

Dumani Mail

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President Droupadi Murmu accepts credentials from envoys of 4 nations

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday accepted credentials from the envoys of four countries, at a ceremonial event held at Rashtrapati Bhavan, according to the President's Secretariat.

Those who presented their credentials included Ambassador of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Vithaya Xayavong; Ambassador of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Emilie Ayaza Mushobekwa; High Commissioner of the Republic of Namibia, Wing Commander Alex Lunyazo Tukuhupwele (Retd.) and Ambassador of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Antonio Serifo Embalo.

The credential presentation ceremony, held at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, marks the formal accreditation of the envoys to represent their respective countries in India.

In terms of prior diplomatic engagements, earlier on Monday, President Droupadi Murmu received

Lee Jae Myung, President of the Republic of Korea, at the Rashtrapati Bhavan and hosted a banquet in his honour.

Welcoming President Myung on his first visit to India, the President appreciated him for his significant contributions to strengthening India-Korea bilateral relations, particularly as Chair of the Korea-India Parliamentary Friendship Group.

As per a statement from the President's Secretariat, she had said that the visit, within the first year of his presidency, reflected the importance he attaches to our relationship.

The President had said that both India and Korea are vibrant democracies that share common values. She was happy to note the recently established India-Korea Parliamentary Friendship Group in the Parliament of India.

She said that this would promote dialogue and exchanges between the Indian Parliament and the Korean National Assembly,



further strengthening mutual understanding and trust.

The President was happy to note that both sides have set an ambitious agenda for bilateral cooperation across several sectors, including shipbuilding, port development, digital cooperation, small and medium enterprises, steel, education, research, culture,

and people-to-people contacts.

She also had noted that both sides had adopted a Joint Declaration to resume negotiations on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). She said that India looks forward to advancing mutually beneficial trade relations and strengthening cooperation with Korea in

areas such as AI, semiconductors, electronics, clean energy, services and tourism, the statement highlighted.

The President had said that India has skill, speed, and scale, while Korea has expertise in high-tech manufacturing. By combining our strengths, we can create numerous opportunities for our youth.

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The President had said that India and Korea should explore opportunities for cooperation in green and clean energy, as well as other climate technologies, to secure a sustainable future for humanity.

The statement had mentioned that the two leaders agreed that close cooperation between India and Korea can bring immense benefits to our people, and both have much to learn from each other. Our people can benefit by working together in areas such as environment, innovation, education, skill development, and technology.

Delhi court sends I-PAC Director Vinesh Chandel to 14-day judicial custody

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Thursday sent I-PAC Director and Co-founder Vinesh Chandel to 14 days' judicial custody till May 7 in connection with a money laundering probe linked to the alleged coal pilferage case.

Meanwhile, Vinesh Chandel has approached the Patiala House Court seeking regular bail.

Additional Sessions Judge Dharendra Rana has issued notice on the bail plea and directed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to file its response. The matter is now listed for arguments on April 29.

The developments come as the Enforcement Directorate (ED)'s 10-day custody of Chandel, granted earlier by the court, concluded on April 23, following which the accused was produced before the court.

In its earlier order granting ED custody, the Delhi court had observed that the agency complied with statutory requirements under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) at the time of arrest. It recorded that copies of the arrest order, grounds of arrest, and related documents were duly furnished to Chandel, with acknowledgement, and were also forwarded to the Adjudicating Authority.

The court had noted compliance with Sections 19(1), 19(2), and 19(3) of the PMLA, observing that procedural safeguards were followed.

Referring to the material placed on record, the court had taken note of ED's allegations that Chandel was involved in routing funds through informal channels, including hawala, and that certain transactions were conducted outside the formal banking system.

The agency also claimed that statements made during the investigation were inconsistent with the material collected and that dealings with multiple entities lacked a clear legitimate business purpose.

Further, the court had recorded ED's allegation that certain electronic records and emails were deleted after search proceedings, which could have impacted the investigation. It was observed that these aspects required deeper examination.

The court had found that custodial interrogation was necessary to trace the proceeds of crime, identify other persons involved, and prevent possible evidence tampering.

Strangled, Raped, Robbed: Hour-Long Horror Inside IRS Officer's Home

New Delhi: Rahul Meena, a teenager accused of raping and strangling a senior IRS officer's daughter in Delhi on Wednesday morning, used his knowledge of the family's routine, and what is usually kept where in the house, to execute the crime.

Meena raped a friend's wife in Alwar on Tuesday night, sold a mobile phone for Rs 10,000 and hired a cab to Delhi for Rs 6,000. He then walked to his former employer, a senior IRS officer's house, in South Delhi. This was just the beginning of what Meena had set on to do.

Meena was familiar with the family's daily routine. He knew the woman's parents would be out for their daily gym session, leaving their daughter home alone.

The 19-year-old, who had worked at the house as domestic help for around eight months before being

fired, also knew that the house key was kept in a shoe rack for other staff to access the premises while the family was away.

As seen in CCTV footage, he entered the house at around 6:30 am and went straight to the woman's study room, a separate one-room structure built on the terrace.

The victim, a 22-year-old IIT graduate, was preparing for the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) exam when Meena stepped into her room. When she questioned his presence, Meena claimed: "Aunty ne bulaya tha kaam se (Aunty called me for some work)."

Meena then demanded money. Her refusal led to a heated argument between the two, which soon turned violent. The woman was struck with a lamp, resulting in injuries across her face and body, and she was strangled

with a mobile charging cable.

The accused then raped the 22-year-old woman while she was unconscious.

Meena, known for borrowing money from domestic staff in the neighbourhood to feed his online gaming addiction, had planned to rob the house. However, the locker in the house could only be opened using a thumb impression.

He then dragged the woman out of the study room, pulled her down the stairs, and into the room where the locker was kept. He pressed the woman's blood-stained finger against a biometric scanner, but it did not open.

According to the police sources, the woman had probably died by then, which may be why the biometric scanner did not recognise her thumb impression.



Meena abandoned the woman's body and proceeded to open the locker using a screwdriver. He took out cash and jewellery and packed them in a bag kept nearby.

Before fleeing the house, Meena was careful to remove his blood-stained clothes and change into the woman's brother's trousers. He replaced his

shoes with a pair of slippers lying around and fled.

While walking towards the Palam railway station, the accused pretended to be on a call to avoid drawing unwanted attention.

Meena was arrested from a hotel in Delhi's Dwarka area, where he had been hiding. He is being

charged with rape, murder and robbery, police said.

The initial investigation has revealed that Meena was addicted to the online game "Teen Patti" through which he lost and earned money. He would use the money to solicit women to fulfill his sexual desires.

He was also into gambling and would often

borrow money from peers.

"He would borrow money from other servants in the vicinity, or from domestic staff working in nearby households, without ever repaying them. This is why he was fired," Joint Commissioner of Police Vijay Kumar said.

According to police sources, during the initial interrogation, Meena claimed that his sole motive was robbery. To avoid suspicion and prevent being traced, he sold three mobile phones - own and those belonging to his family members - before coming to Delhi. A part of the money was used for online betting.

He had also stolen a phone from Alwar victim's house. The plan was to carry out a robbery in Delhi and bring the money back home to Alwar.

The investigating officers, however, believe that it is possible Meena had

come with the intention to rape, considering he had raped another woman less than 24 hours ago.

"Since he had been dismissed from a job here in Delhi, a sense of grudge could also be a contributing factor," Kumar added.

The victim had completed her schooling at DPS RK Puram and had been an All-India topper in her class 12 examinations. She graduated from IIT Delhi and was preparing for the UPSC examination.

She was also a dancer and had won awards in several dance competitions.

It is reported that on Tuesday, the victim's parents had advised her to start her day early and prepare for the competitive exam in the morning. Wednesday - when the horrendous incident happened - was the first day of her new routine.

Delhi HC directs takedown of all links of Kejriwal's April 13 hearing, impleads Centre; issues notice to Kejriwal, Sisodia, others

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has directed removal of all social media links containing the April 13 proceedings before Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma in the recusal plea moved by Arvind Kejriwal.

The Court was informed that the impugned links have already been taken down by Google and Meta. It has also impleaded the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) as a respondent in the case and issued notice to all respondents, including Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia and others, seeking their replies.

A Bench of Justice V

Kameswar Rao and Justice Manmeet Arora was hearing a PIL filed by advocate Vaibhav Singh, which alleges that Kejriwal, Sisodia, journalist Ravish Kumar and others unauthorisedly recorded and circulated the court proceedings on social media platforms.

The Court noted that recording and uploading of court proceedings is expressly prohibited under the High Court's rules unless prior permission is granted. It also referred to Rule 3(1)(b)(xi) of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, which

requires platforms to make reasonable efforts to prevent unlawful content.

During the hearing, the Court directed that any remaining links must be taken down and clarified that if such videos resurface, platforms must remove them promptly upon being informed, with intimation to the Registrar General.

The Bench expressed concern over the impact of such circulation on the judiciary, while intermediaries submitted that identifying the original uploader or automatically blocking such content remains technically difficult. Senior Advocate Arvind



P Datar, appearing for one platform, said the flagged content was removed after official communication and

that intermediaries cannot act as censors.

Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma told

the Court that the issue affects the institution of the judiciary and requires serious consideration. The

matter has now been listed for further hearing on July 6.

The matter was initially listed a day earlier before a Bench headed by the Chief Justice, but Justice Tejas Karia recused from hearing the case, following which it was placed before the present Bench.

The petition states that the April 13 hearing, where Arvind Kejriwal argued his recusal plea, was recorded without permission and widely circulated on social media in edited clips, allegedly distorting the proceedings and bringing disrepute to the judiciary.

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District level poshan pakhwada day celebrated



Khordha - 22/4- District level poshan pakhwada day was celebrated at the conference hall of collectorate khordha. At the beginning of the meeting, DSWO, Ms. Kusum Kumari Praharaj delivered the welcome speech and in her speech, she emphasized on the five main topics of the Poshan Pakhwada celebration, which are (1) Maternal and Child Nutrition (2) Early Stimulation for Brain Development (0-3 years) (3) Play-Based Education at Early Age (3-6 years) (4) Role of Parents and Community in Reducing Screen Time and (5) Gathering Community Support for a Strong Anganwadi. The chief guest of the occasion ADM, Pratap Chandra Beura said, main aim and objective of this program is that no mother or child in the district should suffer from malnutrition and called for everyone's cooperation to make it a

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success. The event, organized under the chairmanship of D S W O . M s . P r a h a r a j . Showcased nutritious food and education related equipment from all child development projects in khordha district. Along with this, a camp was organized for anemia testing. All the POs, CDPOs, Supervisors, Anganwadi workers, Poshan DCDPA, BC, Mamata DPC and media representatives were present in the program. At the end of the event PO, Ms. Soudamini Dash proposed the vote of thanks.

Odisha Accelerates Rail Expansion to Transform Tribal Regions

Rayagada, April 22: In a major boost to infrastructure development, East Coast Railway, in collaboration with the Government of Odisha, has intensified work on four new railway line projects across the state's southern and western regions. With a total investment of over ₹6,879 crore and spanning 382 km, these projects aim to bring rail connectivity to some of Odisha's most remote and tribal-dominated districts.

To ensure faster execution, Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed on April 16, 2026, between the two agencies. The agreements are designed

to streamline land acquisition, expedite statutory clearances, and resolve field-level issues through coordinated monitoring. Officials say the initiative is already improving efficiency and accountability in project implementation.

The projects have also been granted Special Railway Project status, allowing priority administrative support and significantly speeding up land acquisition and approval processes.

Among the key projects, the 126-km Jeypore-Malkangiri line, sanctioned at ₹2,343.64 crore, has made notable progress in land acquisition and forest

clearances. Once completed, it is expected to greatly benefit the tribal population of Malkangiri by improving access to markets, education, and healthcare.

The 44.14-km Jeypore-Nabarangpur line, with an estimated cost of ₹747.91 crore, has already entered the construction phase in key sections, including major bridge works. This project will provide first-time rail connectivity to Nabarangpur district, opening new avenues for economic growth.

Similarly, the 138.32-km Bargarh-Nuapada railway line, sanctioned at ₹2,621.92 crore, is witnessing rapid

progress. Land acquisition procedures have advanced significantly, with statutory notifications issued across multiple villages in both districts, enabling faster transition to construction.

The 73.62-km Gunupur-Theruvadi line, costing ₹1,165.89 crore, has also reached a crucial stage, with land acquisition nearing completion following the issuance of final notifications. The project is expected to strengthen connectivity in Rayagada district and create new livelihood opportunities.

Collectively, these four projects are expected to benefit more than 30 lakh people, most

of them from tribal and marginalized communities. Improved rail connectivity will help farmers access larger markets, facilitate student mobility, and provide better access to healthcare services.

Officials believe that the combined impact of these projects will not only improve transportation but also attract investment, generate employment, and enhance administrative reach in remote areas.

With coordinated efforts and fast-tracked processes, Odisha is steadily moving towards a more connected and inclusive future, particularly for its tribal heartland.

The Coastal Marathon will further enrich Odisha's tourism sector

Puri: The Coastal Marathon is set to boost tourism in Odisha. The event will be held in Puri on the second Sunday of December, i.e., December 13. Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida announced that the winner of the marathon will receive a prize of ₹1 crore.

A mega event titled Puri Coastal Marathon will be organized jointly by the Odisha Tourism Department and OMC. As part of awareness efforts, a marathon was held this morning from Puri Blue Flag Beach to the Taj

Hotel.

On this occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida participated and inaugurated the logo created through sand art by internationally acclaimed sand artist and Padma Shri awardee Sudarshan Pattnaik. She, along with other dignitaries, flagged off the participants at Puri Blue Flag Beach, encouraging the runners.

After the participants reached the Taj Hotel premises, the Tourism Department unveiled its new

tagline: "Think India, Think Odisha." Athletes from various regions were invited to take part in the upcoming Coastal Marathon.

Addressing the gathering as the chief guest, the Deputy Chief Minister stated that tourism is the lifeline of the state. People visit Puri not only for the darshan of Lord Jagannath but also for tourism. Therefore, tourism must be developed in a way that encourages visitors to stay longer in Puri and Odisha.

Among others present were

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Satyabadi MLA Om Prakash Mishra, Pipili MLA Ashrit Pattnaik, and Puri MLA Sunil Kumar

Mohanty. They highlighted that Odisha has immense tourism potential and appreciated efforts to promote and develop it, noting that such initiatives will strengthen the economy at the state, district, and local levels.

Tourism Secretary Balwant Singh welcomed the guests, while Director Dipankar Mohapatra delivered the vote of thanks. Collector Divya Jyoti Parida, SP Prateek Singh, DFO Dhanraj Rakhosh Magar, and others were also present. Senior athletes were felicitated on this occasion.

20 arrested in marijuana smuggling incident



Keonjhar : Keonjhar police arrested 20 persons for allegedly smuggling marijuana from Anandapur area of Keonjhar district while a large quantity of marijuana, vehicles and cash were seized. This has said SDPO Anandapur Kamal Lochan Panda on Wednesday afternoon in a press meet. According to him, on the instructions of the Keonjhar SP Nitin Kushalkar, a special team was formed with all the police station officers of Anandpur sub-division and the investigation was underway.

During the investigation, first two marijuana traders were arrested from Ramachandrapur police station. Later, based on their information, 17 other people were arrested from different areas of Anandpur sub division, the SDPO said.

During the raid and search operation at different places, the police team seized a car loaded with marijuana from Belabahali village under Ghasipura police station and one accused was also arrested.

In this operation

conducted by the police, 10 quintals of ganja, 2 cars, 2 bikes and Rs 12,000 in cash have been seized, police said. "All the accused have been sent to judicial custody after medical examination" Anandpur SDPO Kamal Lochan Panda informed in the press meet.

Strict operations against drug smuggling will continue in the coming days, he added. Along with this, the police have strictly warned those involved in such illegal activities to be remain away from those illegal trade.

Gang rape case: 4 get 20 years RI in Keonjhar

Keonjhar (DMS) : Today, Keonjhar district and Session cum special judge (POCSO) Monalisa Mohanty, sentenced four people to 20 years in prison and slapped fined one thousand rupees each while hearing a gang rape case of a 16-year-old minor. For non-payment of the fine, the court ordered one more year of RI. The convicts were identified as Neda Nayak (24), Chagalu Nayak (24), Sagar Nayak (24) and Sushanta Nayak (26), all from Jalananda village under the Ghasipura police station.

According to Special Public Prosecutor Sanjay Paikray, the incident took place in the Ghasipura police station area in 2020. On the evening of 29 December 2020, when the victim went to the nearby stream to defecate, she met her male friend. While they were talking, four youths came and beat them up and took the victim away and raped her. They threatened to kill her if she reported the incident. The victim and her family were terrified for two days by the life threat.

The 17th All India Nilachal Trophy Cricket Tournament will begin from the 26th.



Puri : Under the auspices of the Puri Pioneer Club, the 17th All India Nilachal Trophy Cricket Tournament will be held at the Shri Jagannath Stadium premises. The tournament will start on April 26 and continue until May 3.

A total of 8 teams will participate in the tournament, including one team each from Delhi and Kolkata, along with teams from Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Rourkela, Balasore, and Puri.

The tournament will be

played in a 40-over format using a red ball. The 17th edition of the tournament is being organized in memory of former cricket secretary of the Puri Athletic Association, Jagadish Chandra Rautaray.

The champion team will receive a cash prize of ₹1 lakh, while the runner-up team will be awarded ₹70,000. Additionally, there will be a daily lucky draw for spectators, where winners will receive a mobile phone each day.

The teams coming from Delhi and Kolkata will include several well-known cricketers who have been part of the IPL auction.

This national-level tournament is being organized with the aim of reviving cricket in Puri and nurturing talented cricketers from the district.

Matches will begin at 8:30 AM at the Jagannath Stadium premises, as informed by the organizers during a press conference.

Risky Travel : Students cross a river to reach School

Keonjhar: The people of Champua Basti under Barbil Municipality, along with those in Dumrita and Shankhojhar villages of Bolani Gram Panchayat of Joda block, who are directly affected by mining, are still deprived of basic amenities. Especially due to lack of bridge over river Karo, the teen students in this area, going to school has become a daily struggle.

Sources said that although the students studying in various schools in Balagoda want to go to school using the shortest route from their villages, the Karo river is creating a big obstacle in the way. Since there is no permanent bridge over this river, villagers and students

risk their lives by using a dangerous broken electricity pole as a bridge.

"This scene is enough to narrate the development in mining affected areas. Due to this the lives of students crossing the river on narrow and unstable electric poles are always in danger. "Despite many incidents of slipping, falling into the river and getting injured, no permanent arrangement has been made by the administration" alleged Ramesh Munda, Hiranya Barik, Kailas Mohakud and others.

"The situation becomes more miserable during the rainy season. The river swells and this temporary



road is completely submerged. Consequently, students and villagers are forced to travel

via long main roads, which is physically and financially burdensome for them. "The

government earns crores of rupees in revenue through mining, while on the other

hand, the District Mineral Fund (DMF) is collecting huge funds. But such devastation in the most affected areas raises questions about the use of DMF funds" said S. Nanda, a social activist of Bolani.

According to local villagers, constructing a permanent bridge here would not have been difficult if the DMF funds were invested properly. They have demanded that the administration construct a safe and permanent bridge at the earliest.

This incident highlights a stark picture of development in mining-affected areas—where resources abound, but people still struggle for basic rights due to a lack of facilities. Sub

Sources said that although the students studying in various schools in Balagoda want to go to school using the shortest route from their villages, the Karo river is creating a big obstacle in the way. Since there is no permanent bridge over this river, villagers and students risk their lives by using a dangerous broken electricity pole as a bridge.

Collector Champua said, "I will look into the issue and take steps to solve the problem." (EOM)

Odisha Cabinet Approves Key Reforms to Boost Governance, Infrastructure and Industrial Growth

Bhubaneswar : Under the chairmanship of Hon'ble Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, the State Cabinet of Odisha has approved a series of significant proposals aimed at strengthening governance, accelerating infrastructure development, and promoting industrial growth across the state.

Among the major decisions, the City Gas Distribution Policy will expand access to clean energy, reduce carbon emissions, and enhance urban energy infrastructure. The Odisha State Data Policy 2.0 seeks to ensure secure and efficient data management, enabling evidence-based governance and fostering innovation.

To boost industrial



development, a new textile unit in Bolangir will strengthen the textile value chain in western Odisha

while creating local employment opportunities. The Transport Traffic & Enforcement Cadre Rules,

2026 are set to modernise enforcement mechanisms, improve road safety, and enhance service efficiency.

Further, the Odisha State Allied & Healthcare Council Rules, 2026 will regulate allied health professionals and elevate the quality of healthcare services. Amendments to the Right to Public Services Rules, 2012 aim to deliver faster, more transparent, and citizen-centric services.

An ordinance under the Indian Stamp Act, 1899 has also been approved to streamline administrative processes and strengthen revenue systems. Additionally, a ₹158.88 crore high-level bridge over the Kathajodi River will significantly improve connectivity between Cuttack and Bhubaneswar, helping to ease traffic congestion and support regional mobility.

Call to Voters: Participate Fearlessly in the Festival of Democracy

Bhubaneswar : In a heartfelt appeal to voters in the first phase of the West Bengal Assembly elections, special emphasis has been placed on encouraging young citizens to come forward and actively participate in this vibrant democratic process. Voters are urged to cast their ballots with enthusiasm and without fear, upholding the true spirit of democracy.

Every vote carries the potential to shape the future. It is a powerful step toward building a 'Sonar Bangla'—a state rooted in peace, free from fear and disorder, and driven by development, progress, and mutual trust.

National Award-Winner Anupam Patnaik Returns with Supernatural Horror-Comedy Mantra Muughda

Bhubaneswar : April 23 : The makers releases the trailer of much-anticipated Odia film Mantra Muughda. It is helmed by National Award-winning filmmaker Anupam Patnaik, who earlier won the award for Pratikshya at the 69th film festival. Actor-director Anupam Kher is in the process of remaking the film in Hindi language.

Following the success of Karma and Gangs of Puri, widely watched OTT series, Mantra Muughda is backed by Amiya Patnaik Productions, a banner with over 42 years of legacy in Odia cinema. The film is shot extensively at the 600-year-old Dharakote Palace over a 45-day schedule. It blends multiple genres—horror, comedy, mystery, and fantasy in a single narrative. Mantra Muughda is a supernatural horror-comedy that narrates the story of three friends who accidentally awaken something evil at an abandoned palace leading them into a wild ride of horror, comedy and fantasy. The film has an ensemble cast that features Sanoj Kumar, Manmay Dey, Sarthak Bharadwaj, Dipanwit Dasmohapatra, Suryamayee Mohapatra, Bhoomika Dash, Hara Rath, Umakanta Sahoo, Soma Hota, Nishant Majithia, Barsha Patnaik, Choudhury Jayprakash Das, Akash Rout, Pihu Mohapatra, Ankita Mishra, Jagannath Jagan, Ishani Panda, Sujit Baral, Riten Patnaik and Ashis Rout in pivotal roles.

The story is conceived by Anupam Patnaik and Roshan Bisoi. The screenplay of the film is written by Rohit Gehlot and Anupam Patnaik while dialogues are penned by Pranab Rath. The Additional Screenplay & dialogues are contributed by Nishant Majithia.

Keonjhar district achieves success in inter-school sports

Keonjhar : The students, their parents and teachers of PM Shri Kendriya Vidyalay, Keonjhar expressed happiness over the enthusiastic performance of the students in the inter-school taekwondo competition held at Bhubaneswar Kendujhar School 5. The competition took place from the 20th to the 23rd of this month.

In this competition, Omkar Soren won the gold medal in the under-19 category, while Ritibhan Das won the silver medal in the under-14 boys' category. Similarly, Adyasha Bala won the bronze medal in the under-14 girls' category. Guardian Ramani Ranjan Das informed that they trained under Madhusudan Raut, coach of the Kendujhar Taekwondo Association. The school teachers, classmates and parents congratulated the children for their better performance this year compared to the previous year.

Illegal sale and purchase of uncultivated orchard land, construction of buildings after encroachment; Tahsildar issues notice to maintain status quo

Puri: Valuable uncultivated orchard land located in Markandeswar Sahi mouza under Puri Sadar Tahasil is allegedly being illegally bought and sold, encroached upon, and used for building construction.

Following a complaint, the Tahsildar has issued a notice to the encroacher who has taken possession of the land, directing them to stop construction work and submit relevant land documents. A notice has been issued under Section 9 (Encroachment Case No. 4-114/2026, Form-K) to maintain status quo.

The land in question falls under Khata No. 675, Plot No. 678, classified as valuable uncultivated orchard land. It is alleged that Leena Behera, wife of Muralidhar Behera, from Plot No. 254, Raghunath Nagar, Bhubaneswar, has forcibly encroached upon the land, cut down trees illegally, and started constructing a building.

A person had filed a complaint with the Tahsildar opposing this activity. Acting on the complaint, the Tahsildar has issued a stop-work order along with a show-cause notice, asking the concerned party to submit land ownership documents by the 24th of this month.



Social activist Sailendri Senapati earns honorary doctorate



Paradip/Bhubaneswar: Mrs. Sailendri Senapati, a well-known social activist of Paradip region, chairperson of NOC Foundation and vice-chairperson of International Human Rights organization of Odisha unit, has been conferred with a doctorate degree recently.

Mrs. Senapati came into the limelight by distributing sanitizers, masks, food and drinking waters in various slum areas of Paradip during the Corona epidemic.

She has been awarded this international honorary doctorate by the All India Charitable Association for her outstanding contribution in the field of social service. Mrs. Senapati came into the limelight by distributing sanitizers, masks, food and drinking waters in various slum areas of Paradip during the Corona epidemic. Apart from this, usually Mrs. Senapati and the members of her organization were seen constantly extending helping hands to the helpless people in the region. After receiving this doctorate honor, many good wishes were given to Sailendri and various organizations congratulated her.

Under-construction overbridge in Gurujanga & Wilkisan nagar, sewage water accumulated knee-high, people in distress

Khordha-23/4 - While the construction of National Highway No. 57 from Khordha Pitapalli Bypass to Taratua is underway, the departmental authorities have constructed an overbridge between Gurujanga and Wilkisan nagar adjoining khordha municipal council, sewage water from ward no-17 & 18 of Gurujanga is accumulating knee-high,

causing inconvenience to the general public and school , college students of 20 villages passing under the said bridge. It is not possible for the general public to walk under this bridge. The illusion of a pond has been created there, and the sewage water has accumulated in the area, creating a foul-smelling environment. Even when an ambulance arrives, one has to wait for some time. As

a result, many school and college students are falling into the water below this bridge every day and are becoming victims of accidents. The municipal authorities, R&B department and the National Highways authorities have become a nuisance to the public about how this sewage water will be discharged and how its permanent drainage will be ensured.

Shakespear' play staged on 3rd day of Canfest-2026

Paradip - The third day of 23rd National Theatre Festival Canfest-2026 being organised by Canmass here at Jayadev Sadan of Paradip Port with staging of the play by the artists of Hrudyta, Bhubaneswar under the direction of Prof. Ramakanta Mishra. Shakespeare is a biographical drama on the life and work of William Shakespeare, the greatest poet and dramatist of all time. The Poet's spirit comes out of his grave and tells his story that his personal life and his career as a dramatist and the times he lived in. The play opens with the famous monologue 'All the world's a stage' from As You Like It and the iconic monologues and some of the dramatic scenes from his timeless works namely Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, The Merchant of Venice, Macbeth, Julius Caesar, Othello, Kind Lear and the Tempest are enacted. The play ends with Shakespear's spirit bidding goodbye and going back to the grave. The play reminded the creations of Shakespeare. On the 4th evening Theatre Wala of Delhi will stage hindi play Koi Baat Chale.



Odisha a leading model in India in Mangrove Conservation and Restoration

Bhubaneswar: April 22, 2026 : Mangroves play a pivotal role in protecting coastlines and supporting livelihoods

- Mangrove forest cover in Odisha has increased by 16.6%
- Bhitarkanika National Park has largest mangrove area, covering over 212 sq km
- Innovative steps taken for sustainable restoration and conservation of mangroves
- Special programs implemented with community participation and support from CAMPA

Bhubaneswar, Odisha is establishing itself as one of India's most successful models in mangrove restoration, delivering measurable ecological, economic, and climate outcomes at scale. Today, the State hosts approximately 259.06 sq. km of mangroves across five coastal districts, with Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapara district alone accounting for over 212

sq. km, making it one of India's most significant mangrove ecosystems.

Anchored by scientific innovation, policy convergence, and strong community participation, Odisha has transformed its coastal ecosystems into resilient green barriers against climate change. With support from the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA), the State continues to scale coastal conservation initiatives under the vision of the Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department, Government of Odisha.

A key strength of Odisha's approach lies in integrating science-driven monitoring with on-ground restoration. Data buoys deployed by National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) under Odisha Forestry Sector Development Project

(OFSDP) play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance necessary for growth of mangrove ecosystems in Bhitarkanika. These data buoys help detect pollution and environmental stress, enabling timely interventions and strengthening long-term restoration and conservation strategies.

"Financial support from CAMPA has been instrumental in scaling up these interventions. Beyond plantation, efforts have focused on ecological restoration measures such as creek deepening to restore natural tidal flow, and targeted fencing to reduce anthropogenic pressure," said Varadaraj Gaonkar, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Mangrove Forest Division (Wildlife), Rajnagar.

Odisha is also advancing innovative restoration methods like the "fishbone channel" model, introduced to revive degraded tidal zones.



By restoring natural tidal water flow, this technique has helped regenerate around 100 hectares of mangroves in just four years in Bhitarkanika.

The State's approach goes beyond plantation, focusing on landscape-level restoration. Mangrove vegetation is concentrated across Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Bhadrak, and Balasore districts. Over the past four years, mangrove cover in Kendrapara district

alone has increased by approximately 9.43 sq. km, while for the entire Odisha it has surged 9.89 sq. km, according to India State of Forest Report (ISFR) data. Degraded mangrove patches, encroached government lands, and areas previously used for brackish water aquaculture have been successfully restored, reversing decades of ecological damage and reclaiming vital coastal habitats.

Another defining feature of Odisha's model is strong community integration. With CAMPA-backed initiatives, local communities actively participate in nursery raising, plantation drives, and protection of restored ecosystems. This ensures conservation is closely linked with livelihood generation and climate resilience.

Community participation has been central to our success. Local residents

actively engage in plantation activities, fostering a strong sense of ownership. Improved ecosystem health has also supported livelihoods indirectly, particularly through fisheries and related activities," affirmed the DFO, Rajnagar.

The impact of these efforts is already visible on the ground. "Earlier, high tides would send floodwaters surging into our village, destroying roads, inundating homes, and even bringing crocodiles along with the currents. Now the situation has improved significantly, bringing new hope and security for the community," shared Uma Rani Giri, a resident of Kanaknagar village under the Rajnagar Forest Division.

Mangroves in Odisha are not just forests—they serve as critical bio-shields against cyclones and storm surges in a state frequently exposed to extreme weather events.

Their dense root systems absorb wave energy, reduce coastal erosion, and stabilize shorelines. At the same time, they contribute to carbon sequestration, support biodiversity, and strengthen fisheries, thereby enhancing coastal livelihoods and food security.

"CAMPA has been supporting broader habitat restoration and scientific wildlife management across the Bhitarkanika landscape, ensuring a more holistic and sustainable approach to ecosystem conservation," underscored the DFO.

Notably, over the last decade, Odisha has recorded a 16.6% increase in mangrove cover, expanding from 222 sq. km in 2011 to over 259.06 sq. km in 2023, as per ISFR data. This sustained progress reinforces Odisha's position as a national leader in climate action, ecological governance, and nature-based coastal resilience.

Free & Fair

THE spotlight on the Election Commission of India (ECI) has intensified amid the first phase of the high-stakes elections in West Bengal today. The run-up to the Assembly polls has witnessed a bitter confrontation between the ECI and the ruling Trinamool Congress over the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. Mass deletion of voters' names has dominated the electoral discourse in the state over the past four months. Trouble started in December last year when the poll panel declared that "logical discrepancies" had been found in the forms of 1.36 crore people. Of these, 60 lakh were placed under adjudication, and then 27.1 lakh of them were deleted. Lakhs of aggrieved residents are still awaiting the decision of appellate tribunals on their appeals. All the chaos and confusion have undermined the sanctity of the rolls. Moreover, the avowed objective of identifying and listing "illegal immigrants" has been virtually cast aside.

The ECI, whose credibility and neutrality have come under a cloud in West Bengal, faces the onerous task of ensuring free and fair elections. The Supreme Court has rightly observed that the SIR process has led to a "trust deficit" between the poll body and the state government. Notably, the exercise has been largely hassle-free in several other states and union territories. Another point of contention is the poll panel's decision to transfer around 1,100 officers, including the chief secretary, after the elections were notified.

Beyond Bengal, the ECI is under increasing pressure over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the nation. Opposition parties have alleged that the PM's speech violated the Model Code of Conduct. At stake is the ECI's autonomy -- can it send a strong message that no political party or individual will be spared if found guilty of violations? The onus is on the poll body to refute the allegations of partisanship and prove that it is not another "caged parrot" — as the apex court had once described the CBI.

Health Scheme

A welfare scheme that exists on paper but fails at the hospital gate does more damage than no scheme at all. It raises expectations, then erodes trust. Punjab's flagship health insurance programme is fast becoming a cautionary tale of this disconnect between promise and practice. The idea is compelling: cashless treatment worth lakhs, accessible to every family through a simple health card. The reality, however, is harsh. Patients reaching the emergency department hospitals are being told their ailments are not covered, or that specific procedures fall outside the approved package list. Others are redirected to government facilities, regardless of urgency or proximity. In effect, the "cashless" assurance collapses at the hospital counter. A recent Ludhiana case illustrates the failure starkly: a woman's son was denied surgery as a major private hospital refused the card, forcing her to spend lakhs elsewhere.

This is not merely a case of administrative teething troubles. It reflects deeper structural flaws of unclear package coverage, poor public awareness and reluctance among private hospitals wary of delayed reimbursements. The absence of reliable data on actual beneficiaries only compounds the opacity, making course correction difficult. When citizens are handed a card that symbolises security but delivers uncertainty, the damage is twofold. First, families are forced into out-of-pocket expenditure, often at moments of acute vulnerability.

This is not merely a case of administrative teething troubles. It reflects deeper structural flaws of unclear package coverage, poor public awareness and reluctance among private hospitals wary of delayed reimbursements. The absence of reliable data on actual beneficiaries only compounds the opacity, making course correction difficult. When citizens are handed a card that symbolises security but delivers uncertainty, the damage is twofold. First, families are forced into out-of-pocket expenditure, often at moments of acute vulnerability. Second, and more enduringly, faith in public institutions is weakened. Welfare must be dependable. The government must move beyond announcements to ground-level accountability. Clear communication on coverage, strict enforcement of hospital compliance and transparent settlement of claims are essential. More importantly, the focus must shift from enrolment numbers to actual utilisation. Healthcare is a test of governance. A scheme that falters at the hospital gate is not just inefficient; it is unjust.

Development of sensitivity and sympathy. Stories give us a chance to peek into the lives of others. Empathy is developed within us while understanding different situations, cultures and conflicts. This quality makes us a better person and also strengthens our responsibility towards society.

IMF World Economic Outlook & Indian Economy

Suresh Chandra Sarangi

In an increasingly fragmented world and amid intense geopolitics over the Strait of Hormuz, the IMF and World Bank Spring meetings were held from April 13 to 18 th, in Washington, D.C. The global economy is facing unprecedented challenges and stress, as the developments and outcomes of the Middle East war threaten to disrupt growth and instill disinflation. This meeting was against the backdrop of heightened trade barriers, since withdrawn, imposed by US President Trump and the war in the Middle East. With an anticipation that the conflict remains limited in duration and hope it creates less intense damage (now has crossed 52 days), the IMF and World Bank meet estimated global growth to 3.1% in 2026 and 3.2% in 2027, while pruning down earlier growth estimates. It is expected that there will be a modest increase in inflation, reduced from earlier January estimates. The World Economic Outlook report highlights downside risk and significant disruption in the financial market in the case of a protracted war.

The report highlights the rising public debt and productivity gains from Artificial intelligence. The report speaks for international cooperation to withstand and navigate the current shock, and resultantly, because of higher allocation towards defence upgradation, there may be a crowding out in social spending by nations. The shocks persist even after the invasion and war, with critical infrastructure restoration and upgradation taking time thereafter. Global headline inflation is expected to increase to 4.4 % in 2026 and may decline to 3.7% in 2027.

Because of the war, the fragilities of commodity imports may put pressure on emerging market economies, including weaker economies. The energy prices may play the spoilsport. A break in the global supply chain may enhance the prices of goods in the near term. The World Economic Outlook report is critical of inflationary pressures, weaker fiscal health, and

external sustainability, and a reduction of social spending may result in social discontent and chaos.

Amidst all these gloomy pictures, the IMF Managing Director, Kristalina Gergova, speaks positively about the Indian economy, which dispels the pall of gloom. It is a fact that India has slipped from 4th Rank

position. As the markets fall because of the war, leading to a flight of capital from the capital market and India, the equity market in particular may face trouble. It is an irony of fate that, though India's ranking slipped to 6 th position, the IMF has enhanced India's growth perspective, raising it to 6.5% for the FY 2026- 27, in view of

tragedy has disrupted the supply chain, and it appears there may be a short supply of fertiliser. Fertiliser is a critical input for Indian Agriculture, especially Urea, and the government has to review the position to maintain an adequate buffer stock to negate the adverse effect of fertiliser supply bottlenecks. That will help in achieving commensurate Agricultural growth and rural prosperity, so central to India's GDP growth. India has been managing the headwinds because of its policy approach, emphasis on the agriculture sector, and the MSME sector could steer millions to write the success story.

Other drivers like a strong domestic consumption base, adequate investment in infrastructure, robust services sector, and well-integrated resilient banking course, IMF says to reduce the freebies and subsidies, and expenditure rationalisation, to arrest fiscal concerns. Capex showing an upward trajectory could fill the gap with promising growth numbers. The government's estimation to reduce the fiscal deficit to 4.5% of GDP during FY 26_27 may help reduce the central government's debt burden. The system liquidity position appears comfortable with the RBI's calibrated action.

Over the years, the NonPerforming Assets have been on a decline with a higher provision coverage ratio and lower gross NPA and Net NPA. It is a better sign that the Return on Assets is improving, with good Asset quality. The silver lining is the digital revolution, which defines how India transacts and moves forward. India has a strong foundation in digital architecture, and that shall rewrite the growth story, proving India's strong resilience. The IMF report is well timed for India's economy with a detailed analysis of its choke points. India, if restructure its policy approach, with support from RBI and manages the shortfall in long-term average rainfall, with rationalisation of expenditure, can move against the tide to rewrite its own history. That would be a defining moment for India,

Amidst all these gloomy pictures, the IMF Managing Director, Kristalina Gergova, speaks positively about the Indian economy, which dispels the pall of gloom. It is a fact that India has slipped from 4th Rank to 6th in GDP ranking, yet, there is a silver lining. This is on the basis of the findings by and reported by the IMF meeting. But this does not show a real weakness of the Indian economy, as there was a revision of the GDP base year, affecting the nominal GDP by around 4% and the Rupee's depreciation against the dollar to an extent of 11% during the financial year. The Top economies, as per GDP valuations, are the US, with 32.3 trillion dollars, China with 20.85 trillion dollars, Germany with 5.45 trillion dollars, Japan with 4.38 (4.46) trillion dollars, the UK at 4.25 trillion dollars, and India with 4.15 trillion dollars. It does not mean a slowdown of the Indian economy, but a temporary setback.

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As far as India is concerned, there is a fear of El Niño and its impact on the monsoon, with resultant lower rain, that may jeopardize the kharif crops significantly. The Trump Tariff effect, the war disruption, and finally, a super El Niño may bring pressure on fiscal health with fiscal deficit rising to 4.5 to 4.6%, as per some economists. The global headwinds put further pressure, and it has a cascading effect on the stability of the Rupee and the balance of payment

the sustained domestic demand. It seems India is no exception from what is confronting the world, and India could create some space for itself.

Of course, it is difficult to say anything with confidence because of the global headwinds. The conclusion of the war is not yet final; a return to aggression is more likely, in view of the US demand and Iran's reluctance to respond to that demand. In such a situation, everything depends on the durability of war. Along with that, there is a raging West Asia, domestic macroeconomic indicators, trade headwinds, fiscal constraints, El Niño impact, and currency depreciation, throws enough challenges for India. RBI is maintaining the status quo, so far as the rates are concerned, though it does not completely answer the growth imperative, yet, in a way, the rate has remained benign so far, after earlier cuts and in the context of a rising CPI as well as WPI, which seems to be an appropriate stand by the monetary policy committee. Brent Crude is remaining close to 100, in view of continued skirmishes, and any upward movement in the prices of oil may bring further fiscal pressure.

El Nino causing a threat to food security. Apart from El Niño, the Gulf

Power of reading: how books make better people

Dr. Vijay Garg

It is said that the books are like a mirror, showing us what we carry within ourselves. While reading, we do not only understand words, but make their meaning with our thoughts, feelings and experiences. In this process, books shape our personality and play an important role in our overall development.

Medium of self-introduction When we read a book, we start finding ourselves in its characters, events and thoughts. A good book gives us the opportunity to peek inside ourselves— We start recognizing our weaknesses, strengths and desires. This self-identification is the first step of development.

Extension of knowledge and approach Books are not just a source of information, they expand the perspective. The book of history, science, literature or philosophy — gives us the ability to see the world from a new perspective. This diversity breaks the limits of our thinking and makes us more mature.

Development of sensitivity and sympathy Stories give us a chance to peek into the lives of others. Empathy is developed within us while understanding different situations, cultures and conflicts. This quality makes us a better person and also strengthens our responsibility towards society.

Improvement in language and expression Our language is enriched

by regular studies. The stock of words increases, expression becomes clear and effective. It is very useful not only in academic life, but also in professional and personal life.

Mental balance and creativity Books also help to calm our mind and reduce stress. A good book takes us away from daily worries and enters a new world. At the same time, it also encourages our imagination, which develops creativity.

Value and character construction The ideas and messages contained in books shape our values. Moral stories, inspiring biographies and thought-provoking articles play an important role in our character formation. They help us understand the difference between right and wrong.

The meaning of all-round development is the mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual progress. Books make an important contribution to all these dimensions:

Intellectual expansion: Books are unlimited stores of knowledge. They calm our curiosity and increase logical capacity.

Moral values: Stories and religious texts explain us the difference between right and wrong. From 'Panchatantra' to 'Satyarth Prakash', literature always paves the way to morality.

Flight of Imagination: Books take us to worlds where we cannot reach physically. It lays the foundation of

creativity and innovation.

Changing round and relevance of books

In today's digital age, e-books and audio books have become more popular, but the comfort that gives a paper book in hand and its smell is incomparable. The culture of the library not only develops the habit of reading, but also teaches patience and concentration.

"A window without a room is like a brain without books".

Contribution to society building

The impact of books is not limited to the individual. An informed reader becomes a conscious citizen. When the tendency to read in society increases, superstitions and vices automatically begin to disappear. Books remind the mistakes of history to make a better future.

Conclusion Books are not only a means of knowledge, but a mirror of self-development. They introduce us to the truth inside us and guide us towards becoming a better person. In the digital age, where there is an abundance of information, books are even more important because they give us the ability to think and understand deeply.

So, if we want to make our lives rich and balanced, books must be our true friend and guide. Because when we read, we not only understand the world, but also ourselves.

Dr. Vijay Garg Retired Principal
Malout Punjab

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Supreme Court Rejects "WhatsApp University" as Legal Source in Sabarimala Hearing

New Delhi, 23/4(H.S.): The Supreme Court's ongoing hearing on the Sabarimala temple issue briefly took a lighter turn on Thursday when Justice B. V. Nagarathna dismissed references to "WhatsApp University" as a valid source of judicial information. The comment came during arguments in which senior advocate Neeraj Kishan Kaul, appearing for the Dawoodi Bohra community, cited an article by Congress leader Shashi Tharoor arguing that judicial intervention in religious matters is inappropriate. Justice Nagarathna remarked that information drawn from what she called the "WhatsApp University" cannot be treated as acceptable legal material, underscoring the court's preference for rigorous, academically grounded scholarship over widely circulated, informal content. Chief Justice Surya Kant, presiding over the nine-judge



bench, added that while the court respects prominent writers and thinkers, individual opinions remain personal and cannot substitute for reasoned legal doctrine. Justice Nagarathna then quipped that views must not originate from "WhatsApp University," prompting laughter in the courtroom and a quick clarification that the debate is not about judging which "university"

is better, but about the reliability of the source. The bench, comprising Justice B. V. Nagarathna, Justice M. M. Sundresh, Justice Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Justice Arvind Kumar, Justice A. J. Mishra, Justice P. B. Varale, Justice R. Mahadevan and Justice Joymalya Bagchi, is revisiting the broader question of religious autonomy, gender equality and the extent of judicial

interference in temple-entry disputes. The current hearing follows the court's landmark 4-1 decision of September 28, 2018, which held that long-standing discrimination against women at Sabarimala was unconstitutional and that biological and physiological differences cannot be used to curtail women's right to religious freedom. In that earlier judgment, the court observed that women have been treated as less worthy than men for decades, and pointedly noted that while society worships women in the form of goddesses, it simultaneously denies them equal access to holy spaces. The present proceedings are expected to refine the contours of that ruling, particularly in the context of religious denominations that claim exemption from gender-equality norms under the Constitution's right to manage religious affairs.

Supreme Court Stays Amit Jogi's Life Sentence in Jaggi Murder Case

New Delhi, 23/4 (H.S.): The Supreme Court has stayed the execution of a life-imprisonment sentence awarded to Amit Jogi, the son of former Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Ajit Jogi, in the 2003 murder of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader Ram Avatar Jaggi. A bench headed by Justice Vikram Nath passed the interim order while hearing a special leave petition filed by Amit Jogi challenging the Chhattisgarh High Court's verdict. Amit Jogi had moved the Supreme Court against the High Court's decision to impose life imprisonment, which overturned his earlier acquittal by the trial court. Through his senior counsel,

Kapil Sibal and Mukul Rohatgi, he argued that the High Court had passed the impugned order without giving him a proper opportunity to present his case, describing the process as procedurally unfair. The case dates back to June 4, 2003, when Ram Avatar Jaggi, then an NCP leader, was shot dead while travelling in his car in Chhattisgarh. In 2007, the trial court acquitted Amit Jogi while convicting other co-accused. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), along with the complainant Satish Jaggi, challenged the acquittal in the High Court, but in 2011 the Chhattisgarh High Court had dismissed the CBI's plea, holding

that the agency's challenge was not maintainable. However, in 2025, the Supreme Court disagreed, calling for the CBI's appeal to be decided on the merits. On a fresh hearing, the High Court reversed its earlier stance, set aside the trial court's acquittal, and held Amit Jogi to be the mastermind behind the murder, awarding him life imprisonment. The stay order by the Supreme Court now puts that sentence on hold as the top court examines the legal and factual basis of the High Court's decision, keeping the criminal-procedural aspect of the decades-old Jaggi murder saga in the judicial spotlight.

India and Egypt Resolve to Step Up Defence Industry Ties and Strategic Collaboration

New Delhi, 23/4(H.S.): India and Egypt have agreed to deepen their defence-industry cooperation and work jointly under a fresh roadmap, following the 11th India-Egypt Joint Defence Committee (JDC) meeting held in Cairo. The talks, which concluded on Wednesday, laid out a structured plan for bilateral defence engagement through 2026-27 and underscored both nations' shared focus on maritime security, joint exercises, and technology partnerships. During the JDC meeting, the two sides reviewed progress since the previous committee session and finalised a joint roadmap for expanding defence cooperation. Anchored in their broader strategic partnership, the roadmap prioritises strengthening military connectivity, intensifying combined training, scaling up naval collaboration, and enhancing technology transfer and co-development initiatives. Officials stressed that deepening defence-industrial ties will now be a central pillar of the bilateral relationship, building on Egypt's established manufacturing base and India's rapidly expanding defence-



production ecosystem. An Indian delegation led by Joint Secretary (International Cooperation) Amitabh Prasad, with senior officials from the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces, participated in the talks alongside an Egyptian team comprising senior officers from the Egyptian Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence. The Indian side highlighted that India's defence-industry turnover has now crossed 20 billion dollars, with exports to over 100

countries amounting to roughly 4 billion dollars, underscoring its growing role as a supplier of advanced defence platforms and systems. A key outcome of the meeting was the inaugural India-Egypt Navy-to-Navy staff talks, which focused on enhancing coordination in the broader Indo-Mediterranean region. The delegation lauded the Indian Navy's role in upholding freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean Region and underscored the importance of

India's Information Fusion Centre for Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) in bolstering maritime domain awareness and security-related information-sharing. The Indian delegation also met with Lieutenant General Amr Abdel Rahman Sokar, Commander of the Egyptian Air Force, and expressed appreciation for the close cooperation between the two air forces. In a symbolic gesture, the delegation paid tribute to Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the First and Second World Wars by laying a wreath at the Helipolis War Memorial, reinforcing the enduring historical and emotional bonds between the two nations. By aligning on a forward-looking defence-cooperation plan and prioritising industrial collaboration, India and Egypt have effectively signalled their intent to transform an already robust strategic partnership into a more operationally integrated and technology-driven relationship, with significant implications for regional security architecture and defence-trade dynamics.

New Delhi, 23/4 (H.S.): The Delhi High Court has directed the removal of all videos related to the ongoing hearing in a plea filed by senior advocate Vaibhav Singh, which sought to recuse Justice Swarnakanta Sharma from hearing former Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's case. A bench headed by Justice V. Kameshwara Rao not only ordered the takedown of these clips from social-media platforms but has also issued a notice to Kejriwal himself in the matter. The directive came during Thursday's hearing, when the court took exception to the public dissemination of proceedings from Justice Sharma's bench. Meta informed the court that it had already taken down certain URLs, while Google told the bench that it had not removed any YouTube links, arguing that those clips did not contain an official recording of the court's proceedings. The petitioner challenged this, asserting that the videos in question clearly featured recordings of the judicial hearing. In response, the court instructed Google to ensure the removal of all videos depicting the court's proceedings. The case stems from the special trial court's order acquitting Kejriwal in the Delhi excise-policy scam matter, against which the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has moved the High Court. The petitioner's



plea targets the Bench hearing the CBI's challenge — specifically the video recording of the hearing at which Kejriwal's plea to recuse Justice Sharma was taken up — and opposes the uploading of such footage on platforms like X, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. The petition alleges that Kejriwal and others, including journalist Ravish Kumar and Congress leader Digvijaya Singh, as well as AAP leaders Manish Sisodia, Sanjay Singh, Sanjeev Jha, Puran Deep Sahni, Jarnail Singh, Mukesh Ahlawat and Vinay Mishra, have violated the court's dignity by circulating edited or selective portions of the hearing. It claims that these videos were edited or selectively posted to mislead the public, undermine the institution of the judiciary and mount unwarranted pressure on

both the court and the central government. The plea also accuses Kejriwal of having made baseless and misleading arguments in court, which were then amplified online. Earlier, on March 22, then-hearing judge Justice Tejaswini Karia had recused herself from the case, expressing reservations about proceeding further. However, on April 20, Justice Swarnakanta Sharma's bench rejected Kejriwal's own application for recusal, stating that a judge cannot be removed from a case merely on the basis of conjecture or perception of bias. The current bench's order to delete social-media recordings reinforces the court's stance on preserving the integrity of judicial proceedings and preventing their politicisation through selective online dissemination.

PM Modi Puts The Spirit of Altruism Under the Spotlight Through Sanskrit Wisdom

New Delhi, 23/4 (H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi has used a Sanskrit shloka to underscore the value of selfless service and compassion in everyday life, invoking classical Indian wisdom to inspire a culture of giving without expectation. On Thursday, he shared a well-known subhashit on X (formerly Twitter), linking the natural generosity of the world around us to the ideal conduct of noble-minded individuals. In essence, the shloka suggests that just as the sun spontaneously opens the lotus, the moon naturally awakens the night-blooming kumudini, and the clouds rain down water without being asked, truly virtuous people likewise devote themselves to the welfare of others



without looking for reward or recognition. It draws a quiet parallel between the selfless functioning of nature and the ethical conduct expected of human beings. Through this

post, the Prime Minister appealed to citizens to internalise the ideals of paropakara (service to others), karuna (compassion), and nishkama seva (selfless service).

President Murmu Receives Credentials of Envoy from Four Nations in Ceremonial Function

New Delhi, 23/4 (H.S.): President Droupadi Murmu formally accepted the credentials of the ambassadors from four countries during a ceremonial function at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Thursday. The ceremony marked the official commencement of the diplomatic tenures of the envoys of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia and Guinea-Bissau in India. Speaking on behalf of the Rashtrapati Bhavan, officials noted that President Murmu received the credentials from the following representatives: Vithaya Xayavong, Ambassador of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; Emilie Ayaza Mushobekwa, Ambassador of the



Democratic Republic of the Congo; H Wing Commander Alex Lunyazo Tukuhupwela (Retd.), High Commissioner of the Republic of Namibia; and Antonio Serifo Embalo, Ambassador of the

Republic of Guinea-Bissau. The presentation of credentials is a formal diplomatic ritual that signifies the recognition of an envoy's authority to represent their country in India and serves

as a symbol of the strengthening of bilateral ties. The President's act of accepting the credentials reflects India's continued commitment to deepening political, economic and cultural engagement with nations across Asia, Africa and the Pacific region. The ceremony was conducted in a dignified and traditional setting at Rashtrapati Bhavan, underscoring the constitutional importance of accreditation and the institutional continuity of India's foreign-policy framework. With the arrival of these new envoys, New Delhi is poised to further expand cooperation in areas such as trade, investment, capacity-building, and multilateral coordination in international forums.

Crucial Polling Day: Bengal's Phase 1 and Tamil Nadu's Full Assembly Battle Unfold

New Delhi, 24/4 (H.S.): In a pivotal electoral milestone, West Bengal kicks off its Assembly elections with the first phase across 152 constituencies today, while Tamil Nadu witnesses voting on all 234 seats in a single, high-stakes showdown. West

Bengal's polls follow an exhaustive Special Intensive Revision of the electoral rolls, ensuring meticulous voter verification amid unprecedented security measures. Spanning 16 districts—eight in North Bengal, three in South Bengal,

and five in Junglemahal—polling stations will buzz from dawn till dusk under the watch of 2,407 companies of central forces. Purba Medinipur leads with 273 deployments, as every booth falls within a 100-meter cordon of paramilitary

control, with four personnel stationed per site to safeguard integrity. The Election Commission has issued stern directives: any trace of perfume, ink, glue, or chemicals on EVM buttons will trigger "vote tampering" charges, potentially voiding

polls and mandating repolls. Presiding officers must rigorously inspect machines pre-voting to thwart foul play. Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu's 5.73 crore voters will shape the destinies of 4,023 candidates across its 234 constituencies,



putting the DMK-led alliance against the AIADMK front in a fiercely contested single-phase frenzy from 7 AM to 6 PM. As democracy pulses through these southern strongholds and eastern frontiers, the outcomes promise to redraw India's political contours.

Kremlin Sets Strict Terms: Putin-Zelensky Talks Only for Final Ukraine Settlement

Moscow, 23/4 (H.S.): The Kremlin has drawn a firm line on potential direct negotiations between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, insisting that any summit must focus solely on sealing a conclusive end to the ongoing conflict. This stance, articulated by presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov, underscores Moscow's readiness for talks but only under conditions that guarantee tangible outcomes. Peskov, speaking on Russian state television and quoted by TASS, emphasized the necessity of a clear purpose. "The main thing is the goal of this meeting. Why should they meet? Putin has said he is ready for a meeting in Moscow at any moment," he stated. He added that discussions would be productive only if aimed at "finalising agreements,"



rejecting vague diplomatic overtures amid the protracted war now entering its third year. This position emerges as faint glimmers of de-escalation appear on the horizon. Recent reports from Reuters and the Associated Press highlight stalled U.S.-brokered ceasefire efforts, with European diplomats noting Russia's incremental territorial gains in

eastern Ukraine. Kremlin insiders, cited by RBC, reveal Putin's preference for a Moscow-hosted summit to project strength, contrasting with Zelensky's calls for neutral ground like Istanbul, where preliminary talks faltered last month. The Kremlin's rigid preconditions reflect broader strategic calculations. Analysts from the Carnegie Moscow

Center argue that Moscow seeks to lock in control over annexed regions like Donetsk and Luhansk before broader peace terms, leveraging recent military momentum. Zelensky, in a CNN interview aired yesterday, dismissed premature summits without preconditions like troop withdrawals, accusing Russia of using talks as a stalling tactic. Western allies, per BBC monitoring, view the Kremlin's deadline-like framing as a bid to divide NATO unity, especially with U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's incoming administration signaling a potential pivot toward rapid negotiations. As global stakeholders watch closely, the Kremlin's ultimatum injects urgency into the diplomatic calendar. With frontline clashes unabated and winter logistics looming, Peskov's words signal that Moscow holds the initiative — but at the risk of prolonging stalemate if Kyiv demurs.

Trump Hails Iran's Reprieve for 8 Women Protesters After Personal Plea Amid Hormuz Standoff

Washington, 23/4 (H.S.): President Donald Trump announced on Wednesday that Iran had canceled plans to execute eight women arrested during anti-government protests, crediting his direct intervention as a positive step toward peace talks. This development unfolds against the backdrop of Iran's refusal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz on the same day, citing the ongoing U.S. naval blockade as a ceasefire violation. Trump revealed on Truth Social that four of the women would be released immediately, with the others receiving one-month prison sentences instead of death, following his Tuesday plea linking their freedom to negotiation goodwill. Iran's judiciary swiftly dismissed the claims as "false news," insisting the women never faced execution, though rights groups note at least one protester from January unrest was sentenced to death. Trump framed this as "very good



news," thanking Iranian leaders for respecting his request shortly after extending the Pakistan-brokered truce. The announcement came hours after Trump prolonged the two-week ceasefire to allow more time for Islamabad-mediated discussions on the Hormuz crisis, nuclear issues, and regional de-escalation. Yet Tehran's parallel rejection of strait reopening—voiced by Parliament Speaker

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf—highlights persistent distrust, with ship seizures by Iran's Revolutionary Guards fueling mutual breach accusations. The women were detained amid 2025-2026 Iranian protests, brutally suppressed with over 2,200 executions reported earlier, as Tehran consolidates power post-U.S.-Israeli strikes that ignited the seven-week war.

Indian Envoy Meets President Of Israel, Reaffirms New Delhi's Commitment To Strengthen Partnership

Jerusalem 23/4 (H.S.): India's Ambassador to Israel, J.P. Singh, reaffirmed New Delhi's commitment to further strengthen Special Strategic Partnership between the two nations during a meeting with Israeli President Isaac Herzog on the sidelines of an event. Singh met President Herzog during an event celebrating Israel's 78th Independence Day and extended warm greetings of the Indian leadership on the occasion. "At an event celebrating Israel's 78th Independence Day, Amb. J.P. Singh extended his warmest greetings to President H.E. Isaac Herzog on behalf of the leadership and people of India. Amb. reaffirmed India's commitment to further strengthening the India-Israel Special Strategic Partnership," Embassy of India in Israel posted on X. On Wednesday, President Droupadi Murmu extended wishes to Herzog on the occasion of Israel's 78th Independence Day and stated that the Special Strategic Partnership between the two nations continues to grow. "On the joyous occasion of the 78th anniversary of Israel's Independence, I extend heartfelt best wishes to H.E. Isaac Herzog and the people of Israel. The India-Israel Special Strategic Partnership continues to grow stronger, reflecting the deep friendship and shared commitment of our two nations



to peace, innovation and mutual prosperity," the President's Secretariat stated in a post on X. Responding to President Murmu's wishes, Herzog stated that Israel deeply appreciates its special friendship with India and expressed readiness to work to strengthen it across various sectors. "Thank you President of India for your good wishes on Israel's Independence Day. We deeply appreciate the special friendship between Israel and India, and we continue to work to strengthen it across all fields of cooperation," Herzog posted on X. On April 14, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar held a telephonic conversation with his Israeli counterpart Gideon Sa'ar, discussing West Asia situation and the Strait of Hormuz. "Had a telecon this afternoon with Israel

FM Gideon Sa'ar. Our discussion covered different aspects of the West Asia situation," EAM Jaishankar posted on X. Sa'ar stated that he told EAM Jaishankar that the US' stance in the negotiations that would prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons is important for the international community. "A good conversation, as always, with my friend, India's Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar. We discussed Iran, the Strait of Hormuz, and Lebanon. I said that the firm American stance in the negotiations on conditions that would prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons (no enrichment in Iran, removal of enriched material from Iran) is critical for the entire international community," the Israeli Foreign Minister posted on X after the call.

Trump Extends Iran Ceasefire With No Deadline

Washington: The Donald Trump administration has extended its ceasefire with Iran while maintaining a sweeping naval blockade, with the White House insisting there is no deadline for negotiations and signalling continued economic pressure on Tehran. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said the United States is pursuing a dual-track approach, pausing military strikes while intensifying financial and maritime restrictions. "President Trump announced an extension of the cease fire... and generously offering a bit of flexibility to a regime who has been completely tarnished because of Operation Epic Fury," she told reporters inside the White House on Wednesday. She made clear that the pause in combat operations does not signal a reduction in pressure. "There's a cease fire with the military and kinetic strikes but Operation Economic Fury continues, and the effective and successful naval blockade continues as well," she said. According to the White House, the blockade is inflicting

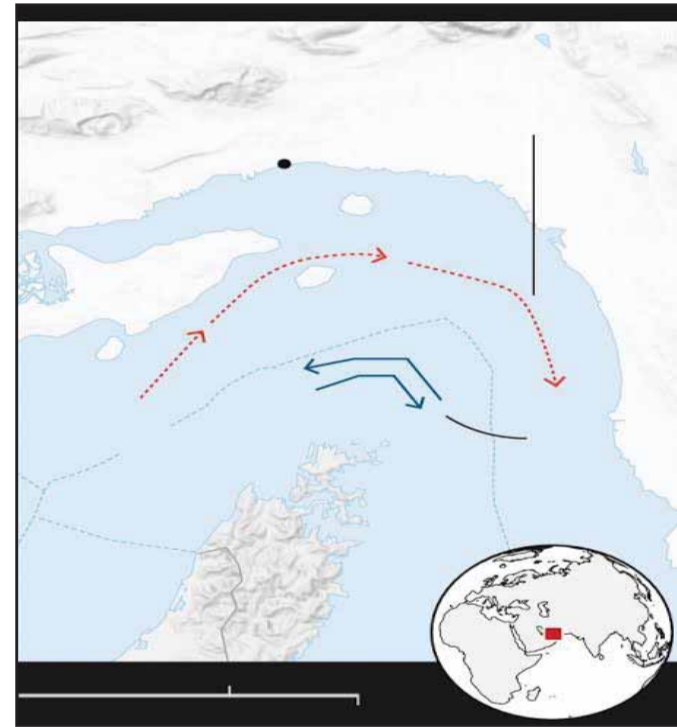
significant economic damage. "We are completely strangling their economy through this blockade... they're losing \$500 million a day," Leavitt said, adding that Iran is unable to move oil shipments or sustain payments. Despite the escalation in economic pressure, the administration has deliberately avoided setting a timeline for negotiations. "The President has not set a firm deadline... ultimately, the timeline will be dictated by the commander in chief," she said, rejecting reports of a short window for talks. Pressed on whether the ceasefire or blockade would continue indefinitely, Leavitt declined to provide clarity, reiterating that the President would determine the course "when he feels in the best interest of the United States and the American people." She also pointed to divisions within Iran's leadership as a key factor shaping the negotiations. "There's obviously a lot of internal division... a battle between the pragmatists and the hardliners," she said, noting that Washington is waiting for a "unified response"

from Tehran. The White House acknowledged that conflicting signals from Iran have complicated the process. "What they say publicly is much different than what they concede to the United States... privately," Leavitt said, cautioning against relying on official Iranian rhetoric. She said US negotiators have already engaged directly with Iranian counterparts but emphasised uncertainty over who ultimately holds decision-making authority within the regime. Defending the administration's posture, Leavitt argued that Washington retains the upper hand. "The cards are in President Trump's hands right now... Iran is in a very weak position," she said. She also defended the President's public messaging during the crisis, saying it had not undermined negotiations. "The United States and President Trump have been very clear in our demands and our red lines," she said. Separately, Leavitt said the administration is monitoring developments in the aviation sector amid reports of a potential bailout for Spirit Airlines, but offered no details.

Hormuz Standoff: Iran's Defiant Stand Against U.S. Naval Siege Imperils Ceasefire Hopes

Tehran, 23/4 (H.S.): Iran has firmly rejected reopening the Strait of Hormuz, on Wednesday citing the ongoing U.S. naval blockade of its ports as a direct breach of the fragile ceasefire between the two nations. This critical chokepoint, through which one-fifth of global oil flows in peacetime, remains a flashpoint amid escalating maritime confrontations. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) announced the seizure of two container ships—the Panama-flagged MSC Francesca and the Liberia-flagged Epaminondas—after they allegedly violated warnings in the strait.

A third vessel, the Panama-flagged Euphoria, sustained bridge damage from IRGC gunfire, according to UK-based maritime trackers, underscoring the perilous volatility in these waters. These actions followed U.S. interceptions of Iranian-linked



ships, with both sides accusing the other of ceasefire violations. President Donald Trump extended the truce initially brokered by Pakistan—on Tuesday at mediators' behest, yet

Iranian officials, including Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, decry the blockade as undermining any true peace. Talks in Islamabad have stalled over Hormuz control, Iran's nuclear ambitions, and regional ceasefires, with a second round potentially looming by week's end per U.S. sources. Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei acknowledged Pakistan's mediation but offered no concessions. The standoff stems from a U.S.-Israeli offensive seven weeks ago that prompted Iran to shutter the strait, retaliating against strikes on its infrastructure. Amid domestic protests crushed brutally and IRGC consolidation of power, Tehran demands asset releases and war reparations in negotiations. Gulf states, battered by economic fallout, now push for curbs on Iran's nuclear program and Hormuz dominance.

US Lawmakers Back Strong India Ties

Washington, 23/4 (H.S.): Powerful American lawmakers across party lines called for deeper India-US cooperation on security, trade and global stability, even as some flagged strains in ties over tariffs and policy differences. At an "Exhibition on Human Cost of Terrorism," organized by Indian Embassy at the Capitol Hill, members of Congress described India as a key strategic partner, underscoring shared democratic values and the need for closer coordination in addressing global challenges, particularly terrorism. Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi said the relationship "is not as strong as it should be," pointing to what he described as a more "transactional relationship" and the impact of tariffs. He added, however, that ties "should transcend parties... and... rise to new heights over time." At the same time, Krishnamoorthi stressed common



ground between the two countries. "Our two countries... share so much in common," he said, citing a commitment to freedom, equality and a rules-based order. Congressman Dave Taylor described India as "a hugely important ally of the United States," calling for "a coordinated policy" to address global threats, including terrorism. Others highlighted the strategic dimension of the partnership. Congressman Bill Huizenga, Chairman of the

South and Central Asia Subcommittee for Foreign Affairs, said India is "extremely important... both economically, strategically," adding that cooperation spans counter-terrorism, intelligence-sharing and maritime security. Huizenga pointed to the importance of ensuring open sea lanes, saying the United States is focused on "making sure that there's an ability to transit the free... seas," an area where India plays a

growing role. Congressman Rich McCormick emphasised the long-term potential of the partnership, describing the "synergy between our two countries." "When you look at what America and India together are poised to do... (it) could usher in an era of peace, economic prosperity," he said, linking the relationship to broader global stability. Congressman Ro Khanna, co-chair of the India Caucus, said the partnership has taken on greater importance in confronting transnational threats. "Terrorism isn't just contained to one region... it spreads and threatens freedom around the world," Khanna said, adding that both countries must deepen "intelligence sharing (and) defence cooperation." Congressman Jonathan Jackson tied the relationship to global economic pressures, noting that instability affects both nations.

US Defends Russia Oil Waiver Amid Price Fears

Washington, 23/4 (H.S.): US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent defended a temporary sanctions waiver affecting Russian oil, saying it helped prevent a sharper spike in global prices, even as Democrats warned it could boost Moscow's war finances and keep fuel costs high. Testifying before a Senate panel, Bessent said the move was aimed at stabilising supply during a volatile period. "Treasury

was able to create the more than 250 million barrels on the water," he said. He added that without the waiver, prices could have surged further. "As they came in today, the oil prices are at \$100. If we had not done that sanctions relief, they might have been at \$150." Bessent said the policy was designed to protect consumers. "100 per cent of 100 is less than 80 per cent of 150," he said. Chris Coons said the

waiver risks sending billions of dollars to Russia. He argued it undermines pressure on Moscow at a critical time. "We the folks in Delaware are buying \$4 a gallon gas today," Coons said. He questioned whether the policy had delivered any real relief. Bessent rejected claims that Russia or Iran had gained significantly. "I couldn't disagree more," he said. He said the decision to extend the waiver was influenced

by global concerns. "I was approached by more than 10 of the most vulnerable and poorest countries... and they asked us to extend that sanction and it's only for 30 days," he said. Lawmakers also flagged rising fuel costs. Jack Reed said Americans are paying "over \$4 a gallon at the pump," warning that prices remain a burden on households. Bessent pointed to market trends.

Vedanta Fixes 1st May as record date for demerger; announces share allotment details

Mumbai, 23/4(DMS): Vedanta Limited today announced that its Board of Directors has approved key steps to operationalize its previously announced composite scheme of arrangement, marking a significant milestone in the company's ongoing strategic reorganization.

The Board has fixed 1st May, 2026 as the effective date and record date for demerger to determine shareholders eligible to receive shares in the resulting entities under the demerger.

A significant step, the demerger will help in simplifying Vedanta's corporate structure with sector focussed independent businesses and provide opportunities to global investors, including sovereign wealth funds, retail investors and strategic investors, with direct investment opportunities in dedicated pure-play companies linked to India's remarkable

growth story through Vedanta's world class assets. It will also provide a platform for individual units to pursue strategic agendas more freely and better align with customers, investment cycles and end markets. Eligible shareholders of Vedanta Limited will receive shares in the resulting companies as per the following ratios:

Vedanta Aluminium Metal Limited (VAML): 1 equity share (?1 face value) for every 1 Vedanta share held
Talwandi Sabo Power Limited (to be renamed Vedanta Power Limited): 1 equity share (?10 face value) for every 1 Vedanta share held
Malco Energy Limited (to be renamed Vedanta Oil & Gas Limited): 1 equity share (?1 face value) for every 1 Vedanta share held
Vedanta Iron and Steel Limited (VISL):

1 equity share (1 face value) for every 1 Vedanta share held

Key Highlights of the Reorganization:

The demerger will result in the creation of four independent, sector-focused entities across aluminium, power, oil & gas, and iron ore & steel. Talwandi Sabo Power Limited and Malco Energy Limited will be rebranded to Vedanta Power to reflect their sectoral focus.

The demerger will allow sharper operational focus and agility, helping the demerged businesses align more closely with their respective market cycles, customer requirements and investment needs. It will also enhance the visibility of individual business performance, making it easier for markets to appropriately value each vertical, thereby unlocking embedded value.

Smartphone Production Up 8 Pc, Exports Surge 28 Pc

New Delhi, 23/4(H.S.): The shipments of 'Made in India' smartphones grew 8 per cent (on-year) in 2025, driven by a 28 per cent surge in exports and a 1 per cent growth in domestic sell-in, according to a new report on Thursday. Exports accounted for approximately one-third of all smartphones manufactured in India, said Counterpoint Research's 'Make in India' Tracker. Foxconn Hon Hai emerged as the key beneficiary with a 48 per cent YoY growth in its exports, driven by strong Apple shipments. Tata Electronics, also a key assembler of Apple devices, further contributed to this export surge. Samsung's in-house production saw an uptick in its export contribution as well, recording a 4% YoY growth. "Exports are becoming increasingly central not only for India-based smartphone EMS players but also for the country's broader export strategy. Electronics grew to become the

third largest export category in FY25 (financial year ended March 31), driven largely by smartphones, and is on track to become the second largest category in FY26," said Research Director Tarun Pathak. The government's recognition of this sector's growing importance is evident in the SEZ reforms notified last year, budgetary support and reforms announced in this year's Union Budget, and the most recent FDI relaxations. "However, near-term headwinds such as disruptions due to the US-Iran war could impact logistics, while sustained increases in memory prices may create demand-side pressures over the longer term," he noted. Domestic EMS players continue to expand even as the first phase of the PLI scheme nears completion. This has been possible due to exports and sustained premiumization in the domestic market, said senior research analyst Prachir Singh.

HSBC Takes Rare Double Hit at India, Cuts Local Equities to Underweight

New Delhi, 23/4(H.S.): Global broker HSBC has delivered a second, sharp downgrading blow to Indian equities within less than a month, cutting its allocation from "neutral" to "underweight" and rattling local market sentiment just as the benchmark indices already slog through one of their weakest global-ranking runs in years. The move adds technical weight to foreign-investor concerns over oil-shock-driven inflation and a less-attractive growth-earnings mix in India. This is not HSBC's first adjustment: on March 31, it had already trimmed its India rating from "overweight" to "neutral," wary of stretched valuations. Now, citing a combination of Middle East tensions, surging crude prices and softening corporate-earnings prospects, the bank has slid India further down the ladder, calling the market "vulnerable among emerging-Asia peers." In its latest note, HSBC argued that the war-



driven spike in oil prices— weakened only partially by geopolitical risk rather than fundamentals—has elevated the inflation and growth threat in the world's third-largest oil importer. Brent crude, it pointed out, has soared more than 40 percent since the West Asia conflagration began in late February and has traded above 100 dollars per barrel, raising the risk of slower

consumption, higher input costs and a sharper cut in India's projected earnings growth. The brokerage estimated that if elevated oil and gas markets remain tight through the June and September quarters, headline earnings-growth forecasts for Indian corporates could be trimmed by up to 1.5 percentage points, swallowing much of the recovery bulls had priced in for

gained 1.05 percent to close at 7,137.95. The Nasdaq Composite added 397.60 points, or 1.64 percent, finishing at 24,657.57, underscoring lingering confidence in the domestic growth outlook. However, the mood has soured in the overnight session. Dow Jones futures are currently trading 368.49 points, or 0.74 percent, lower at 49,120.55, reflecting rising anxiety over the escalation in West Asia. The collapse of nascent peace talks and the standoff between the United States and Iran over the Strait of Hormuz have reignited fears of energy-market disruption and a broader regional conflict, prompting a shift toward risk-off positioning. European markets felt the impact in the previous session, with persistent pressure across

bourses. The UK-listed FTSE 100 ended 0.21 percent weaker at 10,476.46, France's CAC 40 slipped 0.97 percent to 8,156.43, and Germany's DAX lost 0.31 percent, closing at 24,194.90. The sell-off suggests that investors are factoring in higher geopolitical risk premiums and possible volatility in oil and industrial-exposed sectors.

Asia is bearing the brunt of the risk-off sentiment today, with almost all major indices in the red. The GIFT Nifty is trading 205 points, or 0.84 percent, lower at 24,159, signaling that Indian futures markets expect a weaker open for the domestic indices. Singapore's Straits Times Index has fallen 0.97 percent to 4,954.41, reflecting sentiment-driven declines across the region.

fiscal 2027.

Domestic equity valuations, HSBC added, have already rolled over from earlier peaks, but further repricing looms if analysts begin lower-earning estimates in a coordinated manner.

The bank also linked the downgrade to broader foreign-investor anxiety. Indian benchmarks, it noted, are among the worst-performing globally this year: the Nifty has fallen about 6.7 percent and the Sensex roughly 7.9 percent, as foreign portfolio investors unwind positions amid rupee-weakening worries and growth-temperament jitters. As of now, overseas funds have offloaded around 18.5 billion dollars of Indian equities in 2026 after a record 18.9-billion-dollar sale last year. HSBC's warning becomes even sharper when framed against its earlier optimism. The bank also flagged the potential double-knock of

structural headwinds in India's software-services segment— where artificial intelligence-driven cost-savings abroad could dent exports—and a persistently pricey oil term structure, which could force the rupee lower and amplify import-bill pressures. Together, that dynamic could make India less attractive than certain North and East Asian peers within the broader emerging-Asia equity basket. For domestic investors, the HSBC note is a cautionary marker: one of the world's largest global banks is now explicitly steering clients away from aggressive India bets, not just because of local flaws but because of a tighter global energy-risk-growth nexus. Even if some domestic players still see value in selective pockets, the message is clear—India's premium over other emerging markets has shrunk, and the onus of proving that premium is back now rests squarely on earnings.

Markets Rebound After Morning Sell-Off; Sensex and Nifty Pare Early Losses

New Delhi, 23/4(H.S.): India's domestic equity benchmarks staged a partial recovery on Thursday after a sharp early-session dip, as investors gradually stepped in to buy on weakness and trimmed initial losses in the Sensex and Nifty. Although the broader market remained in negative territory by mid-morning, the trend shifted from outright weakness to a more nuanced, range-bound trade. The BSE Sensex opened lower at 77,983.66, down 532.83 points, and quickly slipped further to an intraday low of 77,693.06, losing 823.43 points on the day. By 10:00 a.m., however, aggressive buying interest helped pare losses, with the index trading at 78,084.83, down 431.66 points or about 0.55 percent. Similarly, the NSE Nifty began the session at 24,202.35, dropping to 24,134.80 before regaining ground to 24,287.45, still 90.65 points or 0.37 percent lower. Across the broader market, about 2,704 scrips were actively trading by 10:00 a.m., reflecting healthy participation amid volatility. Of these, 1,349 shares were in the green, while 1,355 were in the red, indicating a near-equal split



between gainers and losers. Among the 30 Sensex constituents, only eight were trading higher, while 22 were in negative territory, underscoring that heavy-weight sentiment remained cautious even as some counters found support. Sectoral and stock-specific moves painted a mixed picture. Pharma heavyweights such as Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, Cipla and Sun Pharmaceutical, along with power

major ONGC and food-and-FMCG giant Nestlé, posted gains ranging from 1.01 percent to 6.37 percent, bucking the broader sell-off. On the flip side, technology-heavy Tech Mahindra, Eternus, auto giant Mahindra & Mahindra, financial-services firm Shriram Finance and premium-retailer Trent all declined between 1.98 percent and 2.34 percent, dragging down the major indices. The recovery in the benchmark indices

comes on the back of a subdued close on Wednesday, when the Sensex ended 756.84 points, or 0.95 percent, lower at 78,516.49, while the Nifty slipped 198.50 points, or 0.81 percent, to 24,378.10. Market participants now await the remainder of the session to see whether the morning-hour rebound sustains or whether profit-booking and global cues push sentiment back toward weakness.

Gold Edges Lower Across India's Bullion Markets as Silver Holds Steady

New Delhi, 23/4(H.S.): Bullion dealers across India reported a continued softening in gold prices on Thursday, marking the fourth consecutive day of weakness in the sarrafa (jewellery) market, while silver rates remained unchanged, reflecting a pause in the white metal's recent volatility. According to local trade data, 24-carat gold is currently trading in a band of ?1,54,740 to ?1,55,450 per 10 grams in most major cities, down slightly from the previous session amid a broader correction in global bullion markets. The weaker tone coincides with stabilising international gold benchmarks and a firmer rupee against the dollar, which tend to cap domestic premiums. In the national capital, 24-carat gold is quoted at ?1,54,890 per 10 grams, with 22-carat gold trading at ?1,41,990 per 10 grams. Mumbai, regarded as the country's financial hub, sees 24-carat gold at ?1,54,740 per 10 grams and 22-carat at ?1,41,840 per 10 grams, mirroring the muted trend seen in western India. In Ahmedabad, 24-carat gold is quoted at ?1,54,790 per 10 grams and 22-carat at ?1,41,890 per 10 grams, while Chennai witnesses slightly



higher premiums, with 24-carat around ?1,55,450 per 10 grams and 22-carat near ?1,42,490 per 10 grams. Kolkata posts 24-carat at ?1,54,740 per 10 grams and 22-carat at ?1,41,840 per 10 grams, keeping pace with the national average. Other key centres follow a similar pattern. Bhopal quotes 24-carat gold at ?1,54,790 per 10 grams and 22-carat at ?1,41,890 per 10 grams, while Lucknow sees 24-carat at ?1,54,890 per 10 grams and 22-carat at ?1,41,990 per 10 grams. Patna posts 24-carat at ?1,54,790 per 10 grams and 22-carat at ?1,41,890 per 10 grams, and Jaipur quotes 24-carat at ?1,54,890 per 10 grams and 22-carat at ?1,41,990 per 10 grams. In southern states, jewellery hubs such as

Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Bhubaneswar are also witnessing a downbeat bias in gold. In these cities, 24-carat gold is trading at ?1,54,740 per 10 grams, and 22-carat at ?1,41,840 per 10 grams, broadly in line with Mumbai and Kolkata benchmarks. Silver, by contrast, has held its ground. In Delhi's sarrafa market, silver continues to trade at Wednesday's closing level of ?2,64,900 per kilogram, reflecting limited fresh movement in global futures and a stable rupee-dollar dynamic. The white metal's price per gram remains effectively unchanged at ?264.90, indicating that traders are refraining from aggressive repricing ahead of upcoming global data releases and central-bank cues.

Oil Rally Surges Past Key Thresholds as Hormuz Blockade Tightens

New Delhi, 23/4(H.S.): International crude-oil prices have extended their sharp upward run for a fourth consecutive day, lifted by intensifying geopolitical tensions in West Asia and a near-complete freeze in shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. Brent crude has surged above the psychologically

critical 105-dollar barrier, while West Texas Intermediate (WTI) has climbed close to the 100-dollar mark, underscoring growing concerns about a prolonged supply-side squeeze. Brent crude, the global benchmark, jumped to 105.86 dollars per barrel in early trade, briefly breaching the 105-dollar level before edging slightly

lower. By 9:15 a.m. Indian time, the contract was trading at 103.76 dollars per barrel, up 1.80 percent on the day, having opened above 100 dollars at 101.66 dollars per barrel. Similarly, WTI crude opened at 92.69 dollars per barrel and quickly advanced to 97.22 dollars per barrel, before easing to 94.97 dollars per barrel, still

reflecting a 2.13-percent gain. The surge is being driven by the virtual standstill in tanker traffic via the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic chokepoint that carries about a fifth of global oil exports. The breakdown of peace talks between the United States and Iran has left both sides digging in: Washington has maintained a

naval blockade aimed at coercing Tehran, while Iran has refused to allow Hormuz to be used for international trade, arguing that it will not bow to external pressure. On Wednesday, Iranian gunboats fired on cargo vessels near the Omani coast, a move widely interpreted as an attempt to

signal resolve and deter freedom-of-navigation operations. The incident has further unnerved shipping and energy markets, as insurers and charterers reassess risk and many carriers reroute or delay voyages, adding to freight costs and delays. Analysts warn that the hardening stance of

both Washington and Tehran makes an immediate resumption of normal Hormuz-based oil flows extremely unlikely. President Donald Trump has announced a ceasefire, yet at the same time insisted on keeping the Strait under pressure, effectively prolonging the supply-disruption scenario.

Tamil Nadu Polls: MNM chief Kamal Haasan, daughter Shruti Haasan cast votes in Chennai



Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) chief and veteran actor Kamal Haasan, along with his daughter Shruti Haasan, arrived at Alwarpet School to cast their votes. The father-daughter duo was seen reaching the polling station amid security arrangements as voting took place across key constituencies in the state. Actor S. Ajith Kumar also cast his vote at a polling station in the Thiruvanniyur area of Chennai. Tamil Nadu BJP Vice President Khusbu Sundar also cast her vote in Mylapore. Speaking with ANI, she urged everyone to exercise their right to vote, hoping they would make the right decision. "You can see the smile on my face that says it all. Casting my vote has been my biggest democratic right, and I think this matters a lot to me as a citizen of the country... Today is the time for people to take a call and a decision, and we leave it to them," she said. Polling for the Assembly elections began in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal (Phase 1) amid tight security on Thursday. The voting will conclude at 6:00 pm today in both states. The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly elections are being held in a single phase today, while West Bengal will witness two phases of polling in the Assembly elections 2026, with the second phase scheduled to take place on April 29. The counting of votes is scheduled for May 4. Polling is being held for 234 Assembly constituencies across Tamil Nadu. The main contest is expected between the DMK-led alliance, which includes the Indian National Congress, DMDK, and VCK, and the National Democratic Alliance led by AIADMK with BJP and PMK as allies. With the DMK banking on its welfare record, the AIADMK-led NDA is fighting for a comeback. Actor-turned-politician Vijay is also set to make his electoral debut with his party TVK, which could turn the contest into a three-way fight.

Allu Arjun Moves into Luxurious Jubilee Hills Home



Tollywood superstar Allu Arjun, riding high on the blockbuster success of Pushpa 2, is set to move into a lavish new residence in Hyderabad's upscale Jubilee Hills neighborhood. He will be joined by his wife Sneha Reddy, their children Allu Ayaan and Allu Arha, and other family members. The sprawling property covers approximately 4,000 square yards and is estimated to be worth ₹100 crore.

The actor is also expected to host a grand housewarming ceremony later this year. In the meantime, reports suggest that Allu Arjun has rented a ₹16 lakh apartment on Juhu Tara Road in Mumbai, temporarily relocating for his pan-India projects. On the professional front, Allu

Arjun is gearing up to headline the eagerly awaited drama Raaka, directed by acclaimed filmmaker Atlee. The film marks his first on-screen collaboration with Bollywood superstar Deepika Padukone. The project, previously referred to as "#AA22xA6," was officially renamed Raaka on Arjun's 44th birthday. The first look from the movie revealed an intense close-up of a bald Arjun with a wolf-like claw partially covering his rugged face, his eyes fixed with predatory intensity. The makers teased fans, saying, "#AA22xA6 is now #Raaka. Prepare yourself for a vision beyond limits @alluarjunonline @atlee47 @deepikapadukone." Beyond Raaka, Allu Arjun has an exciting slate of projects ahead. He is collaborating with acclaimed director Lokesh Kanagaraj on a highly anticipated film currently titled AA23, produced by Mythri Movie Makers. Additionally, he will reprise his role as Pushpa Raj in the third installment of the popular Pushpa franchise, alongside Rashmika Mandanna and Fahadh Faasil.

SPORTS

IPL 2026: CSK Sign Akash Madhwal As Replacement For Injured Mhatre

Mumbai, 23/4 (H.S): Five-time champions Chennai Super Kings (CSK) have signed Akash Madhwal as a replacement for Ayush Mhatre, who has been ruled out of the remainder of the IPL 2026 due to a hamstring injury, for a fee of Rs. 30 Lakh. Having served as a net bowler for the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) in IPL 2021, Madhwal, a right-arm fast bowler, made his debut for the Mumbai Indians in 2023, wherein he took a five-wicket haul with impressive figures of 5/5 in his debut season for MI in the crucial IPL 2023 Eliminator against the Lucknow Super Giants. However, his performance declined in the 2024 season, where he took only five wickets in five matches. In the previous edition, he played for Rajasthan Royals, claiming four wickets in four games. Overall, he has 23 wickets from 17 matches in the tournament but went unsold at the IPL 2026 auction. Madhwal, a 32-year-old uncapped Indian right-arm medium-fast bowler from



Roorkee, was named captain of Uttarakhand for the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy ahead of the 2022-23 domestic season, highlighting his rising prominence in the circuit. Earlier reports stated that Madhwal took part in CSK trials and was a strong contender to replace Khaleel Ahmed, who

missed the tournament due to a quadriceps injury. The team faced three straight losses early on but recovered with consecutive wins. Although he took only two wickets in five matches, his overall performance was solid, with an economy rate of 8.67 so far. Chennai played their first match without Khaleel against

Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), conceding 194 runs in 20 overs, and then lost the game. Meanwhile, Mhatre, India's U19 World Cup-winning captain, began the season strongly for CSK, scoring two fifties in six matches before suffering a left hamstring injury while batting in their recent game against SRH.

Deepika, Tarundeep Aim For 'Bigger, Better' 2030 CWG, Hopeful Of Archery's Return

New Delhi, 23/4 (H.S): India will host the 2030 Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The event will have a larger program than the 2026 Glasgow edition, held from July 23 to August 2, which included 10 sports and six para sports. Traditional medal-winning sports like shooting, wrestling, badminton, and archery are anticipated to be part of the competition again. Elite Indian recurve archers Deepika Kumari and Tarundeep Rai are optimistic about archery's inclusion when India hosts the Games again. In 2010, during India's last hosting, 17 disciplines were featured, with the host nation earning a notable number of medals: 30 in shooting, 19 in wrestling, 8 in archery, and 4 in badminton. Deepika, who secured India's inaugural women's individual recurve gold at the 2010 Delhi Games, reflected on how this milestone influenced her career and boosted the sport's popularity. "2010 Commonwealth Games was a huge kick in my career as a 16-year-old became a champion in a discipline not so popular. I didn't understand the value of the achievement at that time but in my opinion archery received a huge boost due to that. A lot of Indians got to know about the sport of archery after my accomplishments in the Commonwealth Games. Apart from that, Indian citizens also got educated about

many disciplines which they could witness from close quarters as the country staged the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi," Deepika told SAI Media on the sidelines of the NTPC National Ranking Archery Tournament. Deepika is confident that the upcoming Games will exceed past standards. "The way we had organised CWG in 2010, I believe it will be bigger and better in 2030 and archery makes a return then. We archers haven't competed in the multi-nation event since the Delhi edition and hopefully archery makes a comeback," the 31-year-old added. Tarundeep Rai, who won bronze in the men's recurve team event at CWG 2010, emphasized how hosting major events can boost grassroots participation and improve infrastructure over the long term. As a three-time Olympian aiming for a medal at Los Angeles 2028, he also pointed out the rapid growth of archery in India. "2010 Commonwealth Games was a very exciting moment for me. I witnessed a huge transformation in the archery community thereafter. There were changes in terms of infrastructure and individual strength in terms of skills and knowledge. At that time we had around 400 archers in the country now the number has swelled to more than 30,000 active archers.

Amazon Gets Interim Relief As Delhi HC Blocks Third-Party OTT Rights For Drishyam 3



New Delhi: The Delhi High Court recently granted interim relief to Amazon Prime Video and restrained Mohanlal's production house, Aashirvad Cinemas, from entering into any agreement with third parties for the creation or exploitation of over-the-top (OTT) rights in the "Drishyam" film franchise. While hearing a petition filed by Amazon Seller Services Pvt Ltd under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, a single-judge Bench of Justice Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar held that a prima facie case was made out in favour of Amazon and that the balance of convenience and likelihood of irreparable harm also lay in its favour. "Accordingly, till the next date of hearing, the Respondents are restrained from creating or otherwise dealing with any third-party rights in respect of the non-linear internet-based rights in the film tentatively titled 'Drishyam 3'," the Delhi HC ordered. Amazon, through senior advocate Amit Sibal, contended that the dispute arises out of a Master Video Licence Agreement dated October 16, 2020, which contained an "Amazon Option" clause granting it preferential rights over future titles in the popular Malayalam "Drishyam" franchise. It was submitted that, under the contractual framework, the respondents were obligated to notify Amazon and engage in good-faith negotiations for a specified period before dealing with third parties. The petitioner further argued that even after the expiry of the exclusivity period, it retained a contractual right to match any third-party offer. According to

Amazon, negotiations were ongoing, and draft terms were exchanged when the respondents, through an email dated March 31, 2026, "unilaterally terminated the negotiations", claiming that Amazon's rights had "fallen away" and that they would proceed with alternative offers. In its order, Justice Shankar recorded the contention that such a position was "wholly untenable and contrary to the contractual arrangement governing the parties", particularly when the petitioner had already exercised its right to match the competing offer. Amazon further argued that there was an imminent apprehension that the respondents would create third-party rights in respect of "Drishyam 3", thereby causing irreparable harm and rendering any eventual arbitral award ineffective. Referring to the settled principles governing interim relief under Section 9, the Delhi High Court reiterated that such jurisdiction is limited to granting protective measures and does not extend to adjudicating the merits of the underlying dispute. Citing the Supreme Court's ruling in ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Ltd. v. Essar Bulk Terminal Ltd., Justice Shankar reiterated that interim relief is governed by the "triple test" of a prima facie case, balance of convenience, and irreparable injury. "The Petitioner has made out a case for grant of ad-interim protection... the essential ingredients for grant of interim relief... stand established in favour of the Petitioner," the Delhi HC observed. Accordingly, it directed that, till the next date of hearing, the respondents shall not "create or otherwise deal with any third-party rights in respect of the non-linear internet-based rights" in the film.

Zanai Bhosle Fulfills Asha Bhosle's Last Wish, Immerses Her Ashes In The Ganga At Varanasi

Zanai Bhosle, the granddaughter of legendary singer Asha Bhosle, was seen breaking down as she performed the final ritual of Asthi Visarjan of her late grandmother Asha Bhosle in Varanasi. Zanai Bhosle shared a few stories on her social media account from the time of Asthi Visarjan, and also penned an emotional note remembering her grandmother. Taking to social media, Zanai shared a video wherein her family along with her were seen

seated in a boat on the river Ganga in Varanasi. The video showed the Bhosle family performing a pooja before immersing the legendary singer's ashes in the Ganges. A pooja setup was placed before a beautiful portrait of Asha Bhosle on the boat with her son Anant Bhosle, wife Anuja and daughter Zanai praying. Zanai revealed that the family fulfilled Asha Bhosle's final wish by immersing her ashes in the Ganga. She wrote, "OM SHANTIToday, the closest people

to Ashaai, have done the toughest thing one can do... let go of her in the Ganga, Varanasi... but, it was her final wish and I'm sure she is at peace. I request everyone who loved her to only pray for her peace." Ever since the legendary singer Asha Bhosle passed away, Zanai has been sharing an umpteen number of posts on her social media account, reflecting on her bond with her late grandmother and also expressing how dearly she has been missing her.