

# Dumani Mail

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## PM Modi Highlights 'Abhilekh Patal' Digital Archive

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday drew attention to a vast digital archive created by the National Archives of India, urging citizens to explore the 'Abhilekh Patal' portal for a deeper understanding of India's historical legacy.

Speaking during the latest episode of Mann Ki Baat, the Prime Minister said the portal hosts over 200 million digitised documents, including rare manuscripts, letters, and records related to key figures and events in Indian history.

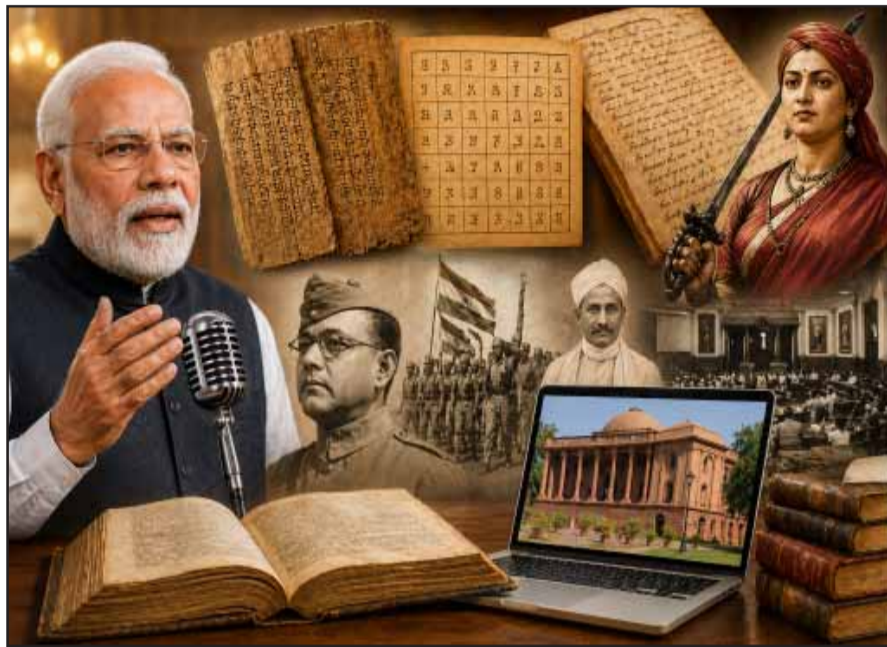
Among the highlights, PM Modi mentioned the 7th-century Gilgit Manuscripts written on Bhoj Patra (birch bark), and the 8th-century text Siribhoovalay, known for its

unique numerical grid format.

He also referred to historically valuable letters linked to Rani Lakshmbai, noting that these documents shed light on her decisions during the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and reflect her courage.

The Prime Minister added that the portal includes extensive material related to Subhas Chandra Bose, including documents on the Azad Hind Fauj and his speeches. Records associated with Madan Mohan Malaviya are also available, covering the founding of Banaras Hindu University and the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan.

In addition, users can access archival material related to the Constituent



Assembly of India, offering insights into the framing of the Constitution.

Explaining the name, PM Modi said "Abhilekh" refers to records in Sanskrit,

while "Patal" denotes a platform, together forming the acronym for Portal for

Access to Archives and Learning.

During the broadcast, the Prime Minister also paid tribute to Rabindranath Tagore ahead of his birth anniversary, celebrated as Pochchishe Boishakh on May 9.

Recalling his visits to Shantiniketan, PM Modi described Tagore as a multifaceted personality who contributed to literature, education, and rural development. He also noted the enduring global influence of Rabindra Sangeet.

The Prime Minister further remembered the upcoming anniversary of the Indian Rebellion of 1857, paying homage to those who ignited the spirit of patriotism during the uprising.

## NSA Ajit Doval Meets UAE President

New Delhi: India's National Security Adviser Ajit Doval met UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi on Saturday during his official visit to the Gulf nation.

The meeting focused on strengthening the India-UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and enhancing cooperation in key areas, including energy security, amid evolving regional developments.

According to the Indian Embassy in the UAE, Doval conveyed greetings from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and discussed ways to deepen bilateral ties, along with the regional security situation and other issues of mutual interest.

The UAE's state-run news agency WAM reported that the two leaders exchanged greetings and reaffirmed their commitment to further advancing cooperation between the two countries. Doval conveyed the Prime Minister's best wishes for the UAE's continued progress and prosperity, while the UAE President

reciprocated with greetings for India's leadership and its people.

Discussions also covered recent developments in West Asia and their implications for regional and global security, as well as concerns related to energy stability.

The meeting was attended by Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, and Ali bin Hammad Al Shamsi, Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for National Security.

This marks the second high-level engagement between India and the UAE within a month. Earlier, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met the UAE President during his visit to the country, highlighting the resilience and transparency of the bilateral partnership despite a complex regional environment.

Jaishankar had travelled to the UAE following his participation in the 9th Indian Ocean Conference in Mauritius.

## Delhi Police arrest Nandu gang associate in Dwarka; live cartridges, single-shot pistol recovered

New Delhi: The Delhi Police on Sunday apprehended a close associate of the Kapil Sangwan alias Nandu gang during a specialised operation in Dwarka, recovering multiple illegal firearms and ammunition. The Delhi Police said that the accused is linked to an extortion racket.

According to the information from Delhi Police, an arms supplier, a close associate of Kapil Sangwan @ Nandu Gang, was apprehended in a major

crackdown at Dwarka. An illegal automatic pistol, a single-shot pistol and live cartridges were recovered. The accused is linked to an extortion racket.

Earlier in April, the Anti-Auto Theft Squad (AATS) East District of Delhi Police arrested an individual for illegal possession of arms and ammunition. Acting on specific and real-time intelligence, the police team apprehended the accused before he could carry out any criminal activity.

According to the Delhi



Police, a special team was constituted for the operation. Based on credible information regarding the movement of a suspicious individual linked to the

"Chenu Gang", the police laid a trap and successfully apprehended him. Upon search, one country-made pistol and two live cartridges were recovered

from his possession.

During interrogation, the accused disclosed that he is an active member of the "Chenu Gang" and provides logistical support to its members. He was in contact with one Shezad, an active robber involved in several recent robbery incidents in Delhi.

Shezad was earlier arrested by Shahdara District Police on 22 March 2026 and was sent to judicial custody. Currently, he is on police remand in connection with

FIR dated 17 March 2026, registered at PS Krishna Nagar, Delhi.

The Delhi Police said that the accused further revealed that he was roaming in the area with the intention of committing robbery at gunpoint, which was successfully thwarted due to timely police action.

In this regard, a case vide FIR No. 199/26 dated April 1, 2026, under Section 25 of the Arms Act was registered at PS New Ashok Nagar, and further investigation is underway.

## Veteran Photographer Raghu Rai Dies at 83

New Delhi: Veteran photographer Raghu Rai died today after a two-year-long battle with cancer. He was 83. Born on December 18, 1942, in Jhang (now in Pakistan), Rai became one of the most respected photographers not just in India, but across the world. Rai's photography is often described as a "visual record" of modern India.



In 1992, he was named "Photographer of the Year" in the US. In 2019, he won the Académie des Beaux-Arts Photography Award, one of the top international honours in photography. He was also given a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2017 by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

He captured powerful images after the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, one of the worst industrial disasters in history. He received the Padma Shri in 1972 for his powerful photography during the Bangladesh Liberation War.

## Massive fire at Gurugram plastic factory spreads to nearby warehouses; no casualties reported

New Delhi: A massive fire broke out at a plastic factory and warehouse in Gurugram's Bajghera area on Sunday and spread to nearby units, prompting evacuation of surrounding areas, officials said.

The blaze was discovered around 5 am, when factory workers noticed

the fire and initially tried to douse it before alerting the fire brigade and police as the flames spread, they said.

Half a dozen fire tenders were rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control after nearly four hours of firefighting, according to officials.

## Target to built Odisha in a developed State by 2036- Minister Sampad Swain

Jagatsinghpur, Industry Minister Sampad Swain said to built Odisha as a developed State by 2036 and all should try their best for the upliftment of rural poor and to enable them to avail all sorts of benevolent scheme. At the celebration of National Panchayat Raj Diwas at Adikavi Saraladas Bhawan Chief Executive and development Officer Akshya Pillely praised over the meeting. M P, Bibhu Prasad Tarai address the gathering and give emphasis upon decentralisation of power and development of infrastructure for upliftment of rural poor. Local MLA, Amarendra Das joined as guest and said that, Wo- men were empowered by three tyre Panchayatraj system and they were economically and socially developed. Collector J. Sonal and President Zilla Parisad Manoj Bhoi also address the gathering.

## Interstate drug syndicate busted in Delhi; cocaine worth Rs 5 crore seized, two held

New Delhi: Delhi Police has arrested two people and busted a major interstate drug trafficking syndicate, seizing around five kg of high-quality cocaine valued at over Rs 5 crore, an official said on Sunday.

Following inputs, the police have arrested Javed Hussain, 29, from the Gazipur roundabout area in east Delhi on April 10, and recovered 456 grams of fine-quality cocaine, also known as crank, from him, the officer said.

A case was registered at the crime branch, and an investigation was initiated. During interrogation, Hussain revealed that the contraband had been sourced from an Uttar Pradesh-based alleged supplier, Soib Khan, 25.

## Delhi: Crime Branch busts drug trafficking network in NCR, 3 held

New Delhi: In a major crackdown on the illegal pharmaceutical drug trade, the Crime Branch of Delhi Police has arrested three accused persons for allegedly trafficking banned and controlled medicines, officials said on Sunday.

According to officials, the accused were involved in the supply of restricted pharmaceutical drugs across the Delhi-NCR region. During the operation, police recovered a substantial quantity of Alprazolam tablets, Tramadol capsules,

and codeine-based cough syrup from their possession.

Further investigation is underway to trace the wider supply chain.

Furthermore, Delhi Police also apprehended a close associate of the Kapil Sangwan alias Nandu gang during a specialised operation in Dwarka, recovering multiple illegal firearms and ammunition. The police said that the accused is linked to an extortion racket.

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During interrogation, the accused disclosed that he is an active member of the "Chenu Gang" and provides logistical support to its members. He was in contact with one Shezad, an active robber involved in several recent robbery incidents in Delhi.

## FTII exam at a centre in Delhi cancelled

New Delhi: The Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) administration on Sunday cancelled its entrance examination at a centre in Delhi after a few students allegedly entered the strong room and manhandled the staff, official sources said. Exams at all other centres proceeded peacefully, they said.

The matter will be investigated to identify the exact cause and chronology of events, the sources said on the cancellation.

# Atal Bichar Manch to Approach Court Against Alleged Exploitation by Tata Power

Puri : Atal Bichar Manch has alleged that due to illegal directives of the Odisha Electricity Regulatory Commission and corrupt practices by certain state government authorities, a fraudulent and unconstitutional agreement was made with Tata Power. As a result, electricity distribution services in Odisha have deteriorated severely. The government, they claim, has remained a silent spectator, causing significant losses to electricity consumers and the general public.

This was stated by the President of Atal Bichar Manch, Binay Nrusingha Mohapatra, during a press conference held at Rani Sati Bhavan in Saradhabali. He said that electricity distribution in Odisha has become chaotic due to deliberate and deceptive decisions by authorities at both government and private levels. The Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) TPCODL is



allegedly carrying out illegal activities.

According to him, the agreement under Rule 47 of the Odisha Electricity Reform Act, 1995—where GRIDCO holds 49% and Tata Power holds 51% stake—is illegal and unconstitutional. It also violates provisions of the Electricity Act,

2003 and Articles 254(2), 298(b), 246(2), and 299 of the Constitution of India.

An application titled "Urgent Need for Essential Electricity Services" was submitted to the Governor of Odisha on January 19, 2026, with copies sent to the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister (Energy), and Chief

Secretary, requesting cancellation of the agreement signed on June 1, 2020, between the Odisha government and Tata Power. However, even after five months, no action has been taken.

The Manch alleged that due to four such unconstitutional agreements, the entire control over electricity generation, transmission, distribution, and trade in the state has shifted to a private company, leading to arbitrary functioning and exploitation of consumers.

They further claimed that although TPCODL is presented as an SPV, the real control lies with Tata Power, making the shareholding structure unconstitutional. This setup prioritizes profit over public welfare, resulting in consumer exploitation.

The Manch emphasized that unless these agreements are canceled and licenses withdrawn under the Electricity Act, 2003,

public dissatisfaction will continue to grow. Electricity services, they stressed, are fundamentally the responsibility of the government.

They also alleged large-scale financial irregularities, claiming that around ₹1500 crore meant to clear dues of the previous service provider (CESU) was misappropriated after the agreement with Tata Power, with funds allegedly distributed among officials and authorities.

They demanded a high-level investigation by a committee of credible government officials and strict action against those involved in corruption. They also called for cancellation of Tata Power's license to ensure better governance and protect consumer interests.

Several members, including Bishwanath Panda, Prashant Kumar Bhuyan, and Laxmi Priya Sahu, were present at the press conference.

## MCL organises 'All India Official Language Seminar' under TOLIC, Sambalpur

Sambalpur, April 25, 2026: Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), under the aegis of the Town Official Language Implementation Committee (TOLIC), Sambalpur organised a one-day "All India Official Language Seminar" at the company headquarters on Friday.

Shri Keshav Rao, Director (Human Resources) MCL presided over the event, with distinguished presence of Shri P. K. Patel, Chief Vigilance Officer, MCL & Shri A. K. Behura, Director (Finance), MCL.

On this occasion, the session speakers Dr. Vichitrans Gupta, Deputy Director (Implementation), Eastern Region, Kolkata shared insights on the topic "Role and Contribution of TOLIC in the Implementation of the Official Language"; Shri Ajay Malik, Former Deputy Director (Implementation), Government of India, delivered his views on "Hindi in the Digital Age: The Changing Role in E-Governance and Administrative Technology"; Dr. Ram Vihar Yadav, Former

Deputy General Manager, HPCL spoke on "The Role of Heads of Offices and Official Language Officers in the Effective Implementation of the Official Language Policy" and Shri Vishal, Assistant Director, Ministry of Coal, Government of India shared his insights on the topic "Official Language Hindi: From Policy to Practice."

On this occasion, the guests also released the "NARAKAS Sandarbhika," a reference publication by TOLIC, Sambalpur. While, cultural performances presented by school children were highly appreciated by the guests and attendees.

The seminar witnessed participation from representatives of subsidiary companies of Coal India Limited, offices of TOLIC in the Eastern Region, member offices of TOLIC, Sambalpur, as well as representatives from MCL headquarters and its areas. Shri Sambit Pattnaik, General Manager (Official Language Department), MCL, officers and employees of the department were also present on this occasion.



Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the new permanent campus building of Kendriya Vidyalaya Deogarh in Deogarh.

## Child and Maternal Healthcare is Essential; Importance Given to Friendship Bonds Like Sakhi

Sambalpur, April 26(DMS) : Care for child and maternal health is essential, as it contributes to the overall prosperity of families. Similarly, friendship bonds like "Sakhi" spread the message of peace and harmony. However, neglect of child care and violence against women due to various social issues often push families into darkness.

Keeping this in view, awareness meetings were organized by SARC at Dulesara in Salebhadi Panchayat, Jarda, and Burodih in Tileimal Panchayat under Kuchinda Block.

Under the initiative of the Odisha Government and Sambalpur district administration, the One Stop Sakhi Centre Kuchinda, operated



by SARC, conducted awareness sessions on issues such as rape, domestic violence, acid attacks, cybercrime, dowry harassment, and violence related to

superstition and witch-hunting. Mrs. Dusmita Manohari from the Sakhi Centre informed people about how such problems can be addressed confidentially under

one roof through the centre's support services.

Similarly, with support from NABARD, a training and health check-up camp on child and maternal healthcare was also organized at the same locations.

The camp was held under the chairmanship of SARC Secretary Ashok Panigrahi. Dr. Rajaram Sadangi provided training, conducted health check-ups, and distributed medicines free of cost to patients.

CEO Sanjeeb Kumar Sahu, PM Prabhat Chandra Pradhan, VLW Saroj Kumar Pradhan, Dwitiya Kisan, and Sakhi Centre paramedical staff member Mrs. Mayara Bag also played key roles in managing the programme.

## Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi Inaugurates 76 Hospitals & Signs Rs 177 Crore MoU on World Veterinary Day 2026

April 26, 2026 : Bhubaneswar: In a landmark event at the State Convention Centre, Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi turned World Veterinary Day into a launchpad for one of the state's most ambitious animal husbandry and fisheries overhauls in recent years. With a total investment push exceeding Rs 277 crore, the Chief Minister inaugurated 76 newly constructed veterinary hospitals and 4 animal welfare centres built at a cost of nearly Rs 100 crore.

## MCD inaugurates advanced eye care centre in East Delhi

New Delhi: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Saturday inaugurated an Advanced Eye Care Centre at Swami Dayanand Hospital in East Delhi to strengthen specialised treatment facilities for residents in the area.

Officials said the new facility includes advanced ophthalmic equipment such as ND: YAG laser, green laser and Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) machines, which are expected to aid in the early detection and treatment of conditions like glaucoma and diabetic retinopathy.

The official statement read that the centre, set up in the hospital's OPD block, has been equipped with modern machines and specialist services to provide quality eye care to people from East Delhi and adjoining localities.

## Secretary RERA wrote to the Collector requesting an investigation and sought a report on violation of RERA rules

Keonjhar: Secretary Odisha Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA), has written letter to the Keonjhar collector asking him to investigate a complaint, enclose it, and submit a detailed action report. The letter was issued after a local resident named Amar Nayak filed a complaint alleging that agricultural lands in the Yellow Zone were sold without RERA approval and used for real estate purposes. According to the complaint 1 acre and 80 decimal of land in the yellow zone in the Baniapat-Khuntaapada Mouza, under Keonjhar Sadar Tehsil is being sold and used for real estate purposes.

According to sources, the government's is preparing a policy for land purchase and sale. However, despite repeated warnings, dissatisfaction remains because land plotting and purchase and sale are going on in violation of RERA rules in Keonjhar. In this regard, the officials in charge are violating the rules and regulations, but no action is taken against them, and this illegal work is increasing.

Sources said that in the Keonjhar Master Plan area, permission from Orera is required if land in the yellow zone is sold for real estate purposes. But

without permission from Orera, land brokers and builders are allegedly selling agricultural land illegally by plotting it into small plots. Many areas of land in the green and yellow zones of the Keonjhar Master Plan area is being allegedly sold in parts without ORERA's permission. After a complaint was received in this regard, Orera has ordered an investigation. After Orera ordered an investigation, there has been a stir among land brokers.

Pradip Mohanty, a local resident, alleged that this situation causes many owners to face difficulties when changing the land type to homestead in the Keonjhar Master Plan area. Without the correct land type, building plans are not approved and banks won't issue housing loans. Buyers are getting trapped in the web of deceit of builders and land brokers.

"People who bought agricultural land in urban areas, investing their entire life's savings, are now spending their time in regret. Builders and brokers are getting rich while the common man who bought the land with hard earned money are now suffering. Hence we are demanding a crime branch investigation into this," said senior lawyer Ashok Das. (EOM)

## Inauguration and Foundation Laying of 124 Projects Worth Rs. 280 Crore in Deogarh.

Sambalpur, April 25(DMS) : While women across India are supporting the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam' (Women's Reservation Act), the opposition does not want an increase in seats for women. Their mindset is creating obstacles in the path of women's empowerment and development, said Union Education Minister and Sambalpur MP Dharmendra Pradhan during the inauguration and foundation laying ceremony of various developmental projects in Deogarh on Friday.

Mr. Pradhan visited the district and inaugurated and laid foundation stones for 124 projects worth nearly ₹280 crore. He also distributed benefits of various government welfare schemes to eligible beneficiaries.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that the historic 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam,' introduced under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is a revolutionary step in the field of women's reservation. It will increase the number of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, helping create more women representatives in Odisha and empowering them in decision-making processes.

He added that while mothers and sisters are enthusiastic about the implementation of the scheme, it is unfortunate that opposition parties and Odisha opposition

leader Naveen Patnaik do not want an increase in seats for women. He said that while Prime Minister Modi is committed to increasing women's representation, the people of Deogarh fully support this initiative.

Providing details about the projects, Mr. Pradhan said that 63 projects worth ₹130.79 crore were inaugurated, while foundation stones for 61 projects worth ₹147.70 crore were laid.

Among the major projects, the permanent campus building of Kendriya Vidyalaya Deogarh, constructed at a cost of around ₹31.40 crore, was dedicated to the people. Built on 9.22 acres of land, the school has 45 rooms, including 24 smart classrooms, three modern science laboratories, and two computer labs.

The school is expected to provide quality education to over 1,000 students. From the current academic year, double sections from Class I to V will begin, with plans to expand up to Class XII in the future. Additionally, the 'Integrated Urban Hostel' at Deogarh College campus was inaugurated, which will especially benefit students from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and backward classes. Mr. Pradhan said these projects will significantly strengthen the social and economic infrastructure of Deogarh and serve as a milestone in the district's development.

## Illegal arms manufacturing unit busted in Moradabad, three arrested

New Delhi: Police busted an illegal arms manufacturing unit being run from Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, and arrested three people following a coordinated operation, an official said Saturday.

On April 21, a patrolling team received a tip-off near Yamuna Khadar Pusta Road in Wazirabad about a man carrying illegal weapons. Acting on the information, police apprehended Mohammad Ayub (49), a resident of Moradabad, and recovered two country-made pistols and 10 live cartridges from his possession.

"A case was registered, and an investigation was initiated. During interrogation, Ayub revealed that he had procured the weapons from a supplier identified as Sonu, who operates from Moradabad," the officer said.

## AAP no longer the same party, no one can work with Kejriwal: Defected leader Swati Maliwal

New Delhi: Defected AAP MP Swati Maliwal on Saturday alleged that her former party had "strayed far" from its original principles, and its leader Arvind Kejriwal is no longer the same. Barely a year after losing power to the BJP in Delhi, AAP suffered its greatest jolt on Friday when seven of its Rajya Sabha MPs, including Raghav Chadha and Maliwal, quit the party. The other defectors were Sandeep Pathak, a key face of the party organisation, former cricketer Harbhajan Singh, Ashok Mittal, Rajinder Gupta and Vikram Sahney.

## Uncertainty Over Apparel Teacher Appointment

Sambalpur, 26/04(DMS) : To make students self-reliant by providing technical and vocational education from the school level, the government has introduced vocational courses through OSEPA in various schools. However, in several schools where these vocational courses have been launched, there are no teachers available. As a result, students are being deprived of vocational education.

At the Girls' High School in Laida under Rengali Block of Sambalpur district, vocational courses were introduced from the

2025-26 academic session. Two outsourced teachers were appointed, and teaching began in two streams—IT and Apparel. Four students enrolled in IT, while eight girl students enrolled in Apparel.

But for the last five months, there has been no teacher to teach the Apparel course in the school. This has led to dissatisfaction among conscious citizens, as the course was opened without ensuring proper teaching staff.

An Apparel teacher had joined duty on December 1, 2025, but due to a stay order on the

appointment, the teacher left the school on December 7, 2025. After working for only six days, the teacher has not returned even after five months. No replacement teacher has been appointed either.

As a result, the students who opted for the Apparel course are deprived of education and are worried about how they will appear for the annual examination.

When asked about the matter, Block Education Officer Saptarshi Mahapatra said that vocational trade teachers are appointed through outsourcing

agencies, and salaries are also paid by those agencies. "We only send the attendance report of the appointed vocational teachers," he stated.

Similarly, District Education Officer Lakshman Bhoi was contacted several times for his comments, but he did not answer the phone.

In this situation, uncertainty continues over the appointment of the Apparel teacher. People are demanding that higher departmental authorities intervene and ensure immediate appointment of a teacher.

## Heatwave Grips Odisha; No Significant Relief Expected Before Tuesday

Bhubaneswar, 26 April (H.S.): Odisha continues to experience intense heatwave conditions, with temperatures soaring across the state. Western districts have recorded highs of around 43°C, while coastal regions remain hot and humid, with temperatures ranging between 38°C and 40°C.

According to the India

Meteorological Department (IMD), similar weather conditions are expected to persist on Sunday, with little change likely on Monday. A marginal drop in temperature — by approximately 2 to 4 degrees Celsius — is anticipated from Tuesday, April 28, though officials caution that this may not bring substantial relief.

The IMD has also indicated the possibility of Kalbaisakhi (nor'wester) activity in parts of South Odisha on Sunday, which may bring isolated rainfall. Such conditions are expected to continue intermittently in southern districts until May 1.

Coastal Odisha and nearby districts are likely to



remain hot and humid over the next two days. Heatwave conditions are forecast to prevail in several districts, including Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khordha, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Jharsuguda, Balangir, Sambalpur, and Angul.

On Saturday, at least 17

locations across the state recorded temperatures exceeding 40°C. Jharsuguda emerged as the hottest place at 44.1°C, nearly 3 degrees above normal. Other high readings included Titilagarh (43°C), Balangir (43.5°C), Nuapada (43°C), Sundargarh (42.8°C), Sambalpur and Hirkud (42.6°C each), Sonepur (42.3°C), and

Bhawanipatna (42.0°C). In contrast, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack recorded relatively lower temperatures at 36.6°C and 36.8°C, respectively, offering slight respite compared to other regions. Authorities continue to advise residents to take necessary precautions to cope with the extreme heat.

## Union Minister Pradhan Listens to PM's 'Mann Ki Baat' in Native Village Nalam

Bhubaneswar, 26 April (H.S.): Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday visited his ancestral village Nalam in the Talcher-Kaniha block of Angul district, Odisha. During the visit, he joined party workers and local residents to listen to the 133rd episode of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popular radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat'.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that 'Mann Ki Baat' has emerged as an effective platform for public dialogue across the country, fostering positive thinking and awareness while contributing to nation-building. Referring to the Prime Minister's message, he highlighted that



the achievements of Indian scientists in the nuclear sector and the excellence of young girls in mathematics are matters of national pride.

He further noted that the Prime Minister's appeal to

promote local bamboo products as gifts would strengthen the 'Vocal for Local' initiative. Citing the teachings of Lord Buddha and the ideas of Rabindranath Tagore, he said the message

inspires citizens to work towards building a strong and self-reliant India.

The Union Minister also described the Prime Minister's call for the 'Digital Census 2027' as a significant

step towards national progress and urged citizens to actively participate in the initiative.

During his visit, Pradhan interacted with elders and family members in the village, stating that the affection of his native soil and the blessings of elders continue to inspire him.

He also offered prayers at the village deity, Lord Nrusingha Dev, for the well-being of all. Additionally, he paid floral tribute to noted freedom fighter Pabitra Mohan Pradhan at Talcher-Kaniha. He remarked that the sacrifice and fearless leadership of the Prajamandal movement leader will remain a lasting source of inspiration for the youth.

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## Woman Killed in Elephant Attack in Dhenkanal Village



Bhubaneswar, 26 April (H.S.): In a tragic incident, a woman was killed after being attacked by a wild elephant in Sansailo village under Valia panchayat in Dhenkanal district.

The deceased has been identified as Gitanjali Sahu, a local resident. According to preliminary information, she had gone to a nearby forest area early in the morning to

collect mangoes when a wild elephant suddenly appeared and attacked her. She sustained critical injuries and died on the spot.

The incident has triggered panic among villagers, who have raised concerns over the increasing cases of human-elephant conflict in the region. Locals have urged the Forest Department to take

immediate and effective measures, including enhanced monitoring and preventive steps, to prevent such incidents in the future. Forest officials have reached the site and initiated an investigation into the matter. Further details regarding the circumstances of the attack and possible compensation for the victim's family are awaited.

## Birth Anniversary of Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Deo Observed by Utkal Sammilani

Bhubaneswar, 26 April (H.S.): The 134th birth anniversary of noted Odia leader and former ruler Krushna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Deo was observed by the Utkal Sammilani in Bhubaneswar.

Floral tributes were offered at his statue at AG Square at around 9 am. Later, a commemorative meeting was held at the organisation's central office auditorium in Unit-6.

The meeting was chaired by Vice-President Prof. Surendra Nath Mohanty, while General Secretary Dr. Radhanath Praharaj conducted the proceedings. Speakers highlighted the Maharaja's pro-people



leadership and his significant contribution to the formation of Odisha as a separate state.

They recalled his

persistent efforts in presenting a strong case at the Round Table Conferences in London, advocating for the

inclusion of Odia-speaking regions under the Madras Presidency into Odisha. These efforts ultimately contributed to the formation of the state in 1936.

Participants expressed concern that despite his pivotal role, Maharaja Gajapati has not received the level of recognition and prominence he deserves. They urged the government to take appropriate steps to honor and promote his legacy.

Several members and office bearers of the organisation attended the event. Engineer Jitendra Kumar Padhi delivered the vote of thanks at the conclusion of the programme.

## Odisha CM's Public Grievance Hearing Postponed Amid Heatwave

Bhubaneswar, 26 April (H.S.): The public grievance hearing programme of the Chief Minister scheduled to be held on Monday (April 27) in Bhubaneswar has been postponed in view of the prevailing heatwave conditions.

The event was slated to take place near the former Government Primary School (Capital Nursery) at Unit-2, Ashok Nagar. However, authorities decided to defer the programme considering the intense summer heat and its potential impact on public safety.

The decision was announced by the General Administration and Public Grievance Department. Further details regarding the rescheduled date are expected to be notified in due course.



## 12 Injured, 8 Critical as Wedding Bus Overtakes in Sonepur

Bhubaneswar, 26 April (H.S.): At least 12 people were injured, including eight in critical condition, after a bus carrying a wedding party overturned in Sonepur district of Odisha early Sunday morning.

The accident occurred near Kartang village under Binika police limits when the bus, carrying around 58 passengers from the groom's side, lost control and overturned between 2:30 am and 3:00 am. The vehicle was returning from Boudh to Kamgaon in Sohela area of Bargarh district at the time of the incident. No fatalities have been reported.

All injured passengers were immediately shifted to nearby medical facilities for treatment. Several victims are



currently undergoing treatment at Sonepur District Headquarters Hospital as well as Burla Hospital. Some of the injured have reportedly sustained fractures, including broken limbs.

Preliminary information suggest that the driver may have fallen asleep at the wheel, causing the vehicle to

lose control. However, the exact cause of the accident is yet to be officially confirmed.

On receiving information, Binika police rushed to the spot and initiated an investigation. Authorities are examining all possible factors to determine the circumstances leading to the accident.

## Naveen Patnaik Condolences Demise of Veteran Photojournalist Raghu Rai

Bhubaneswar, 26 April (H.S.): Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik has expressed deep sorrow over the demise of legendary photojournalist Raghu Rai, paying tribute to his immense contribution to visual storytelling in India. In a social media post, Patnaik said he was "deeply saddened" to learn about Rai's passing, describing him as a chronicler of India's spirit, its people, and everyday life. He noted that Rai's work would remain etched in the collective memory of the nation.

"Through his lens, he chronicled the spirit of India, its people and everyday life which will remain etched in our collective memory. His frames were not mere pictures, but living histories," Patnaik stated. He further expressed hope that Rai's legacy would continue to inspire generations of storytellers and extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and admirers.

## Odisha CM Mohan Charan Majhi Inaugurates 76 Hospitals & Signs Rs 177 Crore MoU on World Veterinary Day 2026

April 26, 2026 : Bhubaneswar: In a landmark event at the State Convention Centre, Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi turned World Veterinary Day into a launchpad for one of the state's most ambitious animal husbandry and fisheries overhauls in recent years.

With a total investment push exceeding Rs 277 crore, the Chief Minister inaugurated 76 newly constructed veterinary hospitals and 4 animal welfare centres built at a cost of nearly Rs 100 crore. He also witnessed the signing of a Rs 177 crore MoU with six

PSUs for the construction of 219 additional veterinary hospitals and disease diagnostic laboratories across the state. A highlight of the day was the announcement of a state-of-the-art Rs 10 crore molecular laboratory to be established at Phulnakhara in Cuttack, along with a 76 crore upgrade to the state-level animal feed testing laboratory.

Speaking at the function, CM Majhi painted a powerful picture of the veterinarian's role in society. "Veterinarians treat animals who cannot speak. In reality, they are great souls. For our livestock, they are living gods," he said, drawing loud

applause from the gathering of veterinarians, farmers, and animal rearers.

The Chief Minister also used the occasion to mark OPOLFED's golden jubilee by launching dedicated marketing centres for brown eggs and the indigenous 'Aseel' chicken breed. He expressed confidence that the new centres would ensure fair prices for poultry farmers. Simultaneously, he inaugurated a 750 crore fish landing centre at Kasia in Bhadrak and the upgradation of the Dhamra fish harbour — twin projects aimed at transforming the lives of thousands of fishermen.

## Prime Minister Narendra Modi today asserted that change in West Bengal is imminent

April 24, 2026: Kolkata: Prime Minister and senior BJP leader Narendra Modi today asserted that change in West Bengal is imminent. Addressing an election rally at Baruipur in South 24 Parganas district, Sri Modi claimed that the voting trend in the first phase indicated setbacks for the ruling Trinamool Congress in several districts. He appealed to voters

to strengthen this trend in the second phase and help build a developed Bengal. Sri. Modi alleged that ruling party-sponsored infiltration had forced many youths of the state to seek jobs outside Bengal. He said the issue could be resolved only through political change in the state. The Prime Minister also accused the present government of being anti-

women and said women's safety remained a matter of concern. Referring to Jadavpur University, he alleged that academic activities were being affected and questioned the steps taken by the state government to protect the institution. He alleged that the ruling Trinamool Congress had failed to work for backward communities in West Bengal.

## BJP organised "Jana Akrosh Mahila Samabesh" in khordha



Khordha - 26/5- BJP khordha district organised "Jana Akrosh Mahila Samabesh" at Geeta Bhawan padia khordha. The meeting was designed to protest against the failure of the 33% women's reservation bill (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhinyam Bill) to pass in parliament, blaming the congress led INDIA alliance for obstructing the legislation. The BJP highlights that the bill tabled on April 16-17, 2026 did not pass due to a lack of a two thirds majority attributing this to opposition from the congress and it's allies. The meeting are branded to showcase the anger of women from village to parliament against opposition to the bill accusing them of a "direct betrayal of India's women." BJP women leaders are actively targeting congress, DMK, TMC, Samajwadi and Aam Aadmi party for not supporting the bill. Addressing the gathering BJP, Mahila Morcha State

Secretary Pinky Pradhan launched a strong attack on opposition parties accusing them of obstructing the "Nari Shakti Vandan Act" in parliament and betraying the aspirations of women. She characterised the situation not merely as a defeat of a legislative proposal but as a setback to the aspirations and empowerment of women. She stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought to ensure 33 percent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies allowing for their meaningful participation in policy-making but the opposition

parties detailed the initiative for narrow political interests. This is not the defeat of a bill but a blow to the dreams of mothers and women across the country.

BJP Khordha district president Biswaranjan Badjena stated that the parliamentary debate on the bill had the potential to reshape the nation's future but was stalled by opposition parties. He alleged that their actions amounted to injustice towards women which the electorate would not forgive. BJP state executive member Nikunja Kishore Pattnaik also criticised parties describing them as anti women

and asserting that women in Odisha would reject such attitudes. He reiterated that the union government has consistently priorities women's empowerment and that the BJP has a long standing commitment to safeguarding women's dignity and rights. The meeting was attended by several senior leaders including BJP executive committee member Rashmi Mayee Pattnaik, Rosina Rani Dash, Urmila Mohapatra among others. The large scale mobilisation reflects the growing political intensity surrounding the women's reservation bill with the issue expected to remain at the centre.

## Digital Heist

TWO recent headline-grabbing frauds — the Rs 20-crore crypto con in Ludhiana and the Rs 22.9-crore digital arrest scam in Delhi — clearly indicate that India's cybercrime problem is systemic, scalable and increasingly sophisticated. In Ludhiana, an industrialist was lured through a fake crypto ecosystem and drained of Rs 19.84 crore, routed through 76 forged accounts across 15 banks. In the digital arrest case, fraudsters impersonating law enforcement officials weaponised fear, isolating the victim, coercing compliance and extracting Rs 22.9 crore through staged urgency and intimidation. In a rare intervention, the Reserve Bank of India ombudsman directed five banks to pay Rs 1.3 crore for lapses in due diligence in the digital arrest case.

Significantly, both cases expose a common fault line: banking channels that fail to detect the abnormal. The scale alone raises uncomfortable questions. How do dozens of fraudulent and mule accounts slip through multiple banks' KYC filters? How does a network sustain itself long enough to move unusually large, rapid transfers without triggering red flags? Compensation, when it comes, is partial and belated. It is hardly a deterrent in a high-reward fraud economy. Today's scams are behavioural operations. Fake dashboards simulate profits; fake officials simulate authority. Victims are not just deceived; they are managed, monitored and manipulated over time. Cryptocurrencies sit in a grey zone. Coercion-based frauds lack clear response protocols. Inter-bank coordination is weak. Enforcement chases money already dispersed across layered accounts.

These cases once more underscore the reality that cyber fraud in India has evolved into an organised enterprise. In the absence of clear oversight, scammers exploit both the opacity and the hype associated with digital assets. Tackling it requires tighter banking scrutiny, real-time transaction monitoring and a coherent regulatory framework for digital assets.

## Nuclear Power

IN a big boost to India's nuclear ambitions, the indigenous Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam in Tamil Nadu has attained criticality, marking the start of a controlled, self-sustaining nuclear fission chain reaction. The reactor has thus crossed the most crucial threshold before power generation. It's a strategic milestone in the country's long-envisioned three-stage nuclear programme. Fast breeder reactors (FBRs) have a key role to play in meeting India's energy needs. The nation's nuclear roadmap — conceptualised under pioneers like Homi J Bhabha — rests on a sequential strategy: pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWRs), followed by FBRs and ultimately thorium-based systems. While PHWRs form the backbone of the current capacity, they rely on limited uranium resources. FBRs, by contrast, are designed to "breed" more fuel than they consume, converting uranium-238 into plutonium-239 and, eventually, enabling the production of uranium-233 from thorium.

**This makes the second stage indispensable. Without FBRs, the transition to the third stage — full utilisation of India's vast thorium reserves — would remain aspirational. The Kalpakkam reactor promises a tangible pathway towards energy self-reliance. So far, only Russia has operationalised commercial FBRs at scale; the technology is complex, capital-intensive and fraught with safety and economic concerns in countries like France and the US.**

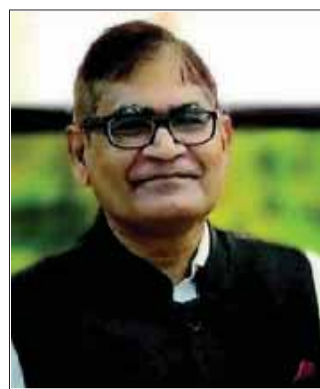
However, the celebrations must be tempered with realism. The PFBR project has faced significant delays, underlining the engineering and regulatory challenges inherent in such advanced systems. Moreover, public apprehension about nuclear safety — heightened globally after incidents like the 2011 Fukushima disaster — continues to slow down project execution in India. Addressing these concerns through transparency and robust safety frameworks will be as critical as technological success. Ultimately, the PFBR's criticality is a defining step because it reaffirms India's long-term energy vision: leveraging its unique thorium advantage to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels. The task ahead is clear — scale up, build public trust and ensure sustainable energy security.

**Significantly, both cases expose a common fault line: banking channels that fail to detect the abnormal. The scale alone raises uncomfortable questions. How do dozens of fraudulent and mule accounts slip through multiple banks' KYC filters? How does a network sustain itself long enough to move unusually large, rapid transfers without triggering red flags? Compensation, when it comes, is partial and belated.**

# India's Civil Service: Ominous Trends

Max Weber had argued that bureaucracy constitutes "the most efficient and rational way in which human activity can be organized and that systematic process and organized hierarchies are necessary to maintain order, maximize efficiency and eliminate favoritism". Robert K. Merton, on the other hand, was anguished by the dysfunction resulting from bureaucratic structures. The negative consequences according to him are displacement of goal, trained incapacity, over conformity to rules. In the context of India, Francis Fukuyama observes that "India is famous for high levels of corruption and clientelism, excessive rules and bureaucratic red tape". He also believes that India clearly needs much greater state capacity across the board to govern professionally and properly. As India observes its Civil Services Day, the PM flagged the need for the civil servants to be "enablers rather than being keeper of rule books". He also has been advocating for deregulation as a necessary condition for faster growth.

Bureaucracy in India has gone through mainly three phases, (a) passive compliance with government policy, (b) conformance to the party in power during the emergency years (1973-77), and (c) regulation rather than control after economic liberalization in the 1990s and now the thrust is to deregulate and be an enabler for the private sector to be "the new temples of Viksit Bharat". Mr. Nehru as India's first PM chose the path of socialism where "PSUs were considered temples of modern India. Prof. Jagdish Bhagwati believes that India's tryst with socialism really got a shot in arm, with Indira's nationalization spree, beginning with nationalization of banks in 1971. Prof. Raj Krishna had famously observed that the "Hindu rate of growth" of 3.5 percent from 1950-1980, was largely due to the asphyxiating control of the



Professor Satya Narayan Misra

bureaucracy, lack of accountability, and scant concern for efficiency. Her trusted bureaucrats like PN Haskar gave sinews to this socialistic glissando. The Emergency imposed in 1975 was a major watershed for India's civil servants, when they became committed to the philosophy of Indira, rather than carrying out rule of law with objectivity. The civil servants, as Justice Shah Commission (1977) noted "showed loyalty to the party in power in order to advance their career. Forging of records, fabricating grounds of detention were endemic".

The paradigm shift in governance, however, kick-started with economic liberalization in the 1990s. From a control regime, India embraced a regulatory mechanism and adapted market economics propagated by the Washington Consensus in the field of banking, and taxation, FE rate, and FDI inflow. FERA became FEMA, and TRAI regulated the telecom sector. (PERDA) and (IRDA) regulated pension and insurance. SEBI regulated the stock market. The major turnaround in public policy was in fostering Public-Private Partnership which found its fruition in the gleaming airports, the sleek national highways, and

the highly efficient telecom sector that we see. Bureaucracy is no longer involved in controls and quota enforcement but in promoting 'liberalization, privatization, and globalization'. PPP has become the new buzzword for bolstering the infrastructure sector.

India is a unique case where the current bureaucratic system itself acts as the greatest resistance in increasing bureaucratic capacity. The entire setup is skewed in favor of generalists over specialists. This is because people receive their promotion on the basis of service tenure rather than performance. India's challenges at the time of independence were huge but still basic, like maintaining law and order and revenue collection. However, today, with far more complex challenges of sustainable development, the policy challenges are much more complex and require domain experts. This would increase the bureaucratic capacity, thus allowing greater autonomy and ultimately improving the quality of governance and service delivery. Francis Fukuyama rightly believes that bureaucratic autonomy is sine qua non of quality governance. Further, for public policy and governance to succeed institutions must be given independence, civil servants should be more professional through capacity build up program and there is fair synergy between political expediency and sound professional opinion.

Bureaucracy must uphold rule of law in a professional and objective manner. Institutional independence must be respected by the party in power. For this to happen the selection process for major constitutional functionaries like the C & AG, CEC should be done by a collegium system, with the PM, CJI & LOP as members rather than by the party in power. Most importantly, the bureaucracy must be ring-fenced against arbitrary political masters, by ensuring

the stability of tenure. On their part, the bureaucrats must rise to the challenge of nation-building, providing effective law and order, and most importantly equip themselves professionally and update their skills periodically to be at par with the best global standards of governance. Acemoglu, the Nobel laureate in Why Nations Fail aptly observes that 'it is the quality of institutions that separate the economic success or failure of nations'.

The Economist in a recent editorial has pointed out that liberal democracy is at a crossroads, as the governing elite is subserving the interests of the elite and not of the common man. Good governance as per UNCHR rests on five pillars; respect for all human rights, fundamental freedoms, right to development, accountant ability, and active participation of civil society. Institutional independence is a major contributor to foster this process. On retirement of Ernest Welteke in 2004 as President of Bundes Bank, Schroder, the German Chancellor observed "I am often frustrated by the Bundes Bank. But thank God, he was there." One clearly senses an emasculation of such independence in institutions like the Chief Election Commission as in India & an enfeeblement of judicial firmness. It may be recalled that each of India's previous PMs depended on the independent advice of technocrats & civil servant; Nehru on Bhabha & Mahalanobis, Indira on Haskar, Bajpayi on Brajesh Misra, Rajiv on Pitrida & Manmohan on Montek. One clearly senses a sapping of that nexus and prevalence of a pliant bureaucracy to subserve the greed of the corporates. The increasing tendency of civil servants to embrace political pasture has significantly benumbed their training to be apolitical and rational. There is an ominous trend to placate party in power, which must be eschewed.

(Formerly JS in Ministry of Defence)

## Digital Footprints and Forgotten Rights

Dr Vijay Garg

In the age of smartphones and social media, memory has taken on a new form. Moments once stored in fading photographs or personal diaries now live permanently in the digital world—uploaded, shared, and archived across platforms. Birthdays, achievements, opinions, and even mistakes are preserved with startling clarity. While this digital memory offers convenience and connection, it also raises a critical question: should everything be remembered forever?

This is where the idea of the right to be forgotten becomes deeply relevant.

The Rise of Permanent Memory

Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube have turned everyday users into constant content creators. Each post, comment, or photo becomes part of a growing digital footprint. Unlike human memory, which fades with time, digital memory is persistent. A post made years ago can resurface in seconds, often out of its original context.

This permanence has benefits—memories are preserved, lost connections can be rediscovered, and personal histories can be documented. But it also means that past mistakes, outdated opinions, or moments of vulnerability can continue to define a person long after they have changed.

**This permanence has benefits—memories are preserved, lost connections can be rediscovered, and personal histories can be documented. But it also means that past mistakes, outdated opinions, or moments of vulnerability can continue to define a person long after they have changed.**

What Is the Right to Be Forgotten?

The right to be forgotten is the idea that individuals should have the ability to request the removal of personal information from the internet, especially when it is no longer relevant, accurate, or necessary. It is closely associated with legal frameworks like the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which empowers individuals to seek deletion of certain personal data under specific conditions.

At its core, this right is about dignity and control. It acknowledges that people evolve and deserve the chance to move beyond their past without being constantly judged by it.

The Conflict Between Memory and Freedom

Digital memory and the right to be forgotten often stand in tension. On one hand, there is value in preserving information—journalistic records, historical events, and public accountability rely on access to past data. On the other hand, unlimited access to personal data can harm

individuals, affecting careers, relationships, and mental well-being.

For example, a controversial post from a teenager's past might resurface during a job application years later. Should that moment define their future? The answer is not simple. It lies somewhere between public interest and personal redemption.

Social Media and Algorithmic Recall

Modern platforms are not just passive storage systems—they actively remind users of their past. Features like "memories" or "on this day" posts bring back old content, sometimes without considering emotional context. AI-driven algorithms also amplify older posts if they gain renewed engagement, extending their lifespan far beyond what was originally intended.

This creates a situation where forgetting is no longer natural—it must be requested, managed, and sometimes fought for.

Challenges in Implementation

While the right to be forgotten is conceptually appealing, its practical application is complex. Who decides what should be erased? Should public figures have the same rights as private individuals? Can information truly be deleted in a world where data is copied, shared, and stored across multiple servers?

Moreover, there is a risk of misuse. The right to be forgotten could be used to erase legitimate criticism or rewrite history. Balancing privacy with transparency remains one of the biggest challenges of the digital era.

Towards Responsible Digital Citizenship As individuals, we also carry responsibility. Being mindful of what we share, respecting others' privacy, and understanding the long-term impact of digital actions are essential steps. Digital literacy is no longer optional—it is a necessity.

At the same time, technology companies must design systems that prioritize user control, offering clearer options for data management and deletion. Policymakers, too, must continue refining laws that protect individuals without compromising the public's right to information.

Conclusion

Digital memory has given humanity an unprecedented ability to remember—but with it comes the need to forget. The right to be forgotten is not about erasing the past, but about giving individuals the freedom to grow beyond it.

In a world where everything can be stored, shared, and searched, perhaps true progress lies in learning not just how to remember, but when to let go.

**Dr Vijay Garg Retired Principal? Educational columnist Eminent Educationist street kour Chand MHR Malout Punjab**

## Maa Janaki - The Epitome of Womanhood

Goswami Tulsidas

Janaki Navami or Sita Navami has great significance in Sanatan Dharma and Indian culture. Janak Nandini and spouse of Bhagwan Ram was born or revealed on the Navami Tithi of Shukla Paksha of Vaishakh month. This day falls exactly one month after Sri Ram Navami and is celebrated with great pomp and gaiety all over the Indian Sub-continent.

Maa Sita was the adopted daughter of Raja Janak, the king of Mithila (also called Videh), hence she is also termed as Janaki or Janak Nandini or Vaidehi. According to Sanatan Dharma mythology, Raja Janak was ploughing the land during a Yagya ritual at present day Sitamarhi in Bihar, the border district of Nepal. He found a baby within a golden casket in the furrow of the field, whom the childless king accepted as the divine gift as his beloved daughter. Sri Ram was the Avtar of Bhagwan Vishnu and Maa Sita is regarded as the embodiment of his wife Devi Lakshmi. She is also called Bhumija as she appeared from the Bhumii i.e. the earth.

Prabhu Sri Ram and Maa Sita are considered as an ideal couple. Although several hurdles had come in their way, they were firm about their relationship. The character of Maa Sita is the epitome of an ideal woman in the human world and almost all families have the ambition for a daughter, a spouse, a daughter-in-law, a sister-in-law, or a mother like Sita. She is known for her dedication, sincerity, courage, purity and self-sacrifice. She was a princess, but she accompanied her husband as a Pativrata Stree (devoted wife) during his exile. She loved Lakshman and Hanuman as her brother and son. She followed the traditions of helping the poor & Sant by providing Bhiksha (i.e. alms) to Ravan, who was disguised as Sadhu. She was intelligent and had the presence of mind to throw her jewels to the monkeys, which later helped Sri Ram-Sena to trace the abducted route. After her kidnapping, she warned Ravan for the debacle of his generation due to his misdeeds.

Sita was unhappy with her separation or informal divorce during her pregnancy, but she was courageous. She decided to give birth to children and equip them with all virtues. She lived as a single mother in the later part of her life. She didn't consider herself a victim and did not go back to Ayodhya to demand equal rights. She understood Sri Ram's internal struggle to choose the role between a king and a husband.

She performed her duty as the beloved daughter of Raja Janak's family, the daughter-in-law of Raja Dashrath's family, the spouse of Prabhu Ram, and lastly the mother of Maharaj Luv and Kush. When Luv and Kush were accepted by the Praja of Ayodhya and father Ram, her last role as mother was also completed and she returned to the womb of Dharati Mata (the earth) to seek solace from the cruel world, where purity needs proof from women.

On the auspicious day of Janaki Navami, the married women observe Upwas (a day-long fast) for the longevity and success of their husbands and worship Sri Ram and Maa Sita to seek their blessings. Along with deities of Ram, Sita and Lakshman, the plow representing Dharti Mata (Earth) is also worshipped with proper Puja-vidhi. Devotees chant the shlok of Rigveda (4.57.6) - "ArvachiSubhage Bhava Site VandamaheTva. Yatha Nah SubhagasasiYathah Nah Sufalalasi." (O Maa Site, come in front of us. We bow before you. O Goddess, enriched with supreme treasure and vibes, please show your kindness and generosity and be the harbinger of auspicious outcomes for us).

Maa Sita, her character and life of struggle is part and parcel of the enriched culture of the Indian Sub-continent. It is believed that by performing the Puja rituals and Vrat on Janaki Navami bestows virtues like modesty, motherhood, sacrifice and dedication and blesses a joyful and prosperous married life..

(The Author is a technocrat and educationist)

# NIA Arrests Main Accused in South 24 Parganas Bomb Blast Case in West Bengal

New Delhi, 26 /4 (H.S.): The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested the main accused in the bomb explosion case that occurred in South 24 Parganas district of West Bengal in March this year. In the blast, one person was killed and three others were seriously injured, sending shockwaves through the local community. The agency has identified the arrested person as Ahidul Islam Mulla, a resident of the Bijoyanagar Bazar area in the district. According to the NIA, he was a co-accused in the conspiracy and actively involved in manufacturing bombs and destroying evidence. Investigators say the blast took place while explosives were being prepared, killing one of the conspirators on the spot. An earlier accused in the



case has already been arrested by the West Bengal State Police. The NIA has since taken over the investigation, conducting a detailed probe that led to the identification and apprehension of Mulla. The incident occurred in Dakshin Bamonuya village in South 24

Parganas, triggering widespread panic in the area. The agency has registered the case as RC-09/2026/NIA/DLI and said the investigation is still ongoing. Authorities are now examining the role of other possible suspects and checking for any wider network linked to the plot.

# A Nation's Power Will Be Defined by Its Technology, Not Territory: Dr Jitendra Singh

New Delhi, 26/4 (H.S.): Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr Jitendra Singh, has said that in the coming decades a nation's strength will be gauged by its technological capability, not just its land or military. Speaking virtually to the PAN-IIT Alumni Conference in Los Angeles, he added that India's mission is not only to become a developed country by 2047, but also to shape the direction of global progress. Dr Singh told the global gathering of technology leaders, entrepreneurs, investors and researchers that "India's technological sovereignty" will be central to both its domestic development and its global standing. He said the country must move beyond being a consumer of technology and emerge as a creator, designer and driver of global innovation. He stressed that critical areas such as semiconductors, artificial intelligence, robotics and quantum technologies are now essential for national security and economic resilience. Advancing India's position in these fields, he argued, will give the country greater strategic autonomy and bargaining



power on the world stage. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, Dr Singh said, India has transformed from a technology-importing nation into a global innovation hub. He pointed to the expansion of the space programme, breakthroughs in biotechnology, and the rapid rise of deep-tech startups as living proof of India's growing technological muscle. He called science, technology and innovation the bedrock of the "Developed India 2047" vision, and said that cross-sectoral reforms—from space and nuclear to digital infrastructure—have all been driven by technology-enabled

policies. The minister praised the contribution of the Indian diaspora, especially IIT alumni, calling them a crucial bridge between India and global innovation ecosystems. Through investments, mentorship, institutional partnerships and policy engagement, he said, overseas-based Indians are continuously strengthening India's development trajectory. He urged the large base of Indian technologists abroad to deepen collaboration with Indian universities, research bodies and startups, so that India can jointly build globally relevant technologies instead of merely adapting foreign solutions.

# Prime Minister Modi to Inaugurate Ganga Expressway, 6,350 Crore Projects in Uttar Pradesh on 28-29 April

New Delhi, 26/4(H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Uttar Pradesh on April 28 and 29 to inaugurate and lay foundation stones for development projects worth about ₹6,350 crore and to formally open the Ganga Expressway. The multi-day tour will also include a women's convention in Varanasi and a visit to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple. April 28: Women's convention and infrastructure launch. On April 28, the Prime Minister is expected to reach Varanasi by around 5 pm, where he will attend a women's convention and address a public gathering. On this occasion, he will inaugurate around 48 projects worth over ₹1,050 crore, including road-widening works, rail over-bridges and sewage treatment plants. He will

also lay foundation stones for more than 112 projects valued at around ₹5,300 crore. These include water-supply and sewerage schemes, a 500-bed multi-specialty hospital, tourism-development initiatives, ghats' redevelopment, and various administrative-infrastructure projects. Later that day, the Prime Minister will flag off two new "Amrit Bharat Express" trains—the Varanasi-Pune Amrit Bharat Express and the Ayodhya-Mumbai Amrit Bharat Express—highlighting the government's push for faster, high-frequency rail connectivity. April 29: Ganga Expressway inauguration and temple visit. On April 29, the tour will begin with the Prime Minister offering prayers at the Kashi Vishwanath Temple in

Varanasi. Later, he will travel to Hardoi district, where he will inaugurate the Ganga Expressway—a 594-kilometre access-controlled corridor stretching from Meerut to Prayagraj (Allahabad). The expressway is expected to slash travel time between the two cities from 10-12 hours to about 6 hours, linking 12 districts and creating a high-speed transport backbone for the state. A key strategic feature is a 3.5-kilometre emergency airstrip near Shahjahanpur, which has defence and emergency-response significance. The project is projected to boost industrial investment, agricultural incomes, logistics efficiency and employment, and is being presented as a cornerstone of Uttar Pradesh's infrastructure and economic-development agenda.

# Rahul Gandhi Holds Interaction at Gargi College, Says Gen-Z Women Will Lead India's Future

New Delhi, 26 /4(H.S.): Opposition leader in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, visited Gargi College, Delhi University, on Sunday and held a candid dialogue with students, focusing especially on the role of "Gen-Z" women in shaping India's future. The meeting highlighted the younger generation's aspirations and their desire for more inclusive, violence-free politics. Rahul Gandhi later posted a 36-minute video on social media platform X, capturing the conversation with the college's women students. In his caption, he wrote that meeting young women from Gargi College and Delhi University was "really



enjoyable," adding that the present-day youth understand issues deeply and that the country's future is in safe hands. He said women belonging to "Generation Z" will lead India in the coming years, and called on

society and institutions to open up more opportunities for youth and ensure they are empowered to take forward the nation's agenda. The interaction also touched upon the Women's Reservation Bill, with students

describing it not just as a tool for empowerment but also as a means to rebalance power structures. They stressed the need to increase equality, respect and participation of women in politics, and said they want to replace violence, hatred and patriarchy with unity, equality and mutual respect in public life. Rahul appreciated the students' straightforward and fearless thinking, and reiterated that the country's future is secure in the hands of the younger generation. He urged elders and institutions to create space and support so that young people, especially young women, can step into leadership roles across sectors.

# POSH Awareness Workshop Held in Delhi

New Delhi, 26/4 (H.S.): Sampurna organised a training workshop on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act in the national capital, with a focus on strengthening awareness and effective implementation of the law. Ten selected members participated in the workshop and are being trained as professional volunteers to promote and implement the POSH Act in its true spirit. The initiative aims to build a team of trained and committed individuals within Sampurna who can contribute actively towards awareness and enforcement, addressing gaps caused by limited understanding and training. The workshop was chaired by Dr. Shobha Vijender, Founder President of Sampurna and a social worker associated with women's empowerment initiatives. In her address, she provided a detailed overview of the POSH Act, covering its background, significance and practical aspects of implementation. She emphasised that meaningful empowerment of working women requires proper



and complete implementation of the Act. During the first session, key provisions of the law were discussed, including its background and necessity, the role of NGOs in awareness generation, responsibilities of Internal Committees (IC) and Local Committees (LC), and the handling of cases with sensitivity and professionalism. The session also included discussions on real-life case scenarios, supported by a live presentation. Participants engaged actively in the interactive

session, sharing perspectives and experiences. They expressed satisfaction with the training and noted that it enhanced their understanding and confidence to work in the field of POSH awareness and implementation. Tea and refreshments were served at the conclusion of the programme. The vote of thanks was delivered by Nikhil, Coordinator, who acknowledged the leadership of Dr. Vijender and the participation of attendees.

# Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan to Visit Andhra Pradesh on Monday



New Delhi, 26 /4 (H.S.): Vice-President C. P. Radhakrishnan will visit Andhra Pradesh on Monday and Tuesday, April 27-28, the Vice-President's Secretariat has said. During the trip, he is scheduled to attend the centenary celebrations of Andhra University in Visakhapatnam on April 27. The visit underlines the national importance of the university's 100-year milestone and is expected to highlight the role of higher education and research in the state's development.

# Prime Minister Modi to Visit Sikkim on 27-28 April, Inaugurate and Launch Projects Worth Over 4,000 Crore

New Delhi, 26 /4(H.S.): Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Sikkim on April 27 and 28 to attend the closing ceremony of the state's 50th Statehood Year celebrations and to inaugurate, dedicate and lay the foundation stones for multiple development projects worth over ₹4,000 crore. The visit is expected to give a major push to infrastructure, connectivity, health, education, tourism, agriculture and urban development in the Himalayan state. The Prime Minister's Office said PM Modi will arrive in Gangtok around 3 pm on April 27. On the morning of April 28, he will visit the Orchidarium in Gangtok, where the advanced "Swarnajayanti Maitri Manjari Park" has been developed to showcase the state's rich biodiversity and floral heritage. Later, he will participate in the 50th year statehood closing ceremony at the Paljor Stadium in Gangtok and address a public gathering. On this occasion, he will inaugurate and lay foundation stones for projects worth more than ₹4,000 crore across the state, covering sectors such as infrastructure, connectivity, health,



education, energy, urban development, environment, tourism and agriculture. Prime Minister Modi will lay the foundation stone for a 100-bed Ayurveda hospital at Yangang in Namchi district. He will also inaugurate a 30-bed Integrated Sowa-Rigpa (traditional Tibetan-medicine) hospital at NIT Deorali, which will strengthen the state's traditional-medicine services and create new healthcare opportunities. The Prime Minister will inaugurate the permanent

campus of Sikkim University, the Neta Subhas Chandra Bose Centre of Excellence building, the Helen Lepcha Medical College, and the Dantem Professional College. He will also dedicate model residential schools, a new degree college, monastic hostels-cum-classrooms, and launch IT-based learning infrastructure in 160 schools, marking a major upgrade in Sikkim's educational ecosystem. To improve connectivity, he will lay the foundation stones for two double-

lane steel-arch bridges over the Teesta River and inaugurate the widening and strengthening of the road from Birbhang to Namchi. In the energy sector, he will inaugurate the upgradation of transmission and distribution networks in Gangtok, which will make power supply more reliable. Under urban-development schemes, the Prime Minister will inaugurate a public service secretariat at Lumsy, the Civil Services Institute in Gangtok, several residential projects, and lay the foundation stone for the Sadbhavana Mandap along MG Road, all aimed at easing governance and public services. For environmental protection, he will inaugurate the redevelopment of the sewage system at Singtam and the Rani Chhu River Pollution Control Project in Gangtok. In tourism, he will inaugurate the redevelopment of the Ridge Precinct, eco-tourism facilities in Soreng, pilgrimage infrastructure and traveller hostels linked with the Kailash-Manasarovar route, and lay the foundation stone for an eco-pilgrimage complex at Gyalsing.

# Centre Launches Five-Year Project to Strengthen Grassroots Biodiversity Governance in Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya

New Delhi, 26/4 (H.S.): India has launched a five-year project to strengthen on-the-ground biodiversity conservation and integrate it into local development plans, with pilot work in Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya. The initiative, led by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and the National Biodiversity

Authority (NBA), aims to empower local communities and village panchayats while also creating sustainable livelihood opportunities. The project is titled "Strengthening Institutional Capacities for Securing Biodiversity Conservation Commitments" and will run from 2025 to 2030. It is being implemented with financial

support of 4.88 million US dollars from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Two ecologically significant landscapes have been selected as pilot sites: Tamil Nadu: The Sathyamangalam landscape, located at the meeting point of the Western and Eastern Ghats,

includes the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve. The project will involve communities living near these forests to mainstream biodiversity conservation into Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDs). Meghalaya: In the Garo Hills region, the project will focus on the Nokrek Biosphere Reserve, Balpakram National

Park, and the Siju Wildlife Sanctuary. Here, it will support community-level conservation through local institutions and traditional knowledge. The main goal is to mainstream biodiversity in local development plans and strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs). The project

will create multi-stakeholder platforms that bring together forest departments, revenue departments, elected representatives, and civil-society groups to design community-owned conservation plans. It also aims to design innovative financing mechanisms, such as benefit-sharing arrangements, corporate social responsibility (CSR) partnerships,

and green micro-enterprises, so that conservation can support long-term livelihoods for local people. Focus on knowledge, capacity, and inclusion. A major component of the project is knowledge management and capacity building. Successful models and innovations developed in Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya will be documented and shared for replication across the country.

## Four Killed in Israeli Strikes on Gaza; Leaflets Dropped in Lebanon as Warnings Escalate

Gaza Strip/Beirut, 26 /4(H.S.): People in Gaza and Lebanon continue to bear the brunt of Israeli military operations. At least four people were killed in Israeli air and ground strikes on Gaza early Sunday, while Israel dropped leaflets over villages in Lebanon's Tyre district, warning residents to stay away from certain areas. According to Al Jazeera, citing Gaza health officials, one person was killed in an airstrike near the central village of Al-Mughraqa. Two others were killed in areas near Gaza City due

to Israeli gunfire and shelling. The Israeli military also shot a 40-year-old woman in the southern Gaza Strip town of Khan Younis, and she later died from her injuries. The Palestinian health ministry says that since October 2023, at least 72,587 people have been killed in Gaza. Even after a partial ceasefire was announced in October 2025, attacks have not fully stopped, leaving civilians vulnerable to renewed violence. In Lebanon, Israel has been conducting regular strikes against Hezbollah targets along

the border, even as a broader military truce remains in place. The Israeli army announced that it dropped leaflets over a string of villages in the Tyre district, including Majdat Bait al-Sayyidah, Mazraa Joun, Zibqine, Yatar, Sarbhin, Hadatha, Bait Yahoun, Chakroun, Mazraa Salama, Kfar Chouba, Froun, Al-Wakkar al-Gharbi, Yammour al-Shaqqif, Arnoun, Deir Mimmas, Marjayoun, Abl al-Sakki, Kabrih, Al-Mareh, Ain Kinyeh and Ain Ata. The leaflets warn

residents not to move towards the Litani River region, the Salhani Valley, and areas near Al-Salkooki, saying that active military operations are under way and civilians should stay away from these zones. The Israeli military has stated that people should not head south, as attacks against Hezbollah positions are ongoing in that direction. The warnings and continued strikes highlight the fragile security situation along the Israel-Lebanon border and the persistent humanitarian toll on both sides.

## Turkey Talks to U.S. After Failed Islamabad Talks; Iran Shares Concerns with Oman

Ankara/Muscat, 26 /4 (H.S.): Following the failure of the second round of Iran-U.S. talks in Islamabad, Turkey has held phone discussions with American officials to review the outcome, while Iran has shared its concerns with Oman. The moves underline the continuing regional effort to mediate between Tehran and Washington amid growing tensions. Turkey's Foreign Ministry said Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan spoke on the phone with U.S. negotiators about the latest developments in the Islamabad talks. Ankara has

positioned itself as a diplomatic intermediary between Iran and the United States and has also advocated for a ceasefire, accusing the U.S. and Israel of carrying out a coordinated attack on Iran that violates international law. Turkish officials have stressed the need for dialogue and de-escalation, warning that further military action could deepen instability across the Middle East. Oman's official news agency reported that Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said met Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in the capital Muscat. The two sides discussed

the regional situation and ongoing mediation efforts aimed at ending the conflict between Iran, the United States, and Israel. Oman, long seen as a quiet mediator in regional disputes, is also playing a brokering role in the peace talks. Sultan Haitham emphasized the importance of negotiations and diplomatic initiatives in resolving the crisis and called for a sustainable political settlement. Both Turkey and Oman have underlined that only a negotiated solution, not military escalation, can bring lasting stability to the region.

## President Zardari Arrives in China to Strengthen Bilateral Economic Ties



Beijing, 26 /4 (H.S.): Pakistan's President, Asif Ali Zardari, arrived in Changsha, China, shortly after midnight on Saturday to commence an official visit aimed at deepening economic and trade cooperation between the two nations. This visit is strategically significant as both countries commemorate the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relationship. According to the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs, President Zardari's itinerary includes high-level engagements with provincial

leaders in Changsha (Hunan province) from April 25 to 27, followed by a visit to Sanya (Hainan province) from April 28 to May 1. A core objective of these discussions is to provide renewed impetus to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a cornerstone of the bilateral partnership, and to explore further avenues for regional connectivity. Upon his arrival in Changsha, the President was received by Hu Xusheng, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Hunan

Provincial People's Congress, along with senior diplomatic envoys from both Pakistan and China. Prior to his departure, President Zardari was seen off at Allama Iqbal International Airport by Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider. This high-level visit underscores the enduring commitment of both Islamabad and Beijing to maintaining their long-standing diplomatic tradition and navigating the evolving requirements of their integrated economic framework.

## Shooter Arrested After Charging Security Perimeter at White House Dinner

Washington DC, 26 /4 (H.S.): President Donald Trump was swiftly evacuated unharmed from the White House Correspondents' Dinner after gunshots rang out, with authorities confirming the shooter's arrest following a brazen security breach. Chaos unfolded Saturday night in the Washington Hilton's ballroom, where hundreds of journalists, celebrities, and leaders gathered for Trump's address. Witnesses heard five to eight shots, prompting Secret Service agents to rush the head table and escort Trump, First Lady Melania Trump, and Vice President JD Vance to safety. National Guard

troops then secured the venue, allowing guests to exit but preventing re-entry under tight external measures; no casualties



were reported among attendees. A Fox News journalist relayed details directly from top White House officials: "The shooter charged the magnetometer closest to the front door... and took a shot

at a Secret Service member at the ballroom," highlighting the suspect's attempt to breach the main screening area outside the hall. One officer sustained a minor injury to their bullet-resistant vest but is expected to recover fully. Posting on Truth Social, Trump lauded law enforcement's swift response, noting the shooter was apprehended and proposing to resume the event: "LET THE SHOW GO ON," while yielding to security protocols. This incident, his first such dinner as president, echoes a prior 2024 assassination attempt but ended without harm to leaders. The suspect's identity and motives await official disclosure.

## President Trump Evacuated Following Shooting Incident at White House Correspondents' Dinner

Washington DC, 26/4(H.S.): President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump were swiftly evacuated on Saturday evening after an armed individual opened fire near the security checkpoint of the annual White House Correspondents' Association (WHCA) dinner at the Washington Hilton hotel. Following the incident, which occurred shortly after 8:40 p.m. ET, the President addressed the nation from the White House, emphasizing that while such attacks on the American republic are not unprecedented, the country must remain resolute in resolving political differences peacefully. During his press briefing, President Trump commended the U.S. Secret Service and local law enforcement for their rapid response, which prevented further casualties. Security personnel confronted the suspect, identified as 31-year-old Cole Allen, near the event's magnetometer screening area. Despite the suspect firing at least one shot—striking an agent



whose protective gear prevented serious injury—law enforcement officers successfully apprehended the individual. President Trump characterized the attack as an assault on the fundamental purpose of the dinner, which is intended to foster dialogue and celebrate freedom of expression. Expressing concerns over current security protocols, the President

stated, "This event was dedicated to the freedom of speech, aimed at bringing together members of both parties and the press." He added that future iterations of the dinner would incorporate enhanced security measures, potentially hosted at a more secure venue. In response to the violence, Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi issued a statement expressing "great relief" that the

President, the First Lady, and all attendees were safe, while condemning the "terrifying act of violence". The suspect, Cole Allen, remains in custody and is expected to face federal charges related to the attack on a law enforcement officer. President Trump concluded by urging all Americans to commit to resolving national divisions through peaceful and civil discourse.

## BLF Attack on Military Convoy Leaves Two Pakistani Officers Dead in Balochistan

Islamabad, 26/4 (H.S.): Two Pakistani military officers were killed and several others injured in a targeted attack by the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF) in the Balochistan province. According to statements released by the separatist organization, a military convoy was struck by an improvised explosive device (IED) in the Jhao area of Khuzdar on April 25. BLF spokesperson Major Gwahram Baloch confirmed that the explosion completely destroyed a military vehicle. While the group asserted that two officers died at the scene and others sustained serious injuries, there has been no official comment or confirmation from the Pakistani military regarding the incident. The BLF further detailed a series of recent operations across the region. On April 24,



militants reportedly seized a police station in the Mill area of Noshki, disabling its communication equipment and wounding a police officer during the takeover. On the same day, the group claimed to have launched grenade attacks on a military headquarters in

Kharan. Additionally, on April 23, BLF fighters reportedly blocked the Quetta-Karachi highway in the Jhao region for three hours. During this period, the group maintained strict surveillance over all vehicular movement and activities on the critical transit route.

## Trump Halts Diplomacy Trip to Pakistan Amid Iran Standoff

Washington DC, 26/4 (H.S.): US President Donald Trump announced on Saturday, that he has cancelled a scheduled diplomatic mission to Pakistan intended to address the ongoing war with Iran. The trip, which was set to feature US special envoy Steve Witkoff and presidential adviser Jared Kushner, was scrapped shortly after an Iranian delegation led by Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi departed Islamabad. President Trump stated that he did not see the value in his envoys undertaking long-distance travel for discussions that he felt lacked progress. "They can call us anytime they want, but you're not going to be making any more 18-hour flights to sit around talking about nothing," the President remarked. Trump further emphasized his administration's leverage, writing on his Truth Social platform: "Also, we have all the cards, they have none! If they want to talk, all they have to do is call!!!!". The cancellation arrived at a time of deep uncertainty regarding the leadership structure within Tehran. President Trump cited "tremendous infighting and confusion" within the Iranian government, suggesting that it remains unclear who is authorized to make binding decisions. Despite the breakdown in face-to-face negotiations, the White House confirmed that the existing ceasefire, which was previously extended beyond its April 22 expiration date, remains in place for the time being. Foreign Minister Araghchi, who has also visited Oman and Russia, characterized his stay in Pakistan as "fruitful".

## Fragile Ceasefire Shattered as Israeli Airstrikes Kill Four in Southern Lebanon

Beirut, 26/4 (H.S.): Four people were killed in southern Lebanon on Saturday after Israeli airstrikes hit multiple locations near the border, reigniting fears that the already-fragile ceasefire may be unraveling. The Lebanese state news agency reported the deaths, while the Israeli military said it had targeted Hezbollah rocket launchers and fighters in several sites across the region. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) stated that overnight strikes destroyed loaded rocket launchers in three locations and hit facilities used by Hezbollah's elite Radwan forces, which operate in southern Lebanon. Israeli officials also

claimed that Hezbollah had fired rockets at northern Israel, at least one of which was intercepted, with no casualties reported on the Israeli side. The strikes come amid a tenuous ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon, brokered by the United States and extended by three weeks after it was originally due to expire. Despite the truce, both sides have repeatedly accused each other of breaching the agreement, with Israel stating that Hezbollah has continued to stockpile and launch weapons from the south, while Lebanese officials and Hezbollah lawmakers argue that the ceasefire is "meaningless" without

guarantees for civilian safety and full withdrawal. Lebanon's Civilian Toll and Humanitarian Worries Civilian areas in southern Lebanon have borne the brunt of cross-border attacks. According to Lebanese health and state-run sources, repeated Israeli bombardments over the past year have killed more than a thousand people and wounded thousands more, forcing tens of thousands to flee their homes. Many displaced families now live in makeshift shelters or overcrowded buildings, raising concerns among humanitarian groups about a worsening crisis if the ceasefire collapses. Hezbollah, an Iran-

backed militant group embedded in Lebanon's political fabric, has rejected disarmament proposals pushed by Washington and some Lebanese officials. The organization continues to portray its armed presence as a "resistance" against Israel, even as it deepens Lebanon's internal divisions and complicates efforts to form a stable democratic order. Lebanon was expected to hold parliamentary elections in May 2026, but the renewal of hostilities has led the country's political elite to delay the polls. The parliament voted to extend its own term for two years, citing the difficulty of organizing elections under

ongoing conflict and displacement. Critics argue that the move only entrenches an old-guard system long accused of corruption and patronage, while ordinary citizens struggle with economic hardship and security fears. International Concerns and Regional Tensions The United Nations and several Western powers have repeatedly warned that another full-scale war between Israel and Hezbollah could quickly spiral into a wider regional conflict. The UN's peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon has also come under fire in recent months, underlining the volatility of the border zone.

## Only One New IPO Launch Next Week; Two Fresh Listings on BSE and NSE

New Delhi, 26 /4(H.S.): The primary market will remain quiet next week, with just one new IPO coming to the market and only two fresh listings planned on the BSE and NSE. The week beginning Monday, April 27, will see limited activity compared with the recent surge in small and mid-cap issues. The only new initial public offering (IPO) slated for next week is from Amba Auto Sales and Services, an SME-segment issue. The company's ₹65.12 crore IPO will open for subscription on April 27 and close on April 29. The price band is fixed between ₹130 and ₹135 per share, with a lot size of 1,000 shares. Allotment is expected to be finalised by April 30, and the shares are likely to list on the NSE SME platform on May 5. In addition to this new issue, investors can continue bidding in the Adisoft Technologies SME IPO, which opened on April 23. Subscription will remain open



until April 27, with a price band of ₹163 to ₹172 per share. Allotment is expected on April 28, and the shares are likely to list on the NSE SME platform on April 30. The issue has already received around 3.34 times subscription. On the listing front,

Citius Trinet Investment Trust, an infrastructure investment trust (InvIT), is scheduled to list on both the BSE and NSE on April 29. The next day, on April 30, Adisoft Technologies shares are expected to make their debut on

the NSE SME platform. Overall, next week's primary-market calendar appears relatively calm, with the focus shifting to listing performance and investor sentiment in the recently launched SME-segment IPOs.

## India's Top 10 Companies Lose Over 2.05 Lakh Crore in Market Cap; TCS, Reliance Face Heaviest Hit

New Delhi, 26 /4 (H.S.): Domestic equities saw a sharp bout of profit-booking and selling last week, dragging down the market capitalisation of India's most valuable companies. After the five-day trading session from Monday to Friday, market caps of seven of the top 10 most-valued firms together shed over ₹2.05 lakh crore, while the remaining three recorded gains of more than ₹48,000 crore. The biggest blow came to Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), whose market cap declined by ₹66,699.44 crore to ₹8,67,364.12 crore. Reliance Industries slipped by ₹50,670.34 crore to ₹17,96,647.50 crore, making it the second-largest fall among the top 10. Other major decliners included: HDFC Bank, down ₹23,090.05 crore to ₹12,08,225.48 crore; Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), down ₹19,670.75



crore to ₹5,13,020.56 crore; Bharti Airtel, down ₹19,406.59 crore to ₹11,05,718.62 crore; ICICI Bank, down ₹14,663.27 crore to ₹9,50,345.40 crore; Larsen & Toubro, down ₹11,142.62 crore to ₹5,52,171.88 crore. These seven companies collectively accounted for a ₹2,05,343.06-crore erosion in valuation during the week. Gainers: Unilever, SBI

and Bajaj. The three gainers in the top-10 list were Hindustan Unilever, State Bank of India (SBI) and Bajaj Finance, whose combined market caps jumped by ₹48,429.31 crore. Hindustan Unilever added ₹20,352.91 crore to reach ₹5,47,219.80 crore. SBI rose by ₹19,522.76 crore to ₹10,16,752.53 crore. Bajaj Finance gained ₹8,253.64 crore to ₹5,73,690.81 crore.

## Gold Prices Edge Slightly Lower, Silver Shows Minor Gains; Bullion Eases Rs 1,740 per 10 Grams in a Week

New Delhi, 26 /4(H.S.): Domestic gold prices showed only a small fall on Sunday, while silver edged up modestly in Indian bullion markets. The mild correction in gold follows a more pronounced weekly decline, with the yellow metal coming off by up to ₹1,740 per 10 grams in seven days and silver tumbling by as much as ₹15,000 per kilogram over the same period. In inter-city trading, 24-carat gold quoted a range of ₹1,54,040 to ₹1,54,910 per 10 grams, depending on the city, while 22-carat gold traded between ₹1,41,200 and ₹1,41,350 per 10 grams. Silver, on the other hand, rose slightly and is now trading around ₹2,60,000 per kilogram in the Delhi bullion market. Major city benchmarks: Delhi: 24-carat at ₹1,54,190 per 10 grams, 22-carat at ₹1,41,350; Mumbai: 24-carat at ₹1,54,040, 22-carat at ₹1,41,200; Ahmedabad: 24-carat at ₹1,54,090, 22-carat at ₹1,41,250; Chennai: 24-carat at ₹1,54,910, 22-carat at ₹1,42,000



(notably higher than other markets). Kolkata: 24-carat at ₹1,54,040, 22-carat at ₹1,41,200. Bhopal, Patna, Jaipur and Lucknow: 24-carat in the ₹1,54,090-₹1,54,190 band and 22-carat around ₹1,41,250-₹1,41,350. In Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Bhubaneswar, 24-carat traded near ₹1,54,040 per 10 grams, with 22-carat at ₹1,41,200, in line with Mumbai's quoting. Overall, most state bullion hubs—including Karnataka, Telangana and Odisha—showed only a mild

softness in gold, reinforced by the sharper weekly correction. Over the past week, 24-carat gold prices fell by up to ₹1,740 per 10 grams, while 22-carat dropped by about ₹1,600 per 10 grams. Silver saw an even steeper weekly fall, slipping by roughly ₹15,000 per kilogram compared with last-week levels. Traders say the current move reflects a mix of weaker global sentiment and local profit-booking, though demand ahead of festive and wedding months continues to provide a partial cushion to any deeper slide.

## Maharashtra Day Holiday on 1 May; BSE, NSE Shut, MCX Trades Only in Evening Session

New Delhi, 26 /4(H.S.): The domestic stock exchanges will remain closed on Friday, 1 May, on the occasion of Maharashtra Day. As a result, there will be no trading on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and National Stock Exchange (NSE) on this day. The break applies to all major segments, including equities, equity derivatives, currency derivatives, corporate bonds, mutual funds, securities-lending schemes, interest-rate derivatives and commodities. The Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) will also shut its morning session (9:00 am to 5:00 pm) due to the Maharashtra Day holiday. However, the exchange will remain open for its evening session, with normal trading from 5:00 pm to 11:30/11:55 pm, allowing investors to trade in commodity futures during that window. According to the current holiday calendar: 28 May 2026 (Thursday): Stock markets will be closed on Bakri Id. 26 June 2026 (Friday): A trading holiday for Muharram. 14 September 2026



(Monday): Market closed on Ganesh Chaturthi. 2 October 2026 (Friday): Mahatma Gandhi Jayanti will be a full-day holiday. 20 October 2026 (Tuesday): Markets shut on Dussehra. 10 November 2026 (Tuesday): Trading holiday for Diwali—Balipratipada. 24

November 2026 (Monday): Holiday for Guru Nanak Jayanti. 25 December 2026 (Friday): Market closed on Christmas. India's Independence Day (15 August 2026) falls on a Saturday, and Diwali (8 November 2026) falls on a Sunday, so neither is listed as a

separate trading holiday. However, exchanges will conduct Diwali "Muhurat trading" on that day, with exact timings to be announced later. Investors are advised to plan their orders and settlement cycles keeping these dates in mind.

## Over 51.8 Lakh Domestic LPG Cylinders Delivered In A Day, Supply Normal

New Delhi, 26 /4(H.S.): More than 51.8 lakh domestic LPG cylinders were delivered on Saturday as the supply of cooking gas continues to be normal with no dry-outs being reported at retail distributorships, according to the update issued by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on Sunday. Besides, 5.45 lakh PNG connections have been gasified, and infrastructure has been created for an additional 2.62 lakh connections since March this year. More than 42,500 PNG consumers have also surrendered their LPG connections via MYPNGD.in website, the statement said. Meanwhile, online domestic LPG cylinder bookings have increased to 98 per cent, while authentication code-based deliveries, on the registered mobile number of the consumer, have increased to around 94 per cent to prevent diversion at the distributor level. Supply of cooking gas to domestic households has been prioritised even as overall LPG supply continues to be affected by the prevailing geopolitical situation. Over 9,131 metric tonnes (MT) of commercial LPG (equivalent to more than 4.8 lakh 19 kg cylinders) was sold on Saturday, which takes the total



amount sold during this month to 1,64,655 MT (equivalent to more than 86.66 lakh 19 kg LPG cylinders). Meanwhile, enforcement actions continue across the country to curb hoarding and black marketing of LPG. More than 2,100 raids were conducted across the country on Saturday. Public sector oil marketing companies have strengthened surprise inspections and imposed penalties on 310

LPG distributorships and suspended 70 LPG distributorships so far. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas further stated that it is taking steps to ensure the uninterrupted availability of petroleum products and LPG across the country, in the context of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Citizens are advised to avoid panic purchase of petrol, diesel and LPG and to beware of

rumours and rely on official sources for correct information. LPG consumers are requested to use digital booking platforms and avoid visiting distributors. All refineries are operating at high capacity with adequate crude inventories, while sufficient stocks of petrol and diesel are being maintained. Local LPG production from refineries has been increased to support domestic consumption, the statement added.

## Fed Meet, Q4 Earnings, US-Iran Tensions Likely To Drive Stock Market This Week

New Delhi, 26 /4(H.S.): A mix of global and domestic triggers, including the upcoming US Federal Reserve policy decision, ongoing earnings season, geopolitical tensions and crude oil price movements, are expected to guide the Indian stock market in the coming week after benchmark indices ended lower. Indian equity benchmarks, the Sensex and Nifty, closed in the red after two straight weeks of gains, weighed down by rising geopolitical tensions and cautious commentary from major IT firms. After a brief early uptick, markets remained under pressure through the week amid sustained selling. The Nifty declined 1.87 per cent to settle at 23,897.95, while the Sensex dropped 2.33 per cent to end at 76,664.21. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, experts said that on the upside, immediate resistance is placed at 24,000, followed by 24,150 and 24,350 levels. "On the downside, support is seen at 23,800 and then at 23,700. A decisive break down below 23,500 could trigger further



downside pressure," an analyst said. Going ahead, investors will closely track the outcome of the upcoming meeting of the Federal Open Market Committee scheduled for April 28-29. Markets are widely expecting the US Federal Reserve to keep interest rates unchanged for a third consecutive meeting, after pausing rate action in January and March following earlier rate cuts. Back home, the fourth-quarter earnings season will gather pace, with more than 200 companies set to announce their results for the quarter ended March 31, 2026. Investors will watch corporate commentary closely for cues on demand outlook, margin pressures

and sectoral trends, particularly after subdued guidance from IT majors in recent weeks. Geopolitical developments will also remain on the radar, especially the ongoing tensions linked to the US-Iran situation. Fresh remarks by Donald Trump regarding engagement with Iran have added to uncertainty, keeping global markets on edge. Any escalation or de-escalation could have a direct bearing on investor sentiment. Crude oil prices are another key variable influencing market direction. Prices remained volatile during the week, with supply concerns and hopes of renewed US-Iran talks driving fluctuations.

## Ranveer Singh Mimicry Row Settled, K'taka HC Accepts Apology

The Karnataka High Court on Saturday accepted an undertaking by Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh, known for his role in 'Durandhar', to visit the Chamundeshwari Temple in Mysuru and tender an apology for his mimicry of a deity depicted in the film Kantara Chapter-2. Meanwhile, the complainant and advocate Prashant Methal stated in Bengaluru that the matter has been settled and that the court will issue an order in this regard soon. The bench, headed by Justice M. Nagaprasanna, accepted Ranveer Singh's undertaking to make amends for his mimicry of the temple deity's depiction in the film. The court observed that it would pass a formal order after recording the actor's apology and indicated that it may direct him to visit the temple within four weeks. Senior counsel Sajjan Poovayya, appearing for Ranveer Singh, submitted that the actor had filed a revised affidavit offering an unconditional apology. He also stated that Ranveer Singh would visit Chamundi Hill and tender his apology for the act of mimicry. Speaking to the media at the Bengaluru Police Commissioner's office, the complainant, advocate Prashant Methal, said that the Ranveer Singh case had been settled. He said that arguments were heard on the affidavit submitted to the court, which stated that the actor would visit Chamundi Hill in Mysuru "in due course". He added that they had raised arguments on what "due course" implies, whether it is 15 days, 30 days, one year, or even 10 years. The actor's counsel submitted that, due to security concerns, a specific timeline could not be provided. After Durandhar 1 and 2, there appears to be a need for enhanced security. Methal said they expressed confidence in the Karnataka Police, who can provide foolproof security when the actor visits. He further stated that the bench agreed with this position. The affidavit has been filed, stating that he will come soon and apologise before the goddess. He added that forgiveness is a fundamental principle of all religions. Since he has tendered an apology, no further punishment is necessary. He said it is appropriate to end the matter here and that it would not be proper to continue. It can be recalled that the controversy, often referred to as the "Kantara mimicry row", arose from an incident during the 55th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa on November 28, 2025, where Ranveer referred to the sacred Chamundi deity as a "female ghost" and mimicked a scene from the film Kantara Chapter-1.



## Rhea Chakraborty Gets Relief: Mumbai Court Orders Defreezing of Bank Accounts in Sushant Singh Rajput Case

In a significant legal development, a Mumbai special court has ordered the defreezing of several bank accounts belonging to Rhea Chakraborty, her brother Showik Chakraborty, and their mother. The accounts had been frozen during the investigation into the death of Sushant Singh Rajput. The accounts were originally frozen in 2020 by the Narcotics Control Bureau as part of a drug-related probe linked to the high-profile case. However, the court found that the agency failed to comply with provisions under Section 68F of the NDPS Act. As per the law, any freezing of financial assets must be confirmed by a competent authority within 30 days—something that was not done in this case. The judge ruled that the continued freezing of these accounts was legally untenable due to this procedural lapse, thereby granting relief to the Chakraborty family. Rhea Chakraborty's legal team argued that the



accounts—many of which were jointly held—were frozen without following due process. They emphasized that the absence of timely confirmation made the action unlawful. On the other hand, the prosecution maintained that the freeze was justified based on alleged links to a drug network during the investigation. Despite this, the court prioritised procedural compliance and ruled in favour of the applicants.

## SPORTS

### Deepti Sharma's Sparkling Comeback: Star All-rounder Leads India to Series-Saving Win Over South Africa

New Delhi, 26/4 (H.S.): Indian women's all-rounder Deepti Sharma has expressed her joy over a powerful comeback performance in the fourth T20 against South Africa, where her all-round brilliance helped India secure their first win of the five-match series. Deepti first played a match-shaping, unbeaten knock of 36 runs to steady India's innings after a shaky start. Later, with the ball, she delivered her best T20I figures of 5 for 19, claiming her maiden five-wicket haul in women's T20 internationals. This all-round effort powered India to a 14-run victory in Johannesburg, denying South Africa a series whitewash and keeping the tie competitive ahead of the final match. Deepti, 28, had been struggling with form, having gone five T20Is without a wicket and delivering unimpressive returns with the bat. In an emotional reaction after being named Player of the Match, she credited her teammates for keeping faith in her, saying: "This award belongs



to my team, who never stopped believing in me." Head coach Amol Mazumdar had earlier defended her, calling her "one of Indian women's cricket's pillars" and insisting that a return to form was just a matter of time. Her Johannesburg performance has now emphatically vindicated that faith. India had lost the first three matches, but Deepti

stressed that the tour has been a rich learning experience and that the fourth-T20 win has boosted the team's confidence. "Whatever we play, we play as a unit—whether batting or bowling—and we must keep this belief going forward," she said. India Women, asked to bat, posted 185 for 5 in 20 overs, with significant cameos from Jemimah

Rodrigues, Richa Ghosh, and Deepti's 36\*. In reply, South Africa Women reached 171 for 9, falling short by 14 runs despite strong resistance from the top order. The five-match series will conclude with the fifth and final T20I on April 27 in Benoni, South Africa, with India now eyeing a series-leveling result.

### Pakistan Announce 15-Member Women's Squad for ODI Series Against Zimbabwe

New Delhi, 26/4 (H.S.): Pakistan has announced a 15-member women's squad for the upcoming three-match ODI series against Zimbabwe. The series will be played in Karachi and marks Zimbabwe Women's maiden white-ball tour of Pakistan. Pakistan will be led by white-ball captain Fatima Sana. The ODI outfit features a mix of experienced performers and one fresh face—Mominia Riasat, who has earned her maiden call-up to the 50-over side. Fatima Sana (captain), Aliya Riaz, Ayesha Zafar, Diana Baig, Gull Feroza, Mominia Riasat, Muneeba Ali



(wicket-keeper), Najiha Alvi (wicket-keeper), Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Parvaiz, Rameen Shamim, Sadaf Shamas, Sidra Amin, Syeda Aroob

Shah and Tasmia Rubab. The three-match ODI series will begin on May 4 at the National Stadium, Karachi, with the second and third

ODIs scheduled for May 6 and May 9, respectively. Zimbabwe will arrive in Karachi on April 29 and conduct practice sessions at the National Bank Stadium from April 30 to May 3. Following the ODIs, a three-match T20 International series will start on May 12, also at the same venue. The Pakistan Cricket Board will announce the T20 squad at a later stage. The series is part of the ICC Women's Championship 2025-2029 and serves as important preparation for Pakistan ahead of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup later in the year.

### Kriti Sanon Steps Down as Hyphen's Chief Customer Officer

Actor Kriti Sanon has stepped down as Chief Customer Officer of her beauty brand Hyphen, nearly three years after launching it on her 33rd birthday. The brand confirmed the leadership change on Instagram but did not clarify whether Sanon has completely parted ways with the company. Hyphen, launched in July 2023, quickly became one of India's fastest-growing beauty brands. CEO Tarun Sharma reported Rs 400 crore in revenue within two years, with a 60% repeat customer rate and expansion from one million to four million consumers across 19,000 pin codes. The brand's affordable range, priced between Rs 449 and Rs 649, helped it capture a strong market position. Sanon's exit from Hyphen's leadership sparked mixed reactions online. Some fans speculated the move could be linked to her upcoming film Cocktail 2, while others questioned whether the brand might be preparing for an acquisition or rebranding. Loyal customers credited her involvement as a major reason for their trust in Hyphen products. Industry observers noted that Sanon's decision reflects a broader trend among celebrity entrepreneurs who step back from active management once their brands mature. The lack of clarity on her continued association leaves room for speculation about Hyphen's next phase.



### 'Michael' Box Office Collection Day 1: Biopic Tops India Charts, Beats Bollywood Releases

The much-anticipated biopic Michael, based on the life of global pop icon Michael Jackson, has made an impressive debut at the Indian box office. Despite receiving mixed reviews, the film recorded a strong opening, emerging as the top performer on its first day. Starring Jaafar Jackson in the lead role, the film earned approximately ₹5.50 crore net in India on Day 1, including paid previews. The movie collected around 2.40 crore during previews and crossed ₹6.60 crore gross overall on its opening day. This marks one of the best



openings for a musical biopic in India, surpassing previous films in the genre. The film outpaced several major Hindi releases currently running in theatres: Ginny Weds

Sunny 2 earned around 30 lakh on the same day. Bhooth Bangla collected 5.15 crore. Dhurandhar 2 recorded 1.60 crore.