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PM Modi holds bilateral talks with South Korean President Lee Jae Myung at Hyderabad House



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday held bilateral talks with South Korean President Lee Jae Myung at Hyderabad House in New Delhi.

The two leaders were also seen planting a tree, symbolising the growing partnership between the two nations. President Lee arrived in New

Delhi on Sunday for a three-day State visit and was received at the airport by Union Minister of State Harsh Malhotra. External Affairs Minister S.

Jaishankar also called on the visiting leader, expressing confidence that his talks with PM Modi will further strengthen India-South Korea 'Special Strategic Partnership'.

Earlier on Monday, Lee was accorded a ceremonial welcome at Rashtrapati Bhavan. He was received by President Droupadi Murmu and PM Modi at the reception, which featured children in traditional attire waving the national flags of India and South Korea.

After the reception, President Lee, accompanied by First Lady Kim Hea Kyung, paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat.

Young officers 'enablers of progress and guardians of public trust', says President Murmu

New Delhi: Probationary Officers of the Indian Railways from the 2022 and 2023 batches, along with Assistant Executive Engineers of the Central Engineering Service (Roads) from the 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 batches, met President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday.

Addressing the officers, the President said they had entered public service at a crucial juncture in India's development journey, noting that the country is moving forward with the shared vision of building a Viksit Bharat.

She told the young officers that, as members of the Indian Railways and the Central Engineering Service (Roads), they are "stepping into roles that directly affect the lives of millions of citizens," emphasising that their responsibilities would have a direct and lasting



impact on people's quality of life.

Highlighting the importance of infrastructure, President Murmu said it forms the backbone of modern nations.

"Railways and highways are not merely systems of transport; they are instruments of economic expansion, social inclusion, and national integration. When a train reaches a remote village or a highway connects a distant region, it opens immense opportunities for socio-economic development of such regions," she said,

according to an official statement.

The President further noted that strong infrastructure plays a vital role in reducing logistics costs, promoting trade, attracting investments, and improving overall productivity.

"It strengthens national unity by bringing regions and people closer," she said.

Advising the officers on their professional approach, President Murmu said that success should not be measured solely in numerical terms, adding that the real

benchmark lies in the extent to which their work improves people's lives.

She urged them to uphold the core values of public service, including integrity, accountability and a commitment to excellence. Acknowledging that they would face challenges and difficult decisions, she said their values should guide them in such moments.

Encouraging continuous growth, the President advised the officers to remain curious, keep learning and embrace innovation in their work. She said that the choices they make, the standards they set and the dedication they demonstrate will leave a lasting imprint on the nation's development.

President Murmu concluded by reminding them that they are "not just administrators but the enablers of progress and guardians of public trust."

President Murmu, PM Modi welcome South Korean President Lee Jae Myung at Rashtrapati Bhavan

New Delhi: South Korean President Lee Jae Myung was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday, marking a key moment in his three-day State Visit to India. He was received by President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with First Lady Kim Hea Kyung accompanying him.

The ceremonial reception featured traditional performances and a warm welcome by children holding both the Indian Tricolour and the South Korean national flag. Following the reception, President Lee is scheduled to visit Rajghat to pay

tribute to Mahatma Gandhi. President Lee arrived in New Delhi on Sunday, where he was received at the airport by Union Minister of State Harsh Malhotra. Shortly after his arrival, he met members of the Korean community and expressed optimism that the upcoming India-Republic of Korea summit would serve as a "turning point" in bilateral relations.

Highlighting India's growing global role, President Lee noted that the country has evolved into a key driver of global production and supply chains, moving beyond its earlier perception as primarily a consumer

market.

During the visit, President Lee will hold wide-ranging talks with PM Modi focusing on strengthening cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, shipbuilding, semiconductors, artificial intelligence, and other critical and emerging technologies. The two leaders are also expected to exchange views on regional and global issues. PM Modi will host a lunch in honour of the visiting dignitary.

President Lee is also scheduled to meet President Murmu, who will host a state banquet in his honour. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar called on the visiting leader on Sunday, welcoming his

commitment to deepen bilateral ties.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), the visit marks an important milestone in advancing the India-South Korea Special Strategic Partnership. Rooted in shared democratic values and longstanding civilizational connections, both nations are aiming to expand cooperation into new and emerging domains while strengthening existing partnerships.

This is President Lee's first visit to India and the first by a South Korean leader in over eight years, underscoring renewed momentum in ties between the two countries.

India-Uzbekistan Joint Military Exercise DUSTLIK 2026 Held at Gurumsaray



New Delhi: The seventh edition of the India-Uzbekistan joint military exercise DUSTLIK 2026 is being conducted at the Gurumsaray Field Training Area at Namangan in Uzbekistan. The Ministry of Defence said that the exercise is aimed at enhancing

interoperability and joint operational capability in semi-mountainous terrain, with a focus on special arms skills and special operations against unlawful armed groups. The Ministry said, during the exercise, troops of both contingents have undertaken

familiarisation, techniques and procedures; ambidextrous pistol firing; UAV application and operational readiness, among other activities.

The Defence Ministry said that in the coming days, the exercise is expected to advance to more complex

joint missions in semi-mountainous terrain. The Ministry said that the exercise will further deepen the coordination and interoperability between the Indian Army and the Uzbekistan Army. The exercise will conclude on the 25th of April.

BMW, Fortuner Owner Shoots Man Dead Over Midnight Parking Dispute In Delhi

New Delhi: Delhi: A dispute over parking vehicles escalated into a fatal shooting in East Delhi's Preet Vihar in the early hours of Monday. A 34-year-old man was allegedly shot dead following an argument with his brother's neighbour over parking space.

The victim, identified as Pankaj Nayyar (34), had come from Noida to meet his brother Paras Nayyar (43) in Preet Vihar. Soon after Pankaj arrived, an argument broke out between the brothers and their

neighbour, Gaurav Sharma, over parking their vehicles.

According to the police, Sharma owns a BMW and a Toyota Fortuner and was living at the premises as a tenant. However, he had parking space allotted for only one vehicle. His BMW was already parked in the designated spot, and the dispute began late at night over parking the Fortuner.

The argument quickly escalated, and Sharma allegedly opened fire during the quarrel. Pankaj Nayyar sustained a gunshot injury to the chest and collapsed at the spot.

Over parking vehicles escalated into a fatal shooting in East Delhi's

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CM Rekha Gupta reviews development works during Azadpur mandi inspection

New Delhi: Amid ongoing efforts to upgrade civic infrastructure and ease public congestion in key commercial hubs, the Delhi Government has intensified on-ground monitoring of major development projects. The move comes as part of a broader push to ensure faster execution, accountability, and improved public facilities across high-traffic areas in the national capital.

CM Rekha Gupta conducted an on-ground inspection of Azadpur Mandi, Gupta Market and the adjoining areas.

Reprimands Officials for non action! She reviewed the progress of development works being undertaken by DMRC and PWD, and sought detailed updates from the concerned officials. Clear directions were issued to ensure that public movement and citizen convenience remain the highest priority during the execution of all works.

She further instructed that every project must be completed with full transparency, within the stipulated timeline, and without any compromise on quality, so that essential public facilities are delivered on schedule.

NDMC identifies pigeon, stray dogs feeding points, ramps up sanitation

New Delhi: The New Delhi Municipal Council has submitted a compliance report before the National Green Tribunal detailing action to regulate the feeding of pigeons, monkeys, cattle and stray dogs, and to address related sanitation concerns, officials said on Monday.

According to the report filed on Friday, the civic body has identified pigeon feeding points in its area and directed the staff to regularly penalise people causing insanitary conditions.



"In the last three months to identify locations of pigeon feeding points, 23 challans were done in January 2026, 14 in February 2026 and 39 in March 2026, and directions were issued to

challan regularly the persons creating insanitary conditions," the report stated, adding that the enforcement department has also removed unauthorised vendors from the concerned areas.

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Issue was not women's reservation but Modi preservation: Cong slams govt

New Delhi: The Congress on Monday termed the defeat of the government's Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha as a setback to what it called "bulldozer politics." The party alleged that the Centre attempted to push a delimitation exercise under the guise of implementing women's reservation, but its real objective was political gain rather than genuine empowerment.

Congress leader Jairam

Ramesh said the rejection of the Bill marked a victory for constitutional values and democratic processes. He argued that the proposal was less about ensuring women's representation and more about introducing delimitation without adequate transparency or consensus. According to him, assurances given by the government—such as maintaining proportional representation among states—were not clearly

mentioned in the Bill, raising concerns among opposition parties.

The Congress also criticized the delay in implementing the women's reservation law, noting that the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, passed in September 2023, had yet to be enforced. The party questioned the government's intent, pointing out that the law was notified only recently after a long period of inaction.



Reiterating its demand, the Congress urged the

government to implement women's reservation

immediately based on the current strength of the Lok Sabha, without linking it to delimitation. It called for an amendment bill to be introduced either by May-end or during the Monsoon Session of Parliament. The party also advocated for the inclusion of OBC women within the reservation framework.

The defeated Bill had proposed increasing Lok Sabha seats from 543 to 816 to facilitate 33% reservation

for women following a delimitation exercise based on the 2011 Census. However, it failed to secure the required two-thirds majority, receiving 298 votes in favor and 230 against out of 528 members present and voting.

Congress leaders maintained that women voters would not be misled and emphasized their party's longstanding support for women's representation in governance.

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“Chariot construction begins along with Chandan Yatra”

Puri : On the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, the construction of the chariots of Lord Jagannath has commenced, along with the 21-day-long Chandan Yatra being held at Narendra Pushkarini.

During the Chandan Yatra, the movable idols of the Lord—Madan Mohan, Bhudevi, Sridevi, and the Panchu Pandavas—enjoy a ceremonial boat ride (water sport) in two beautifully decorated boats named Nanda and Bhadra. Both boats have been specially adorned for the occasion. The Chandan Chakra has also been artistically decorated by painters.

On Akshaya Tritiya, the Lord was ceremoniously taken from the temple to Narendra Pushkarini in a

procession. Devotees and temple servitors (sevayats) showed great enthusiasm to witness this sacred festival.

On the same auspicious day, as per tradition, the construction of the three chariots for the Rath Yatra also began. After receiving the divine command (Agyan Mala) from the temple, the sacred wood (Dhaura logs) was worshipped. Following this, the chief artisans (Vishwakarmas) initiated the construction by touching the wood with traditional tools such as the barisi, mugur, and axe.

From Akshaya Tritiya until Netrotsava, the servitors engaged in chariot construction will observe strict discipline, consuming only



“Habisa Anna” (a simple, sacred diet), and work with full devotion at the Rathakhala (chariot construction yard). All necessary

preparations have been completed, and the required wood has been arranged. Additional timber is arriving in phases in Puri. Initially, the construction of the ‘Tumba’ (wheel hubs) will begin, followed by other parts of the chariots.

Meanwhile, to ensure peace and order during Akshaya Tritiya and Chandan Yatra, police forces have been deployed around Narendra Pushkarini and Rathakhala. Puri It is noteworthy that during the Chandan Yatra in 2024, a fireworks explosion resulted in the death of 17 people. Keeping this in mind, the police administration has imposed a complete ban on bursting firecrackers at Narendra Pushkarini this year.

The question of equitable representation of women in India’s democratic framework has long remained an unfinished agenda.

The passage of the Women’s Reservation Bill, 2023—popularly referred to as the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam—was widely hailed as a historic step. The law mandates 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, aiming to structurally correct gender imbalance in political representation.

Yet, nearly three years after its passage, the law remains unimplemented, sparking intense political debate. The issue has resurfaced following deliberations during a recent special parliamentary session, where discussions hinted at possible implementation before the 2029 general elections. However, developments in April 2026—including the government’s inability to pass three related bills in the Lok Sabha on April 17—have further deepened the controversy.

The Core of the Dispute

At the heart of the debate lies a procedural condition embedded in the law. The implementation of women’s reservation is contingent upon two key steps: the completion of the next population census and the subsequent delimitation (redrawing) of constituencies. According to the government, without these processes, applying reservation across the existing 543 constituencies would be constitutionally untenable.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) argues that opposition parties are obstructing the process by resisting delimitation, thereby delaying women’s reservation. On the other hand, opposition parties—including the Indian National Congress—maintain that while they support the reservation in principle, they question the necessity of linking it to delimitation, especially when no clear timeline has been provided.

Concerns Over Delay and Ambiguity

Critics point out that the absence of a defined schedule for conducting the next census—originally due in 2021 but delayed—adds to uncertainty. Without clarity on when census and delimitation will be completed, the promise of reservation risks being indefinitely postponed.

Some opposition leaders have suggested that the reservation could be implemented within the current framework of constituencies, even if temporarily, rather than waiting for a comprehensive delimitation exercise. Others argue that if updated demographic data is essential, the government must expedite the census process and make its timeline public.

Clearing the Misconceptions

Amid the political crossfire, a significant misconception has emerged—that the Women’s Reservation Bill has “failed.” In reality, the law has already been passed by both Houses of Parliament and received presidential assent in 2023. The recent parliamentary developments relate not to the passage of the law itself, but to its operationalisation and associated legislative measures.

A Political Flashpoint

The issue has now escalated into a broader political narrative. The BJP has launched nationwide protests, accusing opposition parties of being anti-women, while opposition groups allege that the government is deliberately delaying implementation for electoral advantage.

This blame game risks sidelining the central objective: enhancing women’s participation in governance. Currently, women constitute about 15% of the Lok Sabha—one of the highest in India’s history, yet still far from parity. Globally, India ranks behind several countries in terms of women’s parliamentary representation, underscoring the urgency of reform.

The Way Forward

Three key priorities emerge from the ongoing debate:

A clear roadmap: The government must announce a definite timeline for conducting the census and completing delimitation.

Constructive opposition: Political parties opposing the current approach should propose viable alternatives rather than limiting themselves to criticism.

Curbing misinformation: Public discourse must be grounded in facts to avoid confusion and misinterpretation.

Beyond Politics

Ultimately, women’s reservation is not merely a legislative reform—it is a test of India’s commitment to inclusive democracy. Its success will depend not on political rhetoric, but on the sincerity and speed of its implementation.

If political considerations overshadow this transformative reform, the goal of women’s empowerment may once again be deferred. However, with transparent intent, cooperative federalism, and consensus-driven policymaking, India still has the opportunity to turn this landmark law into a defining milestone in its democratic journey.

Sitanshu Sekhar Mishra
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“Akhimuthi Anukula Festival organized by Panchasakha Krushak Mahasangha”

Puri : The Akhimuthi Anukula festival was organized by the Panchasakha Krushak Mahasangha at the Alasranga field (Harchandi Melan Ground).

Member of Parliament Sambit Patra attended the event as the chief guest, while MLA Om Prakash Mishra and several other leaders were present as distinguished guests.

The program was presided over by advocate Binay Nrusingha Mohapatra, grandson of Pandit Basudev Mohapatra. He stated that on this auspicious day, the construction of the chariots of Lord Jagannath begins, along with the start of the 21-day-long Chandan Yatra festival. On this occasion, the ceremonial Akhimuthi Anukula (initiation of farming activities) was performed by the MP and MLA.

Special emphasis was laid on empowering farmers through water panchayats and ensuring their rights in agriculture. Speakers



highlighted that farmers are a matter of pride and called upon everyone to take a pledge for farming.

MP Sambit Patra said efforts are being made to double farmers’ income and emphasized that agriculture is the country’s primary tradition. MLA Om Prakash Mishra stated that farmers are the backbone of society. He also mentioned that the Chief

Minister has allocated ₹110 crore specifically for agriculture and water panchayats in Satyabadi, which will benefit 14 villages and 19 panchayats. He added that this initiative will reduce migration, ensuring that people will not have to go to places like Gujarat for work.

At the beginning of the meeting, Mahasangha President

Narendra Kumar Swain delivered the welcome address. Among others present on the dais were Ratikanta Mishra, Bishnu Priya Baral, Ramchandra Behera, Chinmayee Rout, Santosh Behera, Shankarshan Pradhan, Bhaskar Nayak, and Ugrasen Biswal.

Hundreds of villagers participated in the festival.

Satyabhama Shabdrag 2026 held

Satyabhama memorial dedicated to the people

Delang, 19/4, The 4th Satyabhama Shabdrag-2026 festival organized in memory of Satyabhama Mahapatra, the late mother of the state’s renowned astrologer and materialist and literary figure Dr. Devi Prasad Mohapatra, was held at Shri Mohapatra’s village Baral on Sunday. Distinguished Odia linguist professor Kailash Chandra Tikayatra, Satyabadi Block Chairman Sunil Kumar Panda, Odisha State Pala Gayak Parishad President G a y a k s i d d h a n t d a r s h i Madanmohan Jena, former

Disciplinary Secretary of Odisha Assembly Suresh Kumar Nayak, distinguished astrologer Niranjan Mohapatra, Editor of leading publishing house Aditya Publications Debashish Samantray, Chairman of Make in India and Media Parivar and senior journalist Dilip Kumar Dhaudia attended the main meeting as a guest and addressed the gathering of Saraswat seekers and appreciated this unique effort of Devi Babu. Eminent literary and research singer gyansagar Sachidananda Mohapatra

presided over the meeting. Edited by Devi Babu, the memorial book ‘Satyabhama’, published by Mrs. Parvati Mohapatra in memory of the mother who gave birth to her, was released by the guests on the stage of the meeting. On this occasion, hundreds of poets and poets recited poems titled ‘Maa’ in the poetry session held on this occasion, making the atmosphere a mother. Poet and vocalist Sarbani Das and Sanyasi Nayak composed the poetry evening. Individuals who have achieved success in the fields of literature,

art, culture and journalism were felicitated. Young Odissi dancer Sudatta Sayanshnata Mishra performed the Navadurga dance flawlessly and mesmerized everyone. Manas Ranjan Patnaik, Ramesh Chandra Palei and Rabindranath Sarangi, with the help of Sadashiv Baral, Vijay Chandra Samantray, Sudhir Swain, Hemendra Patnaik, Vishwanath Vishal and Vishwanath Patnaik, managed the entire program. Finally, Mrs. Parvati Mohapatra proposed the vote of thanks.

Engineering Department of PPA & IFFCO Emerge Champions in Cricket Tournaments

Paradip - The Valedictory Function of the 6th Inter-Department Cricket Tournament and the 5th Corporate Cricket Tournament 2026 was held at Gopabandhu Stadium, Paradip, marking the successful conclusion of an exciting sporting event on Sunday, organized under the aegis of Paradip Port Authority (PPA).

The function was graced by Chief Guest A.K. Bose, Advisor (Traffic), PPA, in the presence of Heads of Departments and other senior officials. Addressing the gathering, the dignitaries highlighted the importance of teamwork, unity, and sportsmanship. They noted that such tournaments go beyond the game, helping build trust, coordination, and strong professional relationships among employees.



They also encouraged participants to uphold fairness, safety, and the true spirit of the game.

During the valedictory function, trophies, medals, and awards were presented to the winning teams, runners-up, and outstanding performers in recognition of their excellent performances and sporting spirit.

In the final match of the Inter-Department Cricket Tournament, the Engineering Department of Paradip Port scored 112/8 in 15 overs. Chasing the target, the Electrical & Mechanical Department scored 93/9 in 15 overs. The Engineering Department secured victory by 19 runs and lifted the championship trophy.

In the final of the Corporate Cricket Tournament, both Paradip Port Authority and IFFCO finished with equal scores, leading to a thrilling Super Over. IFFCO won the match and emerged champions.

The tournament was conducted under the leadership of H.S.Rout, Chief Engineer and

President, Gopabandhu Kreedha Sansad (GKS), and Dr. D.P. Sethy, Senior Deputy CMO and Working President, GKS. Their collective efforts were instrumental in successfully organizing this prestigious sporting event.

The tournaments witnessed enthusiastic participation, spirited performances, and strong support from employees, stakeholders, and sports enthusiasts throughout the event. Matches held under floodlights in the evening created a vibrant atmosphere and added to the excitement for both players and spectators. Paradip Port Authority congratulates all participating teams, organizers, and supporters for making

Akshaya Tritiya Celebrated Across Odisha with Traditional Agrarian Rituals

Bhubaneswar, 20 April (H.S.): The agrarian festival of Akshaya Tritiya is being observed across Odisha today, marking the ceremonial beginning of the agricultural season.

Farmers in various parts of the state performed the traditional ritual known as Akhi Muthi Anukula, symbolically sowing seeds in their fields after ploughing the land. The practice signifies the commencement of farming activities for the year. Dressed in new attire,

farmers carried baskets filled with seeds, offering prayers to Goddess Lakshmi, seeking prosperity and a bountiful harvest.

The occasion also coincides with the onset of Chandan Jatra, during which ceremonial processions of deities are organised at several temples across the state. In Puri, preparations for the annual Ratha Jatra begin on this day, with the construction of chariots for Lord Jagannath and his siblings.



The occasion also coincides with the onset of Chandan Jatra, during which ceremonial processions of deities are organised at several temples across the state. In Puri, preparations for the annual Ratha Jatra begin on this day, with the construction of chariots for Lord Jagannath and his siblings.

Considered highly auspicious, Akshaya Tritiya is traditionally chosen for initiating significant life events such as marriages, property purchases, and business ventures. It is widely believed that activities undertaken on this day bring enduring success

and prosperity. The day also holds deep religious significance. It is believed to mark the birth anniversary of Lord Parasurama. Additionally, Hindu tradition associates the day with the beginning of the composition of the Mahabharata by Ved Vyasa and Lord Ganesha.

DPC, provides financial assistance to the family of bereaved journalist.

Khordha-19/4- Ayash Kant Mohanty, who was working as the khordha district correspondent of the weekly newspaper "PRATHAM" and was undergoing treatment in a private hospital, Bhubaneswar passed away ten days ago. He worked as an assistant director in many odia serials. A condolence meeting was organized by the District Press Club, Khordha on his untimely demise. Today, a delegation of the DPC, led by Prakash Kumar Hati, Dilip Kumar Pattnaik, Sayed Ansar Alli, Shubha Kanta Mohapatra, Shubha Laxmi Samantaray, Durga Prasad Sarangi, Md. Imdad Sharif went to the residence of Ayash Kant and expressed condolences to his family members. The members of DPC also donated ₹ 11500 to his family. The DPC has assured that all



possible assistance will be provided to the family of Ayash Kant to ensure that the state government announces the financial assistance for the deceased journalists. The DPC has been highly appreciated for such a noble work in the public.

The initial ritual of the Thala Utha ceremony marking the beginning of the Sital Sasthi festival has been successfully completed in Sambalpur.



Sambalpur, April 20(DMS) On the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, the traditional "Thala Utha" ritual for the Sital Sasthi Yatra 2026 was performed at the Baba Balunkeswar Temple in Nandapada.

With this ritual, preparations for one of Sambalpur's most prominent cultural festivals have officially begun. The "Thala Utha" ceremony is considered the first step in the divine marriage ritual of

Lord Shiva, symbolically initiating the wedding festivities.

During the ceremony, members from both the groom's and bride's sides participated and carried out the traditional social and religious customs. The rituals were conducted under the supervision of temple priest Lakhapati Mahapatra.

Among those present were:

Groom's father: Ram

Prasad Mishra

Groom's mother: Babita Mishra

Thala Utha performer: Bibhuti Bhushan Mishra

Bride's father: Pradeep Mishra

Bride's mother: Binapani Mishra (Sasan, Sambalpur)

The Nandapada Sital Sasthi Yatra Committee has begun extensive preparations to celebrate this year's festival with great enthusiasm and grandeur.

Saranya Seth scores a near perfect score in CBSE Class X exams and shares her noble vision

Anugul : Miss Saranya Seth has secured 98.02% in the CBSE Class X Examination of 2026. She has passed from DAV Kalinga, MCL, bringing immense pride and joy to our family, teachers, and well-wishers.

Beyond her academic excellence, Saranya carries a noble vision. She aspires to dedicate her life to the service of society, especially the underprivileged, by becoming a doctor. Her dream

is not just a profession, but a mission—to heal, to care, and to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those in need.

We sincerely pray that she continues to be guided by compassion, dedication, and strong values, and that she achieves her goals while contributing positively to humanity. We express our heartfelt gratitude to her teachers, mentors, and everyone who has supported her journey.



Security Tightened in Rourkela Ahead of President Droupadi Murmu's Visit

Bhubaneswar, 20 April (H.S.): Extensive security and administrative preparations are underway in Rourkela ahead of the visit of President Droupadi Murmu scheduled for Tuesday.

Authorities have ramped up security across the city, particularly around the airport and key routes, as a major public programme is planned at a ground near Rourkela Airport. To ensure seamless movement, a full-scale parade rehearsal was conducted on Monday along the route from the airport to Panposh. The exercise involved senior officials, central security forces, and emergency response units to prepare for any contingencies.

A robust security deployment has been put in place, including 45 platoons of police personnel, over 800

Home Guards, more than 160 officers, and nine officials of Superintendent of Police (SP) rank. Senior police officers from Bhubaneswar have also arrived in the city to supervise arrangements.

As per the official itinerary, the President will attend a programme at the Tribal Museum. She will later proceed to the Circuit House for a brief halt before departing for the airport around 3:30 PM. From there, she is scheduled to travel to Jharsuguda and subsequently return to New Delhi.

The visit is expected to witness participation from nearly 10,000 school children, along with a cultural dance programme organised as part of the event. Officials stated that continuous reviews are being conducted to ensure the visit proceeds smoothly and securely.

Wrongly Deleted Voter Names Will Be Restored: Odisha CEO



Addressing a press conference, Chief Electoral Officer R. Santhagopalan clarified that the recent communication issued by the Home Department is part of a routine process and is aimed solely at ensuring proper verification of voter data.

Bhubaneswar, 20 April (H.S.): The Chief Electoral Officer, Odisha has assured that any voter names removed from the electoral rolls by mistake will be reinstated after due verification.

Addressing a press conference, Chief Electoral Officer R. Santhagopalan clarified that the recent communication issued by the Home Department is

part of a routine process and is aimed solely at ensuring proper verification of voter data.

He noted that, on average, between 7 lakh and 9 lakh voter names are deleted annually in Odisha due to reasons such as death, migration, or duplication. However, the number of deletions has been slightly higher this year, prompting authorities to undertake additional verification measures.

Reiterating the administration's commitment to electoral accuracy, the CEO stated that any genuine voter whose name may have been wrongly removed will be added back to the rolls following proper checks.

He also stated that, compared to several other states, the number of deletions in Odisha remains relatively lower.

State government put a smile on the faces of the farmers families by providing CM Kissan fund today. Minister -: Harichandan

Khordha - 20/4- Marking the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, district level farmers day was celebrated on Monday with great enthusiasm in Banpur block Gambharimunda GP, Badapatna village of khordha district. The event was organised by Agriculture department bringing together officials and farmers in a vibrant display of tradition and awareness. Minister of Law, Excise and Works department Prithiviraj HariChandan attended the programme as the chief guest and participated in the ceremonial rituals associated with the farming



season. After offering prayers to the goddess Lakshmi for a prosperous harvest during the ongoing Rabi Crop season, Minister HariChandan performed "Akhi Muthi Anukula" rituals. In line with age old customs, he held a plough and sowed paddy seeds, symbolising the beginning of the agricultural cycle. The

event highlighted the cultural significance of farming practices deep rooted in Odisha traditions. Following the rituals a farmer's meeting was organised where Minister HariChandan emphasized the importance of awareness among the farmers to fully benefit from these initiatives including support for irrigation crop

insurance and modern farming techniques. Mr. Harichandan said, the state government has put a smile on the faces of the farmer families by release the CM Kissan fund today. The program witnessed active participation from district agriculture officers and a large number of farmers from across the district. "I have been involved in the 'Akhi Muthi Anukula' ritual. I believed that the tradition of Akshaya Tritiya in the culture of Lord Jagannath is such that whatever we start, it reaches competition without any hindrance" said Minister HariChandan. The program

was presided by Collector, Amrit Raturaj, while MLA & Chairman district planning committee, Khordha, Prasanta Kumar Jagdev, former MLA, Chilika, Bibhuti Bhusan HariChandan, Vice-President, Zilla Parishad Khordha, Gopinath Moharana, Chief District Agriculture Officer, Khordha, Manoranjan Mishra, Asst. Director, Agriculture, Shreya Satpathy, BDO, Chilika Purnama Mohapatra, BDO, Banpur Bikash Kumar Mohanty were present. At the end of the program the chief guest Minister HariChandan flagged off the agricultural awareness rath.

Sambalpur-(DMS) : In a commendable initiative, Sambalpur district police successfully recovered 114 lost mobile phones and returned them to their rightful owners.

The recovery was carried out through a special drive conducted across various locations in the district. The recovered devices were handed over to their owners during a "Mobile Handover Mela" organized at the District Police Office (DPO) on Sunday.

Addressing a press conference, Additional Superintendent of Police Ajay Kumar Mishra

informed that these phones were not linked to theft cases. Instead, they had been lost due to negligence at different times. As a result, no arrests were made in connection with the recoveries.

The operation was made possible with the assistance of the Cyber Police Station and technical teams, using complaints registered on the official portal.

Police recovered the highest number of

phones—25—from Ainthapali police station limits, followed by 19 from Burla, 12 from Town police station, 8 from Kuchinda, and 6 from Dhanupali, along with several others from different police jurisdictions.

The return of the lost phones brought relief and happiness to the owners, who appreciated the continuous efforts of the Sambalpur police.

Authorities have advised the public to immediately report lost mobile phones on the designated portal, enabling timely action and increasing the chances of recovery.

Manipur Violence

THE recurrence of violence in Manipur, just two months after an elected government was reinstated, is an alarming sign that peace in the northeastern state must not be taken for granted. Two persons, including an ex-serviceman, were shot dead by suspected militants in an ambush in Ukhrul district on Saturday, while two kids were killed in a bomb attack at Tronglaobi in Bishnupur district on April 7. Clashes between protesters, who are seeking the arrest of the perpetrators, and security forces have rocked districts of the Imphal valley. The ambush comes amid appeals for dialogue and reconciliation. The fact that renewed calls for peace are being ignored reflects the depth of mistrust and the volatility of the situation.

The state government's prompt decision to hand over the Ukhrul and Bishnupur cases to the National Investigation Agency indicates a sense of urgency, but it is not a solution in itself. There is a dire need to address the underlying causes that continue to trigger cycles of violence. Competing narratives, mutual suspicion among communities and the quick spread of misinformation have created an environment where even isolated incidents risk triggering wider unrest. Public anger is palpable, but it is also apparently being fuelled by rumours and inflammatory rhetoric.

The government's assertion that the law-and-order situation is "sensitive but under control" seems divorced from the lived reality of people on the ground. Manipur's path forward must rest on sustained dialogue, accountability and community engagement. Security operations are necessary to curb immediate threats, but they must be complemented by efforts to rebuild trust and address grievances. Peace cannot be imposed — it should be negotiated, nurtured and protected by all stakeholders. Until then, each new incident of violence will continue to erode hope, pushing the state further away from lasting stability. Manipuris have suffered untold misery over the past three years; the onus is on the "double-engine" government to give the healing touch right now.

Sewer Death

THE tragic death of two sanitation workers during sewer cleaning in Haryana's Nuh, with another battling for life, is a pointer to a system that continues to fail its most invisible workers. Despite a legal ban, hazardous manual cleaning of sewers persists, exposing a troubling gap between policy and practice. These deaths are rarely "accidents." They are the predictable outcome of sending workers into toxic, oxygen-deprived spaces without protective gear, training or supervision. The presence of lethal gases such as methane and hydrogen sulphide in sewers is well known. Yet, safety protocols are routinely ignored, often by contractors seeking to cut costs and by authorities that look the other way. In the past five years, at least 315 sanitation workers have died cleaning sewers and septic tanks across India, with Haryana being among the worst affected.

The country outlawed manual scavenging under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, but enforcement remains weak. Mechanised cleaning, mandated as the norm, is either unavailable or underutilised, particularly in smaller towns. When deaths occur, compensation may be announced, but accountability is diluted. Prosecutions are rare and systemic reform even rarer.

There is also an uncomfortable social dimension. Sanitation work continues to be performed largely by marginalised communities, perpetuating a cycle of vulnerability and neglect. The persistence of such practices raises fundamental questions about dignity, equality and the value placed on human life. Decisive action is needed. Strict criminal liability must be enforced against those responsible for violating safety norms. Urban local bodies must ensure universal mechanisation of sewer cleaning. Most importantly, the state must recognise that these are not faceless labourers but citizens entitled to safety and dignity. Until then, sewers will remain silent death traps and the promise of reform, an empty one.

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Financial Inclusion Through Technology

THOUGH the term 'Financial Inclusion' was used by international organisations like UNO and World Bank in early 2000 and by RBI in 2005 in their official communications, real financial inclusion started in India in 1970s and 1980s after nationalisation of banks when small loans were given by banks in

rural areas under the banner "Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)". Bangladesh did it under the banner "Micro Credit". Financial inclusion became a policy objective globally and a part of the Sustainable Development Goal in due course. Today financial inclusion has crossed one frontier as it has shifted focus from opening simple savings account which was primarily a form of financial access to the next phase viz. financial and economic empowerment through technology and banking innovation. Earlier billions of people were sidelined from the financial area globally due to distance, but today technology has mitigated this and helped them to be a part of the system. In India, the Covid period gave an opportunity to induct millions to payment system through mobile phones which set the global standard. The volume of transactions through UPI in India alone is about 20 billions per month and it is rising. Brazil's Pix is the other most talked about Digital Public Infrastructure on real time payment system. India's UPI and Brazil's Pix cover 60% of global real time payment transactions.

Technology has added speed and coverage to the financial inclusion process and taken it to the next phase. The Global Findex data reveals that 76% of adults globally now have an account at a bank or a regulated financial institution. Digital financial services



Subash Chandra Misra

have reduced transaction costs by 90% compared to traditional banking methods, making financial services accessible to underserved and poor. After 2014, the share of adults making or receiving digital payments grew by 57% and more than 50% of women in developing economies are now either receiving or making digital payments. Mobile money services have emerged as a major tool of financial inclusion in regions like Sub Saharan Africa with limited traditional banking infrastructure. The government to person payments or direct benefit transfers for various government sponsored schemes has given a tremendous increase to the process of financial inclusion. One estimate shows that 865 million beneficiaries in developing economies opened their first bank account to receive government payments and 57% of adults in developing countries use digital payments representing a significant shift from cash-based transactions.

Trust and success rate in transactions are important factors for inducing new clients in to the fold of finance. It is essential that the success rate of transactions remains very high, else the customers will prefer to do transactions in the old way to avoid

tedious process of lodging complaints and following up the same to recover the blocked money in failed transactions. Hybrid models combining digital and physical touch points showed promise in building trust as such approaches reduced dropout rates as compared to purely digital models. Better infrastructure viz. 4G or 5G internet connectivity improves service delivery and reduces transaction failure rates and builds trust.

Some of the technology that have facilitated and deepened financial inclusion are cloud native solutions, microservice architecture, document verification system, digital identity verification system etc. The cloud-native platforms enabled financial institutions to serve customers in remote areas with a lower transaction processing time. The Microservice architecture allows for creation of wide range of financial products which can enhance customer experience and expand access to financial services. It has also been observed that organisations implementing microservice architectures have achieved a 70% reduction in security incidents compared to traditional systems. KYC process has been revolutionised by digital identity verification. Biometric authentication with facial recognition has emerged as a cornerstone of modern KYC frameworks in real-world implementation. Real-time document verification systems has resulted in reduction in time from traditional manual verification method. Digital technology has resulted in reduction in cost of customer on-boarding and transaction cost while improving regulatory compliance. The customer on-boarding time in South East Asia has been reportedly reduced by 70% due to adoption of technology.

Use of AI in credit assessment and loan approval processes have resulted in significant reduction in approval time

and improvement in approval process, due to enhanced risk assessment methodologies and the integration of alternative data sources. Microfinance institutions adopting digital technologies have achieved better cost-efficiency ratios than traditional operators. This improvement is noticeable in rural areas, where lower overhead costs have allowed for more competitive interest rates while maintaining operational sustainability.

A study examining data from 2018 to 2023, revealed that regions with comprehensive digital financial infrastructure experienced around 20% increase in financial system participation. Small enterprises adopting digital platforms showed an average revenue growth of around 30% compared to businesses relying solely on traditional banking channels. Average household savings rates also increased among digital financial service users and substantial gains were observed in underbanked regions.

With the prospect of reaching out to more number of financially excluded and underserved people, financial institutions are offering digital services through mobile apps. Today more than 80 countries including many from Africa are offering financial services through mobile phones which has enabled people in remote areas to switch over from cash based transactions to digital cash less mode. Mobile phone has upgraded financial inclusion to the next level where people use various financial services like using a debit/ credit card, online payment facility, insurance product, credit facility, investment in mutual fund and securities. While expanding the scope of financial inclusion there is need to educate the public to protect them from the risks of digital ecosystem including cyber frauds.

The author is a Retired Chief General Manager of Reserve Bank of India.

student & discipline

Dr. Suresh Kumar Nayak

A disciplined routine encourages better academic performance. Having a routine set for learning and studying leads to better grades. Self-disciplined students know where they are going wrong. Instead of continuing the path, they get back on track and score better. School discipline refers to the rules and strategies applied in school to manage student behavior and practices used to encourage self-discipline. School discipline addresses schoolwide, classroom, and individual student needs through broad prevention, targeted intervention, and development of self-discipline.

Discipline creates habits, habits make routines, and routines become who you are daily. The value of discipline is the way to do what needs to be done. Not only does practice allow one to establish a positive action. It helps us train our minds and body and enables us to focus on our goals and to regulate our emotions. Disciplinary Problems in the Classroom: Types & Causes, Some of the types of disciplinary problems that are most common are: Disrespect - students speak and act in a disrespectful way to adults and peers. Defiance - students openly refuse to listen to adults or follow directions. Bullying - students consistently intimidate others, often to make themselves feel better.

Self-discipline allows you to stay focused on your goals. It enables you to stay in control of yourself and of your

reaction to any situation. Self-discipline is like a muscle: the more you train it, the stronger you become. Lack of self-discipline can cause low self-esteem. Discipline refers to rule-following behavior, to regulation, order, control and authority. It may also refer to punishment. Discipline is used by those in authority to encourage habits, routines, and automatic mechanisms such as blind obedience. It may be inflicted on others or on oneself. Orderly behaviour refers to discipline as a condition that must exist for an orderly behaviour in the organization. Punishment is used to prevent indiscipline. When a worker goes astray in his conduct, he has to be punished for the same and the recurrences of it must be prevented. Disciplining your child means teaching them responsible behaviour and self-control. With appropriate and consistent discipline, your child will learn about consequences and taking responsibility for their own actions. The ultimate aim is to encourage the child to learn to manage both their feelings and behaviour.

The value of discipline is the way to do what needs to be done. Not only does practice allow one to establish a positive action. It helps us train our minds and body and enables us to focus on our goals and to regulate our emotions. It helps preserve society's peace and order.

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Live in the world like a lotus leaf, says Krishn

Pandit Somnath Dash

Irrespective of whether one is a renunciate or a householder, the words of wisdom contained in the Bhagwad Gita teach us the method of leading a balanced life — a life that attaches equal importance to the spiritual aspect of life and attainment of proficiency in worldly affairs. The Gita urges repeatedly that one should live in the world like a lotus leaf, which remains pure and untainted despite being surrounded by filthy water.

The Gita opens with a vivid description of men and things on the eve of the great battle of Kurukshetra. At the eleventh hour, Arjun's mind is tormented at the sight of his venerable preceptors, sires and grandsires, sons and grandsons who are present in the battlefield. The very thought of fratricidal carnage and bloodshed that would ensue causes untold agony to his delicate mind — so much so that he puts aside his bow and arrow and is in no mental condition to fight.

It is ironical that despite being a householder belonging to the warrior caste, Arjun conducts himself like a sannyasin and puts up a plausible plea for abstention from activity and for withdrawing from the world, an ideal which was popular among certain sects at the time when the Gita was written. Significantly, his reluctance to fight is not an outcome of utter dispassion; it is because his mind is governed by false passion. At the same time, the teacher of the Gita asserts that abstention from action is just not possible. This is because nature is at work on a constant basis. The teacher of the Gita does not reject the world as a mere illusion and action as a snare. He advocates leading an active life in the world with the inner life anchored in the eternal spirit. The Gita thus is a mandate for action; it teaches that perfection can be attained even while doing one's duties.

Gandhi ji in his commentary on the Gita opined that it is not desire that vitiates the action but selfish desire, that is the desire for fruit; and if an end is put to this selfish desire, the action performed won't be binding. The abandonment of the desire for fruit encompasses both 'sannyas' and 'tyag', both having the etymological meaning 'give up'. In this context, the person who completely abstains from performing action is not a sannyasi but only an idler or hypocrite.

Krishn says in the Gita: "He who performs all actions in a spirit of surrender to the Eternal Being, abandoning attachment, is as unaffected by sin as a lotus leaf by filthy water." The Gita thus advocates detachment from desires and not cessation from work.

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India, South Korea Will Continue To Contribute Towards Peaceful And Inclusive Indo-Pacific: PM Modi

New Delhi, 20/4 (H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday that India and South Korea share a common outlook for the Indo-Pacific and will continue to contribute towards a peaceful, progressive, and inclusive region, adding that both nations convey a message of peace and stability amid global tensions. Addressing a joint press meet with South Korean President Lee Jae Myung following their talks here, PM Modi stated that India and South Korea agree that reform of global institutions is needed to address global challenges.

"In this era of global tensions, India and Korea together convey a message of peace and stability. We are very pleased that today, (South) Korea is joining the International Solar Alliance and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative. Through our joint efforts, we will together continue to contribute towards

a peaceful, progressive, and inclusive Indo-Pacific. We also agree that reform of global institutions is essential to address global challenges." Extending a warm welcome to President Lee, PM Modi said: "I am delighted to welcome President Lee on his first visit to India. President Lee's life is an inspiring example of struggle, service, and dedication. Every challenge has only strengthened his resolve to serve the people. Although this is his first visit to India, his affinity for India has been evident since our very first meeting." He noted that India and South Korea, through the visit of President Lee, will transform this "trusted partnership into a futuristic partnership". He noted that their ties have become more dynamic and comprehensive in the past 10 years.

"The South Korean President's visit to India after a gap of eight years is very important.

Democratic values, market economy and respect for the rule of law are in the DNA of our two nations. We have a common outlook in the Indo-Pacific region as well. Based on all this, our relations have become more dynamic and comprehensive over the last decade, and today, with President Lee's visit, we are going to transform this trusted partnership into a futuristic partnership. We will realise new opportunities for cooperation in every field, from chips to ships, talent to technology, environment to energy, and together ensure the progress and prosperity of both countries." PM Modi announced that India and South Korea have formed an Industrial Cooperation Committee to strengthen business cooperation. He mentioned that India and South Korea will start the Economic Security Dialogue to increase cooperation in critical technology and supply chains.

Supreme Court Expresses Concern Over Rising "Digital Arrest" Frauds in India

New Delhi, 20/4 (H.S.): The Supreme Court on Monday expressed serious concern over the growing number of "digital arrest" cases across the country. During the hearing, Chief Justice Surya Kant observed that it was shocking that even highly educated people were falling victim to such cyber frauds. Counsel for the petitioner suggested that intermediary platforms should be equipped with a "kill switch" to help curb the menace, arguing that victims often panic upon learning they are being digitally "arrested" and are unable to respond effectively. Attorney General R. Venkataramani informed the court that an internal meeting among the concerned departments had already taken place and that a final meeting would be held soon. He suggested that the next hearing could be scheduled for May 12. Earlier, on December 1, 2025, the Supreme Court had said that the issue of digital arrest fraud required urgent attention. It had ordered a CBI probe into the registered cases linked to the scam and stated that the central agency would be fully free to investigate



bankers wherever bank accounts used in cybercrime were traced. The court had also directed the Reserve Bank of India to assist in determining whether artificial intelligence or machine learning could be used to identify suspicious accounts and freeze them. States that had not yet permitted CBI investigations within their jurisdictions were directed to allow such inquiries in digital arrest cases. The amicus curiae had noted that there were three broad categories

of cybercrime: digital arrest, investment fraud, and fake job scams. The court had also observed that in such offences, victims are often induced to invest large sums of money. On October 17, 2025, the Supreme Court had taken suo motu cognisance of the rising number of digital arrest incidents and issued notices to the central government and the CBI. It had said that forging Supreme Court and High Court orders, along with judges' signatures,

to carry out digital arrest scams amounted to a direct assault on public trust in judicial institutions. The court had taken note of a case involving an elderly couple from Ambala who were digitally "arrested" and cheated out of more than Rs 1 crore. The couple had written to then Chief Justice B. R. Gavai describing the fraud. The court said the matter was not an isolated incident and that several reports had already appeared in the media. It stressed the need for coordination between central and state police forces to uncover criminal acts involving forged judicial documents, extortion and looting, especially against innocent people and senior citizens. According to the couple's letter, a forged court order stamped to show their alleged arrest and surveillance between September 3 and September 16 was produced, after which they were defrauded of over Rs 1 crore through multiple bank transactions. The elderly woman said some individuals had shown them court orders through audio and video calls.

PM Modi Highlights Agriculture as the Foundation of Prosperity, Shares Sanskrit Subhashita

New Delhi, 20/4 (H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday underlined the central role of agriculture in India's prosperity and described farmers as the nation's food providers, saying their hard work and dedication ensure the country's progress. The verse conveys that agriculture brings wealth, purifies wisdom, and serves as the very basis of life for all living beings. It also states that the farmer who grows food for the world is truly the greatest giver, because without food no other form of charity or gift can sustain life. The Prime Minister's message placed renewed emphasis on the importance of farmers in strengthening the nation's economy, food security and long-term development.

CJI Surya Kant Expresses Shock Over Well-Educated People Falling Victim to Digital Arrest Scams



New Delhi, 20/4: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant expressed his astonishment on Monday over the increasing number of well-educated individuals being deceived in digital arrest cases. While presiding over a bench that also included Justice Joymalya Bagchi, CJI Surya Kant highlighted a recent troubling case involving an elderly woman who lost her entire retirement savings due to such a scam. The remarks were made following a suo motu case raised by Attorney General R. Venkataramani, addressing the growing number of victims in digital arrest incidents.

PM Modi to Inaugurate Pachpadra Refinery in Rajasthan on Tuesday

New Delhi, 20/4 (H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Rajasthan on Tuesday to dedicate to the nation India's first greenfield integrated refinery-cum-petrochemical complex in Pachpadra, Balotra. On the occasion, he will also address a public gathering. According to the Prime Minister's Office, the Prime Minister will inaugurate the project at around 11:30 am on April 21. The landmark facility is being regarded as a major achievement in India's energy and petrochemical sectors. Developed as a joint venture between Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited and the Rajasthan government, the greenfield refinery-cum-petrochemical complex has been built with an investment of more than Rs 79,450 crore and has a capacity of 9 million metric tonnes per annum



(MMTPA). The state-of-the-art complex integrates refining and petrochemical production, with a petrochemical capacity of 2.4 MMTPA. It has a Nelson Complexity Index of 17.0 and a petrochemical output share of more than 26 percent, placing it in line with global standards. Officials said the project will play a significant role in strengthening the country's energy security, boosting self-

reliance in petrochemicals, and accelerating industrial growth. It will also create a foundation for the development of petrochemical and plastic parks in the region, supporting downstream industries and allied sectors. In addition, the refinery is expected to generate large-scale employment opportunities and contribute substantially to the region's socio-economic development.

South Korean President Lee Receives Ceremonial Welcome at Rashtrapati Bhavan, Pays Tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat

New Delhi, 20/4 (H.S.): South Korean President Lee Jae-myung, who is on a three-day visit to India from April 19 to 21, was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday. President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi received him in the traditional manner. President Murmu said on social media that she had formally welcomed the South Korean President at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal also noted that India remains committed to advancing its special strategic partnership with South Korea. He said President Lee was welcomed by President Murmu and Prime Minister Modi in keeping with tradition. Earlier in the day, President Lee paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat. Sharing the development online,



Jaiswal said the South Korean President had honoured the values of peace and non-violence by offering floral tributes to Gandhi, reflecting a shared commitment to peace, harmony and a better world. India and South Korea established their special strategic partnership in 2010, and cooperation has since expanded across defence, trade, technology,

semiconductors, batteries, cybersecurity and the Indo-Pacific region. South Korea is one of India's key trading partners, with bilateral trade exceeding 30 billion dollars. High-level discussions are expected during the visit, with trade, defence cooperation, technology transfer and peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific likely to figure prominently on the agenda.

Udhampur Bus Tragedy: President and Prime Minister Express Grief, Announce Ex-Gratia Relief for Victims' Families

New Delhi, 20/4 (H.S.): President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday expressed deep sorrow over the tragic bus accident in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district, in which 16 people lost their lives and 20 others were injured. In her message, President Murmu said she was deeply saddened to learn about the deaths caused by the accident. Extending her condolences to the bereaved families, she prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured. Prime Minister Modi also said he was devastated by the loss of lives in the Udhampur bus mishap. He conveyed his sympathies to the grieving families and wished the injured a swift and



complete recovery. According to the Prime Minister's Office, an ex-gratia assistance of Rs 2 lakh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund will be given to the next of kin of each person killed in the accident. The injured will receive financial

assistance of Rs 50,000. The accident took place on Monday when a passenger bus skidded off a hilly road and plunged down a slope in Udhampur district. Rescue and relief operations were launched immediately after the incident.

NSA Ajit Doval Holds Talks in Riyadh on Bilateral Ties and Regional Developments

New Delhi, 20/4 (H.S.): National Security Adviser Ajit Doval arrived in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Sunday during his official visit to the Kingdom. He was received at the airport by India's Ambassador Dr. Suhel Khan and Saudi Arabia's Deputy Minister for Political Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Saud Al-Sati. The Indian Embassy in Saudi Arabia said on X that Doval undertook the official visit to Riyadh on April 19. During the trip, he met Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister, His Royal Highness Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, Foreign Minister His Royal Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan, and National Security Adviser His Excellency Dr. Musaed



Al-Aiban. During the meetings, both sides underlined the need to further strengthen India-Saudi Arabia bilateral relations. They also

discussed the ongoing conflict in West Asia, the broader regional situation, and other issues of mutual interest.

PM Modi Pays Tribute to Jagadguru Basaveshwara on Basava Jayanti

New Delhi, 20/4 (H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday paid homage to Jagadguru Basaveshwara on the occasion of Basava Jayanti. In a message posted on X, the Prime Minister said he was paying tribute to Basaveshwara and his timeless teachings on this special day. He said

Basaveshwara's vision of a just society and his unwavering efforts to empower people would continue to inspire generations. Jagadguru Basaveshwara was a great 12th-century philosopher and social reformer. He is remembered for his vision of a fair and egalitarian society. Rejecting the caste

system, he established the Anubhava Mantapa, which came to symbolize equality and open dialogue. His philosophy was rooted in the principle of Kayakave Kailasa — the idea that work itself is worship. He is also regarded as the founder of the Lingayat tradition.

Fact-Finding Team Releases Report on Noida Violence, Alleges Widespread Arbitrary Detentions

New Delhi, 20/4 (H.S.): A fact-finding team formed by the All India Lawyers Union (AILU) in collaboration with student and youth organisations has released its report on the labour agitation in Noida's industrial area, raising serious concerns over the manner in which arrests were carried out. The team said there has still been no

official clarity on the number of people detained. According to eyewitnesses cited in the report, nearly 800 people, including around 350 minors, were allegedly arrested in connection with the incident. Issued under the signature of Sunil Kumar, secretary of AILU's Delhi state unit, the report alleged that on April 13 and 14,

police picked up several innocent people from the streets. Many of those detained were children returning from tuition classes, while others were shoppers buying groceries, medicines or clothes, and some construction workers were taken away while having lunch. The report said plainclothes policemen carried

out the arrests. It further stated that several workers employed in factories were detained from their workplaces between April 15 and 17. In some cases, workers were arrested before they could even enter the factory premises, allegedly at the behest of management officials. The report also claimed that some workers had been called

to work by their employers before being taken into custody. The fact-finding team expressed concern that families were not informed after the arrests, and no details were provided about where the detainees were taken or held. The report also said that the reasons for the arrests were not disclosed. According to the report, many workers were detained

under Section 151 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Family members, it said, have been making repeated visits to police stations and the Kaska jail in search of their relatives, but their whereabouts remain unknown. Many of the workers have still not been released. The report concluded that the Noida police violated constitutional safeguards in its handling of the labourers.

Tragedy in Louisiana: Gunman Kills Eight Children in Deadly Shreveport Shooting

Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 20/4 (H.S.): A gunman stormed into three homes in Shreveport, Louisiana, early Sunday and shot dead eight children in what has become the deadliest mass shooting in the United States since January 2024. The attack left the Shreveport community devastated, with witnesses and residents breaking down in tears at the scene. According to the Caddo Parish Coroner's Office, a 13-year-old boy was also injured after jumping from a roof while trying to escape. He reportedly suffered fractures. CNN and CBS News reported that Shreveport police spokesperson Chris Bordelon said during a press conference that a total of 10 people were shot. The suspected gunman has been identified as Shamar Elkins, who was killed in a police shootout. The victims included three boys and five girls, seven of whom were siblings. The children who died were identified



as Jayla Elkins, 3; Shayla Elkins, 5; Kayla Peugh, 6; Layla Peugh, 7; Markedon Peugh, 10; Sariah Snow, 11; Khederion Snow, 6; and Breylon Snow, 5. Police said two women sustained serious injuries in the shooting, while a teenager was also hurt. According to investigators, the suspect first shot a woman on the street before

entering a nearby home and opening fire on eight people inside. Louisiana Attorney General Liz Murrill said on X that multiple law enforcement agencies are investigating the case. State Representative Tammy Phelps said some children even tried to escape through the back door

during the attack. Police records show that Elkins had previously been arrested in 2019 in a weapons-related case. The U.S. Army said he also served for seven years in the Louisiana Army National Guard. Shreveport Mayor Tom Arceneaux said the incident had shaken the entire city. According to the Gun Violence Archive, at least 114 mass shootings have taken place in the United States so far this year. City Council member Tabatha H. Taylor, who was at the scene, was seen crying and said the tragedy was the worst event in Shreveport's history. Police Chief Wayne Smith said he could barely comprehend how such a horrific incident could happen. House Speaker Mike Johnson, who represents the Shreveport area in Congress, called the killings heartbreaking and said the victims' families are in the nation's thoughts during this extremely difficult time.

U.S. Fires on Iranian Ship, Seizes Vessel as Tehran Warns of Retaliation

Tehran/Washington, 20/4 (H.S.): A maritime confrontation in the Gulf of Oman has dealt a fresh blow to fragile efforts to ease tensions between Iran and the United States. Iran's military on Sunday vowed retaliation after Washington allegedly opened fire on an Iranian cargo ship and took it into custody. According to Iranian state broadcaster IRIB, the military said in a Telegram post that the United States had violated the ceasefire and carried out "armed piracy" in sea lanes. Iranian officials accused Washington of damaging the ship's navigation equipment and deploying troops on its deck. The U.S. military, however, confirmed that an American destroyer fired multiple rounds at an Iranian-flagged vessel that was attempting to breach a U.S. naval blockade. U.S. Central Command said on Sunday that the ship had been intercepted after failing to comply with repeated warnings. It also said that since the blockade began, the United States has ordered



25 commercial vessels to turn back or return to an Iranian port. Hours before the incident, President Donald Trump said he was sending his team to Islamabad for talks with Iran. Tehran later said no negotiations would take place unless the United States lifted its blockade. Iranian media also reported that the government has decided to sell damaged state buildings that were affected during the war. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, in a phone call with Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, said the U.S. blockade in the

Strait of Hormuz violated the ceasefire agreement. He also warned that Iran fears Trump may "betray diplomacy." On Truth Social, Trump said an Iranian cargo ship had tried to evade the U.S. blockade in the Strait of Hormuz and was now in American custody, adding that U.S. authorities were inspecting the vessel. The incident has sharply escalated tensions in one of the world's most sensitive maritime corridors, where any disruption can quickly ripple through oil markets and regional diplomacy.

Balochistan Bloodshed: Three Policemen Slain in Rebel Clashes as Enforced Disappearances Protest Persists

Islamabad, 20/4 (H.S.): In a grim escalation of unrest in Pakistan's volatile Balochistan province, three police personnel lost their lives in separate clashes with outlaws and insurgents over the past 24 hours, with several others wounded, authorities confirmed today. Security forces have cordoned off the affected areas and launched extensive search operations to apprehend the perpetrators. Meanwhile, a protracted hunger strike by ordinary citizens outside the Quetta Press Club entered its 6,139th day, demanding transparency on long-standing cases of enforced disappearances by the state. Reports from Dunya News Channel and The Balochistan Post detail Sunday's brazen assault in Khuzdar city, where armed thugs opened fire on a police team responding to a solar panel theft complaint in the Bagbana sub-tehsil. The attack claimed the lives of Head Constable Samiullah and Woman Constable Malik Naz, while Station House Officer Ibrahim Sheikh and Constable Najibullah sustained critical injuries and were rushed to



Khuzdar Civil Hospital. In a parallel incident, a ferocious firefight erupted in Mastung district's Dasht Kambela area, felling Head Constable Rahmatullah Khilji and injuring six more policemen. Pakistani Army units, encircling the plains, faced stiff resistance from insurgents who also targeted a security camp in Dasht Kund Musuri, underscoring the province's deepening insurgency. The Quetta vigil, spearheaded by the

Voice for Baloch Missing Persons (VBMP), amplified with the arrival of Jameel Baloch, brother of abducted student Sohail Ahmed Baloch (alias Lal Mohammad) and his friend Fasihullah (son of Syed Abdul Rauf Shah). The duo, BS Pakistan Studies scholars at Balochistan University, vanished from their hostel on November 1, 2021. Jameel urged immediate disclosure of their fates amid a swelling chorus against state abductions.

No Plans Yet To Attend Next Round Of Talks With US: Iran

Tehran, 20/4 (H.S.): Citing "contradictory actions" from Washington, Iran on Monday made it clear that it has not made any decision yet on participating in the next round of negotiations with the US. "So far, we have not made any decisions regarding the next round of negotiations," said Esmail Baqaei, spokesperson for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, while speaking to reporters at a weekly press conference in Tehran. The spokesperson criticised the United States, accusing Washington of engaging in contradictory actions while claiming to pursue diplomacy. He mentioned that since the very beginning of the ceasefire, "bad faith and constant complaints" were faced by Iran from Washington. He clarified that the



US initially claimed that Lebanon was not part of the ceasefire, despite contrary assertions. According to semi-official Tasnim news agency, Baqaei added that even after an understanding was reached, Iran encountered "maritime actions in

the Strait of Hormuz", including a US attack on an Iranian trade vessel on Sunday night, which he described as a violation of the ceasefire and "an act of aggression". On Sunday, President Donald Trump said that the US forces had intercepted and taken

custody of an Iranian-flagged cargo ship that tried to bypass the US blockade in the Gulf of Oman. Baqaei emphasised that Iran's mistrust towards the entire process will only deepen with the inconsistency and added that Tehran will make the necessary decisions about the future path with careful consideration of its national interests. He also mentioned that the US had "betrayed diplomacy twice" and attacked Iran's sovereignty and assets, and that "very costly experience" of the past year cannot be ignored by Iran. Baqaei noted that the country must remain cautious of the enemy's plots even with diplomatic tracks, and "all components of Iran are vigilantly monitoring any process".

Israel Army Claims Killing Senior Hezbollah Commander Abbas

Jerusalem, 20/4 (H.S.): The Israeli military said Sunday it killed Hezbollah's Bint Jbeil commander, Ali Rida Abbas, along with more than 150 members of the group in "pre-ceasefire strikes" during the 24 hours before a US-mediated truce took effect, media reports said. The military said Abbas was the fourth Hezbollah commander for the Bint Jbeil area killed by Israel since October 2023. It described Bint Jbeil in southern Lebanon as a key frontline area for Hezbollah attacks. Xinhua News Agency reported. Abbas was considered one of the most senior officials in Hezbollah's armed wing and had survived Israeli strikes on the group's military leadership in 2024. There was no confirmation

from Hezbollah. Separately, the military said one soldier was killed, and nine others wounded "during combat" in southern Lebanon, where Israeli troops remain deployed despite the ceasefire. Israel's state-owned Kan TV reported the reservist was killed when a military bulldozer struck an explosive device planted by Hezbollah. The death marked the second Israeli military fatality since a 10-day ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon took effect at midnight between Thursday and Friday local time (2100 GMT). Since six weeks of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah began in early March 2026 amid the Iran war, 15 Israeli soldiers have been killed, according to military figures.

No More Mr Nice Guy": Iran Spurns Second Round of US-Mediated Talks as Middle East Ceasefire Nears Breakdown

Tehran, 20/4 (H.S.): Iran has formally rejected a second round of direct talks with the United States, accusing Washington of unreasonable demands, "blame-game" rhetoric and unilaterally reshaping the terms of a fragile ceasefire just days before the two-week truce in the Middle East is set to expire. The repudiation inflames already-tense relations between Tehran and Washington, as US President Donald Trump simultaneously renews his threat of large-scale strikes on Iranian infrastructure unless Tehran accepts what he describes as a "fair and reasonable" peace deal. Iran's foreign-policy establishment has categorically dismissed reports of a second round of negotiations taking place in Islamabad, branding such claims as "false" and orchestrated to pressure Tehran politically. The semi-official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) stated that the United States has imposed "excessive demands" and shifted its negotiating positions repeatedly, while also violating the ceasefire framework through what Tehran calls a de facto naval blockade of Iranian ports. According to IRNA,

America's "unreasonable and unrealistic expectations," combined with persistent threats to Iran's physical infrastructure, have made "constructive talks" virtually impossible. Iranian officials have also accused Washington of peddling a narrative about Iran's alleged participation in a second round of negotiations simply to cast Tehran as intransigent ahead of the ceasefire's April 22 deadline. The US-imposed blockade of Iranian maritime chokepoints has emerged as one of the most contentious issues in the current standoff. Washington has justified the restrictions as a measure to choke off Iranian weapons shipments and prevent further destabilisation in the region, but Tehran characterises them as violations of the ceasefire and unlawful coercion. Tensions escalated further when an American destroyer opened fire on and seized an Iranian-flagged vessel attempting to evade the blockade. Iran has warned that it will retaliate for what it views as a direct assault on its sovereignty, and Tehran's media apparatus has repeatedly juxtaposed images of



heavily armed US warships with rhetoric framed around "national humiliation" and "resistance." Iranian state outlets such as Fars and Tasnim have cited "anonymous senior officials" saying that the "overall atmosphere cannot be assessed as very positive," and that any meaningful resumption of negotiations is contingent on the lifting of the US-imposed naval restrictions. Iran and the United States, alongside Israel, are now only two days away from the scheduled end of the two-week ceasefire that temporarily halted

the broader Middle East war. The truce was first brokered in late February 2026, following a surprise US-Israeli strike on Iranian facilities on February 28 that triggered a rapid spiral of retaliatory attacks across the region. President Trump has publicly accused Iran of violating the ceasefire by allegedly firing on shipping near the Strait of Hormuz, a vital artery for global oil and gas flows. In a recent statement, he insisted that Washington remains committed to a negotiated settlement but warned that failure to reach a deal

would invite devastating strikes on Iranian bridges, power plants and other critical infrastructure. Speaking to a US news outlet, Trump claimed that the "basic concept" of the deal is already in place and that he sees "a very good chance" of finalising it in Islamabad. However, the White House's insistence that envoys headed by Vice President JD Vance, special envoy Steve Witkoff and senior adviser Jared Kushner will proceed to Pakistan appears to have deepened Tehran's scepticism that Washington is negotiating in good

faith. Trump's unusually aggressive rhetoric has become a defining feature of the current phase of US-Iran diplomacy. On his social-media platform, he has reiterated that he will "knock out" key elements of Iran's civilian infrastructure unless Tehran accepts his terms, framing the threat as a necessary lever to force a capitulation on what Washington calls Tehran's "destabilising" regional activities. International reactions to this rhetoric have been mixed. Some European allies have quietly urged Washington to temper its language, warning that overt threats of mass infrastructure damage could further entrench hard-line positions in Tehran and harden public opinion against any negotiated settlement. At the same time, dovish voices within the US foreign-policy establishment have privately conceded that Trump's blend of pressure and diplomacy may be the only way to extract concessions from a regime that views any retreat as a sign of weakness. The choice of Islamabad as the proposed venue for a second round of talks has added a new layer of complexity to the crisis. Pakistan's leadership,

led by General Asim Munir, has been quietly navigating pressure from Washington, Tehran, and regional heavyweights such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, all of which have a vested interest in preventing a prolonged war in the Middle East. Reports suggest that Trump's overture to Pakistan is part of a broader bid to portray the upcoming round as a "neutral" mediation, even as critics argue that Washington's control over the agenda and military posture at sea severely undermines Islamabad's role as an impartial broker. For Tehran, the prospect of engaging in what it perceives as a US-centric process, with American officials and their allies largely dictating the terms, only reinforces its declared unwillingness to participate. With the April 22 expiry of the ceasefire looming, the Middle East stands at a precarious juncture. On one side is a US-led coalition that views the current ceasefire as a lever to force comprehensive Iranian concessions on its nuclear programme, regional proxies and missile capabilities.

Markets End Marginally Higher, Investors Lose Nearly Rs 19,000 Crore

NEW DELHI, 20/4 (H.S.): Domestic equity markets witnessed sharp volatility throughout the day ahead of the second round of peace talks between the United States and Iran. Trading opened on a positive note, but sustained tug-of-war between bulls and bears kept both the Sensex and the Nifty fluctuating in a narrow range. At the end of the session, the Sensex closed higher by 0.03 percent and the Nifty by 0.05 percent. Buying remained steady in automobile and PSU bank stocks throughout the day. Shares of capital goods, consumer durables, oil and gas, and public sector enterprise indices also ended in positive territory. On the other hand, IT, realty and telecom stocks remained under persistent selling pressure. FMCG, healthcare, metal and tech indices also closed lower. Broader markets too faced selling pressure, with the Nifty Midcap index ending 0.18 percent lower and the Smallcap index falling 0.45 percent. Despite the marginal gains in benchmark indices, heavy selling in midcap and smallcap stocks eroded investor wealth by nearly Rs 20,000 crore. The market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies declined to Rs 465.45 lakh crore (provisional) after today's trade, compared with Rs 465.64 lakh crore at the



close of trading on Friday. This means investors suffered a loss of about Rs 19,000 crore in a single session. On the BSE, 4,578 stocks saw active trading during the day. Of these, 1,840 closed higher, 2,548 ended lower and 190 were unchanged. On the NSE, 2,978 stocks were actively traded, of which 1,123 finished in the green and 1,855 in the red. Among the 30 Sensex constituents, 12 closed with gains while 18 ended in losses. Similarly, 23 of the 50 Nifty stocks closed higher and 27 ended lower. The BSE Sensex opened 139.36 points higher at

78,632.90. Soon after trading began, buying pushed the index up by as much as 448.91 points to 78,942.45. However, once selling pressure intensified, the index slipped by 290.24 points to 78,203.30. By the end of the session, the Sensex settled at 78,520.30, up just 26.76 points. The NSE Nifty also started the day on a firm note, rising 37.95 points to open at 24,391.50. Soon after the market opened, the battle between bulls and bears drove the index up and down repeatedly. Supported by buying, the Nifty climbed 127.10 points to 24,480.65. But

under selling pressure, it dropped 112.30 points to 24,241.25. It finally closed at 24,364.85, with a modest gain of 11.30 points. Among the major gainers in today's trade, Trent Ltd. rose 3.29 percent, JSW Steel 2.76 percent, State Bank of India 2.55 percent, Asian Paints 2.14 percent and Grasim Industries 1.46 percent. On the losing side, Jio Financial fell 2.75 percent, Hindalco Industries 2.29 percent, TMPV 1.22 percent, Kotak Mahindra 1.15 percent and Bharat Electronics 1.12 percent.

Early Trade Pressure Weighs on Sensex and Nifty; Benchmark Indices Edge Lower Amid Volatility

New Delhi, 20/4 (H.S.): The domestic stock market witnessed a choppy start to Monday's session, with benchmark indices losing momentum after opening higher. Although buying support initially pushed both the Sensex and Nifty upward, selling pressure soon emerged, dragging the market back into the red by 10 a.m. By around 10 a.m., the Sensex was trading lower by 5.82 points, or 0.01 percent, at 78,487.72, while the Nifty had slipped 20.75 points, or 0.09 percent, to 24,332.80. The session began on a positive note, with the Sensex opening 139.36 points higher at 78,632.90. It briefly rose further to 78,733.25 before profit-taking set in and erased its early gains. The Nifty followed a similar pattern. It opened 37.95 points higher at 24,391.50 and climbed to 24,420.20 in the first 10 minutes before weakening sharply under selling pressure. By the half-hour mark, it had even fallen to an intraday low of 24,241.25 before recovering slightly. Market breadth remains weak. Trading remained weak across the broader



market as well. A total of 2,776 stocks were active on the exchanges, of which 945 were trading in the green while 1,831 were in the red. Among Sensex constituents, 9 of the 30 stocks were trading higher, while 21 were under pressure. In the Nifty pack, 10 of the 50 stocks were in positive territory, compared with 40 stocks trading lower. Among

the key gainers, State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Trent, Axis Bank and NTPC were trading higher by 2.14 percent to 0.50 percent. On the losing side, shares of Jio Financial, TMPV, HDFC Life, Hindalco Industries and Eternal were down between 3.62 percent and 1.47 percent. The previous trading session ended on a strong note. On Friday, the

Sensex climbed 504.86 points, or 0.65 percent, to close at 78,493.54, while the Nifty rose 16.80 points, or 0.65 percent, to finish at 24,353.55. The market opened weaker on Monday amid a negative start in Indian equities, with early trade showing the Sensex down 248 points and the Nifty below 24,300 in the opening minutes.

RBI Partially Rolls Back Curbs On Rupee Derivative Trades To Restore Market Activity

Mumbai, 20/4 (H.S.): The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday announced a partial rollback of restrictions imposed earlier this month on certain rupee derivative trades — signalling a shift towards normalising market activity after emergency measures to stabilise the currency. The central bank had introduced a series of curbs on April 1 to contain heightened volatility in the rupee, which had slipped to record lows past the 95 mark in late March. These measures included barring banks from offering non-deliverable forwards (NDFs) to clients and restricting the rebooking of cancelled forward contracts, aimed at curbing arbitrage trades that were adding pressure on the currency. In its latest move, the RBI has withdrawn both these restrictions entirely. It has also eased rules related to foreign

exchange derivative contracts involving related parties, allowing the cancellation and rollover of existing contracts and permitting transactions with non-resident entities on a back-to-back basis. The relaxation marks a calibrated rollback of crisis-era controls, even as the central bank continues to keep a close watch on speculative activity. The cap on banks' net open rupee positions in the onshore market at \$100 million remains unchanged. The earlier set of restrictions had targeted arbitrage-driven volatility by limiting banks' positions. However, the measures proved less effective than expected, as banks reportedly shifted positions to corporates and related entities, diluting the intended impact. "On a review, it has now been decided to withdraw the instructions issued

vide A.P. (D I R Series) Circular No. 03 dated April 01," the central bank said. "Further, it has been decided that authorised dealers shall not undertake any foreign exchange derivative contract involving INR with their related parties except for the following: cancellation and rollover of existing contracts and transactions undertaken with non-related non-resident users on a back-to-back basis in terms of the Master Direction - Risk Management and Inter-Bank Dealings dated July 05, 2016, as amended from time to time," it



added. A second round of curbs introduced in April helped the rupee recover nearly 2 per cent, after which it has traded in a relatively stable range of 92.50 to 93.50 in recent sessions. Market participants see the latest rollback as an attempt by the central bank to strike a balance between restoring normal hedging activity and preventing excessive speculative trades that could destabilise the currency. T

Gold and Silver Dull Slightly as Bullion Market Opens Lower

New Delhi, 20/4 (H.S.): The bullion market showed a mild weakening on Monday, with gold prices slipping slightly while silver remained comparatively strong. Across most Indian bullion markets, 24-carat gold was trading between Rs 1,55,770 and Rs 1,56,650 per 10 grams, while 22-carat gold was priced in the range of Rs 1,42,790 to Rs 1,43,590 per 10 grams. In Delhi, 24-carat gold was trading at Rs 1,55,920 per 10 grams, while 22-carat gold stood at Rs 1,42,940 per 10 grams. In Mumbai, the rates were slightly lower, with 24-carat gold at Rs 1,55,770 per 10 grams and 22-carat gold at Rs 1,42,790 per 10 grams. Ahmedabad reported 24-carat gold at Rs 1,55,820 per 10 grams and 22-carat gold at Rs 1,42,840 per 10 grams. Chennai remained at the higher end of the price band, where 24-carat gold was trading at Rs 1,56,650 per 10 grams and 22-carat gold at Rs 1,43,590 per 10



grams. Kolkata quoted 24-carat gold at Rs 1,55,770 per 10 grams and 22-carat gold at Rs 1,42,790 per 10 grams. In Bhopal, 24-carat gold stood at Rs 1,55,820 per 10 grams, while 22-carat gold was priced at Rs 1,42,840 per 10 grams. Lucknow recorded 24-carat gold at Rs 1,55,920 per 10 grams and 22-carat gold at Rs 1,42,940 per 10 grams. Patna also quoted 24-carat gold at Rs 1,55,820 per 10 grams and 22-carat gold at Rs 1,42,840 per 10 grams, while Jaipur reported the

same rates as Delhi, at Rs 1,55,920 and Rs 1,42,940 respectively. Among southern markets, gold prices also remained under pressure. In Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Bhubaneswar, 24-carat gold was trading at Rs 1,55,770 per 10 grams, while 22-carat gold stood at Rs 1,42,790 per 10 grams. Silver, meanwhile, was trading at Rs 2,74,900 per kilogram in the Delhi bullion market, reflecting a firmer trend in the white metal.

Hormuz Tensions Lift Crude Prices Sharply; Brent Climbs to \$96.27 a Barrel

New Delhi, 20/4 (H.S.): Crude oil prices surged in early trading on Monday as rising tensions in the Middle East and fears of disruption in the Strait of Hormuz unsettled global energy markets. Brent crude jumped 6.5 percent to \$96.27 a barrel, while WTI crude advanced 7.5 percent to \$90 a barrel. The spike came amid growing concerns that supply flows could be interrupted in the international market if tensions around the strategic waterway intensify further. Traders reacted sharply to the risk of supply disruption, sending both major benchmarks higher in volatile trade. At one point during the session, WTI crude was up \$5.20, or 6.20 percent, at \$89.05 a barrel. Brent crude was also trading higher by \$4.81, or 5.32 percent, at \$95.19 a barrel, indicating



sustained bullish momentum in the global oil market. The latest move reflects how quickly geopolitical stress in West Asia is feeding into commodity markets.

Crude prices have been swinging sharply in recent sessions as investors assess the possibility of tighter supplies and further instability in the region.

Global Cues Stay Positive as Asian Markets Trade Mixed



New Delhi, 20/4 (H.S.): Global market sentiment remained broadly positive on Monday, supported by a firm close in U.S. equities in the previous session, although trading in Asia turned mixed in early deals. The U.S. market had ended on a strong note in the last session as hopes of easing tensions in West Asia lifted investor confidence. The S&P 500 rose 84.78 points, or 1.20 percent, to close at 7,126.06, while the Nasdaq gained 365.78 points, or

1.52 percent, to finish at 24,468.48. However, Dow Jones futures were trading lower by 377.39 points, or 0.76 percent, at 49,070.04. European markets also maintained a bullish tone in the previous session. The FTSE index advanced 0.73 percent to close at 10,667.63, while the CAC jumped 162.43 points, or 1.93 percent, to 8,425.13. The DAX climbed 547.77 points, or 2.22 percent, to end at 24,702.24. Asian markets, meanwhile, showed a

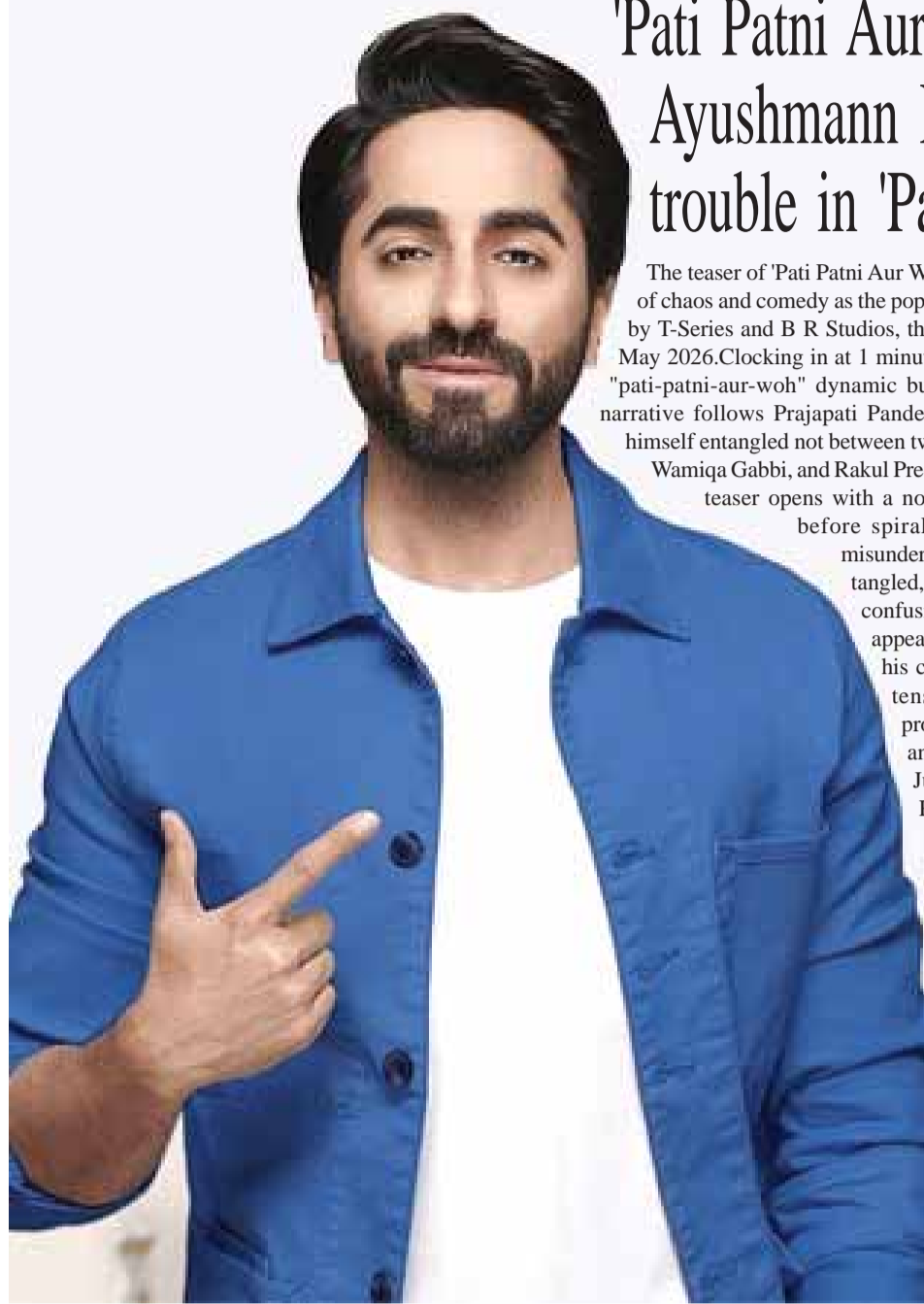
mixed trend in early trade. Of the nine major Asian indices, six were in positive territory, while three were trading lower. GIFT Nifty slipped 0.10 percent to 24,394.50, the SET Composite index fell 0.18 percent to 1,479.76, and the Jakarta Composite index was down 0.02 percent to 7,632.66. On the gainers' side, the Straits Times Index rose 0.16 percent to 5,005.97, the Shanghai Composite gained 0.67 percent to 4,078.39, and the Taiwan Weighted Index surged 521.93 points, or 1.42 percent, to 37,326.27. The Kospi climbed 1.12 percent to 6,261.19, while the Nikkei advanced 645.10 points, or 1.10 percent, to 59,121, and the Hang Seng rose 272.67 points, or 1.04 percent, to 26,433. The overall picture suggests that global markets are drawing support from improved risk appetite, even as Asian investors remain cautious and selective in early trade.

Rupee Rises By 10 Paise As Crude Rallies; Precious Metals Fall Nearly 2 Pc

Mumbai: The Indian rupee gained 10 paise on Monday, opening at 92.83 against the US dollar, buoyed by a significant decline in crude oil prices, optimism around the easing geopolitical tensions, and supportive measures from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The dollar index — which measures the greenback against a basket of six major currencies — rose to 98.27, up 0.37 per cent from the previous close. According to the currency market experts, a

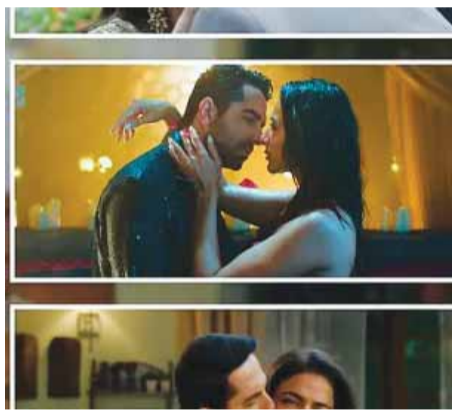
sustained move above Rs 93 could extend the upside toward the Rs 93.5-Rs 93.7 range, while Rs 92.3 acts as immediate support and Rs 92 as a stronger base. "The near-term structure leans toward appreciation of the rupee with complicating geopolitical tensions," analysts said. Meanwhile, global crude oil prices surged sharply on Monday, moving closer to the \$100-per-barrel mark as tensions in West Asia intensified once

again. Brent crude futures — the international benchmark — climbed as much as 7.18 per cent during intraday trade to touch a high of \$96.87 per barrel. Similarly, the US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude also posted strong gains, rising 8.76 per cent to \$91.20 per barrel. Crude oil on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) mirrored the global trend, advancing 6.72 per cent to Rs 8,289 per barrel.



'Pati Patni Aur Woh Do' teaser out: Ayushmann Khurrana faces triple trouble in 'Pativerse' expansion

The teaser of 'Pati Patni Aur Woh Do' has been unveiled, promising a fresh dose of chaos and comedy as the popular "pativerse" expands with a new twist. Backed by T-Series and B R Studios, the film is scheduled for a theatrical release on 15 May 2026. Clocking in at 1 minute and 22 seconds, the teaser revisits the familiar "pati-patni-aur-woh" dynamic but raises the stakes significantly. This time, the narrative follows Prajapati Pandey, played by Ayushmann Khurrana, who finds himself entangled not between two, but three women, portrayed by Sara Ali Khan, Wamiqa Gabbi, and Rakul Preet Singh. Set against the backdrop of Prayagraj, the teaser opens with a nostalgic nod to the earlier "pati-patni" narrative before spiralling into a full-blown comedy of errors. As misunderstandings pile up, the situation grows increasingly tangled, amplifying the film's central theme of romantic confusion. Adding to the mayhem is Vijay Raaz, who appears as a cop interrogating Prajapati Pandey about his complicated relationships, intensifying the comic tension. Directed by Mudassar Aziz, the film is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Renu Ravi Chopra, and Krishan Kumar, with creative production by Juno Chopra. Presented by Gulshan Kumar and B R Chopra, the project marks a continuation of the franchise's comedic exploration of relationships, now reimagined with a more complex love dynamic.



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

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



SPORTS

Varun Chakravarthy Says KKR's Win Over Rajasthan Royals Was a Much-Needed and Emotional One

Kolkata, 20/4 (H.S.): After Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) secured a crucial win in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, spinner Varun Chakravarthy spoke candidly about the team's performance, the pressure surrounding the side, and the emotional weight of the victory. Chakravarthy said that every match in cricket is different and that pitch conditions play a decisive role. Speaking at the post-match press conference, he noted, "I took three wickets today, but that does not happen in every match. At times, the pitch does not assist the spinners, and runs are bound to be conceded. That is the nature of the game, and we have to accept it." Reflecting on KKR's inconsistent batting and the team's recent struggles, he admitted that repeated losses and external pressure had affected the players. "We could not win a few matches, which increased the pressure. But in this game, we came out as a better team and managed to win. There are still many areas



where we need to improve," he said. He also praised the coaching staff for keeping the squad united during difficult times. "It is not easy to manage a team in tough circumstances. The coaching staff kept us together and did not allow outside criticism to affect the team. We will make a gradual

comeback," he said. Describing the victory as deeply emotional, Chakravarthy added that there were tears in the dressing room after the match. "This win means a lot to us," he said. On his own bowling, Chakravarthy said he has not made major changes to his pace or length, but is trying

to unsettle batters by varying his lines. He also revealed that he had suffered a finger fracture before the tournament, which caused difficulties in fielding. Looking ahead, he expressed hope that slower pitches in the second half of the tournament would favour spinners.

Connelly Praises Priyansh Arya, Says They Learn "Small Things" from Each Other

New Delhi, 20/4 (H.S.): Punjab Kings' young all-rounder Cooper Connelly has emerged as one of the standout performers in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, impressing with his consistency and composed batting. In the recent match against Lucknow Super Giants (LSG), he played a superb knock of 87 off 46 balls, although it was his teammate Priyansh Arya's explosive 93 off 37 deliveries that drew more attention. Together, the two

batters stitched a remarkable 182-run partnership in just 80 balls, one of the most influential stands of the season so far. After the match, Connelly said that he and Arya are continuously learning from each other and working to improve their games. "Every player has his own style. We discuss what works best for whom, and we learn small things from each other. Our goal is to keep improving and take the team forward," Connelly said. Connelly has scored 223 runs so far this season, putting him

ahead of Punjab's other key batters, including Priyansh Arya, Prabhsimran Singh and Shreyas Iyer, who have each made around 200 runs. He credited his success to playing according to his strengths and avoiding unnecessary risks. "Every player must identify his strengths and stick to them. The opposition looks for your weaknesses, but it is important to understand them and work on them," he said. Connelly also acknowledged the role of head coach Ricky Ponting in shaping

his progress. He said Ponting's guidance has helped him refine his game, while also praising captain Shreyas Iyer for his leadership. "Ponting and Shreyas are taking the team in the right direction. Shreyas is a brilliant leader who creates a relaxed atmosphere and motivates every player to do better," Connelly said. Punjab Kings' current run suggests that the side is moving in the right direction, with strong coordination and growing chemistry among the players.

Atlee, Priya Atlee Blessed With A Baby Girl!

Chennai: Ace director Atlee and his wife Priya Atlee on Monday announced that they had now been blessed with a baby girl. The couple already have a son called Meer. Taking to his social media timelines to share the happy news, Atlee said, "Feeling blessed" and shared a poster that contained a drawing of their son Meer, which read, "Yay! I've got a baby sister!" The poster also said, "We, Priya and Atlee are blessed with a baby girl. April 20th, 2026." On the work front, Atlee is now working on his next film 'Raaka', featuring Allu Arjun and Deepika Padukone in the lead. On Allu Arjun's 44th birthday recently, the makers had revealed the first look of the actor in the film. The first look featured an intense close-up of a bald Allu Arjun's rugged face. His face is partially hidden by what appears to be a wolf's claw. The entire picture adds a primal, warrior-like aesthetic. Sun Pictures, which is producing the film, had, while formally announcing this project last year had made it clear that the project would have world class experts working on it. The production house, while making the announcement shared a video



clip that had a number of world-class technicians who are to work on the film, sharing their thoughts about the script. Well known VFX supervisor James Madigan, who is known for having worked in films like 'Iron Man 2' and 'Transformers: Rise of the Beasts', was seen saying, "I just got done reading the script and I got to say, my head is still spinning." The clip also had Allu Arjun talking to Mike Elizalde, the president of Spectral Motion and asking him what he thought of the script. Mike Elizalde replied, "The script is seriously unlike

anything I've ever read. It is the best of the best of what I would ever want to create." Academy award winner and Fractured FX artistic director and CEO Justin Raleigh had said, "Reading through it (the script), very excited about all the creature potential. All the different character potential." William Write Anderson, who is the co-owner of Lola VFX, said, "I cannot wait to be a part of this. I can't wait to see what his vision does. The story is unbelievable." The makers are claiming the film to be a film that will have universal appeal.

'Bhooth Bangla' Hits Rs 98 Crore Worldwide in Four Days

Akshay Kumar's horror comedy Bhooth Bangla nearly touched the Rs 100 crore global mark in its opening weekend and continued with modest weekday earnings. The film collected Rs 12.25 crore on Day 1, Rs 19 crore on Day 2, and Rs 23 crore on Day 3. Paid previews added Rs 3.75 crore. By the end of Day 3, overseas earnings reached Rs 28 crore, pushing worldwide collections to Rs 97.87 crore. On Day 4, the movie earned Rs 1.59 crore, taking India's net total to Rs 59.59 crore and gross domestic earnings to Rs 71.25 crore. Running on 5,491 screens across India, Bhooth Bangla has drawn strong audience reactions. The film ended the theatrical run of Dhurandhar 2 and established itself



as a major release of April. Directed by Priyadarshan, the movie reunites him with Akshay Kumar after a long gap. The ensemble cast includes Paresh Rawal, Tabu, Rajpal Yadav, Rajesh Sharma, Jisshu Sengupta, Mithila Palkar, and Wamiqa Gabbi. Released on April 17, 2026, with paid

previews on April 16, the film blends horror and comedy, appealing to a wide audience. Industry trackers expect the film to maintain steady collections through the week, though the pace may slow compared to its strong weekend surge.