's soccer stars Fatemeh Pasandideh and Atefeh Ramezansadeh expressed profound gratitude to the Australian government Friday for granting them humanitarian visas and a "secure refuge," vowing to rebuild their lives and reignite their professional careers Down Under. In their first public statement post-visa approval, the duo hailed the empathy and support as a beacon of hope for a fearless future in sport and sanctuary. "We extend our deepest thanks to the Australian government, especially Home Affairs Minister Tony Burke, for providing us humanitarian protection and a safe haven in this beautiful country," they stated jointly, crediting officials' compassion for easing their transition. Currently training with A-League Women's side Brisbane Roar since last month, the players prioritized safety, health, and resettlement before pursuing their "dream" of competitive football. Australia's intervention



followed the AFC Women's Asian Cup, where US-Israeli airstrikes on Iran heightened peril for six players and a staffer who sought refuge amid another boycott backlash—branded "wartime traitors" by Iranian state media.

IPL 2026 Orange Cap Heats Up: Kohli Holds Fort as Prabhsimran and Iyer Surge

New Delhi, 17/4 (H.S.): The IPL 2026 Orange and Purple Cap races intensified after Match 24, where Punjab Kings dismantled Mumbai Indians emphatically, injecting fresh momentum into both individual leaderboards alongside points table shifts. Virat Kohli of Royal Challengers Bengaluru retains the summit, but Punjab Kings' Prabhsimran Singh (211 runs, now 5th) and skipper Shreyas Iyer (203 runs, 6th) closed in dramatically with unbeaten fireworks—Prabhsimran's 80 off 39 balls and Iyer's 66 off 35—against MI. Trailing Kohli are Sunrisers Hyderabad's Heinrich Klaasen and RCB's Rajat Patidar, with SRH's Ishan Kishan next; Rajasthan Royals' Vaibhav Suryavanshi slipped to 7th after a duck.

Actor Rudra Narayan injured in road accident



Bhubaneswar: Popular theatre actor Rudra Narayan, known for his performances in Dhauri Ganatya, has sustained serious injuries in a road accident. He is currently undergoing treatment at Bhadrak Medical. According to reports, the accident occurred while Rudra Narayan was traveling from Pirahat to Bhubaneswar. His vehicle was reportedly hit by an unidentified car near Nalanga Chhak on National Highway 16 in Bhadrak. Following the collision, he was immediately admitted to a nearby medical facility via ambulance. Authorities have not yet confirmed which vehicle caused the accident. Rudra Narayan received preliminary treatment at the hospital, including a CT scan to assess the extent of his injuries. Officials are awaiting the scan report, which is expected to provide further details on his condition. Fans and colleagues are hoping for a speedy recovery as the actor remains under close medical supervision.

Matka King: Vijay Varma Rules This Gritty 1960s Crime Saga

Vijay Varma delivers a masterclass in restrained intensity as Brij Bhatti, a cotton trader who constructs a gambling empire in the heart of 1960s Bombay. Streaming now on Prime Video, Matka King attempts to capture the feverish desperation of a city on the brink of change. While the series often treads familiar territory seen in previous underworld dramas, it finds its soul in the "democratisation of luck," where the working class finally gets a seat at the high-stakes table. Director Nagraj Manjule brings his signature focus on social realism to the script. The story follows Bhatti's rise after a fallout with his wealthy employer, Lalji Bhai, played with menacing authority by Gulshan Grover. Unlike traditional crime lords, Bhatti operates on a code of perceived honesty. He convinces the masses that while the law may be rigid, his "Matka" numbers offer a genuine escape from poverty. This psychological hook—selling hope to those who have none—remains the most compelling aspect of the eight-episode journey. Odisha's own history with informal credit systems and local betting rings mirrors the socio-economic desperation portrayed here, making the "common man versus the elite" theme resonate deeply with regional audiences. The narrative successfully recreates the era through Sudhakar Reddy Yakkanti's cinematography, which drapes the narrow chawls and smoky dens in sepia tones. However, the pacing struggles to maintain the initial momentum. As the empire expands to include Bollywood and cricket, the plot becomes crowded. Sai Tamhankar provides a sturdy emotional anchor as Bhatti's wife, Barkha, highlighting the personal cost of his vertical climb. Kritika Kamra also impresses as Gulrukh, though the writing limits her impact in the later half. The series shines when it examines the mechanics of the game but stumbles when relying on predictable betrayals. Despite these narrative flaws, the production remains a must-watch for Varma's performance alone.

