

# Dumani Mail

Published simultaneously from Bhubaneswar (Odisha), Keonjhar (Odisha) and New Delhi.



## Ghaziabad blaze: Fire engulfs market near Gaur Chowk, 10 fire tenders deployed

Ghaziabad : A massive fire broke out in a market near Gaur Chowk in the Crossings Republik police station area of Ghaziabad.

Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Rahul Kumar said, "A fire broke out in the Crossing Republik market at around 11:12 am today, engulfing several shops and triggering a cylinder blast. Upon receiving the information, five fire tenders were dispatched from Kotwali Ghantaghar, while additional units were called in from Noida, Vaishali, and Sahibabad. In total, around

10 fire tenders reached the spot to carry out firefighting operations."

Kumar further said, "A fire also broke out on the second floor of a nearby residential society, prompting authorities to form two separate teams. One team focused on dousing the fire in the market, while the other brought the blaze in the society under control."

Given the presence of a petrol pump and other establishments near the market, the situation was treated as serious, and the CFO of Noida was also



called to the spot, he added.

The CFO further stated, "The fire was brought under control within approximately one and a half hours. The cause of the blaze is currently

under investigation. Shops dealing in cold drinks, chips, vegetables, and a gym were among those affected."

Officials said the fire in the residential society was

not linked to the market blaze and may have a different cause, which is also being investigated. No injuries have been reported so far.

In a separate incident, a fire broke out near a roundabout in Noida Extension. As the blaze intensified, it spread to the nearby Ajnara Society, reaching a flat on the 18th floor. Fire brigade personnel are working to douse the flames in both the residential building and the adjacent market area.

In another incident, a major fire broke out at a car

repair shop located near Eidgah Tiraha in the Civil Lines police station area of Etawah on Monday, prompting a swift response from police and fire services, officials said.

The incident took place at a mechanic shop situated right in front of the Eidgah, where several old and condemned vehicles, along with vehicles under repair, were parked. However, no injuries were reported. Fire department vehicles were immediately rushed to the spot after the information was received.

## Delhi: May-June-like heatwave strikes in late April



New Delhi: The weather across the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR) has taken a sharp and unexpected turn, bringing with it intense heatwave conditions more typical of May and June, even as April draws to a close.

After experiencing relatively mild and pleasant weather in March, reminiscent of February's lingering chill, residents are now grappling with soaring temperatures.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), a continuous heatwave alert has been issued from April 21 to April 24.

On April 21, the maximum temperature in Delhi was recorded at 41 degrees Celsius, while the minimum stood at 23 degrees. The situation is expected to worsen over the next few days, with temperatures likely to rise further.

The maximum temperature may touch 43 degrees Celsius on April 22 and 23, and similar conditions are expected to persist on April 24, with the

minimum temperature hovering around 24 degrees.

The IMD has also warned that heatwave conditions are likely to prevail not just during the afternoon but well into the evening hours, highlighting the intensity of the current weather pattern.

However, a slight change is expected towards the end of the week. On April 25 and 26, the maximum temperature may drop marginally to around 41 degrees Celsius, while the minimum could rise to 25 degrees.

Skies are likely to remain partly cloudy during this period, although no specific weather warnings have been issued. Despite this, any relief from the heat is expected to be minimal.

Extreme heat has created a challenging situation for residents, effectively subjecting them to a burden of weather-related stress.

Health experts have advised people to avoid stepping out during peak afternoon hours and stay well-hydrated.

## ECI issues strict directive ahead of upcoming state assembly elections



New Delhi: The Election Commission of India has issued a strict directive ahead of the upcoming state assembly elections, barring civic police, village police, and green police from any election-related duties.

According to the Chief Electoral Officer, this measure has been taken to ensure free and transparent voting. The guidelines state that, three days before polling, all civic, village, and green police personnel must be moved to reserve police

lines. While stationed there, they will not be assigned any election responsibilities.

On polling day, however, they will be allowed to cast their votes in plain clothes. Wearing uniforms at polling stations has been strictly prohibited.

Police commissioners and district superintendents across the state have been instructed to enforce these rules strictly. The Election Commission has warned that any violation will be treated as a serious matter.

## Delhi High Court Advocate, 26, Jumps To Death From 15th Floor Of Hotel

New Delhi: A 26-year-old Delhi High Court advocate died after allegedly jumping from the 15th floor of a hotel in New Delhi's Connaught Place area, police said on Monday. The police said they were informed about the incident at The Royal Plaza hotel around 9.15 pm on Sunday. The deceased was identified as Rajesh Singh, a practising advocate at the Delhi High Court who had checked into the hotel the previous evening. "A police team rushed to the hotel and found that the victim, identified as Rajesh Singh, a resident of Mahavir Enclave, had allegedly jumped from the 15th floor of the building," a police statement said. "The family members of the deceased

have been informed about the incident. As per their statement, no foul play is suspected in the matter," it said. A police officer privy to the investigation said that a purported suicide note was also found, in which the advocate did not blame anyone. The police said he was staying alone in the room. Teams from the crime department and the forensic science laboratory (FSL) were called to inspect the scene. Relevant exhibits were lifted and seized, and CCTV footage from the hotel premises was examined, the police said.

A police source said that it is suspected that the victim was depressed over some issues. Further investigation into the matter is underway.

## Delhi: Vice President CP Radhakrishnan meets Ladakh LG VK Saxena. New Delhi: Vice President CP Radhakrishnan on Monday held a courtesy meeting with Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, at Uprashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

"Lt. Governor of Ladakh, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, called on Vice President Shri CP Radhakrishnan at Uprashtrapati Bhavan today," the Vice President posted on X.

It was their first meeting after VK Saxena was appointed as the LG of Ladakh after serving as the Delhi LG.

Earlier today, Vice President Radhakrishnan extended greetings to all civil servants on the occasion of Civil Services Day.

He wrote on X, "On the occasion of Civil Services

Day, I extend my warm greetings to all civil servants and convey my sincere appreciation for your dedication and exemplary service to the nation. As the enduring pillar of India's administrative framework, your efforts in strengthening governance and delivering public services are of immense significance."

"The theme for this year, 'Viksit Bharat: Citizen-Centric Governance and Development at the Last Mile', aligns with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 and underscores the Government's commitment

to transparent, accountable, and citizen-centric governance, with a strong emphasis on last-mile delivery and inclusive development. Today, I also look forward to delivering the keynote address at the Civil Services Day celebrations at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Let us all celebrate the day and continue to work collectively towards building an inclusive and developed India," the X post read.

The Vice President recently concluded his visit to Sri Lanka, exchange of key

MoUs and extension of the OIC cards to include the fifth and sixth generation of Indian origin Tamils.

VP Radhakrishnan and the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, Harini Amarasuriya, discussed the deep civilisational bonds between India and Sri Lanka and the vibrant people-to-people connections that keep these bonds alive.

He also interacted with leaders of the Indian Origin Tamil and Sri Lankan Tamil political parties, besides meeting the Leader of Opposition, Sajith Premadasa, in Colombo on April 19.

## Delhi Police arrest two operatives linked to Pak-based proxy

New Delhi: Delhi Police have arrested two operatives linked to Pakistan-based ISI proxy Shahzad Bhatti.

According to a statement by the police, the two accused, identified as Rajveer and Vivek Vanjara, were involved in a criminal conspiracy to execute target killings and firing incidents in the Delhi-NCR region.

Special Cell had received intelligence inputs that Pakistan-based gangster Shahzad Bhatti and other ISI proxies, in collusion with certain India-based accomplices, were hatching a criminal conspiracy to execute grenade attacks and target killings in the Delhi-NCR region. Accordingly, an FIR was filed on March 31, under Section 61(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).

One of the accused, Vivek Banjara, was traced to Dabra, in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior. He was arrested on April 16 and remanded into Police Custody for five days. Interrogation of Vivek Banjara led to the arrest of the main

Investigation revealed that Rajveer was recruited on social media by one 'Rana Bhai', an associate of Shahzad Bhatti. Later, Rajveer introduced Vivek Banjara to 'Rana Bhai' and Shahzad Bhatti. In March 2026, Shahzad Bhatti directed Rajveer to send someone to Ahmedabad to collect weapons. Rajveer sent Vivek to Ahmedabad; however, the delivery could not materialise. Bhatti has arranged Rs. 5000 for the stay of Vivek in Ahmedabad, the police statement said.

accused, Rajveer, on April 18 in the Sarai Kale Khan area. He was preparing to fire upon a prominent hotel in the Delhi-NCR area.

Delhi Police also seized one pistol and six live rounds, and two mobile phones containing incriminating videos and voice notes. Investigation revealed that

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On April 9, as directed by Shahzad Bhatti, Rajveer and Vivek Banjara went to Amritsar and received one Pistol, 15-20 live rounds and Rs 20,000 from a location. This weapon was delivered to Rajveer to fire upon one Club in Zirakpur, SAS Nagar. This club has received extortion threats from Shahzad Bhatti. On April 11, Rajveer could not open fire at the club due to a mechanical issue with the pistol. Meanwhile, Vivek made a video of the incident to send it to Shahzad Bhatti.

## Delhi News: CM Rekha Gupta inspects Azadpur Mandi and nearby areas

New Delhi : Chief Minister Smt. Rekha Gupta conducted an on-ground inspection of Azadpur Mandi, Gupta Market, and adjoining areas to review ongoing civic conditions and development activities. During the visit, she closely assessed the status of infrastructure and public utility services in the region.

The Chief Minister reviewed the progress of development works being undertaken by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and the Public Works Department (PWD). She sought detailed updates from concerned officials and expressed dissatisfaction over delays and lack of responsiveness in certain areas, reprimanding officials for non-action.

Clear directions were issued to ensure that public movement and citizen convenience remain the highest priority during the execution of all ongoing works.

The Chief Minister instructed that every project must be completed with full transparency, within the stipulated timeline, and without any

compromise on quality. She emphasized that essential public facilities should be delivered on schedule to avoid inconvenience to citizens and traders in busy market areas.

During her inspection, the Chief Minister also reviewed surrounding areas and directed officials to strengthen cleanliness systems, waste clearance mechanisms, and overall civic management. She stressed the need for sustained efforts to maintain hygiene and improve urban infrastructure in densely populated market zones.

The Delhi Government reiterated its commitment to building stronger infrastructure and citizen-centric facilities across the city. Areas that remained neglected for years are now witnessing renewed development momentum, with the administration working in 24x7 mission mode to complete projects on time and dedicate them to the people of Delhi.

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One of the accused, Vivek Banjara, was traced to Dabra, in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior. He was arrested on April 16 and remanded into

Police Custody for five days. Interrogation of Vivek Banjara led to the arrest of the main accused, Rajveer, on April 18 in the Sarai Kale Khan area. He was preparing to fire upon a prominent hotel in the Delhi-NCR area.

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## One person gets 20 years in prison in a gang rape case, 3 others are still absconding

Keonjhar : Keonjhar Fast Track Court Judge Bijay Kumar Mishra today sentenced a person to 20 years in prison and fined him Rs 10,000 in a gang-rape of a 16 year old minor girl. For nonpayment of the fine, the court ordered an additional 6 years in prison. The convicted person is Pradeep Naik (25) and the other three involved in the incident are still absconding, and a non-bailable arrest warrant has been issued against them.

According to Special Public Prosecutor Patitapaban Nath, on February 13, 2021 the Child Line of Banspal block received an information that a 16 year old girl, who was 7 months pregnant, was living in the house of a goat herder in Nayakot police station area. On the same day the Child Line rescued the victim and placed her in the Sakhi One Stop Center, District Headquarter Hospital, keonjhar. During the counseling, the center's director came to know that she was 7 years pregnant. The

said victim was found to have been a victim of gang rape by multiple people.

In this regard, the center's director, Aishwarya Sanghamitra Das, gave a written complaint to the Nayakot police station on 13 July 2021. The police registered a case based on the complaint and conducted an investigation. During the investigation, evidence was found against Manu Pradhan, Pradeep Naik, Asadhu Pradhan and Ramesh Naik in this incident and a case was registered under POCSO Section 6.

The police arrested Pradeep and tried him in court. The other accused, Manu Pradhan, Asadhu Pradhan, Ramesh Naik, are absconding. However, today the court passed the above sentence based on the statements of 20 witnesses and the police investigation report while hearing the case. The court also ordered the District Legal Services Authority to pay Rs 10 lakh as compensation to the victim.

## Mass Wedding Ceremony under Chief Minister's Kanya Vivaha Scheme Held 67 couples got married; families expressed gratitude to the government

Puri : A district-level mass wedding ceremony under the Chief Minister's Kanya Vivaha Scheme was held today at Bagala Dharmashala premises in Puri. A total of 67 couples were united in marriage during the event.

On this occasion, Puri Lok Sabha MP Dr. Sambit Patra joined as the chief guest via video message. He described the scheme as a historic initiative. He stated that for many poor and underprivileged families, arranging a daughter's marriage is a difficult task, and due to financial constraints, many girls remain unmarried. However, this ambitious government scheme has become a blessing for them. He also extended his best wishes to all newlywed couples.

Among others present were Satyabadi MLA Om Prakash Mishra, Pipili MLA Ashrit Pattanayak, and Puri MLA Sunil



Kumar Mohanty. They emphasized that the scheme not only benefits economically weaker, and helpless families, but also helps them fulfill their dream of building a new family and home. They described the concept of organizing marriages

through mass ceremonies as beautiful and heart-touching.

District Collector Divya Jyoti Parida presided over the event and welcomed everyone. The guests later blessed the newly married couples by offering flowers and sacred rice

(akshata).

The scheme aims to promote dignified and legally recognized marriages, reduce the financial burden of marriage for economically weaker families, discourage child marriage and dowry practices, support

widow remarriage, and contribute to social reform.

Under this scheme, each couple receives ₹60,000. Out of this, ₹45,000 is directly transferred to the couple's bank account, while ₹15,000 is used by the organizing agency to cover wedding arrangements, including the venue and feast.

Additional District Magistrate (Administration) Sarat Chandra Behera, Additional District Magistrate (Protocol) Nilamadhab Bhoi, and others were present at the event. At the end, District Social Welfare Officer Tanuprabha Beura delivered the vote of thanks.

The event was organized by the Patita Uddhar Samiti, which managed all arrangements efficiently. Officials and staff of the district administration also extended full cooperation.

## U.S. Delegation Meets Paradip Port Authority in Bhubaneswar



Bhubaneswar/Paradip - Consul General Laura Williams of the U.S. Consulate General Hyderabad, along with a 3-member delegation, met P. L.Haranadh, Chairman, Paradip Port Authority, in Bhubaneswar today.

The meeting focused on key development projects including Bahuda Satellite Port, the proposed Green Hydrogen Jetty at Paradip Port, the Shipbuilding Cluster along the Mahanadi riverbank in Kendrapara district, and opportunities for cargo export and import growth. The interaction reflects growing global interest in Odisha's maritime sector and Paradip Port's commitment to sustainable development, trade expansion, and future-ready infrastructure.

## Mass Marriage under Mukhya mantri Kanya Bibaha Yojana

Jagatsinghpur, To-day a special Mass Marriage Programme arranged by District administration under Mukhya mantri Kanya Bibaha Yojana in front of Collectorate, Jagatsinghpur. It was a joint venture of district administration and Women & Child development department. 28 pairs get married in this special programme. In this programme local MLA, Amarendra Das, Collector J. Sonal, ADM Jyoti Shankar Ray and Sambit Routray, President, Zilla Parisad Manoj Bhoi, Municipality Chairman Archana Singh joined in special Kanyadan programme.

Four nos of NGO namely Nabajyoti Club, Byasa Foundation, Smriti Foundation and Basumata



club made all shorts of arrangement and selection of Bride & Broom. Total 28 Couple get marriage To-day with all traditional rituals. From Govt. Side 45 thousand rupees paid to the account of every couple and 15 thousands to NGO for arrangement of programme.

Socially and economically backward youths were selected for special marriage programme. It was highly appreciated by intellectuals and general people. In future such type of Mass Marriage programme will organised at Block level as informed by district administration. ( Photo

## Request by Shree Jagannath Temple Administration to the Shrimad Jagadguru for Guidance Regarding the Reinstallation of "Dashavatara Idols" on the Singhadwara Ghumuta

Puri : The Chief Administrator has sought guidance from the revered Shrimad Jagadguru, the permanent President of the Mukti Mandap, regarding the proposal to reinstall the Dashavatara idols that were previously removed from the Singhadwara Ghumuta of the temple.

In 2012, during the repair and conservation work carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India on the Singhadwara Ghumuta and adjacent ancient structures, the Dashavatara idols that had been installed there were removed. In their place, a new stone beam was installed. Previously, the Dashavatara idols were made of stucco (lime plaster).

It is noteworthy that in the earlier Dashavatara arrangement,

the idol of Lord Jagannath was placed in the position of the ninth avatar, which had led to differences of opinion at that time.

Later, in the temple management committee meeting held on 17.01.2026, discussions were held regarding the reinstallation of the Dashavatara idols. The committee decided to seek guidance from the Shrimad Jagadguru on this matter.

As per tradition, religious matters of the Shree Jagannath Temple are guided by the Mukti Mandap Pandit Sabha, whose permanent president is the Shrimad Jagadguru. Therefore, the Chief Administrator of the temple, Dr. Arvinda Padhee, has respectfully requested guidance from the Jagadguru on this issue.

## A Day for Child



Delang21/4, A Day for Child program was organized at Mission Shakti Hall, Delang Block. This awareness campaign was organized by CDPO Smt. Japiani Mitra.

Dr. Jayashree Nanda, OLM BPM Babita Jena, Supervisor Sanghamita Behera, Somya Hota, Shantilata Nand, Sarojini Behera, Sailabala Mallik were prominently present. The resource persons focused on the ongoing child labor,

child marriage, sexual violence against children. In the context of their speeches, they emphasized on the priority care of parents, education and provision of nutritious food for the well-being of children and shared their valuable suggestions on child protection Act. Among others, Anganwadi workers, supervisors, members of self-help groups were present. Finally, CDPO Smt. Mitra proposed the vote of thanks.

## "Today is a day to take a pledge for farmer empowerment: Deputy Chief Minister"

Puri : Akshaya Tiritiya is a major and sacred day for the Odia community. From today, the construction of the chariots of Lord Jagannath begins, along with the start of the Chandan Yatra. Farmers also begin the new agricultural year by ceremonially sowing seeds (Muthi Anukula) from today.

On this occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida said that today is a day to take a pledge for the empowerment of farmers. In the morning, the district-level Akshaya Tiritiya and Muthi Anukula program was held at Odansh Farm under Nimapada block in Puri district. During the event, the Deputy Chief Minister

inaugurated a seed distribution vehicle.

Addressing the gathering as the chief guest, she stated that it is believed that anything initiated on this day never diminishes. She emphasized that the government is committed to the development and empowerment of agriculture and farmers. A budget of ₹15,000 crore has been allocated for agriculture. The state has created a record by procuring 150 lakh metric tons of paddy. The agricultural growth rate of the state stands at 5.3%, which is higher than the national average.

She further said that through the export of various crops, fruits, and vegetables, the state is

### District-level Akshaya Tiritiya celebrated

becoming self-reliant in agriculture, horticulture, and allied sectors. The state government provides ₹2,000 each during Akshaya Tiritiya (start of farming) and Nuakhai (harvest festival) to support farmers with seeds and fertilizers. Additionally, the central government provides funds in three installments, making a total of five installments amounting to ₹10,000 for farmers. Women under Mission Shakti

are actively engaged in producing various products, including millet-based drinks, and are becoming "Lakshpati Didis" (women earning in lakhs). Notably, Odisha has the highest number of such women in the country.

The Deputy Chief Minister highlighted that with new knowledge, technical skills, and the use of high-yield seeds, farmers can reach greater heights of development and progress.

Among others present were Additional District Magistrate (Revenue) Dr. Sarat Chandra Mohapatra, Deputy Director of Horticulture Manjula Tripathy, Nimapada Block ATMA Chairman Dillip Kumar Parida,

MP's representative Purna Chandra Ojha, and others, who spoke about the significance of Akshaya Tiritiya.

At the beginning, Chief District Agriculture Officer Chandra Mohan Chand welcomed everyone, while Satyabadi Agriculture District Officer Pares Chandra Panda conducted the proceedings and delivered the vote of thanks.

Through an online platform, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi distributed ₹2,000 each to 189,203 farmers of the district, totaling ₹37.84 crore. Among them, 187,897 were small and marginal farmers, while 1,306 were landless farmers.

## Defying CM's Orders: Illegal Barrage Still Intact on Nagavali River

Rayagada: Despite clear directions from the Chief Minister, the illegal barrage constructed by JK Paper Mill on the Nagavali River has not been removed. This raises serious concerns about corporate disregard for government authority, which is not a positive sign for the state.

Keeping farmers' interests in mind, the Chief Minister had directed the removal of the constructed barrage from the Nagavali River. He had also clarified in the State Assembly that no official permission was granted for the construction of this structure. However, even after a year, the barrage remains in place. The massive structure

continues to obstruct the natural flow of the river and has altered its course. Large volumes of water are being diverted and extracted by the factory using high-capacity motors installed along the riverbank. As a result, people living in downstream areas face acute water shortages during summer.

This activity has reportedly been going on for years. The barrage has been constructed using large sand-filled bags placed across the river, significantly affecting its flow.

Raising public concern, Rayagada MLA Kadraka Appalaswamy brought the issue to the State Assembly. In a written reply dated March 13, Chief



Minister Mohan Charan Majhi acknowledged that JK Paper Mill had constructed a partial barrage

using sandbags during water scarcity and confirmed that no permission had been granted. He

also stated that instructions had been issued to remove it.

However, even after a year, no

action has been taken. The barrage submerges during the monsoon but is repaired and rebuilt every year after the rains recede, usually around November.

In a tragic incident linked to sand extraction for the barrage, two young girls from a nearby riverbank area drowned two years ago. Despite this, no serious action has been taken so far.

The MLA stated that he has repeatedly written to the district administration and the Water Resources Department, but no effective steps have been taken. When contacted, Water Resources Department official Subrata Narayan Kashyap admitted that the barrage is illegal and said it could be removed if adequate

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police force and a magistrate are provided. However, he also mentioned that no response was received from the previous district administration.

**Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi to Hold Public Grievance Hearing on April 27 in Bhubaneswar**

Bhubaneswar, 21 April (H.S.): Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will conduct a public grievance hearing in Bhubaneswar on April 27, offering citizens a direct platform to present their complaints and concerns before the state's



highest executive authority. The hearing is scheduled to take place from 7:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the former Government Primary School campus near Capital Nursery in Unit-2, Ashok Nagar. As per official sources, online registration for participation will commence on April 22 at 11:00 AM. Interested citizens can register through the Jan Sunani portal or the dedicated mobile application. Participants must adhere to their allotted time slots and are required to carry a printed acknowledgement of registration, a valid identity proof, and a written copy of their grievance to facilitate a smooth process. The programme is being coordinated by the General Administration and Public Grievance Department, which is overseeing all logistical arrangements for the public interaction.

# President Droupadi Murmu Inaugurates Key Infrastructure Projects in Rourkela

Bhubaneswar, 21 April (H.S.): The President of India, Droupadi Murmu, on Tuesday inaugurated multiple development projects in Rourkela, Odisha, including a Planetarium and Science Centre and the Nirmal Munda Parivesh Path. Later in the day, she also inaugurated a Tribal Museum and an Integrated Command and Control Centre.

Addressing a public gathering, the President highlighted the unique natural beauty, rich folk traditions, and cultural heritage of Sundargarh. She noted that its dense forests, hills,

waterfalls, and rivers contribute to its distinctive charm, while its art and culture have significantly enriched Odisha's cultural landscape. She also described Sundargarh as a land known for its brave individuals and sporting talent.

The President observed that people from across India reside in Rourkela for employment and livelihood, making it a cosmopolitan hub. She said the city has played a pioneering role in promoting Odisha's art, literature, tribal traditions, and sports.

Emphasizing inclusive growth, the President said



that national development is achievable only when all sections of society progress together. She noted that both Central and State governments are implementing various welfare schemes for tribal communities, accelerating development in tribal-dominated districts like Sundargarh and focusing on their economic upliftment.

She urged citizens to actively participate in nation-building and encouraged them to support one another in moving forward. Stressing the importance of social responsibility, she called on

people to work towards uplifting the underprivileged.

The President expressed confidence that India is steadily progressing towards becoming a "Viksit Bharat" by 2047, marking 100 years of independence. She also noted that Odisha will complete 100 years of its formation in 2036. Achieving the vision of a developed Odisha and a developed India, she said, requires inclusive, all-round development and the collective efforts of farmers, workers, tribal communities, marginalized groups, intellectuals, youth, and citizens across both rural and urban areas.

## Odisha to Launch WhatsApp-Based Summer Learning Programme for Students up to Class VIII

Bhubaneswar, 21 April (H.S.): In a move to ensure continuity in education during the summer vacation, the Odisha School Education Programme Authority has announced the rollout of a Summer Learning Programme for students from Shishu Vatika to Class VIII.

The initiative aims to provide structured learning support through digital means, with content being delivered via WhatsApp. The programme will offer a combination of practice assignments and audiovisual materials, enabling



students to stay academically engaged while at home during the break.

Under the programme, class-wise and subject-specific assignment sheets will be shared directly with students through WhatsApp groups managed by parents. The content will be designed to reinforce learning through both written exercises and interactive audio-visual resources.

Officials across districts have been informed about the initiative, and necessary guidelines have already been communicated to ensure smooth implementation at the ground level. To operationalise the programme, OSEPA has directed all government schools to create grade-wise WhatsApp groups for students. These groups must be formed by April 25, 2026, following a standard naming convention that includes the class name and UDISE code.

## Heatwave: Educational Institutions in Bolangir to Remain Closed for Four More Days; Online Classes to Continue



Bhubaneswar, 21 April (H.S.): In view of the prevailing heatwave conditions, the district administration of Bolangir has extended the closure of schools, colleges, and Anganwadi centres for an additional four days, from April 22 to April 25.

Despite the suspension of physical classes, authorities have put measures in place to ensure that academic activities continue without disruption. Teachers and lecturers have been directed to conduct online classes during this period to keep pace with the academic schedule. They have also been instructed to report to their respective institutions and deliver virtual lessons from there.

For Anganwadi centres, the administration has introduced a temporary modification in the distribution of nutrition. Instead of serving cooked meals at the centres, Anganwadi workers will provide dry ration supplies to children at their homes.

The administration further clarified that examinations scheduled during this period will be conducted as per the existing timetable, with no changes.

## BonV Aero and Berhampur University Partner To Grow UAV Ecosystem in Odisha

April 20, 2026 : New Delhi: BonV Aero, India's leading aerial logistics platform manufacturer and the anchor organisation behind the Rangeilunda UAV Test Site, signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Berhampur University. The agreement lays the foundation for a structured, long-term collaboration spanning research, development, skilling, and innovation in unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) and allied deep-tech technologies.

The signing represents a significant milestone — not only for BonV Aero's inspiring journey, but for the broader UAV ecosystem taking shape in Odisha. As India's drone sector matures and assumes an increasingly central role in defence, logistics, precision agriculture, and critical infrastructure, the imperative for a well-anchored talent and research pipeline has never been more pronounced. This MoU is BonV Aero's direct response to that imperative.

The MoU was signed in the presence of the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of Berhampur University alongside senior university officials, including the Registrar, Deans, and Heads of Departments. BonV

Aero was represented at the signing by Rahul Kumar, Co-Founder and Head of Design, whose presence reflected the company's deep institutional commitment to this collaboration. Berhampur University brings considerable academic strength to this partnership with technical domains underpinning BonV Aero's product and R&D roadmap. Equally significant is the university's geographic proximity to the Rangeilunda airstrip — a co-location that enables seamless, real-time integration between academic research and live operational environments. This positions Berhampur University as a valuable partner of what BonV Aero is systematically building: India's first integrated UAV test and innovation ecosystem.

Speaking on the occasion, the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. Geetanjali Dash said, "Berhampur University has always strived to respond to the evolving needs of society and the nation. This MoU with BonV Aero is a significant step in that direction. The training opportunities that will emerge from this collaboration will be immensely beneficial for our Physics and Electronics students — giving them direct exposure to

cutting-edge UAV technology and real-world applications. And to have a world-class UAV Test Hub established in Berhampur is a matter of genuine pride for this institution and this city. I am confident that this will be a partnership that both organisations will immensely benefit from."

Under the terms of the MoU, both institutions will collaborate across three core pillars — joint R&D programs in UAV systems and low-altitude airspace technologies, structured student training and skilling pipelines, and applied research initiatives that translate academic insights into field-ready solutions.

"I have long believed that the most meaningful progress happens when industry, academia and government come together. India's potential in deep-tech is extraordinary, and the UAV sector is only beginning to reveal what it is capable of. Rangeilunda, for us, is more than a test site — it is a statement of intent. And when I look at what we can build together with Berhampur University, I see not just a partnership, but the early architecture of something truly generational," said Satyabrata Satpathy, CEO & Co-founder, BonV Aero.

## OMC achieves breakthrough in Platinum Group Mineral Extraction

April 20, 2026 : Bhubaneswar, 20 April 2026: Odisha Mining Corporation Ltd. (OMC) today successfully conducted the trial run of the Platinum Group Minerals (PGM) Pilot Plant at CSIR-IMMT, Bhubaneswar, for extraction of Platinum Group Elements

(PGE) from ore of Bangur Chromite Mines, Keonjhar. The successful trial marks a significant advancement in India's pursuit of self-reliance in strategic minerals. PGEs—such as platinum, palladium, and rhodium—are vital for clean energy technologies,

electronics, and automotive sectors. The pilot plant has been developed under a ₹10 crore, two-phase R&D programme of Odisha Mining Corporation, in collaboration with CSIR-IMMT and Mintek South Africa. It aims to establish India's first integrated PGE beneficiation

and smelting facility. This 1-tonne-per-hour pilot plant will now validate consistency and scalability of PGE concentrate under real-time operating conditions.

Insights from joint field studies conducted by OMC, Mintek, and CSIR-IMMT teams at Bangur Mines in

October 2025 have been instrumental in shaping the pilot plant's design and operations. This milestone reinforces OMC's commitment to innovation and positions Odisha as a leader in advanced mineral processing, while strengthening India's critical mineral security.

# NASA Invites Media to Rollout Event for Artemis III Moon Rocket Stage

April 20, 2026 : NASA will roll the largest section of the agency's SLS (Space Launch System) rocket, which will launch the second crewed Artemis mission, out of the agency's Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans on Monday, April 20. What's called the top four-fifths of the SLS core stage — the section containing the liquid hydrogen tank, liquid oxygen tank, intertank, and forward skirt — will be loaded on the agency's Pegasus barge for delivery to NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Media will have the opportunity to capture images and video, hear remarks from agency and industry leadership, and speak with NASA subject matter experts and Artemis

industry partners as crews move the rocket stage to the Pegasus barge.

This event is open to U.S. media, who must apply by Wednesday, April 15. Interested media must contact Jonathan Deal at jonathan.e.deal@nasa.gov and Craig Betzebe at craig.c.betzebe@nasa.gov. Registered media will receive confirmation and additional information about the event by email. The agency's media credentialing policy is available online.

Once at NASA Kennedy, teams will complete the stage outfitting and vertical integration before handing the hardware over to the agency's Exploration Ground Systems Program that will handle stacking and launch preparations. The Artemis III

SLS engine section and boat-tail, which protects the engines during launch, moved from the Space Systems Processing Facility at NASA Kennedy to the Vehicle Assembly Building in July 2025. The four core stage RS-25 engines are scheduled to ship from NASA's Stennis Space Center in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi no later than July 2026 for integration into the engine section.

The rocket stage with its four RS-25 engines will provide more than 2 million pounds of thrust to send astronauts aboard the Orion spacecraft for the Artemis III mission. Artemis III currently is scheduled for launch in 2027, following the successful Artemis II test flight mission around the Moon that concluded April

10. Building, assembling, and transporting the core stage is a collaborative process for NASA, Boeing, the core stage lead contractor, and lead RS-25 engines contractor L3Harris Technologies. The core stage is the backbone of the SLS rocket. All five major structures for the rocket stage are manufactured at NASA Michoud. By optimizing space at NASA Kennedy and NASA Michoud for production, integration, and outfitting, NASA and industry can streamline production for a standardized SLS configuration for NASA's Artemis program.

The Artemis III mission will launch to Earth's orbit American astronauts in the

Orion spacecraft on top of the SLS rocket to test rendezvous and docking capabilities between Orion and commercial spacecraft needed to land astronauts on the Moon in 2028. The SLS rocket is the only rocket capable of sending Orion, astronauts, and supplies to the Moon in a single launch.

Artemis III is the second crewed mission under the agency's Artemis program, where NASA is sending astronauts on increasingly difficult missions to explore more of the Moon for scientific discovery, economic benefits, establish an enduring human presence on the lunar surface, and build on our foundation for the first crewed missions to Mars.

**Deptt. of Water Resources, Government of Odisha**  
**"e" Procurement Notice No. ACEDC-CTC- 04 / 2026-27**  
 \*\*\*\*\*

- Name of the Works: Total **01(One)** nos. Drainage work.
- Estimated cost: **Rs.603.30 lakh**
- Period of Completion: **18 (Eighteen)** months
- Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal: From **11.30 hours of Dt. 27.04 .2026 to 18.00 hours of Dt. 11.05.2026**
- Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal: **18.00 hours of Dt.11.05.2026**
- Name and address of the Officer inviting Bid: Additional Chief Engineer, Drainage Circle, Gandarpur, Cuttack- 753003. e-mail id :- sedrainagecirclecte@gmail.com

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal of Odisha Government <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. All information, notices, addendum, corrigendum, cancellation notice etc. if required, will be published in this portal.

Additional Chief Engineer  
Drainage Circle, Cuttack

**32001/97/2627**

**Govt of Odisha**  
**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, NAYAGARH**  
 At/Po-Nabaghanpur, Dist-Nayagarh, Ph-06753-252049 E-mail-nayagarhrw2006@yahoo.in

**1<sup>st</sup> corrigendum to Bid Identification No. Tender Online- Division, Nayagarh-01/2026-27 dtd.07.04.2026**

In partial modification to this office Tender Call Notice No.01/2026-27 invited vide this office Memo No.2200 dtd.07.04.2026 for 24 nos. of Building works under NHM, the online availability of tender as mentioned below have been re-scheduled as follows.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding was		Now Availability of Tender on-line for bidding is rescheduled		Date & Time of opening of Tender Bid was on	Now Date & Time of opening of Tender Bid is reschedule d to
		From	To	From	To		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Nayagarh	No-Tender - Online - Divn. NAYAGARH - 01/2026-27	17.04.2026 at 10.00 A.M.	30.04.2026 upto 5.30 P.M.	28.04.2026 at 10.00 A.M.	11.05.2026 upto 5.30 P.M.	02.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.	12.05.2026 at 11.00 A.M.

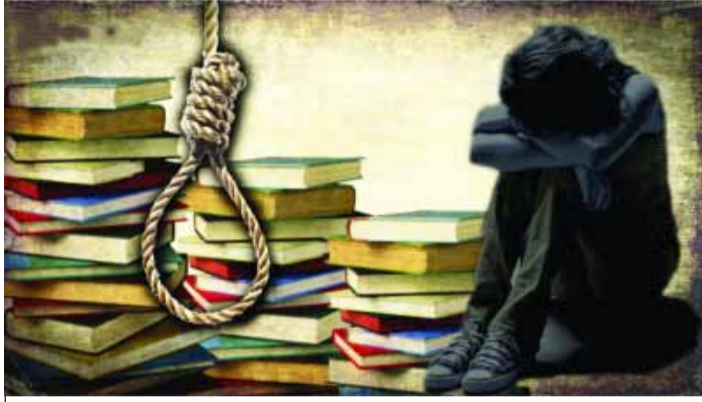
All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

**25001-35-2627**

Executive Engineer  
Rural Works Divn,Nayagarh

## Student Suicides

THE deaths of four students by suicide in two months have rocked the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Kurukshetra, sending shock waves across the country's academic circles. The institute has set up a five-member inquiry panel, while Rajya Sabha MP John Brittas has sought the Union Education Minister's urgent intervention. The NIT has also formed separate committees to look into issues faced by students.



However, the response reveals a troubling lack of preparedness. Ordering hostellers to go home may defuse tensions for the time being, but it won't be helpful in addressing the underlying concerns.

The unrest on the campus has exposed a deep disconnect between the students and the NIT authorities. Allegations of inadequate psychological support and an ineffective mechanism to redress grievances point to systemic gaps that demand independent scrutiny. India's premier institutions have long been associated with intense pressure both inside and outside the classroom. Around three years ago, the Ministry of Education told Parliament that 98 students died by suicide in higher education institutions between 2018 and 2023; IITs accounted for the highest number of deaths, followed by NITs and Central universities.

These disturbing incidents underline the dire need for a nationwide framework to ensure the well-being of students. It must go beyond counselling to include early-warning systems, peer support networks and faculty sensitisation. It is vital to restore confidence among students and their families. Ultimately, the question is not whether institutions can respond to tragedies, but whether they can prevent them. The NIT probe must be marked by transparency; its findings should lead to a paradigm shift from reactive crisis management to proactive care. The loss of young lives that could have been saved shames the nation. India cannot afford to let talent be sacrificed on the altar of stress.

## IT Misuse

POPE Leo XIV's recent warning that artificial intelligence can fuel "polarisation, conflict, fear and violence" deserves global attention. At a time when AI is celebrated for speed, convenience and innovation, the Pope has reminded the world that technology without ethics can become dangerous. AI is not inherently evil, but neither is it neutral. Its impact depends on how humans choose to design, deploy and regulate it. Recent events validate his concerns. Across elections worldwide, AI-generated deepfakes and cloned voices have been used to spread falsehoods, confuse voters and weaken trust in democratic institutions. Fraudsters have also used voice-cloning tools to impersonate family members or officials, tricking victims into handing over money. What once required skill and resources can now be done cheaply and at scale.

The anxiety is no longer confined to misinformation. Warnings surrounding Anthropic's advanced AI model Mythos show that the next frontier may involve threats to financial systems and cybersecurity. If powerful AI can identify vulnerabilities, automate attacks or enable fraud on banking networks, the consequences could extend far beyond the digital world. Financial panic, disrupted payments and shaken public confidence can destabilise societies as surely as political propaganda can. There is also an environmental price. AI's rapid expansion depends on vast data centres and minerals such as cobalt and lithium, often extracted at heavy ecological and human cost. Yet rejecting AI is neither possible nor wise. Used responsibly, it can revolutionise medicine, education, disaster response and productivity. The real challenge is governance. Governments must create robust laws, companies must embed transparency and safety into their systems and citizens must build digital literacy. International cooperation is equally essential. The defining question of this age is not whether machines can think, but whether humans can act responsibly.

*There is also an environmental price. AI's rapid expansion depends on vast data centres and minerals such as cobalt and lithium, often extracted at heavy ecological and human cost.*

# The New Economics of Companionship

Raghunath Mahapatra

In the mid-2000s, Japan's rural Wakayama Electric Railway faced closure, with Kishi Station's staff laid off in 2006 due to low ridership. In January 2007, its president appointed Tama, a local calico, as stationmaster—more as accommodation than strategy. What began as a desperate gesture soon turned into an economic triumph. Within a year, Tama's presence attracted tourists, lifting ridership by an estimated 10–20% and generating roughly 1.1 billion yen in modelled activity. The appointment reconfigured the station's value, turning a failing rural stop into a thriving, globally recognised destination. The idea soon acquired a name: "Nekonomics" (from neko, Japanese for cat), coined by Katsuhiko Miyamoto in 2015 in the context of Abenomics. What began with Tama has since scaled into a measurable system, estimated at around 3 trillion yen annually for Japan's economy across tourism, retail, media, and pet care.

Of late, urban companionship is shifting from human engagement to machine-mediated, screen-filtered interaction, creating a "quiet deficit" in personal connection that fuels loneliness; a problem which is increasingly being linked to significant economic costs globally, with some estimates running into hundreds of billions of dollars annually. To counter this, pet-led economies have emerged as a way out where "Inunomics" (dog-led) dominates via traditional, infrastructure-heavy, space-intensive, and time-intensive ownership. Conversely, "Nekonomics" (cat-led) fits constrained, high-density urban

living due to its low-maintenance nature. While Inunomics leads in scale, Nekonomics is capturing marginal growth in time-scarce, urban contexts, defining the efficiency frontier of companionship economics. Urban cost patterns reinforce this divergence. In India, maintaining a dog in cities can range from ₹3,000 to over ₹10,000 a month depending on size and care intensity; a range reflected in recent urban cost estimates reported by Money control and industry analyses by Research and Markets. Further, Industry estimates, including those by Research and Markets also suggest

structural driver: the loneliness economy. In China, nearly 90 million "Empty Nest Youth" have transformed the country into a major cat market. India's urban clusters are witnessing similar patterns among migrant and single-person households. The appeal of the cat is not exuberance but balance: it offers presence without pressure and emotional stability without high time cost.

Recent data also signals the sectoral depth of Nekonomics. Global pet care spending is projected to exceed \$350 billion by 2030, with feline-linked consumption driving a

*Recent data also signals the sectoral depth of Nekonomics. Global pet care spending is projected to exceed \$350 billion by 2030, with feline-linked consumption driving a rising share of premium growth in urban Asia. Cat food and care products are expanding at nearly 5–6% annually, outpacing several FMCG categories. Within this ecosystem, Nekonomics is reinforcing its shift from informal companionship to structured consumption.*

feline segments are outpacing dog-related spending. Even their role as natural rodent controllers reinforces their low-cost utility. The city culture sharpens this transition. As living spaces compress and workdays stretch into screen-bound routines, companionship is increasingly shaped by spatial and temporal constraints. Cats align with these conditions, adapting easily to vertical living. While ensuring longer, more stable tenancies, in some major Indian cities, pet-friendly housing fetches some rental premiums also.

Beneath these changes in spatial constraints, time allocation, and the consumption of companionship, in the rapidly evolving urbanisation, lays a deeper

rising share of premium growth in urban Asia. Cat food and care products are expanding at nearly 5–6% annually, outpacing several FMCG categories. Within this ecosystem, Nekonomics is reinforcing its shift from informal companionship to structured consumption.

What appears at the household level is now scaling into an industry. According to estimates of "Market Xcel Data Matrix" an India-based, integrated market research company India's pet care industry, "currently valued at about \$3.5 billion, is projected to expand rapidly, driven increasingly by the fast-paced rise of feline 'paw-renting' in urban cities. The entry of players such as the Godrej Group signals early-stage

formalisation of urban cat ownership. Yet the expansion has limits. Cats remain consumption assets rather than functional systems, unlike dogs that extend into security and service roles. Their predatory behaviour raises ecological concerns in dense cities, and while they mitigate loneliness, they cannot substitute deeper social infrastructure. Inunomics and Nekonomics thus form a dual structure of companionship economics. Inunomics is scale-heavy and infrastructure-dependent, while Nekonomics is efficiency-led and density-compatible. While the former continues to dominate aggregate ownership, the latter is shaping the marginal frontier of urban consumption.

The lesson from Kishi Station is not simply about a cat that saved a railway line. It is about recognising value where none was formally assigned. As urban life grows more solitary and machine-mediated, companionship is being redefined and the cat sits at the centre of that shift. This is no longer a niche pet trend but a measurable reallocation of emotional expenditure within constrained urban economies, where attention, time, and space have become priced resources.

For India, the question is whether policy will acknowledge this shift, through taxation, housing norms, and urban design, or continue to treat it as a private indulgence. In the arithmetic of modern economies, even the quietest forms of companionship are now entering the arithmetic of the economy.

The writer is Former Senior Project Associate, HSS Department, IIT Kanpur

## 4 suicides at National Institute of Technology Kurukshetra

- Dr. Satyavan Saurabh

Prestigious Indian technical education institutions, once known as "dream factories," are now becoming factories of mental stress for many young people. The suicides of four students within just two months at the National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra, Haryana, have shocked the entire nation. This is not just the end of four lives, but the failure of a system that is destroying talent instead of nurturing it. These incidents, which occurred between February and April 2026, are not isolated incidents but indicate a dangerous chain—one incident follows another, as despair spreads from one person to the next. Diksha Dubey's suicide note—"I could not achieve anything"—is not just the anguish of one student, but a reflection of a mindset in which achieving something has become the ultimate goal of life.

In India, exams like JEE Mains and JEE Advanced have long been considered the key to success. Millions of students work tirelessly for years to crack these exams and gain admission to institutions like the National Institute of Technology, Kurukshetra. But ironically, admission to an institution, considered a life's greatest achievement, becomes a battleground for many students. Once there, students must not only excel academically but also face the pressure of proving themselves on every front. The 75% attendance rule, constant assignments and projects, the stress of semester exams, and the uncertainty of placements—all of these add up to an invisible but heavy burden on students' minds.

This pressure isn't just academic, but also psychological and social. When a student who has been at the

top of their school or coaching class suddenly finds themselves among hundreds of talented students, their self-image is affected. Where they once considered themselves "the best," they now feel "average" or, at times, "weak." This change is mentally very difficult for many students. They are unable to accept their failures and gradually become victims of self-doubt and inferiority complex.

The role of the family is also crucial in this entire crisis. In Indian society, education is linked to social prestige. Parents have high expectations for their children, and this expectation often inadvertently turns into pressure. National Crime Records Bureau data shows that family pressure is a major factor in suicides among youth. This pressure is especially acute for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Their parents spend a significant portion of their limited income on their education and expect success in return. Therefore, if a student fails to perform as expected for any reason, they feel they have let down not only themselves but their entire family.

Social media has further complicated this situation. Today's youth are constantly surrounded by glimpses of others' "success" and "happy lives." The glitz and glamour displayed on Instagram, YouTube, and other platforms creates a world far removed from reality. However, students begin to compare themselves to others, believing it to be real. When they feel they fall short of this "ideal life," dissatisfaction and frustration grow within them.

French sociologist Emile Durkheim viewed suicide not just as an individual problem, but as a social

problem. His theory of "anomic suicide" suggests that when societal norms and expectations become unclear or unbalanced, individuals begin to feel isolated. This same situation is evident in many technical institutions today. Students are placed in an environment where high expectations are placed on them, but they lack adequate emotional or social support. As a result, they begin to break down internally.

This problem is even more acute for students from rural backgrounds. They are suddenly thrust into an environment where the language, lifestyle, and social behavior are all different. They find it difficult to connect with those around them. This isolation gradually turns into loneliness, and loneliness can become a major threat to mental health. Many students are unable to share their problems with anyone because they feel that doing so is a sign of weakness.

For female students, this struggle occurs on many levels. They have to balance academics with safety, social expectations, and self-reliance. Often, they are made to feel like they have to "prove" themselves, not only as students but also as women. This dual pressure further impacts their mental health.

Many shortcomings also emerge at the institutional level. Mental health services are inadequate in most technical institutions. One or two counselors are not enough to handle the problems of hundreds of students. Students are often hesitant to seek counseling because they fear it will affect their image. Furthermore, mentorship systems are often ineffective. In some cases, instead of

being helpful, they cause additional stress for students.

The steps taken by the administration following the four suicides—such as forming an inquiry committee, improving counseling services, and declaring holidays—are important, but not sufficient. This problem will not be solved by immediate measures alone. It requires long-term and comprehensive change. The education system must recognize that students are not just marks and ranks, but human beings with emotional and social needs.

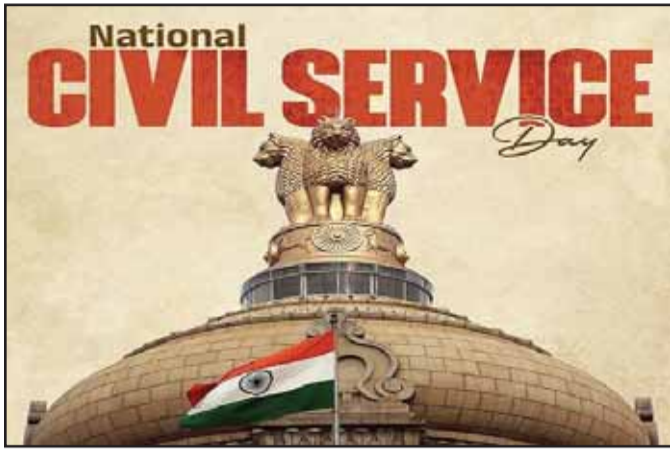
The solution must prioritize mental health. Every institution should have adequate numbers of trained counselors, and students should be encouraged to use their services without fear or embarrassment. Furthermore, flexibility in academic regulations is essential. Not every student is the same, and it is unfair to expect everyone to perform equally.

Families also need to shift their mindset. They must understand that success isn't just about a high salary or a prestigious job. Prioritizing children's mental health and well-being is just as important. Parents should communicate openly with their children and reassure them that they are there for them no matter what.

A positive and supportive environment needs to be created at the campus level as well. Students should be encouraged to help each other and share their problems. Initiatives such as peer support groups, cultural activities, and sports can help improve students' mental health.

## National Leaders Laud Civil Servants as Backbone of Responsive Governance on Civil Services Day

New Delhi, 21/4 (H.S.): President Droupadi Murmu, Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, and other prominent figures extended heartfelt greetings to civil servants on Civil Services Day, commending their pivotal role in fostering good governance, transparency, and citizen-centric development. In an X message, President Murmu hailed civil servants' indispensable contribution to strengthening responsive governance and robust public institutions. From crafting innovative, future-oriented policies to their ground-level execution, their work profoundly impacts millions. She expressed hope they will continue serving with integrity and empathy to build an inclusive, progressive India. Vice President Radhakrishnan praised their dedication as administration's enduring pillars, ensuring effective



public service delivery. Aligning with this year's theme—"Viksit Bharat: Citizen-Centric Governance and Development at the Last Mile"—he stressed reaching the most remote beneficiaries in pursuit of 2047's developed India vision. Speaker Om Birla called civil servants the nation's construction spine, faithfully implementing

policies while bridging government and people—from distant villages to urban centers—across development, law & order, and public welfare. Home Minister Amit Shah and Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari echoed these sentiments, highlighting policy execution integrity as foundational to nation-building and progress.

## PM Modi Pays Homage to Adi Shankaracharya, Hails Advaita Vedanta as Global Beacon

New Delhi, 21/4 (H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid heartfelt tribute to the great philosopher and spiritual luminary Adi Shankaracharya on the auspicious occasion of his Jayanti. In a poignant X post, PM Modi described Shankaracharya as one of India's greatest spiritual luminaries whose teachings, thoughts, and Advaita Vedanta philosophy continue guiding countless souls worldwide. He emphasized Shankaracharya's profound stress on harmony, discipline, and the fundamental oneness of all existence. The Prime Minister noted how Shankaracharya's tireless efforts revitalized spiritual discourse and established



enduring spiritual centers across the nation, providing timeless inspiration. PM Modi expressed his aspiration that Shankaracharya's wisdom will

forever illuminate humanity's path, strengthening commitment to truth, compassion, and collective well-being.

## India Holds Fuel Prices Steady As US, UAE, Australia, Pak See Sharp Surge

New Delhi, 21/4 (H.S.): Even after escalation in West Asia conflict and rise in Brent crude oil prices due to the closure of Strait of Hormuz, the fuel prices remain unchanged in India, while many countries have witnessed a jump of up to 85 per cent. Data by Kotak highlighted a sharp divergence between India and both advanced and emerging countries, where consumers have faced increases in fuel prices so far this year, reports NDTV Profit. On the diesel front, prices have witnessed a sharp rise in several countries in recent months amid geopolitical tensions. Country-wise, the UAE saw an increase of around 85 per cent, followed by Australia and the United States, which recorded rises of more than 65 per cent and 62 per cent, respectively.

Meanwhile, in Canada, Pakistan, France, Sri Lanka and Britain, prices rose between 35 per cent and 53 per cent. Moreover, countries where prices increased more modestly include China and Brazil, while Russia stands out as an exception, with diesel prices rising only slightly — by over 1 per cent. In contrast, diesel prices in India have remained unchanged at Rs 87.6 per litre compared to January levels, indicating zero increase despite the US-Iran tensions. A similar trend has been observed in petrol prices. Neighbouring Pakistan has seen the highest, a 44 per cent jump in petrol prices, followed by the United States (42 per cent) and the UAE (36 per cent).

## Civil Services Day: V-P Radhakrishnan Asks Officials To Focus On Public Service

New Delhi, 21/4 (H.S.): Addressing civil servants, Vice-President (V-P) C.P. Radhakrishnan on Tuesday called upon officers to maintain the highest standards of commitment and integrity, imbuing the spirit of public service. Delivered the keynote address at an event organised on 18th Civil Services Day at the Vigyan Bhawan here, the Vice-President referred to Sewa Teerth — the new Prime Minister's Office complex — and Kartavya Bhawan — the new Central Secretariat complex — as embodiments of dedication, duty, and commitment to the nation. "Emphasising civil servants' key role in the journey towards 'Viksit Bharat @ 2047', Vice-President Radhakrishnan called upon officials to maintain the highest standards of commitment and integrity," a statement said. He stressed the



importance of last-mile delivery and responsiveness to ground realities to ensure that the benefits of governance reach every citizen, particularly the most vulnerable. Vice-President Radhakrishnan called upon civil servants to ensure that their service leaves a meaningful and lasting impact by transforming lives and contributing to societal progress. The event planned

by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions' Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances at Vigyan Bhawan was themed "Viksit Bharat: Citizen-Centric Governance and Development at the Last Mile", an official statement said. The inaugural session included an address by the Minister of State in the Ministry of Personnel, Public

## PM Modi Proclaims National Service as Bedrock of Viksit Bharat Vision

New Delhi, 21/4 (H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing civil servants on Civil Services Day, declared selfless national service the unshakable foundation of a developed India. He emphasized reaching development to the last person in line as essential for building a strong, prosperous, and empathetic nation. In a poignant X post, PM Modi shared a timeless subhashita to remind civil servants of their core duties and values: "Shila? parahitasakti? anutseka? k?ama dh?ti?? Alo bhasceti vidyaya? paripakoicala? phalam?" This profound verse signifies that true wisdom's



ripened fruit manifests in noble character, selfless service to others, humility, forgiveness, patience, and freedom from

greed. PM Modi stated these virtues define the ideal civil servant, forming the bedrock for national progress. He urged all civil servants to reaffirm their commitment to public service supremacy, ensuring every citizen receives development benefits. The Prime Minister praised their contributions from grassroots implementation to policymaking, profoundly impacting countless lives and India's advancement. Civil Services Day, he noted, renews dedication to good governance and nation-building through excellence, compassion, and innovation.

## Delhi's National Science Centre Hosts Earth Day Quiz Spectacle for Students

New Delhi, 21/4 (H.S.): The National Science Centre will celebrate World Earth Day with a special Open House Quiz for students on Wednesday, themed "Our Power, Our Planet"—emphasizing collective responsibility for environmental protection and preservation. Antarctic Exploration Takes Center Stage. At 10 AM, ISRO's Professor Dr. Amitava Sen Gupta will deliver a captivating lecture titled "Exploring Antarctica: Journey to the White Continent," illuminating India's polar research endeavors. The 11 AM Open House Quiz will



challenge young minds on environmental science and Earth's biodiversity, igniting scientific curiosity while testing knowledge through healthy competition. The Ministry of Culture's initiative inspires the next generation to champion planetary stewardship.

## Kejriwal's Recusal Ploy Exposes Pressure Politics: BJP's Bansuri Swaraj



New Delhi, 21/4 (H.S.): The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) welcomed the Delhi High Court's rejection of Arvind Kejriwal's recusal plea against Justice Swarna Kanta Sharma, accusing the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor of orchestrating

pressure tactics on the judiciary. At BJP headquarters Tuesday, MP Bansuri Swaraj declared Justice Sharma's Monday order established "a new benchmark for judicial independence." She branded AAP a "drama company" with Kejriwal

as director, asserting: "India's justice system operates under Constitution and law, not political convenience." Swaraj detailed Kejriwal's failed strategy: Post March 9 order, he petitioned the Chief Justice March 11 for bench transfer (denied); then approached Justice Sharma directly March 13 demanding self-recusal. This triggered what she called AAP's "vile media and social media campaign" targeting the judge personally—including her children. Justice Sharma dismissed claims of prejudice based on her children's central government panel appearances or event attendance, ruling such grounds insufficient for recusal. Swaraj emphasized Kejriwal fears accountability in the excise policy scam, with the court affirming no litigant can question judicial impartiality through conjecture.

## India-Canada Trade Talks Gain Importance Amid New World Order

New Delhi, 21/4 (H.S.): While trade negotiations between India and Canada have in the past been derailed due to political tensions between the two countries, the relaunch of talks during the visit of Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney in March this year has provided a second chance to build a durable bilateral economic relationship amid the changed geopolitical landscape, according to India's former envoy to the North American country. "Canada faces its own structural dilemma. Its overwhelming economic dependence on the United States has become a strategic constraint, particularly in an era of geopolitical uncertainty. Diversification is no longer optional. In that context, India represents not just another market, but a long-term strategic partner," former High Commissioner to Canada, Sanjay Kumar Verma, highlighted in an article in India Narrative. He was of the view that the shift in 2022 towards an Early Progress Trade

Agreement (EPTA) reflected a degree of realism that had been missing earlier, and can be used to gradually build a lasting comprehensive economic partnership agreement (CEPA). The CEPA should not be conceived as a single, all-encompassing outcome, but as a process that unfolds in stages. The first stage can consolidate what has already been negotiated under the EPTA framework. Subsequent stages can progressively incorporate more complex elements, including investment protection, digital trade, and regulatory cooperation. The most sensitive areas — those involving agriculture, intellectual property, or public procurement — can be addressed later, when the political and economic environment is more conducive, Verma wrote in the article. The article highlights that trade in goods between the two countries, though currently modest, can expand with better market access and simpler rules of origin.

Services trade, already a strong pillar of the relationship, can deepen significantly, particularly in areas such as information technology, education and professional services. Customs facilitation, often overlooked in public discourse, can play a critical role in reducing transaction costs and improving predictability. It further states that two countries already enjoy strong investment links as Canadian pension funds and institutional investors have committed significant capital to India's infrastructure and renewable energy sectors, while Indian companies have established a growing presence in Canada's services economy. This investment corridor provides a foundation that most trade negotiations lack. It also creates a constituency with a vested interest in stability. However, a more predictable taxation and repatriation framework will be essential to sustain and expand Canadian investment, balancing sovereign regulatory space with investor confidence.

## Sharad Pawar admitted to Breach Candy Hospital

Pune, 21/4 (HS): Nationalist Congress Party Founder President and former Union Minister Sharad Pawar has been admitted against to the Breach Candy Hospital on Tuesday, his daughter Supriya Sule has confirmed. Various tests are being conducted by the hospital after which Pawar's condition will be clarified, she added. Sharad Pawar was hospitalised last month in Pune with problems related to his respiratory system. He was seen moving on a wheel chair since last few days. Sharad Pawar will not be able to attend the election meeting for Sunetra Pawar on Tuesday, which will be the last meeting before the by-polls. Polling in Baramati and Rahuri constituencies are scheduled for April 23. The by-polls are being held following death of DCM Ajit Pawar, representing Baramati, in a plane crash on January 28. His wife Sunetra Pawar was made Deputy Chief Minister and is contesting by-polls from Baramati.

## Mallikarjun G Kelagade: One Year Pali Language Course at the Age of 75!

Bengaluru, 21/4 (HS): Mallikarjun G Kelagade, former Director of the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR), Government of Karnataka, has completed the one year Diploma Course in Pali language at the age of 75 years! He has scored 403 marks out of a total of 500 marks.

Ceasefire Extended by 48 Hours as Islamabad Talks' Fate Hinges on Iran's Stance

Tehran/Washington/Islamabad, 21/4(H.S.): The US-Iran ceasefire, originally set to expire today, has been extended for two additional days, President Donald Trump announced personally.



'very difficult.' He anticipates Tehran rebuilding sans nuclear arms post-deal. The US team, including VP JD Vance, Jared Kushner, and envoy Steve Witkoff, heads to Islamabad. Trump justified military blockade, vowing sustained

economic pressure until negotiations yield results. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told Pakistan's Ishaq Dar via call that Tehran weighs all options. Parliament Speaker Mohammad Ghalibaf accused Trump of converting talks into 'surrender tables.'

Nepal PMO Imposes Strict Vetting for All Ministerial Policy Announcements

Kathmandu, 21/4 (H.S.): Prime Minister Balendra Shah's office (PMO) has issued a binding directive to all ministries: no policy decisions or official statements may be publicly disclosed without prior PMO approval.



compulsory for any public disclosure. On March 31, Shah further mandated ministers and senior officials submit daily work reports, with under-secretaries designated as focal points for compliance.

US Envoy's Kathmandu Visit Begins with Key Meeting with Nepal's Ruling Party Leader

Kathmandu, 21/4 (H.S.): US Assistant Secretary of State Samir Paul Kapoor, arriving on a diplomatic mission, held his first meeting with Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) Chairman Ravi Lamichhane, leader of Nepal's ruling coalition.

Japan Issues Dire 8.0-Magnitude Quake Warning After Pacific Tremor Rocks Nation

Tokyo, 21/4 April (H.S.): The Japan Meteorological Agency has sounded an urgent alert for a potential earthquake of 8.0 magnitude or greater, issued just hours after a powerful 7.7-magnitude tremor struck Monday evening.



Takaichi urged: 'Residents in warned areas, move to high, safe ground without delay.' Her office scrambles to assess hidden injuries and structural harm. Japan, home to 125 million atop four colliding tectonic plates along the Pacific Ring of Fire's western edge, records ~1,500 quakes yearly—18% of global total.

Ghalibaf's Battlefield Ultimatum: Iran Signals 'New Cards' as Ceasefire Clock Ticks Down

Tehran, 21/4(H.S.): In a stark escalation of rhetoric, Iran's parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf has issued a veiled threat to the United States and Israel, vowing to unveil 'new cards' on the battlefield should the fragile two-week ceasefire collapse.



preparing to show new cards on the battlefield. His words arrive just days before the truce—brokered amid spiraling tensions in the Middle East—nears its expiration, injecting fresh uncertainty into an already volatile diplomatic landscape.

Israeli Strikes Shatter Ceasefire Calm in Southern Lebanon, Kill Woman and Two Children

Beirut, 21/4 (H.S.): Despite a 10-day ceasefire in Lebanon, reports have emerged of Israeli attacks on southern regions, reigniting tensions in the area. According to the National News Agency (NNA), several towns were targeted in the past few hours.

Trump Vows Superior Iran Accord as High-Stakes Talks Loom in Pakistan Amid Ceasefire Deadline

Washington, 21/4(H.S.): US President Donald Trump has sharply intensified his rhetoric against the Obama-era Iran nuclear deal, promising a forthcoming agreement that surpasses it in safeguarding global security.



describing it as reckless largesse that fueled Iranian aggression. Trump asserted that his administration's emerging pact would eliminate such risks, ensuring no nuclear proliferation threatens Israel, the Middle East,

talks with Iranian counterparts. These discussions follow a grueling 21-hour session earlier this month that yielded no breakthrough, heightening tensions as the ceasefire lapses on Wednesday.

strategy mirrors successful prior operations. Amid reports of Iranian resilience such as downing US aircraft, Trump maintains the US holds the upper hand, rejecting any pressure to settle prematurely.

BrahMos in focus as Philippines readies to simulate missile strike

Manila [Philippines], 21/4: The Indo-Russian BrahMos cruise missile will be used in a simulated maritime strike by the Philippines during the ongoing Balikatan 2026 exercises with the United States, even as China warned that such military activity could fuel division and trigger confrontation in the Asia-Pacific region.

7.5 magnitude earthquake in Japan, Tsunami warning issued

Tokyo [Japan], : A powerful earthquake with a magnitude of 7.5 struck northeastern and northern Japan on Monday, with a tsunami warning issued, the country's weather agency said.

to the Japan Meteorological Agency, state media Kyodo cited. 'Notable quake, preliminary info: M 7.4 - 100 km ENE of Miyako, Japan,' the USGS said.



reported that the quake struck at a depth of 10 km. The Japanese weather agency issued tsunami warnings for the Pacific coasts of Hokkaido,

Aomori, and Iwate prefectures, forecasting tsunami waves of up to 3 meters to arrive immediately. No abnormalities were reported at the Higashidori and Onagawa nuclear plants in Aomori and Miyagi prefectures or at the Fukushima Daiichi and Daini nuclear power plants in Fukushima Prefecture, according to their operators, as per the Kyodo news agency.

## Vedanta Aluminium Observes World Art Day in Jharsuguda, Celebrating Odisha's Cultural Heritage

Jharsuguda, 21/4(DMS): Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, marked World Art Day by celebrating the creativity of women and children in Siriapali village, Jharsuguda. Under its Vedkala community development initiative, the company engaged over 150 community members through a vibrant line-up of activities, including bamboo craft-making workshops, drawing and rangoli competitions, debates, and cultural dance performances. Under Project Vedkala, more than 50 local artisans in Jharsuguda are currently being trained in Bamboo, Saura, and Sabai Grass handicrafts. The initiative aims to strengthen traditional skills while creating steady income opportunities through wider market access. The event was attended by Rasmita Sunani, Master Bookkeeper, Siriapali Gram Panchayat and Pushpanjali Seth, Board Member, Subhalaxmi Cooperative, who joined the community members in honouring Odisha's rich heritage of art and craftsmanship. Speaking on the occasion, C Chandru, CEO, Vedanta Jharsuguda, said, "Preserving our rich cultural heritage goes hand-in-hand with community empowerment."



Project Vedkala reflects our commitment to nurturing traditional art forms while creating viable livelihood opportunities for our local artisans. By linking grassroots talent with wider markets, our goal is to help our communities build a self-reliant future. Rasmita Sunani, Master Book keeper, Siriapali Gram Panchayat, added, "Platforms such as these not only celebrate our traditional art but also provide women and children with the confidence to showcase their talents

on a larger stage. It is inspiring to see our local heritage being preserved and supported so actively, creating real opportunities for our artisans." Project Vedkala is designed to bridge traditional craftsmanship with modern market needs. By equipping artisans with knowledge of advanced design techniques and entrepreneurial skills, the initiative ensures that indigenous art forms remain economically viable. This approach also helps foster financial independence, particularly for

women, enabling them to become micro-entrepreneurs within their communities. Alongside Vedkala, Vedanta Aluminium also promotes other traditional crafts through initiatives like VedMurtika, which promotes eco-friendly terracotta and clay crafts. Together, these programmes reflect the company's ongoing commitment to nurturing local talent, preserving cultural heritage, and building resilient, self-sustaining communities across its operational vicinity.

## Tech giants Samsung and LG hike laptop prices twice in three months

Seoul (South Korea): Samsung Electronics and LG Electronics raised laptop prices twice within a three-month period as a severe shortage of memory chips continues to impact the consumer electronics market. This price adjustment pushed the cost of certain models up by nearly 50 per cent compared to the previous year, according to a report by The Korea Herald. The flagship Galaxy Book 6 Pro from Samsung, featuring 32GB RAM and a 1TB SSD, now carries a retail price of 4.19 million won (USD 2,847) in South Korea. This represents a significant jump from a comparable model sold for 2.81 million won (USD 1,914) last year.

## Gold Slips in Early Trade as Silver Holds Steady Across Indian Bullion Markets

New Delhi, 21/4(H.S.): Gold prices continued their downward trajectory for the second consecutive session during early trading in India's sarafa markets, while silver rates remained unchanged from Monday's close. In most domestic bullion hubs, 24-carat gold traded between ₹1,55,280 and ₹1,55,990 per 10 grams, with 22-carat gold ranging from ₹1,42,340 to ₹1,42,990 per 10 grams. Silver stayed firm at ₹2,74,900 per kilogram in Delhi, mirroring yesterday's levels. Delhi saw 24-carat gold at ₹1,55,430 and 22-carat at ₹1,42,490 per 10 grams. Mumbai recorded 24-carat at ₹1,55,280 and 22-carat at ₹1,42,340, while Ahmedabad quoted 24-carat at ₹1,55,330 and 22-carat at ₹1,42,390. Chennai



listed 24-carat at ₹1,55,990 and 22-carat at ₹1,42,990; Kolkata and Bengaluru both at ₹1,55,280 (24-carat) and ₹1,42,340 (22-carat). Bhopal, Lucknow, Patna, and Jaipur followed suit: Bhopal at ₹1,55,330 (24-carat)/₹1,42,390

(22-carat); Lucknow and Jaipur at ₹1,55,430/₹1,42,490; Patna at ₹1,55,330/₹1,42,390. Southern markets in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Bhubaneswar mirrored the national downtrend at ₹1,55,280 (24-carat)/₹1,42,340 (22-carat).

## Indian Bourses Surge in Early Trade as Sensex and Nifty Climb Briskly

New Delhi, 21/4 (H.S.): Domestic equities opened with modest gains before buyers propelled a sharp rally, lifting benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty amid robust buying momentum. By 10 AM, the BSE Sensex had advanced 0.63%, trading at 79,012.57—up 492.27 points from its 78,520.30 close the previous day. The NSE Nifty mirrored the upswing, rising 0.56% or 136.30 points to 24,501.15 after dipping briefly to 24,354.90 post a 9.70-point opening at 24,374.55. Nestle India, Axis Bank, Asian Paints, Adani Ports, and Tata Consumer Products led Sensex gainers, up 0.72-1.68%. Conversely, SBI Life Insurance, HDFC Life, Dr.



Reddy's Labs, Infosys, and Jio Financial slipped 0.50-3.19%. Active trading spanned 2,717 stocks, with 2,169 in green versus 548 in red. Of 30 Sensex components, 27 advanced; Nifty's 50 saw 42 gainers against 8

decliners. Monday's session had seen Sensex edge up 0.03% (26.27 points) to 78,520.30, Nifty 0.05% (11.30 points) to 24,364.85—setting a bullish tone sustained by steady inflows despite intermittent profit-taking.

## Global Cues Present Mixed Signals as Asian Markets Signal Buoyant Start



New Delhi, 21/4(H.S.): Global markets displayed divergent trends today, with American indices closing lower amid profit-taking, while Asian bourses embraced bullish momentum. US markets ended yesterday's session in negative territory due to profit-booking pressure. The

Dow Jones Industrial Average slipped 0.01% to 49,442.56, S&P 500 fell 0.24% to 7,109.14, and Nasdaq declined 0.26% to 24,404.39. However, Dow futures rebounded +0.12% to 49,500.20, hinting at potential recovery. European markets mirrored the caution: FTSE shed

0.55% to 10,609.08, CAC 40 dropped 1.13% (94.08 points) to 8,331.05, and DAX fell 1.16% (284.44 points) to 24,417.80. Asian markets bucked the trend with widespread buying. Seven of nine regional indices traded green, led by Korea's Kospi soaring 2.31% (143.81 points) to 6,362.90 and Taiwan Weighted jumping 1.84% (680.27 points) to 37,639.07. Japan's Nikkei advanced 1.28% (753.11 points) to 59,578, Hang Seng gained 0.36% (95.93 points) to 26,457, and SET Composite rose 0.31% to 1,486.37. Straits Times edged up 0.11% to 5,009.65, while GIFT Nifty climbed 0.45% (109 points) to 24,450.50—foreshadowing strength in Indian markets. Jakarta Composite (-0.77% at 7,535.71) and Shanghai Composite (-0.24% at 4,072.39) remained the regional laggards.

## OPPO F33 Series Debuts In India with Industry-First IP69K Rating And Massive 7000mAh Power

NEW DELHI, 21/4(H.S.) Smartphone users in India now have access to the new OPPO F33 Series, a lineup designed to survive extreme environments while delivering professional-grade photography. Launching today, the series includes the F33 Pro 5G and the standard F33 5G, boasting a rare IP69K rating for high-pressure water resistance and a robust 7000mAh battery.

This release targets a mobile-first generation that demands longevity and high-resolution social media tools in a single chassis. Selfie enthusiasts gain a significant advantage with the 50MP Ultra-Wide Front Camera, which utilizes a 100° Field of View. This hardware allows for 30% more frame coverage compared to older models, ensuring group shots capture every person without awkward cropping.

## India-Linked Tariff Refunds In US May Touch \$12 Billion

New Delhi, 21/4(H.S.): India-linked tariff refunds on exports to the United States are expected to be in the region of \$10 to \$12 billion after the US authorities opened a \$166 billion claims window for customs duties imposed by the Donald Trump administration that were later struck down by the courts, according to a report by Global Trade Research Initiative. The refund process opened on April 20, and claims can be filed only by US-based importers, which means Indian exporters have no direct legal route to seek repayments. Indian companies are now dependent on talks with American buyers if they want to secure any share of the refunds. Exporters may need to seek rebate-sharing deals, price changes, or improved terms in future contracts. The report said the headline figure points to a large opportunity, but warned that any actual gain for Indian exporters will depend on their negotiating strength and their



ability to reopen commercial terms with US partners. Textiles and apparel, engineering goods, and chemicals are likely to account for most of the India-linked refunds, as these sectors were among the worst hit when the tariffs were abruptly jacked up. The refund platform is being managed by US Customs and Border Protection through its Consolidated Administration and Processing of Entries system, known as CAPE. The first phase covers businesses with unliquidated entries, or import filings still under customs review, and entries that were finalised within the past 80 days. Businesses

with older finalised entries must wait for later phases before filing claims. US customs officials told a federal judge that businesses already eligible under the first phase are owed about \$127 billion in refunds. There appears to be a long process ahead as importers must submit claims through the CAPE portal with records linked to eligible entries, including customs filings, tariff payment history, and entry classifications. The agency said it is handling about 53 million entries filed by 330,000 importers. Even after approval, refunds may take 60 to 90 days to be paid.

## RBI's Digital Currencies Plan For BRICS Meet Holds Key To Quicker Global Payments

New Delhi, 21/4(H.S.): The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) proposal to the Union government to place the linking of Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) of BRICS countries on the agenda for the 2026 BRICS summit, to be chaired by India, could play a key role in facilitating international payments, according to an article. BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) has, with the recent addition of Iran, Ethiopia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, and Indonesia to the bloc, emerged as a major influencer in the Global South on the issue of financial governance, according to the article in Modern Diplomacy. The RBI's proposal gives due attention to interoperability of the Digital Rupee (e-₹) with its CBDCs. Instead of promoting the creation of a single shared supernatural currency, this approach aims to interconnect the existing national currencies, such as India's e-Rupee and Brazil's Drex. The objective is to facilitate faster, smoother cross-border payments for trade, tourism, and financial transactions using CBDCs issued by member nations without compromising on national monetary sovereignty. Instead of relying on traditional systems like



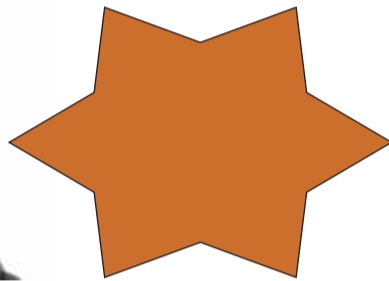
SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Financial Interbank Communication) or similar networks, a digital currency would enable direct settlement between national digital currencies. The primary reason the RBI is pursuing this proposal is the collective desire to reduce dependence on the US dollar. For decades, the dollar has been the world's primary reserve currency and the main element of international trade, the article states. However, the BRICS members are increasingly cautious about the use of sanctions and the SWIFT messaging system to cut

countries off from the global economy. By proposing a "Digital Currency", BRICS aims to create a system where a trader in India can pay a supplier in Brazil using their respective CBDCs, thereby eliminating the need for an intermediary currency, such as the dollar, that acts as a "middleman", and reducing transaction costs. Not only would it encourage monetary sovereignty, but it would also speed up the settlements. Local currency transactions also strengthen the domestic financial systems by increasing demand for national currencies in international

trade, the article observed. This idea followed the BRICS 2025 summit in Rio de Janeiro, which encouraged the development of an interconnected payment system to speed up and simplify trade. This could strategically bring India's rural producers into the global value system through digital finance. When exporters settle transactions in CBDCs without the costly dollar conversions, pricing becomes more competitive, the article pointed out. The RBI recognises, in its stated proposal, the need to create interoperable technology

## Disha Patani joins Emraan Hashmi in 'Awarapan 2', makers lock August release

Vishesh Films has officially announced 'Awarapan 2', the long-awaited sequel to its 2007 cult classic, with a theatrical release locked for August 14, 2026, coinciding with the Independence Day weekend. The film will see Emraan Hashmi reprise his role as Shivam. The promotional imagery features a close-up of a hand marked with a bird tattoo, echoing the original film's themes of freedom and redemption. Positioned as a major Independence Day release, 'Awarapan 2' also stars Disha Patani in a leading role opposite Hashmi, marking her first collaboration with Vishesh Films. Directed by Nitin Kakkar, the sequel aims to build on the emotional depth of the original while introducing a fresh cinematic approach. Producer Vishesh Bhatt underlined the scale and emotional core of the project, stating, "Awarapan is an emotion so large that it's meant for the big screen. It also presents exotic settings and large scale sequences but fundamentally it's built on our core principles of layered storytelling with powerful characters and rich music. Emraan felt the angst of Shivam so deeply that he stepped into character in a heartbeat. And with Disha Patani joining us, the world of the film opened up to new possibilities," in a press note. The sequel continues Vishesh Films' collaboration with Sony Music India. The original 'Awarapan', released nearly 19 years ago, remains widely regarded for its tragic narrative and memorable soundtrack. The makers have confirmed that Awarapan 2 is currently in its final leg of production in Mumbai and will release in cinemas worldwide on August 14, 2026.



## I will carry your stories and tell them to the world: Aneet Padda mourns grandfather's demise

Actor Aneet Padda has shared an emotional tribute to her late grandfather, expressing grief and love in a heartfelt note posted on Instagram following his recent passing. The 'Saiyaara' actor uploaded a photograph of herself holding her grandfather's hand, accompanied by a deeply personal message reflecting on their bond. In the note, Aneet described him as "the only love of my life." "The only love of my life... You were drifting away, but you didn't forget makkhan. You held on to love, even when you couldn't hold on to memory," she wrote. She continued by promising to carry forward his legacy in her life: "I will hold on to both. I will carry all our years together. I will be a good person. I will carry your jokes and repeat them every chance I get. I will carry your kindness and your light into every dark room. I will carry your stories and tell them to the world. I will carry your love, you taught me the purest, most unconditional kind. I will carry you." Concluding her note, the actor added, "I spotted the brightest star in the sky today, and I knew where you went. I love you. I love you. I love you, Dadu. I love you so much. Always, beyond what time can hold." Aneet Padda began her career as a teenage model, later taking on a small acting role in 'Salaam Venky'. She went on to earn notice through the Amazon Prime Video series 'Big Girls Don't Cry' and also appeared in the television show 'Yuva Sapno Ka Safar'. Her breakthrough came in 2025 with director Mohit Suri's romantic drama 'Saiyaara', which propelled her to overnight fame and drew praise for her screen presence. On the work front, Aneet is set to appear next in 'Shakti Shalini', part of the Maddock Horror Comedy Universe.



## SPORTS

### Tennis Royalty Reigns Supreme: Alcaraz and Sabalenka Crowned Laureus 2026 Sports Personalities of the Year

Madrid, 21/4 (H.S.): Tennis dominated the prestigious Laureus World Sports Awards 2026 as Spain's Carlos Alcaraz and Belarus's Aryna Sabalenka were named Sportswoman and Sportsman of the Year, respectively—the highest individual honors in global sports. Alcaraz capped a stellar year with French Open and US Open triumphs, concluding as World No. 1. Sabalenka delivered consistent brilliance, reaching multiple major tournament finals across the season. Hosted by Novak Djokovic and Aline Go, the ceremony celebrated sport's pinnacle achievements since its 2000 inception—recognized as the "Oscars of Sport."



### Cafu Hails 2026 World Cup as Brazil's Golden Window to Glory After 24-Year Wait

Madrid, 21/4 (H.S.): Brazilian football legend Cafu believes the 2026 FIFA World Cup presents the perfect opportunity for the Seleção to reclaim the crown, 24 years after their last triumph under his captaincy. The two-time champion, who lifted the trophy in 2002 against Germany and featured in 1994's penalty shootout win over Italy, praised the current team's blend of balance and experience. At the Laureus Awards, Cafu told reporters: "After 24 years since



our last title, this is the right moment for Brazil." He lauded coach Carlo Ancelotti as a serial winner strengthening attack and midfield, with renewed focus on defense. Cafu backed star Vinicius Júnior to shine on the grandest stage and tipped 19-year-old Endrick—thriving at Lyon—to emerge as pivotal. Hosted across the US, Mexico, and Canada, the tournament positions Brazil as frontrunners, though Spain looms as a formidable rival.

### Wolves' Premier League Exile Sealed by West Ham-Crystal Palace Stalemate

London, 21/4 (H.S.): Wolverhampton Wanderers' (Wolves) relegation from the Premier League was mathematically confirmed Monday following a goalless draw between West Ham United and

Crystal Palace. Now 16 points adrift of West Ham with only five matches remaining, Wolves—17 points from 33 games—drop to EFL Championship next season, ending an eight-year top-flight stint. Since November under Rob

Edwards (replacing sacked Vitor Pereira), Wolves managed just three wins. Notable victories over Aston Villa and Liverpool offered fleeting hope, but prolonged relegation peril proved insurmountable. Burnley faces

confirmation Wednesday against Manchester City. Tottenham lingers outside the drop zone post 2-2 Brighton draw; Nottingham Forest and Leeds United bolstered safety with wins. Coventry City clinched Championship promotion after 25 years.

### Genelia Deshmukh breaks down as Riteish gets emotional at 'Raja Shivaji' trailer launch



Actors Riteish Deshmukh and Genelia Deshmukh turned emotional at the trailer launch of their upcoming film 'Raja Shivaji' in Mumbai on Monday. The couple thanked the team behind the historical drama for their support and hard work. The trailer of the highly anticipated historical drama was unveiled at a grand event attended by the cast and crew. 'Raja Shivaji' revolves around the story of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and is mounted on a large cinematic scale. During the event, Riteish was seen weeping as he spoke to the media

while thanking his team for helping him and bringing the project to life. Standing beside him, Genelia was also moved and broke down on stage. Actor Sanjay Dutt, who was also seen wiping away tears. Riteish later thanked Genelia for standing by him and supporting him throughout the journey of making the film. The launch event was attended by several actors, including Sanjay Dutt, Abhishek Bachchan, Vidya Balan, Mahesh Manjrekar and Bhagyashree, all of whom play important roles in the film. Mounted on a grand

cinematic canvas, the film features high-octane action, rich world-building, and top technical excellence. With music by the celebrated duo Ajay-Atul and cinematography by internationally acclaimed Santosh Sivan, 'Raja Shivaji' is set to deliver a visual spectacle with strong emotional resonance. Presented by Jio Studios and produced by Jyoti Deshpande and Genelia Deshmukh under the banner of Mumbai Film Company, 'Raja Shivaji' is set to release in cinemas worldwide on May 1, in Marathi, Hindi and Telugu.

### Virat Kohli, Anushka Sharma attend 'Ekantik Vartalaap' during spiritual visit to Keli Kunj Ashram

In a quiet spiritual interlude during the ongoing IPL season, Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma visited Premanand Ji Maharaj at the Shri Hit Radha Keli Kunj Ashram in Vrindavan on April 20, coinciding with the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya. The visit took place during a brief break in Kohli's IPL 2026 commitments with Royal Challengers Bengaluru. The couple spent approximately 90 minutes at the ashram, where they participated in an "Ekantik Vartalaap," described as a private spiritual discussion with the Maharaj. During their time there, they listened to devotional

bhajans and engaged with philosophical teachings. In a video shared on the Keli Kunj Ashram's official Bhajan Marg YouTube channel, Kohli appeared in simple attire, wearing a casual shirt, while Sharma opted for a white kurta set. They were seen seated on the ground among fellow devotees. Both wore Tulsi malas and had sandalwood tilaks applied to their foreheads. This is not the couple's first interaction with Premanand Ji Maharaj; they have previously sought his guidance on matters related to life lessons, forgiveness, and relationships. The visit followed Royal Challengers Bengaluru's recent IPL clash against

Delhi Capitals and came ahead of their next scheduled match against Gujarat Titans on April 24. In that previous encounter, Delhi Capitals secured a dramatic four-wicket victory off the final ball. Chasing 176 after RCB posted 175/8, powered by Phil Salt's 63, Delhi recovered from an early 18/3. Contributions from KL Rahul and Tristan Stubbs, along with late hitting by David Miller, guided the team to 179/4. Despite a strong bowling effort from Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Delhi Capitals clinched the win, underlining their composure under pressure and middle-order resilience as they moved to fourth on the points table.