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"Another attempt to defame Kejriwal:" Priyanka Kakkar slams Pravesh Verma's 'Sheesh Mahal'

New Delhi : Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar on Saturday denied Pravesh Verma's allegations regarding Arvind Kejriwal's new bungalow, declaring that the photos shared by the BJP leader are "false."

Addressing a press conference, Kakkar asserted that the images shared by Verma as the residence of the former Delhi Chief Minister are merely "Pinterest photos." She alleged that such misleading claims are being circulated to tarnish the image of the AAP convener.

"...These pictures, which were shown by a Delhi Minister and BJP MP, are available on Pinterest and were projected that these are pictures of the residence of Arvind Kejriwal, which is a big lie...This is another attempt

to defame Arvind Kejriwal..." said Kakkar.

Kakkar's remarks came after BJP leader Parvesh Sahib Singh took a jibe at former Delhi Chief Minister and AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal, calling his new Type-VII government bungalow "Sheesh Mahal part two."

Verma made these comments after former Delhi CM moved to the new Type-VII government bungalow at 95, Lodhi Estate, in the national capital.

Addressing a press conference, Parvesh Sahib Singh accused Kejriwal of betraying the people of Delhi by opting for luxuries in his bungalow.

The BJP leader said, "One who betrayed people of Delhi, who came to power in the name of Anna Hazare, showing pictures of

Babasaheb Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh. One who said I will not take residence and car from the government is Delhi's Rahman Dakait. We will today show you Sheesh Mahal part two."

"He made sheesh mahal that too at the time when Delhi's public was suffering from COVID. An extension was also being created for Rs 70 crore. After losing elections, he went to Punjab. Arvind Kejriwal, Satyendra Jain, Sanjay Singh and Manish Sisodia took possession of government residences near Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann's residence. Bhagwant Mann is tense with these people," he added.

He recalled Kejriwal's promise of leading a life of a common man without using government facilities, and said, "Now, when he got a new bungalow at 95 Lodhi Estate. When the pictures of

it came out, we were astonished. The man who said he would live simply today lives in a luxurious manner. This is a government-allocated house, but the money invested in this house is not government funds. Last time he said that the PWD invested the money, but in this house, every penny invested is private money. His own bedroom is looking like Goa's 7-star hotel room. There are a total of five bedrooms."

The "Sheesh Mahal" allegations first surfaced last year after the BJP accused Kejriwal of excessive expenditure on renovations and luxury additions to the 6 Flagstaff Bungalow. The BJP had also filed a complaint with the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).

Big change at New Delhi Railway Station: Passengers need ticket to enter

New Delhi: In a major development, Indian Railways has started to implement a new access control system at the New Delhi railway station. This is being done to manage heavy traffic and crowds at the railway station in a more efficient way. Under this move, the passengers will not be allowed to enter the station premises without a valid ticket. The project has been launched at Gate Number 9 of the railway station on the Ajmeri Gate side as a pilot. The turnstile gates have been installed on a trial basis at the moment.

Crowd management control system

The New Delhi Railway Station is one of the busiest stations in India. With thousands of passengers using it on a daily basis, the Northern Railway has



introduced turnstile gates that will regulate the entry and exit so that congestion can be reduced and safety can be improved. According to reports, the concerned officials have mentioned that the implementation of the system is being done by the Delhi Division of Northern Railway. It's because the gates can help in controlling the flow of the passengers. In addition, they will prevent

overcrowding inside the station premises.

Officials said the system is being implemented by the Delhi Division of Northern Railway. The gates will help control the flow of passengers and prevent overcrowding inside the station.

Separate entries for reserved and unreserved passengers

As per the new system, separate entry points will be

created for the passengers having reserved tickets and those who will be travelling with unreserved tickets. Alongside this, one-way exit routes are also in place to avoid potential clashes between incoming and outgoing crowds. The railway staff and the Railway Protection Force (RPF) have also been positioned at the trial gate for the management of queues, along with ticket checking. The new signboards are also being installed to guide the passengers properly.

Upgradation plan
The new move is a part of the larger plan for the modernisation of the New Delhi Railway Station. In a meeting which was earlier held in March, the railway minister, Ashwini Vaishnaw, reviewed the proposals for the improvement of safety and crowd management.

Severe heatwave grips Delhi and North India, alert issued for 32 districts in Uttar Pradesh

New Delhi: A severe heatwave continues to grip Delhi and large parts of North India, with residents struggling under intense temperatures and dry, scorching winds. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has indicated that there is little respite in sight, with Saturday expected to bring another day of oppressive heat and discomfort. Meanwhile, a severe heat alert has been issued in Uttar Pradesh's 32 districts.

Over the past 24 hours,

the city has witnessed minimal fluctuation in temperatures. Minimum temperatures ranged between 23 degrees Celsius and 26 degrees Celsius, while maximum temperatures climbed to 42-43 degrees Celsius. In several parts of Delhi, the mercury remained 1.6 to 3.0 degrees Celsius above the seasonal average, intensifying the impact of the ongoing heatwave.

Some parts of the national Capital recorded the season's first heatwave

on Friday, even as the IMD issued a yellow alert. While the Safdarjung weather station did not officially record a heatwave, at least two other stations did.

Safdarjung logged a maximum temperature of 41.9 degrees Celsius, which is 4.2 degrees above normal and just 0.2 degrees higher than the previous day. The minimum temperature was recorded at 24.5 degrees Celsius, 1.8 degrees above normal and 0.9 degrees lower than Thursday's minimum. A heatwave is declared



when the maximum temperature exceeds 40 degrees Celsius and is 4.5 to

6.4 degrees above normal. The Lodhi Road and Ridge stations met this criterion,

recording maximum temperatures of 41.8 degrees Celsius and 43.1 degrees

Celsius, respectively. These readings were significantly above the seasonal averages, with Lodhi Road at 4.8 degrees above normal and Ridge at 4.7 degrees higher.

Meanwhile, a severe heat alert has been issued in Uttar Pradesh, where a prolonged spell of extreme heat is underway. According to the Meteorological Department, these conditions are expected to persist through April 25, affecting both daytime and nighttime temperatures. A heatwave warning has

been issued for 32 districts, including Prayagraj, Sonbhadra, Pratapgarh, Mirzapur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Lakhimpur Kheri, Sitapur, Barabanki, Amethi, Sultanpur, Pilibhit, Bhadohi, Jaunpur, Ghazipur, Azamgarh, Mau, Ballia, Deoria, Gorakhpur, Basti, Kushinagar, Maharajganj, Gonda, Balrampur, Shravasti, Bahraich, and Shahjahanpur. Authorities have advised residents to take precautions against heat-related illnesses.

Chief Justice Surya Kant Says Judiciary Must Preserve Public Trust

New Delhi: Chief Justice Surya Kant today said that the judiciary and its allied institutions enjoy deep public trust, and it is the collective responsibility of all stakeholders to preserve and further strengthen this confidence. He was addressing a seminar on the theme "The Bench Beyond Retirement" at the Constitution Club in Jaipur.

Emphasising the role of former judges, Chief Justice Surya Kant said that their contribution remains vital in strengthening the justice delivery system. He noted that apart from spreading legal awareness among citizens,



retired judges can play a significant role in conciliation and mediation. He also called upon the judiciary and its associated bodies, including the National Legal Services Authority and State Legal Services Authorities, to work

more proactively and with greater awareness.

Addressing the gathering, Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma said that the Supreme Court and High Courts have delivered several landmark judgements that

have positively impacted the lives of millions. He urged citizens to consider approaching mediation centres or Lok Adalats before initiating litigation in courts. On the occasion, the Uniform Registration Number System, an initiative of the Rajasthan High Court, was launched. A compilation of articles authored by former Supreme Court and High Court judges was also released. The event was attended by Acting Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court Sanjeev Prakash Sharma, Deputy Chief Minister Diya Kumari, members of the Association of Retired Judges, and several judges and judicial officers.

Multiple Fires Reported Across Delhi; No Casualties, Firefighting Underway

New Delhi: Several fire incidents were reported across the national capital on Saturday, keeping the fire department on high alert.

A blaze broke out in the forest area of Majlis Park, with fire tenders rushed to the spot as efforts continued to bring the flames under control. Details about the extent of damage are still awaited.

In a separate incident, a fire erupted at a tent warehouse in Jyoti Nagar. According to officials, the fire was reported around 1:05 pm at the Jai Durga warehouse, spread over nearly 1.25 acres. The presence of small Petromax cylinders led to multiple explosions, prompting authorities to escalate the response. Around 23 fire tenders were deployed, and the blaze was later classified as a medium-category fire.

Earlier, a fire had also broken out in a slum area near Punjabi Bagh on Friday. Firefighters acted swiftly to contain the blaze and prevent it from spreading to nearby structures.

No casualties or injuries have been reported in any of the incidents so far. Authorities have initiated investigations to determine the causes of the fires.

BJP's Bansuri Swaraj attacks Kejriwal over Lodhi Estate bungalow

New Delhi: BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj on Saturday accused AAP national convener and former Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal of "double standards", alleging that the proposed "luxurious interiors" of his government bungalow at 95, Lodhi Estate are not in line with his claims of being a common man.

Addressing a press conference, the New Delhi MP said the issue is not about luxury but about "deception" and inconsistency between words and actions.

"Let me reiterate -- the issue is not about living in luxury. The issue is double standards, falsehood, deception, and the gap between words and actions. It is about putting up a facade before the people of this country while practising something entirely different," she said.

Delhi Traffic Police: Central Range Sees 27% Drop in Congestion Calls in Q1

New Delhi: The Delhi Traffic Police has recorded a sharp drop in congestion-related calls in the Central Range during the first quarter of 2026, aided by focused enforcement and improved on-ground management, officials said on Saturday. According to official data, congestion calls fell from 1,378 in January-March 2025 to 1,007 in the corresponding period this year, marking a reduction of around 27 per cent and offering relief to commuters across key stretches. Officials said major improvements were seen in several traffic circles.

Delhi Police recreate crime scene in IRS officer's daughter murder case

New Delhi: In a significant development in the murder and robbery case involving the daughter of an Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer, the Delhi Police on Saturday took accused Rahul Meena to the crime scene to reconstruct the sequence of events as part of their ongoing investigation.

The accused was escorted from police custody to the residence at around 10:00 AM, where investigators carried out a detailed crime scene reconstruction.

During the exercise, Rahul Meena reenacted the entire sequence of events, helping police verify how he is believed to have entered

the house on April 22 and subsequently fled after committing the crime.

Meanwhile, acting on information provided by the accused, Rahul Meena, the police have recovered two mobile phones linked to the case.

These include the victim's iPhone, which the accused had taken with him following the incident. Additionally, the police have recovered a stolen mobile phone that the accused was using while he was absconding after the crime.

The police are now focused on gathering digital evidence through a forensic examination of these mobile phones to further strengthen the case.

Currently, the Delhi Police are investigating the matter from every possible angle and are also working to determine whether anyone else was involved in the crime alongside the accused.

On Friday, Dr Sudhir Gupta, Head of Forensic Medicine at AIIMS Delhi, said that the DNA profiling report for the daughter of an IRS officer is expected within 15 days. Forensic experts have preserved nail scrapings, blood samples and swabs to conduct the analysis as part of the ongoing investigation.

"In this case, DNA profiling will be done, and the report is expected to come within 15 days of



time... The samples that are preserved are nail scraping, blood in gause, vaginal and anal swabs," Dr Sudhir said. About advancements

and conventional DNA profiling, a top forensic expert explained, "Advancements in forensic genetics have enabled the use

of Rapid DNA profiling systems, which are particularly valuable in time-sensitive investigations. These systems can generate DNA profiles within approximately 90 to 120 minutes, facilitating expedited decision-making in urgent cases, mainly for reference samples."

Furthermore, the Saket Court on April 23 sent accused Rahul Meena to four days of police custody in connection with the rape and murder of an IRS officer's daughter in South Delhi's Kailash Hills, allowing Delhi Police to further interrogate him.

The accused was produced before the court, where police sought his

custody for continued investigation into the case.

The 22-year-old victim, daughter of an IRS officer, was an IIT Delhi graduate and a civil services aspirant preparing for her first UPSC attempt. She had been living a disciplined routine and had set up a separate study room on the terrace to focus on her preparation.

Police sources said the accused, who worked as a domestic help, allegedly gained entry into the house on the pretext of being called for money and later claimed during interrogation that "it just happened" after a dispute over payment.

He is also suspected of attempting strangulation

before the attack escalated. Police sources said sexual assault is suspected after the victim was rendered unconscious, followed by multiple fatal blows with a heavy object.

Sources further said the accused allegedly fled with cash and valuables, attempted to evade detection using fake calls, and disposed of mobile phones to erase digital evidence.

He was later traced to Palam railway station, where he tried to escape but failed to board a train.

A case has been registered under charges of rape, murder and robbery, while further investigation is underway.

Man arrested for sharing of obscene and sexually explicit content

Keonjhar : Keonjhar police have successfully apprehended one accused person in connection with a case involving sharing of obscene and sexually explicit content through electronic means forwarded to court today evening . The accused is identified as Ranjan Naik (40) of village Kashipur under Town police station. Police arrested the accused after received a complaint on 23 April, 2026, from a woman.

police registered under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Information Technology Act and arrested today. During investigation, the police examined the complainant and other witnesses, and seized incriminating materials including mobile phones, digital storage devices, and electronic records related to the offence. Scientific and digital evidence collection procedures were duly followed, said Srikanta Sahu IIC Town PS. Subsequently, based on his disclosure, further incriminating materials including a mobile phone containing the objectionable video and related digital evidence were recovered

and seized in presence of independent witnesses. The entire process was duly documented and videographed as per legal provisions, police said. According to the police investigation the accused and the victim were previously acquainted and a land dispute was ongoing between them. The accused allegedly used the objectionable video to blackmail the victim and attempted to coerce her into parting with her land, threatening to make the video viral if his demands were not met. Police investigating further to ascertain the full extent of dissemination of the objectionable content and involvement of any other persons.

Voices Ignored, Rights Denied: Kashipur’s Tribals and Dalits Confront State and Corporate Power

Rayagada, April 24: Bad or good, Kashipur has always been in limelight. Jhodias in Kashipur, almost for past three decades, are running from pillars to posts in the arena of policy makers to get recognised as "Tribals". Unfortunately, their demand has gone to deaf ears. In the eighties, late Rajiv Gandhi visited Kashipur after hunger death news was reported. Multi crores rupees project of Tribal Development department of Govt supported by International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), a body under United Nations, chipped in and got implemented for almost a decade. Output: further hunger deaths during nineties again. People of Kashipur hurled mango kernel porridge and cow dung water at Naveen Patnaik, the then Chief Minister of Odisha, who visited Kashipur to take stock of the situation.



And now, tribals & dalits of Sijimali areas of Rayagada and Kalahandi are up in arms against establishment of a mine by the multinational company Vedanta in Sijimali hills. A violent struggle took place between Kantamal villagers and police both claiming injuries to many of them. Villagers obstructed a road construction by state coercion. While people assert violations of several acts like PESA, FRA, gram sabha, etc have taken place, administration has blamed the agitators to have violated rules of law and obstructed the construction of a road by Govt for local development.

Police's midnight operation, teargas firing, blank gun firing, excess lathi charge, institution of false cases against innocent people, conducting several fake gram sabhas, several other administrative abuses, etc are some of the violations pointed out by the local villagers. In the meantime, there is a beeline of netas and babus from prominent opposition political parties like BJD, Congress, AAP, etc, who, seemingly, have supported the people's cause. Leaders from the ruling BJP have also visited the spot, interacted with people and assured them that henceforth no police atrocities will be meted out to people and they will be free to move in the area even if there is promulgation of 144 IPC or 163 BNS. Proper gram sabhas will be conducted after due consultation. BJP team members alleged that the BJD, which is shedding crocodile tears now, is primarily responsible for instituting the agreement with

Vedanta during 2023 while it was in power. But to a question of locals "Can the double engine govt scrap the mining agreement with Vedanta now ?", the team got dumbfounded. "People lack basic amenities like drinking water, housing, communication, etc in many villages. Solar drinking water projects, check dams for irrigation, borewells, etc are either defunct or non-existent. Govt schemes like PMAY, NHM, etc hardly reach the needy. Scores of Divyangs till date toil to have UDID cards and avail intended pensions. Hence, social security for the poor is in abysmal stage. Neither the govt authorities are proactive not the civil societies question about these lack of entitlements. It is time that anti-mining activists raise these disparities in the area alongwith registering their protests democratically against corporate loot", said Sibaram Naik, an anti-mining activists himself, who was in jail for nine months and still facing a few false cases instituted against him. Be it political party: both opposition and ruling, media houses, tribal and dalit organisations, civil societies, the locals show a sheer trust deficit.

Opposition Has Betrayed Women: BJP



Puri: The BJP has alleged that parties like the Congress, Samajwadi Party, Trinamool Congress, and DMK have "betrayed" the women of the country by opposing the 131st Constitutional Amendment Bill, the Delimitation Bill, and the Union Territories Amendment Bill. To raise awareness among women and the general public across the country against this opposition, the BJP is organizing press conferences at various places. As part of this, a press conference was held in Puri today where Union Minister Jual Oram and Puri MP Dr. Sambit Patra provided detailed information about these three important bills.

Senior BJP leaders Rabinarayan Das, Dr. Debendra Tarai, Binay Nrusingha Mahapatra, and several women members were also present. They stated that the Congress and the INDIA bloc have deprived women of their rightful demands. They claimed that if the bill had been passed, the number of parliamentary seats in Odisha could have increased to 32. According to proportional calculations, Odisha's representation could have increased from about 3.1% to 3.91%, but misinformation is being spread about it. They further argued that delimitation would not have harmed any state; instead,

proportional representation of southern states would have remained protected. They also said that opposition to the 33% women's reservation could impact ongoing elections in West Bengal, and women would respond to it. When the Women's Reservation Act was introduced earlier, these opposition parties supported it under compulsion, but when it came to actually granting rights, their true stance became clear. They added that if delimitation had been done using a fair formula rather than purely on population basis, with a 50% cap, all states would have benefited.

SUP Prohibition Campaign Programme Organised

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD, April 25 : Gram Panchayat level Single Use Plastic Prohibition Campaign programme was organised by the Panchayat Samiti Nuapada at the premises of Budhipali Gram Panchayat office on Saturday. On this occasion Sub Collector Nuapada Surmi Soren was the Chief Guest while Sarpanch of Budhipali GP Bodhankar Sahu, BDO Rohita Bhoi, Excise SP Sanghamitra Pradhan, Regional Transport Officer Sarmila Maharana and other distinct level officers were the special invitees. An awareness rally for



the prohibition of single use plastic, cleanliness drive and planting trees was taken out from Panchayat office to Anganwadi centre Budhipali

where all the guests, mahila mandals, students and employees of the gram panchayat were actively participated. All the guests

provided information about the harms of using plastics. Panchayat Executive Officer Subhalaxmi Sahu proposed vote of thanks.

National Panchayati Raj Day Celebrated



Puri : The district-level National Panchayati Raj Day was celebrated this afternoon at the Town Hall in Puri. The event was organized by the Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department of Puri. The chief guest, Sunil Kumar Mohanty, stated that the Panchayati Raj system symbolizes the hopes and trust of the common people and is also a constitutional right. He emphasized that the department plays a vital role in fulfilling basic needs such as road construction, transportation, healthcare

services, education, and drinking water supply. The program was chaired by Chief Development Officer and Executive Officer Sneha Arugula, who welcomed all attendees. During the event, guests distributed work orders to beneficiaries of the Antyodaya Housing Scheme and provided incentives to eligible beneficiaries. In Puri district, arrangements were made to distribute work orders to 1,852 beneficiaries under the scheme. In Puri Sadar

Block, 206 individuals received work orders, and 5 beneficiaries who completed house construction within the stipulated time were awarded incentive amounts. A live telecast of the state-level National Panchayati Raj Day program held in Balangir was also shown. The event was anchored by Deputy Director of Information and Public Relations Santosh Kumar Sethi. Finally, the vote of thanks was delivered by Block Development Officer of Puri Sadar, Sambit Satpathy.

41st Foundation Day of Nilachal Krushak Mahasangh and Akshaya Tiritiya Festival Celebrated in Puri

Puri: The 41st foundation day of the Nilachal Krushak Mahasangh and the Akshaya Tiritiya festival were celebrated with great enthusiasm at Sharada village under Banakhandi Gram Panchayat in Gop Block of Puri district. The event was presided over by the State President, Gopinath Mishra. Dr. Subash Chhetri, Director of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Bhubaneswar, and Dr. Sukanta Kumar Sadangi, Senior Scientist at the Central Institute for Women in Agriculture, Government of India, Bhubaneswar, attended as chief speakers. Former Union Minister and National President of the Odia Farmers' Protection Campaign, Brajakishore Tripathy, attended as the chief guest. Senior advocate and convenor of the Water Protection Committee, Cuttack, Akshaya Kumar Das, attended as a special guest. Senior advocate and president Guru Prasad Mohanty was an honored guest, and Professor Dr. Adaita Kumar Patra of OUAT participated as a keynote speaker. The traditional "Akhimuthi Anukula" ritual was also performed by the guests. The guests praised the



Mahasangh for its continuous efforts toward the development of agriculture and farmers since 1985. It was highlighted that even after 79 years of independence, a dedicated policy for farmers has not been effectively implemented. Despite slogans like "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan," farmers are not receiving equal benefits and opportunities. The government has lagged in providing basic facilities such as crop storage, cold storage infrastructure, and proper market systems, resulting in farmers not receiving fair prices for their produce, said Akshaya Kumar Das. Niranjan Mahapatra, Chairman of the Advisory

Committee, suggested that strict financial regulations should be imposed on political parties, including taxation such as income tax and GST. Chief guest Brajakishore Tripathy warned that unless farmers aware and united) like pre-independence soldiers, they will remain mere voters, and the country's economy could deteriorate further—leading to a widening gap between the rich and the poor. Key issues in Puri district were identified, including irrigation, drainage, water conservation, flood control, crop storage, cold storage facilities, regulated market committees, proper

management of Sakhigopal and Nimapada markets, timely supply of seeds, loans, fertilizers, and plantation for cyclone protection. The State President Gopinath Mishra emphasized that while both central and state governments have introduced schemes for farmers, they are insufficient and often fail to reach genuine farmers. He called for a dedicated policy to ensure benefits reach actual cultivators. Dr. Sukanta Kumar Sadangi and Professor Dr. Adaita Kumar Patra also discussed various government schemes and their implementation for farmers. Secretary Biplabar Patra suggested that instead of merely calling them "farmers," the government should officially recognize them as "Annadata" (food providers). On this occasion, nine individuals who achieved success in different fields were honored with the "Krushak Bandhu" award. Among others present, District Coordination Committee Chairman Dushasan Swain was on the stage. Gop Block President Prafulla Kumar Patra delivered the welcome address, and Vice President Prakash Kumar Nayak gave the vote of thanks.

Odisha Govt Suspends Additional Tehsildar of Khariar In Nuapada District

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD, April 25: The Odisha government on Friday suspended Bhopinder Singh, Additional Tahsildar of Khariar in Nuapada district, with the state's Revenue and Disaster Management department initiating disciplinary proceedings against him. Singh, an Odisha Revenue Service (ORS) officer, faces action under

Odisha Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules, 1962. The suspension order was issued after the department reviewed certain allegations against the officer. Singh will remain under suspension pending further action. During this period, his headquarters will remain at the office of the

Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC), Northern Division, Sambalpur. He cannot leave the headquarters without prior permission from competent authority. As per the Odisha Service Code, he will receive subsistence allowance during the suspension period, the government clarified.

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Gop Block of Puri district. The event was presided over by the State President, Gopinath Mishra. Dr. Subash Chhetri, Director of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Bhubaneswar, and Dr.

Sukanta Kumar Sadangi, Senior Scientist at the Central Institute for Women in Agriculture, Government of India, Bhubaneswar, attended as chief speakers. Former Union Minister and National President of the Odia Farmers'

Protection Campaign, Brajakishore Tripathy, attended as the chief guest. Senior advocate and convenor of the Water Protection Committee, Cuttack, Akshaya Kumar Das, attended as a special guest.

Odisha Assembly to Hold Special Session on April 30 on Women's Role in Democracy



Bhubaneswar, 25 April (H.S.) : The Odisha Legislative Assembly will convene a one-day special session on April 30 to deliberate on the participation and contribution of women in Indian democracy, according to an official notification issued by the Assembly Secretariat.

All Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) have been requested to remain present during the proceedings, which will

exclusively focus on the role of women in strengthening the country's democratic framework.

The special discussion is being seen as significant, given that women constitute nearly half of India's population and play a crucial role in the nation's social, political and economic development. The session is expected to examine ways to enhance women's participation in governance and legislative institutions.

Two Engineers Convicted in Odisha Vigilance Corruption Case

Bhubaneswar, 25 April (H.S.): In a significant anti-corruption development, Odisha Vigilance has secured the conviction of two engineers in a corruption case linked to alleged misappropriation of government funds under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

According to Vigilance officials, Sadananda Pradhan, former Assistant Engineer

(Retired), Maneswar Block in Sambalpur district, and Biranchi Narayan Dash, formerly Junior Engineer at Maneswar Block and currently Assistant Engineer at Brutang Irrigation Project in Daspalla, Nayagarh, were convicted by the Court of the Special Judge, Vigilance, Sambalpur.

The case pertains to alleged irregularities in a road improvement project executed under MGNREGS

during 2008-09 in Maneswar Block, where the accused were charged with misappropriation of government money by recording inflated measurements in the work execution. They had been charge-sheeted under provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, along with relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code related to criminal breach of trust, forgery and criminal

conspiracy. The court sentenced both convicts to undergo rigorous imprisonment for two years and also imposed fines. Following the conviction, Odisha Vigilance said it will move the competent authority seeking stoppage of pension benefits of retired official Sadananda Pradhan and dismissal proceedings against serving official Biranchi Narayan Dash in accordance with applicable rules.



Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi Extends Greetings on World Veterinary Day



Bhubaneswar, 25 April (H.S.): On the occasion of World Veterinary Day, Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi extended his heartfelt greetings and appreciation to veterinarians and animal health professionals for their dedicated service.

In his message, the Chief Minister emphasized the crucial role played by veterinary professionals in ensuring the well-being of livestock and supporting rural livelihoods. He noted that their tireless efforts significantly contribute to public health and food

security. Highlighting their importance in society, Majhi urged citizens to acknowledge and value the invaluable contributions of veterinarians. He stated that their commitment is essential in building a healthier and more compassionate society.

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STATE

District's first poultry feed production center inaugurated in Jagatsinghpur

Paradip/Jagatsinghpur - State Industries, Skill Development and Technical Education Minister Sampad Chandra Swain inaugurated the 'Maa' Feed Plant at Alanahata under Naugaon block of Jagatsinghpur district on Friday. Many dignitaries including Chairman of the District Planning Committee and popular MLA of Jagatsinghpur Amarendra Das



were present at the inauguration ceremony. This project, launched under the 'Mukhyamantri Krishi Udyog

Yojana', which is the first poultry feed production center in Jagatsinghpur district. With her strong will and entrepreneurial

spirit, Mrs. Namita Sahu has set an example for the youth of the district by establishing such a plant in the rural areas. Congratulating Mrs. Sahu, the Minister Shri Swain said that this plant will meet the needs of poultry farmers in the district, promote women empowerment and create employment opportunities for the youth of the local area.

Another 800 youth of Odisha benefited from digital skilling initiative of AM/NS India



Bhubaneswar/Paradip - ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) marked an important milestone in digital livelihood empowerment with certification ceremonies for 800 trainees under its flagship CSR initiative, Project 'Daksh', across locations in Paradeep, Keonjhar, Kendrapara, and Barbil. Implemented in partnership with Nasscom, the program culminated in the successful completion of intensive digital skill training in IT/ITES trades. The trainees received technical and soft skills training, industry mentorship, and workplace exposure during 225 hours of training. The participants earned certifications in specialized job roles such as Domestic

Data Entry Operator and IT Helpdesk Attendant. Till date in Odisha, a total of 1,895 students have been trained across the four locations as part of the initiative. Of these, 1153 students have already secured placements in reputed organisations including Tatwa, Nija Manpower Services, Techbridge, VGM, Amazon and Randstad, demonstrating the program's strong impact on livelihoods. Through Project Daksh, AM/NS India is shaping a generation of future-ready youth, equipping them with digital skills that drive inclusive growth and unlock sustainable livelihood opportunities. In Paradeep, the event was graced by Ajit Kumar

Uttaray, District Skill Development & Employment Officer, Jagatsinghpur as Chief Guest along with Devendra Rout, Sarpanch, Nuagarh while in Barbil, Fasihul Hasan, Labour Enforcement Officer, Barbil graced the occasion as Chief Guest. The dignitaries addressed the trainees and applauded their efforts and dedication in achieving this certification. They also commended AM/NS India for providing a need based platform and upskilling the youth, thereby improving their employability. In Paradeep, the event was graced by officials from AM/NS India including C.H.Hari Prasad, Plant Head, Paradeep Pellet Plant, SPL, Paradeep Port, Debashish Swain, Lead-CSR

along with Seshdata Sutar, State Head, Nasscom. In the Barbil event, officials from AM/NS India including Indrakant Saha, Mines Manager, Sagasahi, Uday Verma, Head-Security, Pramod Acharya, Welfare Officer, Thakurani Mines, Arun Agrawal, Lead-CSR had joined the ceremony. In Keonjhar, the event witnessed presence of officials from AM/NS India including Jai Kisan Sharma, Head-Logistics, Ajit Singh, Head - Tailing Storage Facility and Pipeline, Banaj Khatua, Lead-HR and Lalit Biswal, Lead-CSR, along with trainees and community members. Similar program was also organised in Kendrapara in the presence of AM/NS India officials and the trainees.

JSW development work continues : Prohibitory Order issues against Congress Padayatra

Paradip - While construction work of JSW Utkal Steel project is progressing near Paradip, the Congress party is allegedly creating unrest in the local area. The proposed padayatra (march) by Congress has been denied permission by the administration. In this regard, a prohibitory order has been issued by the Sub-Collector's office. At present, an intense heatwave is prevailing, and there is a possibility of risk to human life. There are also concerns about potential security issues in the proposed area.

If the padayatra takes place, there could be severe traffic disruptions, causing inconvenience to the general public. There is also a likelihood of a serious law-and-order situation arising. Considering the possible disturbance to public peace, the administration has denied permission for the march. It is worth mentioning that JSW Utkal Steel has undertaken several public welfare initiatives in nearby panchayats like Dhinkia, Gadakujang, and Nuagaon to address drinking water issues during the heatwave. Around

7 acres of ponds have been restored across these three panchayats. A total of 23 borewells have been drilled. To reduce water scarcity in schools, 81 purified drinking water units of 80-liter capacity have been installed. Additionally, a 400-meter borewell has been drilled in Mahal village to improve water availability. To strengthen drinking water supply for Anganwadi children and workers, 11 borewells have been installed at Anganwadi centers. Considering the heatwave, 4 borewells have been installed

in community halls built by self-help groups—2 in Nuagaon, 1 in Gobindpur, and 1 in Patna. To support community infrastructure, 4 borewells along with small ponds have been developed at cremation grounds in Gobindpur, Nuagaon, Dhinkia, and Mahal. Along with this, efforts are being made to empower farmers and women, and provide employment opportunities to educated local youth. JSW remains committed to the development of the local area, stated by the Company Authority.

“Congress Leaders Back Tribal Resistance in Sijimali; Assure Support Against Mining Projects”

Rayagada, Amid the ongoing agitation against proposed mining activities in the Sijimali region under Sunger Panchayat of Kashipur block in Rayagada district, a delegation of national Congress leaders visited the area on Saturday to express solidarity with the protesting tribal communities.

The team, led by former Member of Parliament Saptagiri Ulaka, reached Kantamal village and interacted with local residents. Addressing a public meeting arranged in the village, National Youth Congress President Uday Bhanu participated as the chief guest and assured the tribals of full support.

Speaking at the gathering, he said, “Your struggle is justified. We stand firmly with you. Your issues will be taken up with the party leadership at the highest level. Stay strong and continue your fight for your rights.”

During the meeting, affected villagers shared their grievances, alleging that the government had filed false cases against them as retaliation for opposing the extraction and



transportation of mineral resources. Many claimed they were jailed for months. They further stated that the roads being constructed in the region are not meant for local development, but primarily to facilitate bauxite transportation, which they have

been resisting.

A local woman, Ringi Devi Majhi, alleged that she was imprisoned for seven months for protesting against companies like Vedanta and Maitri, and was even denied the opportunity to meet her

family members during that period. Another ????. Subhash Majhi, claimed that as many as 14 cases were filed against him for speaking out against the company, and that non-bailable warrants were also issued.

The tribals asserted that no amount of police action or legal cases would deter their movement, and that they would continue to fight for their land and rights.

Other prominent leaders present during the visit included Manish Sharma, Ajay Lallu, Leader of Congress Legislature Party Ramachandra Kadam, Laxmipur MLA Pabitra Majhi, Rayagada MLA Appalaswamy Kadraka, and District Youth Congress President Mohan Nayak, among others.

The visiting leaders received a warm and traditional welcome from local women, who led a vibrant procession upon their arrival in the village.

The visit is expected to strengthen the ongoing anti-mining movement in the Sijimali region, with growing political attention likely to amplify the voices of the tribal and marginalized communities.

NCB issued advisory for Indian travellers on new anti-narcotics laws in Maldives

New Delhi: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has issued an advisory to all Indian citizens travelling to or visiting the Maldives following the recent strengthening of anti-narcotics laws in the country. The agency noted that recent legislative amendments to the Maldives' Drugs Act, which came into effect in March this year, prescribe significantly enhanced penalties for drug-related offences, including life imprisonment. The NCB said the amended law provides stricter punishment even for possession of small quantities of prohibited substances. Recent instances have been reported involving foreign nationals, including Indian citizens, being arrested in the Maldives for drug-related offences.

In this regard, the High Commission of India in Malé has also issued advisories urging Indian nationals to strictly comply with local laws and regulations. All Indian citizens have been strongly advised not to carry any package, baggage, or item on behalf of others under any circumstances without being absolutely sure of the contents. It has been asked to maintain full control and supervision of personal baggage at all times. NCB has urged citizens to report any suspicious approach or incident at the MANAS National Narcotics Helpline (1933). Reaffirming its zero-tolerance approach towards drug trafficking, the NCB has called on all citizens to remain vigilant, responsible, and law-abiding while travelling abroad.

Haryana Assembly to hold special session on Apr 27, bill on promotion of Group D staff likely

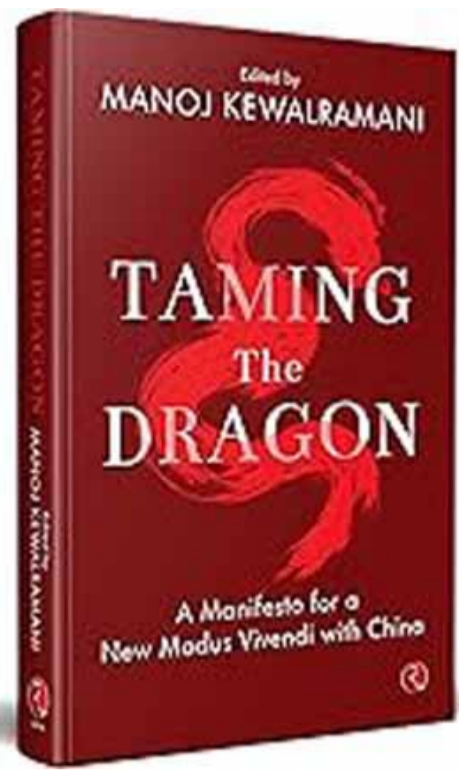
New Delhi: The Haryana Assembly will sit for a special one-day session on April 27, in which the government is likely to introduce a bill on the promotion of Group D employees, along with a censure motion against the opposition parties for the defeat of a bill to amend the women's quota law in the Lok Sabha recently.

Addressing the media here, Chief Minister Nayab Saini accused the opposition parties, including the

Congress and the Samajwadi Party, of stalling the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha on April 17.

Under the bill, Lok Sabha seats were to be increased to up to 816 from the current 543 to operationalise the women's reservation law mandating 33 per cent reservation for women in legislative bodies before the 2029 parliamentary polls, following a delimitation exercise based on the 2011 Census.

Book on India's Strategic Discourse



Dharma Raj

At a time when India-China relations remain tense yet cautiously stabilizing, *Taming the Dragon* arrives as a timely and sharply argued intervention. Written by Manoj Kewalramani-chairperson of the Indo-Pacific Studies Programme at the Takshashila Institution-the book seeks to move beyond rhetoric and provide a clear, strategic framework for India's engagement with China.

The backdrop to the book is the deterioration in ties following the 2020 India-China border standoff, which shattered decades of fragile trust between the two Asian giants. Although high-level meetings between Narendra Modi and Xi Jinping-including those in Kazan (2024) and Tianjin (2025)-signal a

willingness to stabilize relations, Kewalramani is clear-eyed: these gestures do not resolve the deeper structural rivalry. Instead, they underline the complexity of managing coexistence between two rising powers with competing ambitions.

The book's central contribution lies in its emphasis on *atma-shakti*, or self-strengthening, as the cornerstone of India's China policy. Rather than advocating either confrontation or accommodation, Kewalramani argues for a strategy rooted in building India's comprehensive national power. This includes strengthening economic resilience, enhancing military preparedness, investing in technological capabilities, and deepening partnerships with like-minded countries. The message is

unambiguous: India's ability to shape China's behaviour depends fundamentally on its own strength.

One notable feature of the book is its integrated approach. Kewalramani does not treat foreign policy, defence, trade, and technology as isolated domains. Instead, he shows how these elements must be woven into a coherent strategy. For instance, economic policy is not merely about growth but about reducing vulnerabilities and increasing leverage. Similarly, diplomatic engagement is framed not as an end in itself but as a tool to create favourable strategic conditions.

The global context further sharpens the book's relevance. The post-pandemic world, marked by geopolitical chum, Western inwardness, and shifts in U.S. leadership-including the return of Donald Trump-has altered

the balance of power in Asia. Kewalramani situates India's China challenge within this evolving landscape, arguing that New Delhi must think and act like a major power rather than a reactive player.

The book also interrogates a long-standing but vaguely defined concept in India's China discourse: the search for a *modus vivendi*. The author pushes readers to ask what kind of equilibrium India actually seeks. Is it stable competition, managed rivalry, or selective cooperation? By posing these questions, the book forces a shift from abstract aspirations to concrete strategic thinking.

The writing is clear, concise, and policy-oriented. While the book is grounded in rigorous research, it avoids excessive jargon, making it

accessible to both specialists and informed general readers. Its action-oriented tone distinguishes it from more descriptive accounts of India-China relations.

Taming the Dragon is a significant and practical contribution to India's strategic discourse. It does not offer easy answers, but it provides a disciplined framework for thinking about one of India's most consequential foreign policy challenges. For policymakers, scholars, and readers interested in geopolitics, this book is both insightful and essential-urging India to build strength first, and negotiate from a position of confidence thereafter.

Taming the Dragon
Manoj Kewalramani
Rupa Publications
New Delhi

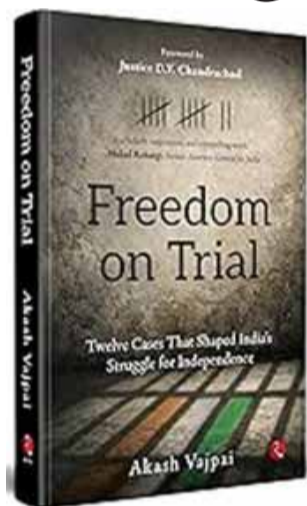
Inspiring Contribution to Historiography

Dharma Raj

India's freedom struggle is often remembered through protests, marches, and mass movements. Yet, *FREEDOM ON TRIAL: Twelve Cases That Shaped India's Struggle for Independence* compellingly reminds us that another, quieter battle was waged within colonial courtrooms. In this insightful and meticulously researched work, advocate Akash Vajpai uncovers a largely overlooked dimension of the independence movement-where law itself became both an instrument of repression and a site of resistance.

Structured around twelve landmark legal cases, the book brings to life courtroom dramas involving iconic figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. These trials, far from being mere legal proceedings, emerge as powerful political theatres. Vajpai demonstrates how colonial authorities used legal frameworks to suppress dissent, criminalize nationalism, and legitimize imperial authority. At the same time, he shows how the accused and their lawyers turned these very proceedings into platforms of defiance, exposing the contradictions and moral fragility of British justice.

The key strength lies in its narrative reconstruction. Vajpai does not simply recount legal facts; he recreates the atmosphere of the courtroom-the tension, the rhetoric, and the strategic choices made by both prosecution and



defence. Through these vivid accounts, readers gain a deeper understanding of how trials influenced public opinion and contributed to the growth of nationalist consciousness. The courtroom, in Vajpai's telling, becomes a stage where the legitimacy of colonial rule itself was put on trial.

The foreword by D. Y. Chandrachud adds further weight to the book, situating these historical cases within the broader evolution of India's constitutional values. It underscores how the experience of colonial injustice shaped the legal and moral foundations of independent India's judicial system.

A particularly striking argument in *Freedom on Trial* is that repression often produced unintended consequences. By prosecuting nationalist leaders under biased and often draconian laws, the British regime inadvertently amplified their

voices and strengthened the movement it sought to contain. Trials became moments of mass political education, where ideas of rights, justice, and self-rule reached a wider audience.

The book also succeeds in reframing how we understand the freedom struggle. It shifts the focus from streets and prisons to institutions of power, revealing how deeply politics was embedded within colonial law. In doing so, it challenges simplistic narratives and encourages readers to see the independence movement as a multifaceted struggle fought across multiple arenas.

Vajpai's writing is clear and engaging, though at times it leans toward a legalistic density that may require careful reading. However, this is a small trade-off for the depth and rigor the book offers.

Freedom on Trial is a weighty and thought-provoking contribution to the historiography of India's independence movement. By illuminating the courtroom as a crucial site of resistance, it enriches our understanding of how law, power, and politics intersected in the struggle for *swarajya*. For readers interested in history, law, or the evolution of democratic ideals in India, this book is both enlightening and essential.

FREEDOM ON TRIAL
Akash Vajpai
Rupa Publications
New Delhi

Contemporary Reading of the Upani?ads

Arun Mishra

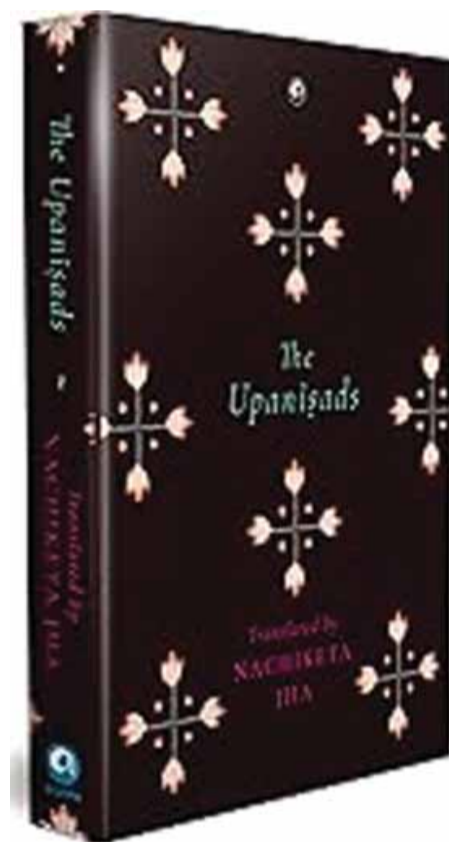
Few texts in the history of human thought possess the philosophical depth and spiritual resonance of the Upanishads. In this ambitious and finely crafted volume, Nachiketa Jha offers a fresh translation and commentary on ten principal Upani?ads, bringing renewed clarity to some of the most enduring questions about consciousness, reality, and the self.

The collection includes foundational

What distinguishes this edition is its grounding in the classical interpretations of Adi Shankaracharya. Jha's commentary draws deeply from ?a?kara's non-dualist (Advaita) perspective, yet it does not remain confined to traditional exegesis. Instead, it opens a dialogue between ancient insights and modern intellectual concerns, particularly in the fields of consciousness studies and philosophy of mind. This bridging of worlds-classical and contemporary-is one of the book's most compelling achievements.

texts such as the Isha Upanishad, Katha Upanishad, Chandogya Upanishad, and Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, among others. Together, they form the philosophical backbone of Vedanta, exploring ideas that have shaped Indian spiritual traditions for millennia.

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contemporary-is one of the book's most compelling achievements.

Jha's translations are both faithful and readable, a balance that is notoriously difficult to achieve with Sanskrit philosophical texts. He avoids excessive literalism without sacrificing nuance, allowing the Upani?ads to speak with clarity and immediacy. Concepts such as Brahman (ultimate reality), ?tman (self), m?y? (illusion), and pr?a (life force) are explained with precision, making them accessible even to readers new to these traditions.

The introductory essay deserves special mention. It serves not merely as a guide but as a conceptual map, outlining the central themes that run through the Upani?ads. Jha situates these ideas within ongoing global conversations about consciousness and existence, suggesting that these ancient texts are not relics of the past but living documents with contemporary relevance. His approach encourages readers to see the Upani?ads not as abstract metaphysical treatises but as experiential inquiries into the nature of being.

At the same time, the book does not dilute the philosophical rigor of its sources. The Upani?ads demand patience and reflection, and Jha respects this by preserving their depth and subtlety. Readers seeking quick answers may find the material challenging, but those willing to engage deeply will discover a rich and transformative intellectual landscape.

The prose is elegant and measured, reflecting both scholarly discipline and spiritual sensitivity. The commentary complements rather than overwhelms the primary texts, guiding interpretation without imposing it.

This hefty volume is a major contribution to contemporary readings of the Upani?ads. It succeeds in making ancient wisdom accessible without simplifying it, and in connecting timeless philosophical questions with modern concerns. For students of philosophy, seekers of spiritual insight, or anyone curious about the foundations of Indian thought, Nachiketa Jha's work offers a rewarding and illuminating journey-an invitation, as the word Upani?ad itself suggests, to sit close and listen.

THE UPANI?ADS
Nachiketa Jha
Aleph Book Company
New Delhi

Placing Alcohol within History

Bhaskar Parichha

In 'Toddy to Tequila', Sandhya Mulchandani presents a richly nuanced cultural history that contests simplistic views regarding alcohol in India. Rather than being merely an indulgence or a social vice, alcohol is portrayed in this book as a significant lens through which to comprehend the evolving traditions, hierarchies, and moral frameworks of the subcontinent. Mulchandani's primary thesis is unequivocal: the narrative of alcohol in India is inextricably linked to the narrative of India itself.

Spanning thousands of years, the book chronicles the evolution of alcohol from sacred ritual to social taboo, from royal luxury to a regulated commodity. It begins with mentions in Vedic texts-where intoxicants were integral to ritual practices-and progresses through tribal brewing customs, the grandeur of Mughal courts, the regulatory fervor of colonial administrations, and into the contemporary age of global consumption.

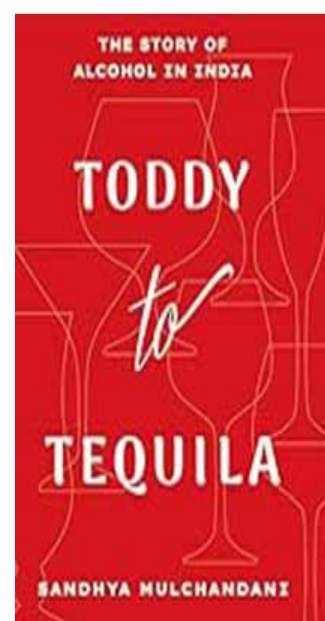
This expansive historical trajectory is one of the book's most significant strengths, providing readers with a broad perspective

on how perceptions of alcohol have transformed over time and across different contexts.

Mulchandani excels at illuminating the contradictions that characterize India's relationship with drinking. Alcohol has been both venerated as a sacred offering and denounced as a moral failing; it has served as a means of livelihood for communities and has been a target for reformist movements. By centering these tensions in her narrative, the author dismantles the myth of a singular "Indian attitude" toward alcohol. Instead, she uncovers a complex mosaic influenced by region, religion, caste, gender, and power.

The most captivating element of the book is its emphasis on individuals rather than solely on practices. Mulchandani vividly portrays a diverse array of characters-gods and ascetics, kings and soldiers, women distillers and social reformers-each contributing to the cultural significance of alcohol. This human-centered approach infuses depth and vibrancy into what could have otherwise been a purely academic narrative.

The book emphasizes the political and economic aspects of



alcohol. From state monopolies and taxation policies to prohibition movements, alcohol has historically served as a means of governance and control. Mulchandani illustrates how various regimes throughout history have alternately promoted and limited its use, influenced by changing priorities regarding revenue, morality, and public order. In this manner, she links historical practices to current

discussions surrounding regulation and consumption.

The writing is both accessible and nuanced. Mulchandani steers clear of excessive jargon, making the book attractive to a broad audience while upholding intellectual rigor.

Another significant strength of the book is its engagement with myth and literature. Drawing from her expertise in mythology and erotic traditions, Mulchandani enhances the narrative with references that shed light on how alcohol has been culturally imagined and represented, beyond mere consumption.

Toddy to Tequila presents an insightful and engaging investigation into a topic frequently simplified into stereotypes. By placing alcohol within the larger context of Indian history and society, Sandhya Mulchandani provides a fresh and thought-provoking viewpoint. It is a captivating read for anyone interested in history, sociology, or the cultural landscape of India.

Toddy to Tequila
Sandhya Mulchandani
Juggernaut
New Delhi

Thoughtful and Evocative

Bhaskar Parichha

In *She of the Sky*, Sankar Narayan Mallick offers a lyrical and introspective collection that gently draws readers into a world where poetry becomes both meditation and movement. A bilingual writer, Mallick brings to this volume a rich cultural sensibility shaped by his engagements with multiple languages, landscapes, and lived experiences. The result is a collection that feels at once intimate and expansive.

The title itself suggests a certain ethereal quality, and the poems live up to that promise. They are woven with quiet sensitivity-moments where silence speaks as powerfully as words.

Mallick moves fluidly across themes: from invocations to the Muse and reflections on love, to deeper contemplations on memory, selfhood, and the subtle strength of human connection. His poetic voice shifts effortlessly-at times playful, at times passionate, and often introspective-yet always grounded in an underlying emotional sincerity.

Mallick's own reflections on poetry, echoed in his preface and resonant with the famous observation of Carl Sandburg, illuminate his creative philosophy. For him, poetry is not merely a crafted form but an experience-"a poem in motion and in meditation." This idea finds expression throughout the collection. His verses do not seek to explain; they evoke, suggest, and often leave space for the reader's own interpretations. There is a deliberate openness, a trust in the elasticity of language.

One of the defining strengths of *She of the Sky* is its rootedness in lived experience. The poems are shaped by Mallick's journeys across

diverse geographies-urban and rural, Indian and international. From the bustling streets of Kolkata to the reflective quiet of Rishikesh, from the cultural textures of Bhubaneswar to glimpses of distant cities like Frankfurt, these varied landscapes enrich the emotional and imaginative scope of the collection. Yet, these are not travel poems in the conventional sense; rather, they are internal landscapes refracted through external encounters.

The imagery in the collection is delicate and often impressionistic. Mallick has a gift for capturing fleeting moods-what might be called "the in-between moments" of life. His language mirrors his own description of poetry: it loops, leaps, sways, and flows.

Mallick writes that many poems were "written through" him rather than "by" him, and this creative humility is palpable. The poems often feel like they emerge organically, as if carried by an inner current rather than constructed through rigid design. The collection balances density with clarity. While some lines carry layered meanings, they rarely become inaccessible. Instead, they invite slow reading and quiet reflection. The emotional register is subtle, avoiding excess while still achieving depth.

She of the Sky is a thoughtful and evocative contribution to contemporary Indian poetry in English. It does not demand attention through dramatic gestures; rather, it earns it through quiet resonance. For readers who value introspective, lyrical poetry that engages both heart and mind, this collection offers a deeply absorbing experience.

She of the Sky
Sankar Narayan Mallick
Black Eagle Books
Bhubaneswar

CAIT Welcomes RBI's Action, Demands Data-Security Probe in Paytm Payments Bank Case

New Delhi, 25 /4 (H.S.): The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) has welcomed the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) decision to cancel the licence of Paytm Payments Bank Limited, calling it a decisive step taken in the public interest. CAIT's National Secretary and Chandni Chowk MP Praveen Khandelwal, in a statement on Saturday, said the move highlights the seriousness of repeated regulatory violations, management failures, and the disregard of RBI's directives. Major restrictions had already been imposed on the bank's operations in 2024, but despite opportunities to rectify these issues, the institution failed to bring about the expected corrective changes. Khandelwal appreciated the assurance given by the RBI to depositors—that their funds are safe and will be returned in line with due process. He stressed that this assurance is particularly important for millions of small traders, shopkeepers, street vendors, hawkers, and women entrepreneurs who have heavily relied on Paytm for daily digital transactions. CAIT noted that



any regulatory action on a platform as widely used as Paytm Payments Bank can cause inconvenience to micro and small business users, and urged authorities to ensure a smooth transition mechanism so that transactions are not disrupted for these vulnerable sections. CAIT National President B.C. Bhartia has demanded a comprehensive investigation into how the vast financial and consumer data

collected through the Paytm platform has been managed, stored, and potentially shared. He highlighted the need for a thorough probe into data-security and data-sovereignty issues, particularly in view of foreign investments, including stakes linked to Chinese entities. Bhartia emphasized that digital payments are the backbone of modern trade and that public trust in fintech

platforms must be preserved. According to him, the RBI's action sends a clear message that no institution can flout rules or ignore the interests of customers. Khandelwal added that financial innovation must move forward in tandem with transparency, accountability, and strict adherence to Indian laws, with the interests of consumers and the nation placed at the highest priority.

No Re-Poll Recommended in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal After Scrutiny of Election Records

New Delhi, 25 /4 (H.S.): The Election Commission of India has completed the scrutiny of Form 17A (Register of Voters) and other election-day documents for all constituencies in Tamil Nadu and the first phase of polling in West Bengal, and has stated that no re-poll has been recommended at any polling station in either state. In a statement on Saturday, the Election Commission said the verification exercise in both states was concluded on April 24 under the supervision of the respective returning officers and in the presence of observers. In West Bengal, scrutiny was carried out for the 152 Assembly constituencies that went to the polls in the first phase, covering 1,478 candidates, all of whom were informed in advance of the time, venue, and date of the scrutiny. Of these, more than 600 candidates or their representatives participated in the process. After examining all 44,376 polling stations, the Commission found no grounds to recommend a re-poll



anywhere. In Tamil Nadu, the scrutiny was conducted for the entire 234 Assembly-seat election, and all 4,023 candidates were notified about the details of the verification. A total of 1,825 candidates or their representatives attended the proceedings. After reviewing records from 75,064 polling stations, the Commission again concluded that no re-poll was warranted anywhere. The entire scrutiny process in both states was videographed to ensure transparency. After examination, the Form 17A registers and associated documents were re-

sealed with the returning officers' official seals. The EVMs and VVPAT machines were placed in secure strong rooms fitted with double-locking systems, CCTV surveillance, and round-the-clock, two-level armed security. Returning officers have been directed to inspect the strong rooms twice a day, while district election officers will inspect the main-office strong rooms daily and the out-station strong rooms every three to four days. Candidates' representatives have also been allowed to camp in the strong-room precincts to maintain continuous monitoring.

Congress Vows Supreme Court Fight for Khera After Bail Setback

New Delhi, 25/4(H.S.): The Congress party has expressed solidarity with leader Pawan Khera following the Gauhati High Court's rejection of his anticipatory bail plea. The party stated that it stands firmly with Pawan Khera and is in the process of challenging the High Court's decision in the Supreme Court. Congress General Secretary (Communications) Jairam Ramesh wrote on the social media platform X that the party is confident justice will prevail over politics of intimidation, threats, and harassment. Notably, the High Court dismissed Pawan Khera's anticipatory bail application on Friday. The case stems from a criminal complaint filed by Riniki Bhuyan Sarma, wife of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. On April 5, Khera held a press conference



accusing Riniki Bhuyan of holding multiple passports and owning properties abroad. Subsequently, she filed a case against Khera and others at the Guwahati Crime Branch police station. Thereafter, on April 7, Assam Police conducted raids at Pawan Khera's

residence in Delhi. On April 10, the Telangana High Court granted him one week of anticipatory bail, but on April 15, the Supreme Court stayed that order. On April 24, the Gauhati High Court pronounced its decision rejecting the anticipatory bail plea.

Delhi High Court Quashes Suspension of Ramanujan College Principal Professor Rasal Singh

New Delhi, 25/4(H.S.): The Delhi High Court has quashed the suspension order against Professor Rasal Singh, Principal of Ramanujan College under Delhi University. The bench of Justice Purushendra Kaurav issued this ruling. The court observed that the petitioner was suspended without an adequate investigation. The suspension was based on the findings of an ad hoc committee, rather than the conclusions of a committee constituted in accordance with the provisions of the POSH Act. The petition had been filed by Professor Rasal Singh himself. In fact, complaints



of sexual harassment under the workplace sexual harassment

prevention law (POSH Act) had been lodged against Professor

Rasal Singh by three assistant professors from Ramanujan College itself. Following these complaints, the Deputy Registrar of Delhi University ordered the formation of a fact-finding committee to investigate. Based on this committee's report, the college chairperson issued the suspension order against Professor Singh in September 2025. Professor Singh challenged this suspension order in the Delhi High Court, which on September 26, 2025, stayed the order. The High Court has now delivered its final verdict, quashing the suspension order against Professor Rasal Singh.

BJP's Jibe at Kejriwal's New Bungalow: Party Should Be Renamed 'Opulent Man Party'

New Delhi, 25 /4 (H.S.): The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has launched a sharp attack on Delhi's former Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor Arvind Kejriwal over his new bungalow. The BJP remarked that given the opulence of Arvind Kejriwal's lifestyle, his party should be renamed the "Opulent Man Party." At a press conference held at BJP headquarters on Saturday, Delhi Minister and New Delhi MLA Parvesh Verma stated: "Relying on the Anna Movement, invoking photos of Mahatma Gandhi, martyr Bhagat Singh, and Baba Saheb Ambedkar, donning the common man's cap, and swearing on a Rs 1 stamp paper affidavit that he would not take a government house, bungalow, or car—he even took false oaths on his children." Releasing photos of Kejriwal's new residence, he added: "Kejriwal first built the 'Sheesh Mahal' in Delhi—we all know that. It was constructed during the COVID wave in Delhi, when people were clamoring for medicines, yet not a single day of work on the Sheesh Mahal stopped." He continued: "After Delhi's defeat, his move



to Punjab compounded Bhagwant Mann's troubles, as Kejriwal occupied one of the large government houses around Mann, former Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain took another, Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh seized a third, and Manish Sisodia claimed one more." Parvesh Verma remarked: "He built a second Sheesh Mahal. When pictures of this bungalow surfaced, the man who claimed he would live simply resides in such grandeur. All those photos exist, showing how Kejriwal has fitted out his new home—they're all here." He asserted: "In independent India's history, Arvind Kejriwal is the first person whose luxuries know no bounds. If anyone has been the most indulgence-

prone figure in free India, it's Arvind Kejriwal. His party shouldn't be Aam Aadmi Party but Opulent Man Party. Donning the garb of simplicity, he conducted the business of plunder. He promised two rooms but built a Sheesh Mahal." On the merger of seven AAP MPs into BJP, Verma said: "Kejriwal massacred public trust for luxury and comfort. That's why his honest MPs and leaders, suffocating under his corruption, left the party. No self-respecting person can stay long in AAP. In independent India, Kejriwal is the most extravagant spender." Notably, on April 24, former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal shifted to a new Type VII government bungalow in Lodi Estate.

Rahul Slams UP Govt Over Ghazipur Rape-Murder, Seeks Probe & Cop Action

New Delhi, 25 /4(H.S.): Congress MP Rahul Gandhi has questioned Uttar Pradesh's law and order situation in the rape and murder case of a woman in Ghazipur district. He demanded action against the guilty police officers, security for the victim's family, and a high-level investigation into the incident. On the social media platform X, Rahul Gandhi described the incidents in Hathras, Kathua, Unnao, and now Ghazipur as part of a pattern, noting that the victims are always Dalit, backward caste, tribal, or poor, while perpetrators receive protection. He also referenced the Manipur incident. Rahul Gandhi alleged that those in power remain silent every time, and voices expected to speak stay mute. In a country where parents must beg to file an FIR for their daughter, such a government has no moral right to remain in power.



Telangana: Kavitha launches TRS, targets BRS, Congress, BJP; unveils five-point agenda

Hyderabad, 25 /4(HS): In a politically significant move, Former Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) leader Kalvakuntla Kavitha on Saturday announced the launch of Telangana Rashtira Sena (TRS), reviving a name that echoes the earlier identity of the Bharat Rashtira Samithi, while declaring her ambition to become Chief Minister and usher in what she described as a "new revolution" in Telangana. Addressing a large gathering at Muneerabad, Kavitha appealed to people to support her new political initiative and said

the party was being launched to realign Telangana with the original aspirations of the statehood movement. She adopted a reflective tone, admitting she felt "ashamed" of certain actions of the previous BRS government, while also expressing pride in her role in the Telangana movement. Positioning herself as a people-centric leader, Kavitha said she aspired to act as an "Aamma" figure for the people of Telangana, stressing that governance should be guided by empathy and welfare-oriented

thinking. Criticising the trajectory of the state post-formation, she said the "Telangana we dreamed of has not materialised," alleging that farmers and marginalised sections continue to face hardships. She referred to issues such as sand mining-related concerns in Nerella and what she described as an atmosphere of surveillance in the state. In a sharp attack on her father and former Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, Kavitha alleged that he had "changed"

over time and lost touch with the people. She questioned his priorities and criticised his focus on national political expansion, stating that the essence of the Telangana movement had been diluted. She further alleged that dissent within the BRS was suppressed and claimed she was sidelined after raising concerns over alleged irregularities in projects such as Kaleshwaram. Without naming individuals, she also accused elements within the party of corruption and said wrongdoing had gone unchecked.

Iran Rejects Direct US Talks in Islamabad, Leverages Pakistan for Ceasefire Mediation

Tehran, 25/4 (H.S.): Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baqaei affirmed on Saturday that Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's visit to Islamabad focuses solely on bilateral consultations with Pakistani officials, explicitly ruling out any direct engagement with United States representatives amid efforts to end the ongoing conflict. In a statement posted on X early Saturday, Baqaei outlined the diplomatic itinerary: "We arrive in Islamabad, Pakistan, for an official visit. FM Araghchi will be meeting with Pakistani high-level officials in concert with their ongoing mediation & good offices for ending American imposed war of aggression and the restitution of peace in our region. No meeting is planned to take place between Iran and the U.S. Iran's observations would be conveyed to Pakistan." This clarification underscores Tehran's strategy of indirect communication through Pakistan, which has positioned itself as a key mediator in the US-Iran standoff following inconclusive Islamabad talks on April 11-12. Araghchi's arrival, accompanied by spokesperson Ismael Buqai, precedes expected



meetings with Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Army Chief Field Marshal Gen Syed Asim Munir, building on prior high-level delegations including Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf. Pakistan's role remains pivotal, with Foreign Minister

Ishaq Dar having recently engaged Araghchi telephonically to advance regional de-escalation. Tehran frames the war as an "American-imposed aggression," aligning with its demands for blockade cessation before substantive negotiations, even as White House officials report

exploratory progress and dispatch envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner. Iran's maneuver preserves leverage while sustaining diplomatic channels, amid heightened US naval deployments and ceasefire strains in Lebanon and Gaza.

Head-On Collision of Transit Buses Near Pentagon Injures 23, Including Defense Personnel

Arlington, Virginia, 25/4 (H.S.): A severe head-on crash between two commuter buses unfolded near a Pentagon bus stop, leaving 23 people injured, among them several U.S. Defense Department staff members. The incident occurred shortly before 7:30 a.m. on Friday, involving an OmniRide bus and a Fairfax Connector bus, prompting an immediate response from emergency services. Eighteen victims required hospital transport for advanced medical assessment, while five received on-site treatment. Ten of those hurt were confirmed as Defense Department passengers,



highlighting the vulnerability of routine transit routes serving military hubs. The Pentagon Force Protection Agency issued a statement confirming the details, noting that the Metro Access Road remained shuttered for investigation, which disrupted mass transit for hours. Video evidence captured the forceful impact, but authorities have yet to determine the precise cause. The Arlington Fire Department assisted at the scene before deferring to federal investigators. This event underscores ongoing safety challenges in high-traffic areas proximate to critical government facilities.

Michael Jackson Estate Faces Sexual Abuse Allegations From 4 Siblings

Los Angeles, 25/4 (H.S.): As the biopic of the King of Pop, Michael Jackson garners positive response at the theatres, the late superstar's estate is facing a new wave of molestation allegations. This time, the allegations have been levelled by four siblings from New Jersey who say they were groomed and abused for years and that the many handlers in his entourage willingly enabled it all, reports "Variety". The lawsuit by the four siblings, three brothers and a sister, was filed in February in Los Angeles federal court. It gained attention on Friday after the plaintiffs gave an extensive interview to the New York Times about the alleged abuse and the legal manipulation that the family claims they endured at the hands of the Jackson estate, long after the superstar's death in 2009. As per "Variety", the complaint names the Jackson estate and the attorneys who lead it, John Branca and John McLain, and private investigator Herman Weisberg as defendants. The complaint asserts that Weisberg and other lawyers affiliated with Jackson were falsely presented to the Cascio family as representing their interests in negotiating a settlement with the estate.

Bangladesh: Rising Deep Fake Abuse Triggers Social Ruin For Women

Dhaka, 25/4 (H.S.): Bangladesh is witnessing a quiet yet devastating rise in the misuse of technology with rising incidents of women being targeted by superimposing their faces onto pornographic content. Enabled by Artificial Intelligence (AI), this practice, known as 'deepfake', primarily targets women, with consequences — such as social ruin, forced withdrawal from public life, and, in the worst cases, death — borne almost entirely by the victims, a report said. According to a report in Bangladesh's leading newspaper "Daily Sun", the victims come from diverse walks of life, including students, activists, professionals, politicians, actresses, and anonymous private individuals. "In one of the most devastating cases documented in Bangladesh, a woman took her own life after an AI-edited video

of her was shared with her family. The perpetrator understood precisely how Bangladeshi social structures work — family honour, community judgement, and the irreversibility of digital shame — and used a fabricated video to trigger all three at once. Her death was not an accident of technology. It was the intended result of its deliberate misuse," the report detailed. Highlighting another case, the report referred to Rajshahi university student Riya, a pseudonym used in academic research, whose face was digitally imposed in sexually explicit images and circulated among student networks. "The content spread to friends and relatives. She was pressured to resign from every student organisation she belonged to. Her mother told her to quit her studies and leave campus. Riya wanted legal help but feared that filing a complaint

would draw media attention and amplify the harm. She did nothing. The content remained," the report mentioned. Syeda Rizwana Hasan, former advisor to Bangladesh's Ministry of Environment, was targeted in early 2025 when a doctored image — placing her face onto a body sourced from an adult website — was widely circulated on social media platforms through an account called "Chemical Ali", known for repeatedly targeting prominent women. Citing the findings of Strengthening Resilience Against Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV) and Promoting Digital Development, the report noted that 89 per cent of women social media users in Bangladesh have faced online violence at least once. It further stated that the profile of deepfake abusers in Bangladesh reveals a wide and disturbing range of perpetrators.

Measles Crisis Exposes Cracks In Bangladesh's Health System: Report

Dhaka: Bangladesh's health sector, shaped over decades, risks being undone within years unless corrective steps are taken, a report has highlighted. According to Bangladesh's leading newspaper "The Daily Star", the current measles vaccine crisis in the South Asian nation is not merely an isolated disruption but reflects institutional weakening, with national vaccination coverage

dropping to around 60 per cent in 2025 — the lowest in nearly a decade — from 85-92 per cent between 2010 and 2022. "Bangladesh's Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) has long been one of the country's most celebrated public health successes. Built on sustained government commitment, strong development partnerships, and a vast network of frontline health

workers, it delivered consistently high coverage and sharply reduced the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases. For years, it positioned the country as a model for the developing world. That model is now being undone," the report detailed. The report stressed that such a significant decline in vaccine coverage is not merely a logistical problem but a clear failure of governance. Immunisation systems, it said, rely on predictable

Netanyahu Endorses Ceasefire Extension with Lebanon, Vows to Counter Hezbollah Interference

Jerusalem, 25/4 (H.S.): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in his first public remarks nearly a day after U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement of a three-week extension to the Israel-Lebanon ceasefire, affirmed the start of a groundbreaking peace initiative while condemning Hezbollah's disruptive tactics. On Friday, Netanyahu delivered a video statement just before Shabbat, emphasizing Israel's resolve to reshape the face of the Middle East, and that is exactly what we are doing," he declared, highlighting a recent phone conversation with Trump. "I had an excellent conversation with President Trump. He is putting very strong pressure on Iran, both economically and militarily. We are operating in full cooperation." Netanyahu extended this praise to the Lebanese front, framing the truce as a pathway to enduring stability. "The same applies in Lebanon.



We have begun a process to achieve a historic peace between Israel and Lebanon, and it is clear to us that Hezbollah is trying to sabotage this," he stated firmly on the same date. He reiterated Israel's operational autonomy, adding, "We are maintaining full freedom of action against any threat, including emerging threats. We struck yesterday and we struck today. We are determined to restore security to the residents of the north." These comments underscore ongoing military responses to provocations amid the fragile truce. Trump's extension, revealed shortly after White House talks between Israeli

and Lebanese ambassadors, builds on an initial 10-day agreement repeatedly breached by Hezbollah. The U.S. leader stressed that any comprehensive Iran deal must sever Tehran's funding to the militia and urged Lebanon to repeal laws prohibiting Israeli contacts, affirming Israel's right to self-defense strikes. Netanyahu's measured optimism reflects a strategic balance: advancing diplomacy under U.S. auspices while safeguarding northern communities from Hezbollah incursions, including recent drone and rocket activities in southern Lebanon.

Netanyahu Confirms Successful Prostate Cancer Treatment, Reassures Nation of Strong Health

Jerusalem, 25/4 (H.S.): Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu revealed on Friday that he underwent successful treatment for early-stage prostate cancer, marking his first public acknowledgment of the diagnosis while reassuring the nation of his robust health during ongoing regional conflicts. Speaking on Friday, the 76-year-old leader detailed a timeline of medical interventions conducted discreetly to avoid wartime distractions. Approximately 18 months prior, he had surgery for an enlarged benign prostate; two and a half months ago, routine monitoring at Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital detected a small malignant tumor, less than one centimeter in size, which was eradicated via targeted radiation therapy. "I requested to delay its publication by two months so that it would not be released at the height of the war against Iran," Netanyahu explained, aiming to



preempt adversarial propaganda. Hadassah Hospital's oncology director, Aharon Popovtser, corroborated the positive outcome, stating that post-treatment imaging and blood tests confirmed the complete disappearance of the disease, attributing the early detection to Netanyahu's age-common condition. Netanyahu dismissed the matter as a "minor medical issue," emphasizing his current excellent physical condition despite speculation fueled by AI-

generated fakes during the Iran war's initial phase. This disclosure revives scrutiny over the prime minister's historically opaque health reporting, including a delayed pacemaker announcement after a public fainting episode. As Israel's longest-serving leader navigates wars in Iran, Gaza, and Lebanon — coupled with recent ceasefire extensions — Netanyahu's update underscores personal resilience amid strategic pressures, with no reported impact on his duties.

Russia's State Duma Speaker Arrives In North Korea

Pyeongyang, 25/4 (H.S.): Vyacheslav Volodin, speaker of Russia's lower house of parliament, visited North Korea to attend the opening ceremony of a memorial museum honouring soldiers killed while fighting for Russia in its war with Ukraine, a Russian report said Saturday. Volodin, chairman of the State Duma, "has arrived in the DPRK on a working visit" to "take part in the opening ceremony of a memorial complex and museum ... honouring the courage of Korean servicemen who took part in the liberation of the Kursk region," Tass said, citing the Duma press service. DPRK stands for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, North Korea's official name. Volodin will attend

the opening ceremony Sunday "on the instruction of Russian President Vladimir Putin" and will also meet with colleagues from the North Korean parliament, Tass said. Jo Yong-won, chairman of the North's Supreme People's Assembly, received Volodin upon his arrival in North Korea, it added. North Korea is set to open the Memorial Museum of Combat Feats at the Overseas Military Operations in Pyongyang, honouring the North's fallen soldiers who were killed while fighting for Russia in the war against Ukraine. North Korea deployed around 15,000 combat troops to support Russia in the war after leader Kim Jong-un and Putin signed a strategic partnership treaty in June

2024. On April 26 last year, Russia declared it had recaptured the Kursk region from Ukrainian forces, with North Korean troops reportedly playing a role in the operation. On Wednesday, North Korea's public security minister Pang Tu-sop and Russia's interior minister Vladimir Kolokoltssev held talks on boosting exchanges and cooperation on law enforcement, amid deepening bilateral ties between the two nations, said the North's state media. Kolokoltssev also invited Pang to visit Moscow and, after the meeting, observed a shooting training session by agents of the North Korean ministry, according to Irina Volk, spokesperson for the Russian ministry.

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Mamata Govt turned Bengal's premier institutions into centres of political anarchy: Dharmendra Pradhan

New Delhi, 25/4 (DMS): Union Education Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan expressed deep concern over the current state of educational institutions in West Bengal, alleging that the Mamata Banerjee-led government has turned them into centres of "political anarchy". Pradhan said Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's resolve to restore Bengal's institutions to their past glory and academic excellence was, in essence, a call to secure the future of the state. Referring to the recent incident at Jadavpur University, the minister said the report of the

University Grants Commission (UGC) expert committee serves as a "concrete document" of the state government's failure. He noted that an institution which once produced eminent academicians and scientists is now marked by "negligent" administration and "zero accountability". Citing the UGC panel's findings, Pradhan said the anti-ragging framework at the university was described as "weak", and a recommendation had been made to cut grants by 10 per cent. This, he added, reflects how the state government

has allegedly used campuses merely for political influence. The Union minister further alleged that under the rule of the Trinamool Congress (TMC), political interference has been prioritised over academic responsibility in Bengal's universities, leading to a complete collapse of the security mechanism. He said ensuring a "fear-free" campus environment was the responsibility of the state government, in which it has "completely failed". Pradhan asserted that students in Bengal no longer accept decline as their destiny, and the demand for

reforms in educational institutions has now taken the shape of a mass movement. Responding to remarks by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, the minister said her "discomfort" over the Prime Minister's push for reforms indicates that she is more concerned about losing political control than about the education of Bengal's youth. He added that people of Bengal have now understood that the real threat lies not within the institutions themselves, but in the politics that has paralysed them for decades.

UCO BANK conducted 'Note Exchange cum Coin Distribution Mela'

Sambalpur, 26/4 (DMS): UCO Bank has conducted a 'Note Exchange and Coin Distribution Mela' in Sambalpur Main Gaiti Road Branch. The event was organized by Uma Kant Nayak and Sameer Kandulna officials from RBI. Zonal Manager Gourab Chatterjee, Currency Chest Incharge Anusuya Sethi, Sushant Elric Dang, second Incharge Santosini Majhi and other staff members were present on this occasion. In this event Uco Bank has exchanged old, Soiled and Mutilated notes of the general public and also distributed coins



and low denomination notes among general public. Uco Bank will conduct more of such events in the coming days and wish to

inform the general public to take the benefit of such events to help the country to reach its motive of circulating Clean Cash Notes.

Bank of Baroda Launches 'bob Senior Citizen Vishesh Samman' Savings Account

Bhubaneswar, 25/4 (DMS): Bank of Baroda, India's International Bank, announced the launch of 'bob Senior Citizen Vishesh Samman', a premium savings bank account offering healthcare benefits and complimentary doorstep banking services for senior citizens. The account is tailored exclusively for customers aged 60 years and above, with a focus on enhancing their overall health and financial well-being. The account provides freeline doctor consultations for

up to six family members, along with concessions on medicines and diagnostic services. In addition, customers can avail two complimentary doorstep banking services per month, bringing essential banking services directly to their homes. Further, the offering also includes a 50% waiver on processing charges for Reverse Mortgage Loan, concessional locker rentals and the bob BhoomiRuPay Select Debit Card that comes with a wide range of lifestyle privileges. Dr. Debadatta

Chand, Managing Director & CEO, Bank of Baroda said, "At Bank of Baroda, we are proud to serve our senior citizens with thoughtfully curated offerings. With 'bob Senior Citizen Vishesh Samman', we have designed a premium offering that combines healthcare access, doorstep banking convenience and a host of banking and lifestyle benefits. This initiative reflects our continued commitment to delivering meaningful and differentiated offerings for our senior customers."

KIIT Ranked 6th Best University in India, Emerges No. 1 in Eastern India in THE Asia Rankings 2026

Bhubaneswar, 24/4 (DMS): KIIT-DU has secured the 6th position among all universities in India, across both government and private institutions, in the Times Higher Education (THE) Asia University Rankings 2026. The university has also emerged as the top-ranked institution not only in Odisha but across the entire eastern region of India. In 2025, the University was ranked 8th best in the country. Globally, KIIT has climbed to the 169th position in Asia, marking a steady and impressive rise from 196th in 2024 and 184th in 2025. The THE Asia University Rankings 2026 assessed 929 universities from 36 countries based on rigorous performance indicators across five key areas: teaching (learning environment), research environment (volume, income and reputation), research quality (citation impact, strength, excellence and influence), international outlook (staff, students and research), and industry income (knowledge



transfer and patents). The ranking is a major achievement for KIIT, as it has outperformed many established and legacy institutes despite being a young university. The Founder of KIIT and KISS Dr Achyuta Samanta

has hailed the ranking, stating that it demonstrates the sustained efforts and commitment of the faculty, staff and students towards achieving academic excellence. He said that KIIT's emphasis on

internationalisation and innovation has helped it build a world-class academic ecosystem, reinforcing its position as a leading centre of higher education in India and beyond.

India Sees Record Peak Power Demand At 252 GW Amid Soaring Temperatures

New Delhi, 24/4 (H.S): India's electricity demand surged to an all-time high of 252.07 GW this weekend as a severe heat wave drove widespread use of cooling appliances, according to the latest power ministry data. The previous record was 250 GW set in May 2024. The ministry said peak demand rose from 240.12 GW on April 23 to 252.07 GW on April 24, higher than 239.70 GW seen on April 22. The government had projected demand could reach 270 GW this summer, though actual levels remained well below that estimate. Last year, peak demand was recorded at 242.77 GW in June 2025, while April 2025 saw highest levels at 235.32 GW. Experts warned consumption could climb further as heat wave conditions could further worsen, leading to more frequent use of air conditioners, coolers and other appliances by households and businesses. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasted heat waves across northwest, central and eastern India through the weekend, with harsher



summers especially in May and June. India's power sector is expected to benefit from Rs 65-70 capex opportunity, backed by strong policy support, a recent report said. Rising electricity demand—potentially tripling—along with new-age consumption (EVs, data centers) adds durable visibility, the report added. Krishna Chandra Panigrahy, director general, Bureau of Energy Efficiency recently said that Indian users shifting from LPG to induction-based cooking amid shortages caused by the West Asia war could add 13-27 gigawatts of

additional power demand at the distribution level. The wide band of 13-27 GW range is due to complexity of demand estimations because of the diverse usage patterns across regions, differences in climate, socio-economic conditions, and cooking habits, Panigrahy said. Piyush Singh, Additional Secretary, Power Ministry had said that India expects to add over 22 GW of capacity between April and June, including 3.5 GW of thermal, 10 GW of solar, 2.5 GW of wind, 1.9 GW of battery energy storage and 750 MW of hydro power.

Build Better Markets, Not Merely Bigger Markets: FM Sitharaman Calls For Quality-Driven Growth

Mumbai, 24/4 (H.S): Calling for integrity-driven growth in India's capital markets, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the country's financial future depends on building stronger, more transparent markets rather than simply scaling them up. Speaking at SEBI's 38th foundational day event here, FM Sitharaman stressed quality over sheer expansion. "Above all, we want better markets, not merely bigger markets. Size without integrity is fragility. Volume without investor protection is exploitation," FM Sitharaman said. "Growth without governance is unsustainable. And ensuring that is definitely a shared national priority and responsibility," the finance minister added. FM Sitharaman said that the journey towards Viksit Bharat will require extraordinary investment in infrastructure, manufacturing, energy transition, urban transformation, innovation and human capital. "It cannot be financed by the public balance sheet or banks alone. It will require deep, well-regulated capital markets, where SEBI's role becomes instrumental," the finance minister stated. Highlighting India's increasing integration with global financial systems, FM Sitharaman observed that the country's capital markets are closely

linked to international investors and cross-border capital flows. "India's capital markets are deeply connected to the world. Our investors are global, our issuers engage international pools of capital and regulatory developments in one major jurisdiction increasingly influence market practice far beyond its borders," the finance minister said. "In that context, our regulatory conversations cannot remain only domestic. I would urge SEBI to institutionalise more frequent and more substantive periodic consultations with its global counterparts and leading market participants on emerging issues such as cross-border fraud, use of AI in markets, sustainable finance disclosures and settlement interoperability," FM Sitharaman added. The Union Minister further said that AI-led tools are making cyberattacks faster, more adaptive, scalable, and in some cases more autonomous in execution. "Therefore, not just SEBI, but all Regulated Entities will have to remain exceptionally vigilant. The tools of attack are evolving at high speed, and the tools of defence must evolve even faster", Finance Minister Sitharaman said.

India Records \$106 Mn Inflow, First In 7 Weeks: Report

New Delhi, 24/4 (H.S): India recorded a net inflow of \$106 million in the latest week, which is the first positive weekly flow in seven weeks, a report has said. According to a report by Elara Capital, the inflow came after cumulative outflows of nearly \$5 billion over the previous six weeks, indicating a gradual easing of selling pressure from India-focused funds. Moreover, weekly outflows from such funds declined sharply from a peak of \$1.2 billion to about \$180 million, it said. Meanwhile, exchange-traded funds (ETFs) led the recovery, attracting inflows of \$220 million during the week, while long-only funds continued to see outflows of around \$400 million. Notably, US-domiciled funds, which had been a major source of selling in recent weeks,



recorded inflows of \$225 million after witnessing seven consecutive weeks of outflows totalling \$3.3 billion. Despite the improvement, India-dedicated strategies have continued to see

outflows for nine straight weeks. Additionally, liquidity conditions remained supportive for the fourth consecutive week globally, with steady inflows into major fund categories. US equity funds saw inflows ranging

between \$10 billion and \$22 billion per week over the past month, while global-mandated funds attracted \$16 billion, according to the report. Global Emerging Market (GEM) funds continued to draw inflows of up to 2 billion weekly, and emerging market growth funds saw inflows of \$1.4 billion. In contrast, Europe and China have continued to witness outflows over the past five weeks, highlighting divergent regional trends. Flows into commodity-related equity funds have softened following strong gains during the period of heightened geopolitical tensions. In addition, energy equity funds saw moderating outflows, while gold inflows stabilised at a slower pace. However, silver-related flows remained weak.

New Delhi, 24/4 (H.S): Gold prices dipped 0.34 per cent during the week after precious metals came under corrective pressure due to profit booking. On Friday, MCX gold June futures gained 0.61 per cent while MCX silver May futures inched up 1.39 per cent. Currently gold futures stand at Rs 1,52,683, while silver futures at Rs 2,44,877 per kg. The price of 10 grams of 24-carat gold was at Rs 1,51,479 on Friday up from Rs 1,52,002 seen on Monday market opening, according to data published by the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA). However, gold advanced towards the end of the week as optimism grew around advancements in United States and Iran negotiations. Traders also weighed the Federal

Reserve's interest rate path after the Justice Department dropped a probe related to the Federal Reserve. Bullion climbed above \$4,700 an ounce as bond yields fell, easing pressure on non yielding assets. Selective buying was seen in precious metals at lower levels, but momentum remained tentative as geopolitical uncertainty lingered without a clear resolution, analysts said on Saturday. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is in Islamabad and US envoys also on the way, creating chances of diplomatic deadlock being lifted, multiple media reports said. However, Iranian officials denied they plan to hold talks with US delegates. Although safe-haven demand eased slightly on expectations of continued negotiations,

underlying risks helped limit the downside, analysts said, adding that precious metals may remain vulnerable to further consolidation in the absence of fresh safe-haven triggers. Any renewed geopolitical escalation or shift in global dollar dynamics could amplify volatility in domestic commodity prices on the MCX, market participants said. COMEX gold traded near the \$4,720-\$4,750 zone, up 3 per cent on a weekly basis, however a major resistance was ahead of \$5,000, after which they predicted a strong bull run. COMEX Silver is currently trading near the \$75-\$76 zone, indicating consolidation with a slight negative bias after failing to sustain recent highs, analysts said.

Isha Ambani poses with Rihanna at Fenty Beauty launch bash in Mumbai; Janhvi Kapoor turns heads

Global music icon Rihanna made a stylish appearance in Mumbai as she attended the Fenty Beauty launch bash at Phoenix Palladium, where the brand is now available exclusively through Reliance Retail's Tira and Sephora. The star-studded event, held on Friday night, saw several prominent names from the entertainment and fashion industries in attendance, including Isha Ambani, Janhvi Kapoor, Kanika Kapoor, Aditi Bhatia, Pashmina Roshan and Manish Malhotra. Rihanna and Isha Ambani were seen smiling and posing together for paparazzi stationed at the venue. For the event, Rihanna opted for a striking black gown featuring a fitted glossy panel at the front and soft pleated detailing along the sides. She kept her look elegant with tied-back hair and minimal accessories. Isha Ambani, meanwhile, chose a pastel blue embellished gown with intricate floral work. The ensemble featured shimmer detailing, sheer accents and a flowing trail, giving her a graceful red-carpet appearance. Actor Janhvi Kapoor also turned heads in a black-and-white outfit. The Homebound actor wore an off-shoulder white structured top paired with a dramatic black draped skirt, completing the look with sleek hair and statement jewellery. Several other celebrities were also spotted arriving through the evening. Rihanna last visited Mumbai in 2024, when she attended Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant's wedding celebrations. She launched Fenty Beauty on September 8, 2017, in collaboration with LVMH. The brand quickly made waves in the beauty industry for its commitment to inclusivity, debuting with a foundation line featuring 40 shades catering to a wide range of skin tones. According to her official website, Rihanna is the first female solo artist to sell out 10 concerts at London's O2 Arena. Her global tours, including the Diamonds World Tour that concluded in 2013, have taken her to more than 100 countries, consistently selling out arenas and stadiums. In 2014, she was honoured with the first-ever Icon Award at the American Music Awards, presented by her mother, Monica Braithwaite, in a memorable on-screen moment.



Priyanka Chopra to be honoured at Gold Gala 2026 alongside EJAE, Charles Melton, Simu Liu

In another feather to her cap, actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas is set to be honoured at the upcoming Gold House Gold Gala 2026, joining the likes of South Korean singer-songwriter EJAE and actors Charles Melton and Simu Liu, among others. The Gold Gala 2026 will take place on May 9 at The Music Centre in downtown Los Angeles. In its fifth year, the Gold Gala is expanding its vision into a broader global platform that recognises cultural influence and impact across industries. This year's theme, 'A New Gold World', reflects a collective effort to build shared progress and opportunity in a time marked by division. The event will bring together over 650 influential leaders to celebrate the Gold 100 List, with standout honorees including Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Charles Melton, Jet Li, Simu Liu, Eileen Gu and more, each recognised for their contributions to culture and global storytelling. Among the key honours, Priyanka Chopra Jonas will receive the prestigious Global Vanguard Honor, acknowledging her remarkable 25-year career that has bridged the Asian Pacific and Western entertainment industries, as per a press release. Her body of work spans acclaimed performances in Hindi cinema and Hollywood, alongside her continued efforts to spotlight emerging and underrepresented talent through her production banner, Purple Pebble Pictures, an impact that has earned her recognition on platforms such as TIME 100 and Forbes' Most Powerful Women. The evening will also feature appearances from Gold 100 honorees across diverse sectors, including entertainment, business, technology, fashion, social impact, sports and gaming. Names such as Theresia Gouw, HUMAN MADE, Tejasvi Manoj, Jen Lee and Brett Bolton will take the stage to share their vision for the future.



SPORTS

Krunal Praises Kohli-Padikkal "Incredible" Show in RCB's Five-Wicket Thriller vs Gujarat

Bengaluru, 25/4 (H.S.): Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) notched a stunning five-wicket victory over Gujarat Titans at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, chasing down a 200-plus target with a blistering partnership between Virat Kohli (81 off 44 balls) and Devdutt Padikkal (55 off 27 balls) at the helm. The two batters stitched 115 runs for the second wicket off just 59 deliveries, decisively swinging the match in RCB's favour. Krunal Pandya then sealed the win with an explosive 23 off 12 balls, steering the chase home with seven balls to spare. "Chasing a target above 200 is always tough because you have to maintain a virtual rate of around 10 runs an over. The way Virat and Dev batted was incredible; some of their shots were simply unbelievable. I'm glad I could contribute for the team and finish the match; there's nothing better than grabbing two points." RCB's bowlers also played a crucial role, pulling Gujarat back from a position of strength. After the Titans looked set for closer to 230 when they were around 170 in the 16th



over, RCB conceded only 17 runs in the next three overs before Krunal went for 18 in the final over, restricting the total to 205 for 3 in the 20 overs. "The pitch was good for batting, but the way we dragged them from that position to 205 was a remarkable collective effort. Credit goes to all the bowlers; everyone chipped in at crucial moments." Devdutt Padikkal reflected on

the partnership, saying: "We knew we had to build a big stand and get the team into a commanding position. After a solid start, our aim was to take the innings deep and keep the pressure on the opposition throughout." With this win, RCB closed their league-stage campaign at the Chinnaswamy Stadium this season. Padikkal thanked the fans, saying: "Thank you, fans, for your

overwhelming support. You back the team in every match and it means a lot to us." Kohli also etched another landmark in this innings, completing 800 fours and 300 sixes in IPL history to become the league's highest boundary-hitter, while moving into the top three on the all-time sixes list behind Chris Gayle and Rohit Sharma. He is also nearing the 9,000-run milestone in the IPL.

T20 Mumbai League 2026: Suryakumar, Shreyas, Shivam Dube Headline Star-Retained List

Mumbai, 25/4 (H.S.): The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) has announced the retained-players list ahead of the 2026 T20 Mumbai League, featuring marquee names such as Indian captain Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer and Shivam Dube. Ahead of the league's fourth season, all eight franchises have retained three players each to build a strong core squad. Among the "icon players" in this year's list are Suryakumar Yadav, Shreyas Iyer, Shivam Dube, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Tushar

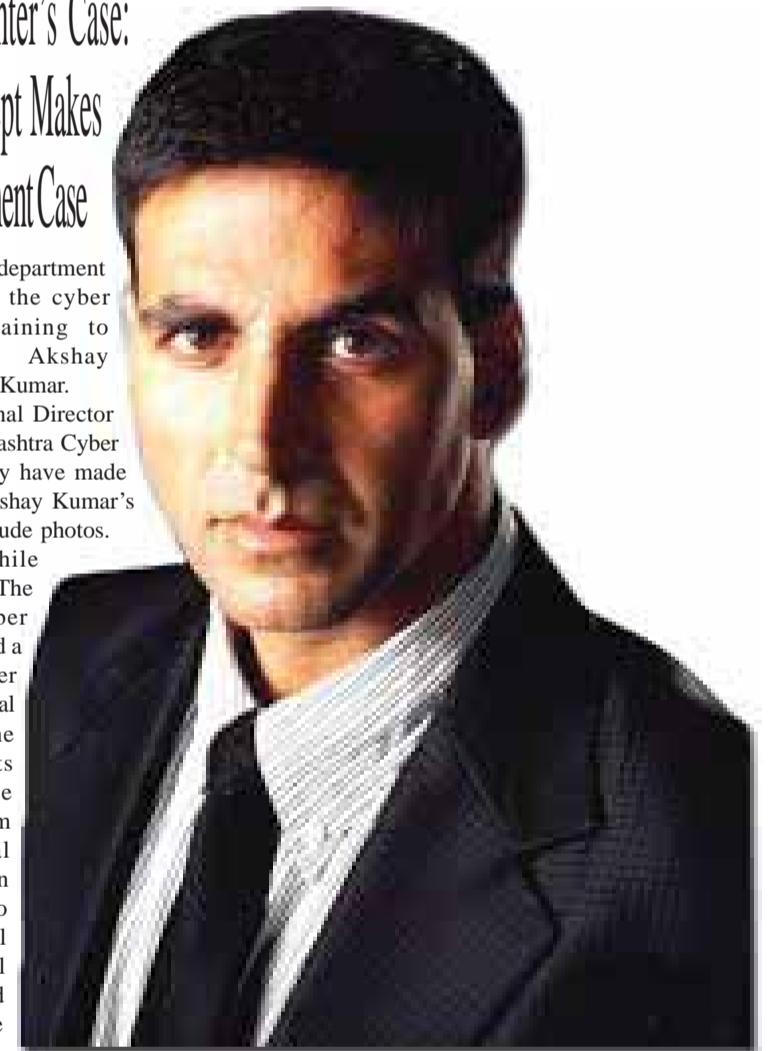


Deshpande, Ajinkya Rahane, Thakur. The list also includes Sarfaraj Khan and Shardul Under-19 World Cup-winning

captain Ayush Mhatre, who has been retained by his side. "This reflects the strong intent of all franchises. The retention of big names from Indian cricket underlines the league's credibility and standard. At the same time, young players will get the invaluable opportunity of sharing the dressing room with these experienced stars, which is crucial for their development. With such a strong core in place, we can look forward to a highly competitive and high-quality season."

Akshay Kumar Daughter's Case: Maharashtra Cyber Dept Makes Arrest In Cyber Harassment Case

The Maharashtra Cyber department has made the arrest in the cyber harassment case pertaining to Bollywood superstar Akshay Kumar's daughter, Nitara Kumar. Yashasvi Yadav, Additional Director General of Police, Maharashtra Cyber department, said that they have made the arrest in the case. Akshay Kumar's daughter was asked for nude photos. She got a message while playing an online game. The Maharashtra Cyber Department also organized a special session for cyber awareness at R.D. National College in the city. The session alerted students about the dangers of the digital world and made them aware of safe digital practices. The session covered measures to prevent online financial frauds, security on social media, phishing attacks and cyber bullying. During the event, Yashasvi Yadav said, "He (Akshay Kumar) had a very shocking story to share with us. He said that his own daughter was being sextorted. The girl was very brave and informed her parents. Through her parents, we received this information, and that is how we handled the case. I would like to draw your attention to that (sic)". He then went on to play an old clip of Akshay Kumar in which the superstar narrated the incident. Back in October 2025, the Bollywood superstar spoke about the distressing experience. He said, "I would like to share a small incident with you, which happened at my home a few months ago. My daughter was playing a video game. There are some video games that you can play with someone, you are playing with an unknown stranger. When you are playing, you get a message saying, 'Thank you, that was great' or 'You are doing so good', very courteous messages. Suddenly, the person said, 'Where are you from?' She wrote, 'Mumbai'. And then everything was normal again. The person told her, 'Well played. You did very well'. Very courteous, it felt respectful". He further mentioned, "Then a message came, 'Are you male or female?' She replied, 'Female'. It went on. And then, he sent a message, 'Can you send me a nude picture of yours?' My daughter, she switched off the whole thing. She went and told my wife. It was great that she went and spoke to my wife about it. This is how things begin. This is also a part of cybercrime. People and children get carried away. Extortion money has to be given. There are many cases of suicides. In the digital world, it is very important that our children learn about this".



Odia Play Anamika Tara Explores Emotional Depths of Human Connections

Bhubaneswar's cultural landscape witnessed a breath of fresh air as the Jeevan Rekha theatre group staged their latest production, Anamika Tara, at the prestigious Rabindra Mandap. Written by Panchanan Patra and directed by Abhinna Routray, this play moves away from traditional loud melodrama to offer a subtle, thought-provoking exploration of human relationships. Characters in this drama represent two polar opposite worlds. One protagonist is a physics professor who views the universe through the lens of rigid logic and mathematical formulas, while the female lead embodies the free-spirited nature of an "Anamika Tara" (an unnamed star). Their paths cross unexpectedly, sparking a deep intellectual and emotional dialogue that challenges the professor's structured reality.