

Dumani Mail

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



SC takes suo motu case over brutal assault of woman advocate by her husband

New Delhi: The Supreme Court today took a suo motu case over the brutal assault of a woman advocate by her husband and ordered a probe into allegations that three hospitals denied her emergency treatment. A Bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice J. Joyimalya Bagchi acted on a letter by advocate Sneha Kalita regarding the attack on her colleague practising at Karkardooma courts.



The court was told the victim suffered multiple injuries and was taken to several hospitals that allegedly refused admission and was later treated at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. Authorities said an FIR was filed, and the accused husband was arrested. Expressing concern over the denial of treatment, the Bench expressed concern and directed the investigating officer to examine the circumstances surrounding the denial of admission and submit a status report.

The Court also ordered police to trace the couple's two missing children and said the eldest will remain with maternal grandparents. The court asked the National Legal Services Authority to provide interim financial aid to the victim, who is now reported to be in stable condition.

President Droupadi Murmu reaches Rashtrapati Niwas



New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu arrived in Shimla today on a five-day visit to Himachal Pradesh. She was received by Governor Kavinder Gupta, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, Assembly Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania, Panchayati Raj Minister Anirudh Singh, and Member of Parliament Suresh Kumar Kashyap, along with other dignitaries.

Tomorrow, she will attend a banquet hosted by the Governor at Lok Bhavan in Shimla. On April 29, the President is scheduled to visit the Atal Tunnel. During the visit, she will interact with officials of the Border Roads Organisation and gather information about the historic tunnel.

On the same day, she will also participate in a programme at ARTRAC in Shimla. Meanwhile, elaborate security arrangements have been put in place in view of the President's visit. More than one thousand security personnel have been deployed in Shimla. Special security arrangements have also been made in Palampur, Manali, the Atal Tunnel, and other locations.

Tomorrow, she will attend a banquet hosted by the Governor at Lok Bhavan in Shimla. On April 29, the President is scheduled to visit the Atal Tunnel. During the visit, she will interact with officials of the Border Roads Organisation and gather information about the historic tunnel. On April 30, the President will attend the convocation ceremony of Chaudhary Sarwan Kumar Himachal Pradesh Krishi Vishwavidyalaya in Palampur as the chief guest.

NIA registers case over recovery of 79 crude bombs in Kolkata

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has registered a case to probe the recovery of 79 crude bombs in poll-bound West Bengal. Officials said the move came following a directive by the Union Home Ministry in this regard. In a statement, an NIA spokesperson said, in pursuance of the home ministry's order, the anti-terror agency registered a case, which was originally filed at Uttar Kashi police station, Bhangar division,

Kolkata, on Saturday, and took up the investigation. The case pertains to the recovery of 79 crude bombs and other incriminating materials by Kolkata police, which were being stored at a spot, thereby endangering human life and property. Earlier yesterday, the Election Commission had directed the West Bengal Police to launch a special drive to arrest those involved in the illegal manufacturing of crude bombs in the poll-bound



state. It asserted that all cases related to the making of any such explosive would be probed by the National Investigation

Agency. The directive came after the police recovered a large number of crude bombs from the house of a person, allegedly a TMC worker, at Bhangar in South 24 Parganas district, days ahead of the second and final phase of the assembly polls in the state.

Meanwhile, one person has been arrested. In connection with an explosion case of 18th March, when the blast

occurred in West Bamunia village of Chaltaberia, Bhangar, while crude bombs were being assembled. The accused, Wahidul Islam Molla, is reported by NIA sources to be directly involved in the incident. Investigators say Trinamool booth president Mosiur Kazi was injured during the process. His body was later recovered nearly 24 kilometres away in Haroa. The NIA continues its probe into the wider network behind the case.

IMD forecasts scorching heat conditions to continue over parts of Northwest and Central India

New Delhi: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast scorching heat conditions to continue over parts of Northwest and Central India for the next three days and abate thereafter. According to IMD, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat and Vidarbha will experience heatwave conditions till tomorrow.

The weather agency has predicted Hot and humid weather conditions in isolated pockets over Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Mahe and Tamil Nadu today. It also said that Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Chhattisgarh and West Madhya Pradesh will likely experience warm night conditions today.

The met department has predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya. The weather body predicted Heavy Rainfall at isolated places over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, West Bengal and Sikkim.

Heatwave Alert: School Timings Changed Across Delhi-NCR

New Delhi: With temperatures climbing sharply as early as April, authorities across Delhi-NCR and several states have begun revising school schedules and introducing heat protection measures for students. The early surge in mercury has also raised the possibility of changes to summer vacation schedules and even earlier holiday announcements in some regions if conditions worsen.

To shield children from extreme heat exposure, district administrations have rolled out revised school timings, hydration protocols and, in some places, even temporary closures.

Delhi Schools Focus On Heat Protection Measures

In Delhi, while no blanket revision in school



timings has been announced so far, the government has begun implementing precautionary measures to protect students from heat-related illnesses.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has said schoolchildren may be

provided ORS solution before leaving school to help prevent dehydration during their commute home, especially during the hottest part of the day.

According to the Directorate of Education's academic calendar, summer

vacation in Delhi schools is scheduled from May 11 to June 30, 2026.

Meanwhile, schools in the capital have been asked to follow several key safeguards:

Mandatory hydration breaks are to be ensured by

ringing a bell every 45 to 60 minutes. Outdoor assemblies, sports and physical activities have been suspended between 11 am and 4 pm. Schools have been directed to provide ORS solution to students before dispersal. These steps are aimed at reducing heat stress as Delhi faces intensifying summer conditions.

Noida Revises School Hours Amid Heatwave

In Gautam Buddha Nagar, the District Magistrate has ordered revised timings for all schools in Noida to safeguard students' health during the ongoing heatwave.

Under the new schedule, classes will run from 7:30 am to 12:30 pm, effective April 27, 2026, and the arrangement will remain in force until further orders.

If workplace turns toxic, employees serve notice period before leaving: Bharadwaj replies to Chadha

New Delhi: AAP's Delhi unit chief Saurabh Bharadwaj hit back at Raja Sabha MP Raghav Chadha on Monday over his "toxic workplace" analogy, saying even when an employee decides to leave a company, he serves a notice period instead of conspiring to damage the organisation's image.

Bharadwaj's remarks came after Chadha, who along with six other Raja Sabha MPs of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), announced his decision to merge with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), defended his exit by comparing the Arvind Kejriwal-led party to a toxic workplace.

In a video statement, Chadha had said if the atmosphere at the workplace becomes toxic, employees are stopped from working, their hard work is suppressed and they are silenced, then the right decision is to leave that place.

Toddler kidnapped from Chandni Chowk rescued; one accused held after five-day hunt

New Delhi: A one-and-a-half-year-old boy who was kidnapped from the crowded Chandni Chowk market in north Delhi has been rescued safely and the suspected kidnapper arrested after a five-day manhunt, officials said on Monday.

According to police, the incident was reported on April 19 when the child's mother approached the police, stating that her toddler had been abducted from the market around 7 pm.

"An FIR was immediately registered and multiple teams were formed to trace the child and identify those responsible," Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Raja Banthia said.

JSW Foundation Launches Powerboat facilities for Safe School Commute in Erasama

Paradip - In a significant step toward enhancing student safety and community mobility, the JSW Foundation inaugurated a 24-seater powerboat at Dahibara, Ghata under the Erasama Block of Jagatsinghpur on Monday. This initiative is aimed at ensuring safe and reliable transportation for school students from Jhatipari and Dahipari villages of Dhobei Jangal Revenue Village under Japa Gram Panchayat. These students travel daily to Ambiki High School and Government Upper Primary School located in Ambiki

Gram Panchayat. For years, students and local residents have relied on country-made boats to cross the Hansua River often under unsafe conditions, without any safety measures. This daily commute posed considerable risks not only to students but also to members of the general public transporting their two-wheelers across the river. The newly introduced 24-seater powerboat, equipped with life jackets is built to safety standards, will significantly reduce these risks while offering a



more comfortable and dependable mode of transport. It is expected to benefit both school children and the wider community.

The program was inaugurated by J.Sonal, IAS, Collector & District Magistrate, Jagatsinghpur, in gracious presence of

Akshay Pillay, IAS, Chief Development Officer Cum-Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad, Jagatsinghpur and Ankit Kumar Verma, IPS, SP Jagatsinghpur. The event was also attended by Dasarathi Jena, OAS, Block Development Officer, Erasama and Manoj Singh, Vice President, JSW Utkal Steel Ltd, Paradip along with Smt. Bidulata Rout, Sarpanch, Japa Gram Panchayat and Abhijit Mohanty, Location Head of JSW Foundation, Paradip, with larger number of Community

members from Dhobei Jangal village. Community members have warmly welcomed the initiative and expressed their gratitude toward JSW Foundation for addressing a long-standing local challenge. The project stands as a testament to the Foundation's commitment to improving quality of life through targeted, community-driven interventions. This milestone reinforces the importance of safe infrastructure in rural education access and highlights how collaborative efforts can drive meaningful change at the grassroots level.

Nominations for Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2026 open till July 31

New Delhi: Nominations for the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2026 are now open for children aged between 5 and 18 years as of 31st July this year. The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar is a prestigious national-level award conferred annually by the President of India to recognise the exceptional achievements of children across the country.

The award is presented to children who have demonstrated excellence in categories including Bravery, Social Service, Environment, Sports, Art and Culture, and Science and Technology. The last date for submission of nominations is 31st July. Nominations from any citizen will be received only through the National Awards Portal on <https://awards.gov.in/>. Self-nomination and recommendations for the awards will both be considered.



Subarnapur Collector Dr. Nrupa Raj Sahu Honoured with Utkal Navaratna Award.

Sambalpur, April 27 (DMS) : Subarnapur District Collector Dr. Nrupa Raj Sahu has been honoured with the prestigious Utkal Navaratna Award, presented by the State Council for Art Research and Training, Odisha, and Jayadev Sanskriti Bikash Parishad, India.

The award was presented during a grand ceremony held at Kala Bikash Kendra in Cuttack. Odisha Crime Branch IG Mr. Sarthak Sadangi was also honoured with the same award on the occasion.

Former Judge of the Odisha High Court, Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sadangi, who is currently a member of the National Human Rights Commission, Jajpur MP Mr. Rabindra Narayan Behera, and former State Finance Minister Mr. Shashi Bhusan Behera attended the event as chief guests and added dignity to the award ceremony.

Dr. Sahu was specially appreciated for his dedication in administrative service, particularly for reaching out to people at the grassroots level, understanding their problems, and ensuring quick solutions.

His contribution toward public welfare and effective governance has earned him widespread recognition and respect.



79 Years After Independence, Phatatangar Village Still Far from Development

Sambalpur-27/04 (DMS) : Even after 79 years of independence, many villages in India are still deprived of even the most basic facilities. The tribal-dominated Phatatangar village under Jhankarpali Panchayat of Rengali Block in Sambalpur district is a clear example of this reality.

Despite its name, development has not reached Phatatangar village. Basic necessities such as education, healthcare, transportation, social development, and safe drinking water are still unavailable.

Around 18 primitive tribal families live in this village. However, till today, there is no proper road connecting the village. The small mud road is full of potholes. During summer, only tractors can manage to travel on it, while during the rainy season, even riding a bicycle becomes extremely difficult.

Although schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Integrated Child Development Services are running across the country, this village has neither a school nor an Anganwadi center. Children of the village have to travel 4 kilometers to Basupali village to attend school and the Anganwadi center.

The Panchayat headquarters is 8 km away, while the Block headquarters is 10 km away. Due to the lack of proper roads, villagers are deprived of education and healthcare services. During the rainy season, if someone falls sick, ambulances



No School or Anganwadi Centre in the Village

cannot reach the village. Patients are carried on cots for 4 km up to Basupali, from where they are taken by ambulance to hospitals in Rengali or Sambalpur.

The village has no pond or water reservoir. As soon as summer begins, the two tube wells in the village dry

up. As a result, villagers are forced to use polluted water from a nearby stream for drinking, bathing, and sanitation purposes.

While both the Central and State Governments claim to be giving special attention to the all-round development of tribal communities, administrative negligence has kept development away from Phatatangar village.

The government had promised that industrialization would bring surrounding development, but that promise has turned into mere words. Even though the village is very close to the Rengali industrial area, no industrial peripheral

development funds have been invested for its basic development. This has created strong dissatisfaction among aware citizens.

When asked about this issue, Jhankarpali Sarpanch Sukant Kumar Sahu said that the road connecting Phatatangar village has been handed over to the Rural Development Department, and proposals for the construction of a pucca road have been approved in Panchayat and Samiti meetings.

He also stated that since groundwater levels fall during summer and tube wells dry up, drinking water is being supplied through tankers by the Panchayat.

Rotary Club organizes free eye check up camp

Khoradha-25/4-A free eye check up camp was organized by Rotary Club Khordha at Pranathi Autonomous College. The camp was formally inaugurated by former Vice-chancellor of North Odisha University, Maj. Khirod Prasad Mohanty. The chief guest of the occasion chairman Khordha municipal council, Ms. Kanakalakshmi Mohanty distributed spectacles to the peoples who had undergone eye tests. In this free eye check up camp, 84 peoples eye were examined

by Dr. Devi Prasad Srichandan and 24 people were distributed spectacles. Among others, Vice-Chairman, Sourya Ranjan Mohanty, Rotarian Deb Prasad Majumdar, Suchismita Parija, Rotary Club President Sukant Nayak, Alok Pattnaik, Saswat Kumar Mohanty, contributed significantly. This eye check up camp was successfully end with the joint efforts of T. Akshay Kumar, Program Officer, NSS, PN, Autonomous College, Khordha and the students of NSS.

MCL Hosts Key Workshop on Risk Assessment Based SOPs to Strengthen Mine Safety

Sambalpur, 26 April 2026: Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) under the aegis of Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS), Bhubaneswar Region-2, successfully organized a focused workshop on "Preparation of Risk Assessment-Based Effective Safe Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Open Cast Mining Activities".

The workshop, organised by Lakhanpur Area, Ib Valley Coalfields of MCL was graced by Shri Nasina BalaSubramanyam, Director of Mines Safety (Mining), as Chief Guest, along with Shri U. Siva Sankar, Dy. Director of Mines Safety (Mining).

The workshop focused on developing practical, site specific, risk assessment-based SOPs for key mining operations, including drilling, blasting, excavation, transportation, and dump management. Experts emphasized clear role definition, strict compliance with safety norms, and the need for dynamic, preventive safety systems. Further, interactive and outcome-oriented sessions enriched by valuable inputs from senior officials and technical experts also took place.



On this occasion, Shri Sunil Sharma, GM (Safety & Rescue), MCL HQs, Shri Awadh Kishore Pandey, GM (Lakhanpur Area), Shri P.B. Reddy, GM (Basundhara Area), Shri Jitendra Tiwary, GM (Ib Valley Area), Shri Ajay Namjoshi, GM (Orient Area), Shri Sameer Kumar, GM (CWS, Ib Valley) along with Project Officers and Senior officials were present. Their participation underscored the importance of adopting structured, risk-based safety practices in line with DGMS guidelines.

Participants from various operational areas of MCL—

Lakhanpur, Ib Valley, Orient, Mahalaxmi, and Basundhara—along with Central Workshop (Ib Valley), actively engaged in the sessions. Representatives from leading mining organizations such as Vedanta Limited, Odisha Coal and Power Limited, NLC India Limited, and NTPC Limited also participated, reflecting strong industry-wide collaboration.

This initiative reaffirms MCL's commitment to strengthening mine safety through proactive, risk-based approaches, setting a benchmark for safer and more sustainable mining operations.

Combing Operations Intensified in Rayagada Forest Division to Strengthen Protection and Wildlife Safety

Rayagada: In a proactive step towards strengthening forest protection and ensuring the safety of wildlife, intensive combing operations are being carried out at various locations under the Rayagada Forest Division. The initiative aims to curb illegal activities such as poaching, unauthorized timber extraction, and encroachment, while enhancing overall surveillance in forest areas.

Forest field staff have been actively engaged in patrolling, monitoring vulnerable zones, and conducting thorough area checks as part of the ongoing operation. The coordinated effort reflects the department's commitment to safeguarding natural resources and



maintaining ecological balance in the region. Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) Ashok Pradhan was present on the ground during the operations, supervising the activities and motivating the staff. His presence ensured effective coordination and boosted the

morale of the team involved in the mission.

Officials stated that such combing operations will continue in a phased manner to strengthen vigilance and deter any form of illegal activity in the forests. The department has also emphasized

community cooperation to support conservation efforts and protect wildlife habitats.

The initiative has been widely appreciated as a positive step towards sustainable forest management and environmental protection in the Rayagada region.

Crackdown on Illegal Mining: Surprise Raid Led by Sub-Collector in Rayagada Exposes Violations"

Rayagada, April 25: In a decisive move to curb illegal extraction of minerals, a surprise enforcement raid was conducted in Kolnara tehsil of Rayagada district under the leadership of Sub-Collector Ramesh Kumar Jena, following directives from District Collector Ashutosh Kulkarni.

Acting on credible information regarding unauthorized mining activities being carried out by several crusher units in the area, a joint enforcement team launched an inspection drive to identify and stop such violations. The operation aimed to ensure strict compliance with mining regulations and prevent further exploitation of natural resources.

The raid team included the Additional Tahsildar of Kolnara, Bhawani Mishra, Revenue



Inspector (RI) Sasmita Mishra, Assistant Revenue Inspector (ARI) Prasannajit Raut, and officials from the Mining Department, Rayagada. The team conducted thorough inspections across multiple crusher units suspected of operating illegally.

During the operation, several irregularities were detected, and necessary legal actions were initiated against those found violating norms. Authorities reiterated that strict measures would be taken against individuals and entities involved in

unauthorized mining and transportation of minerals.

Officials also acknowledged that illegal crusher units and quarry operations continue to exist in various parts of the district, indicating the need for sustained and frequent enforcement drives. The administration emphasized that such surprise raids will be intensified in the coming days to dismantle illegal networks and protect government revenue as well as the environment.

The district administration has appealed to the public to report any instances of illegal mining activities, assuring that prompt action will be taken. This crackdown is seen as a significant step towards restoring regulatory control and ensuring lawful mining practices in the region.

Union Minister Participates in Historic 'Kala Chandan Yatra' of Barkote 'Chandan Yatra' is a shining symbol of Odia culture and spiritual consciousness: Dharmendra Pradhan

Sambalpur, April 25 (DMS) : The historic 'Kala Chandan Yatra' of Barkote Block in Deogarh district is not merely a festival, but a vibrant symbol of Odisha's rich culture, unique traditions, and deep spiritual consciousness, said Union Education Minister and Sambalpur MP Dharmendra Pradhan.

During his visit to Deogarh district on Friday, Mr. Pradhan

participated in various cultural and organizational programs. While attending the 'Kala Chandan Yatra' ceremony, he said that this traditional festival of Kala village carries a glorious history and has today become an identity of the entire Deogarh district.

He further stated that the festival, which promotes disciplined living and social

unity, will provide the right direction and inspiration to the coming generations.

Earlier, at the party office in Deogarh, Dharmendra Pradhan held discussions with party workers. He advised them to strengthen the party organization at the grassroots level and ensure that every welfare scheme of the 'double-engine' government reaches

people from all sections of society.

He also urged the workers to work with dedication towards realizing the vision of a 'Developed Deogarh' and a 'Developed Odisha.'

On this occasion, the Union Minister also attended the consecration ceremony of the Shri Hanuman Temple in Deogarh town and prayed for

the happiness, prosperity, and well-being of all.

He also visited the Shri Jagannath Temple in Barkote, offered prayers, and sought blessings from Lord Jagannath. It is worth mentioning that Mr. Pradhan also inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for several developmental projects in Deogarh on the same day.

Birth centenary of Veteran Cine artist Dukhiram Swain

Jagatsinghpur, Birth Centenary of Veteran Cine artist and nation award winner Dukhiram Swain celebrated by Dukhiram Swain Smriti samiti at Adikavi Sarala Das Sanskriti Bhawan. In this occasion special Dukhiram Swain award given to veteran artist of Odiya Cinema Braja Singh for his life time achievement. Local MLA, Amarendra Das inaugurated the programme and assured to

provide a special Dukhiram Swain memorial Bhawan at District headquarter. Another veteran artist Choudhury Bikash Das joined as guest and address the gathering. Other special guest also address the gathering and all most all encourage the youth mass to follow the path of Dukhiram Swain. Main organiser Ajay Gochayat and others were praised by guest for their effort.

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



India, New Zealand to Sign Free Trade Agreement Tomorrow: Union Minister Piyush Goyal

Bhubaneswar: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said that India and New Zealand will sign a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in New Delhi tomorrow, marking a significant step towards strengthening economic ties between the two countries.

Speaking during his visit to the Taj Mahal in Agra with New Zealand's Minister for Trade and Investment, Todd McClay, Mr Goyal said the agreement was finalised after years of high-level



discussions and will be signed in the presence of both leaders. The FTA aims to double bilateral trade to five billion dollars over the

next five years. Highlighting its economic benefits, Mr Goyal said the agreement will significantly improve

market access for Indian goods and boost trade opportunities. He also met local business owners in Agra from sectors such as leather, textiles, handloom, handicrafts, carpets and spices, and praised their work.

He said Agra will play an important role in India's future exports, adding that enhanced market access and stronger trade ties with New Zealand will support the growth of the city's industrial sector.

The facility will produce

Aluminium Flat Rolled Products (FRP) with an installed capacity of 60,000 tonnes per annum (TPA), in the thickness range of 0.3 – 4.0 mm

Aluminium Foils with a capacity of 18,000 TPA, in the thickness range of 6 – 40 microns

This expansion reinforces Shyam Metalics' focus on product diversification and value addition, while addressing the growing demand for high-quality metal products across industries. The facility is strategically positioned to support the increasing requirements of sectors that rely on precision-engineered and value-added materials, thereby reducing dependence on imports and

contributing to India's manufacturing ecosystem.

The commissioning of the Sambalpur unit is expected to significantly enhance the Company's financial and operational performance. With a strong focus on value-added products, the Company anticipates an improvement in operating margins by approximately 40–50%, driven by better product mix and enhanced efficiencies. Additionally, the new facility is expected to contribute meaningfully to revenue growth, with the topline projected to increase by 2x to 2.5x over the medium term, supported by expanded market reach and higher realization products.

The project further

strengthens the Company's integrated manufacturing ecosystem by enhancing its downstream capabilities and enabling expansion into high-growth segments, thereby unlocking new revenue streams.

Additionally, the facility's strategic location provides logistical advantages, allowing efficient access to key demand centres and supporting seamless distribution across domestic and international markets. This positions the Company to better respond to evolving market dynamics while maintaining operational efficiency.

The project is expected to generate significant employment opportunities in the region and contribute

to the socio-economic development of Odisha. It also aligns with India's broader vision of self-reliance and strengthening domestic manufacturing capabilities under initiatives such as "Make in India."

Commenting on the development, Mr. Brij Bhushan Aggarwal, Chairman and Managing Director, of Shyam Metalics and Energy Ltd., stated:

"This project represents a key milestone in our journey toward building a robust downstream aluminium ecosystem. With rising demand for high-quality aluminium products, we are confident that this facility will contribute meaningfully to industrial growth while supporting local economic development."

President Murmu to Begin Five-Day Visit to Himachal Pradesh from April 27

Bhubaneswar : President Droupadi Murmu will be on a five-day visit to Himachal Pradesh from tomorrow for the summer sojourn. During her visit, the President will stay at the Rashtrapati Niwas at Mashobra in

Shimla. The President will attend a banquet hosted by the Governor of Himachal Pradesh at Lok Bhavan in Shimla on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, President Murmu will visit the Atal Tunnel. She

will also attend the convocation ceremony of Chaudhary Sarwan Kumar Himachal Pradesh Krishi Vishwavidyalaya at Palampur on Thursday. On the same day, the President will host an At

Home Reception at Rashtrapati Niwas in Mashobra. The President will also visit the Army Training Command in Shimla on the last day of her visit on 1st of next month.

Shyam Metalics Announces Upcoming Launch of Aluminium Flat Rolled Products and Foil Manufacturing Facility in Sambalpur, Odisha

New Delhi : Smel Steel Structural Pvt. Ltd., a step-down subsidiary of Shyam Metalics and Energy Limited, is pleased to announce that its aluminium manufacturing project in Sambalpur, Odisha is in an advanced stage of readiness for



commencement of commercial production.

The project marks a significant expansion into value-added aluminium products and reinforces the Group's commitment to strengthening India's downstream metal capabilities.

World's 'most eye-catching' train journey: 25-minute ride along a river and a scenic trip; not China or India, it is in...

Bhubaneswar : Train journeys offer a unique and enriching travel experience that combines comfort, convenience, and more. Unlike other modes of transport, trains allow passengers to relax, move freely, and enjoy uninterrupted views. Additionally, train travel connects remote regions with major cities.

The Sagano Romantic Train in Japan stands out as one of the most visually

captivating rail experiences in the world, according to a list compiled by InsureandGo. It passes by the Arashiyama bamboo forest and is a short 25-minute ride along the Hozu River. Winding through the scenic route, the journey offers passengers breathtaking views.

From high-speed bullet trains to heritage routes like the Sagano line, Japan showcases how travel can be both functional and

immersive.

Japan offers a rich mix of tradition, nature, and modern experiences, making it ideal for all kinds of travellers. In cities like Tokyo, you can explore a blend of futuristic skylines. Nature lovers can head to Mount Fuji for breathtaking views. Food is another highlight: sushi, ramen, and street food in some places.

According to InsureandGo, the rankings were determined using "eye-

tracking technology" that measured how viewers interacted with images of train routes. Participants were shown visuals, and it was analysed how quickly their attention was drawn and how long they focused on each scene.

While Japan's Sagano Romantic Train secured the top position, Europe emerged as a strong contender overall, with four routes featuring in the top rankings.

MISSIONCR314 Driving a Silent Media Revolution in Odisha

Bhubaneswar: What began as a modest experiment in grassroots broadcasting has today evolved into one of Odisha's most powerful people-led communication movements. From the launch of Radio Namaskar in Konark in 2010, the state has steadily built a vibrant community radio ecosystem that is now transforming lives across districts.

Today, Odisha hosts 47 functional community radio stations, each rooted in its local geography, language, and social context. These stations are not merely broadcasters. They are platforms of participation, accountability, and local storytelling. With over 60 new applications under process, the movement is only expanding further into underserved regions. Odisha today ranks as the leading states in India in terms of functional

community radio stations, volume of new applications, and population reach through community radio networks.

At the centre of this growth is MISSIONCR314, a strategic and visionary initiative that is quietly reshaping the communication landscape of the state. The mission focuses on strengthening community radio as a tool for development, governance, and cultural preservation. It aims a community radio in each block of Odisha.

A Lifeline During Disasters Odisha is no stranger to natural disasters. From cyclones like Cyclone Phailin, Cyclone Hudhud, and Cyclone Fani to recurring floods and the global crisis of COVID-19, community radios have consistently proven their relevance.

Beyond emergencies, community radios in Odisha are deeply engaged in everyday development issues. Programmes on natural farming, sustainable livelihoods, civic awareness, and government schemes have empowered citizens with actionable knowledge. Farmers are learning new agricultural practices. Women's groups are finding platforms to share their voices. Local governance is becoming more participatory, with Panchayat-level discussions reaching wider audiences. The impact is measurable. Community radio in Odisha today reaches around 27% of the state's population, creating an informed and engaged rural citizenry. Preserving Language, Culture and Identity One of the most remarkable contributions of this movement is in the preservation of Odisha's linguistic diversity. Broadcasts are carried out in local and tribal languages such as Kui, Desia, Sambalpuri, Santhali, Ho, and other regional dialects.

During these critical moments, when conventional communication systems often fail, community radios have acted as trusted last-mile communication channels. They disseminated early warnings, relief information, health advisories, and government announcements in real time, often in hyper-local dialects that people understand best. Their role during COVID-19 was particularly notable. From

myth-busting to promoting vaccination awareness, these stations helped bridge the information gap in remote communities.

Strengthening Local Livelihoods and Governance Beyond emergencies, community radios in Odisha are deeply engaged in everyday development issues. Programmes on natural farming, sustainable livelihoods, civic awareness, and government schemes have empowered citizens with actionable knowledge.

Farmers are learning new agricultural practices. Women's groups are finding platforms to share their voices. Local governance is becoming more participatory, with Panchayat-level discussions reaching wider audiences.

The impact is measurable. Community radio in Odisha today reaches around 27% of the state's population, creating an informed and engaged rural citizenry. Preserving Language, Culture and Identity One of the most

remarkable contributions of this movement is in the preservation of Odisha's linguistic diversity. Broadcasts are carried out in local and tribal languages such as Kui, Desia, Sambalpuri, Santhali, Ho, and other regional dialects.

In an era where mainstream media often overlooks these languages, community radio is ensuring that local voices are not just heard, but celebrated. Folk traditions, oral histories, songs, and cultural narratives are being

archived and shared, strengthening community identity.

Leadership Behind the Movement Driving this transformation is N. A. Shah Ansari, widely regarded as a leading voice in community media across India and Asia. His vision has been instrumental in shaping MISSIONCR314 into a scalable and impactful model. Ansari has been actively supporting the establishment, training, and

sustainability of community radios through a dedicated Community Radio Facilitation Centre in Konark. His approach combines grassroots engagement with institutional capacity building. He is now taking this vision further by setting up the Asia Centre for Community Media in Konark, which aims to position Odisha as a hub for community media innovation and training in Global fora.

THE ODISHA AGRO INDUSTRIES CORPORATION LIMITED
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)
95, SATYA NAGAR, BHUBANESWAR-751 007.

TENDER NOTICE
Bid Identification No- MD/OAIC-81 (Tech.) /2026-27
Online Tender in conformity with technical specification, terms & condition are invited from manufacturers for "Procurement of 13353 nos. of storage bins of 110 Kg capacity for supply to individual farmers under NFSNM 2025-26". For details please visit website <https://tendersodisha.gov.in/> <https://odishaagro.nic.in/> from dt.29.04.2026 to dt.19.05.2026.

Sd/-
Managing Director, OAIC Ltd

1001/26/2627

Jolted AAP

SEVEN Rajya Sabha MPs have jumped the AAP ship, leaving the party in dire straits barely 10 months before the Punjab Assembly elections. Three of them — Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak and Ashok Mittal — announced a split in the party and said that two-thirds (7/10) of the AAP members in the Upper House had decided to “merge with the BJP” as a faction. The writing was on the wall ever since Chadha upped the ante against the party top brass over his removal from the post of AAP’s Deputy Leader in the Rajya

This is undoubtedly the biggest setback for the Aam Aadmi Party after it was defeated by the BJP in the Delhi Assembly elections last year. Chadha, once seen as a prominent face of AAP’s next-generation leadership, has justified the drastic step by accusing the young party of abandoning its foundational ideals. He and other MPs have claimed that the party is giving precedence to “personal benefits” over public service. Their salvos are primarily aimed at AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal, who is perceived to be pulling the strings of the Bhagwant Mann government in Punjab.

Sabha. Ironically, Mittal, who replaced Chadha, has also joined hands with him.

This is undoubtedly the biggest setback for the Aam Aadmi Party after it was defeated by the BJP in the Delhi Assembly elections last year. Chadha, once seen as a prominent face of AAP’s next-generation leadership, has justified the drastic step by accusing the young party of abandoning its foundational ideals. He and other MPs have claimed that the party is giving precedence to “personal benefits” over public service. Their salvos are primarily aimed at AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal, who is perceived to be pulling the strings of the Bhagwant Mann government in Punjab.

Kejriwal, who is fighting a court battle in the Delhi excise policy case, has framed the “exodus” as a betrayal of the trust reposed in these MPs by the party as well as Punjab’s people. Mann has branded them as “traitors” and accused the BJP of blatantly executing an operation to weaken AAP. The saffron party, which has already poached several Punjab Congress leaders in recent years, is looking to boost its poll prospects in the border state. The challenge for AAP is to quickly regroup after this huge jolt and regain lost ground in Punjab. The possibility of more party leaders switching over to the BJP is not ruled out. The developments have set the alarm bells ringing for Opposition parties in other states too. The INDIA bloc faces the tough task of keeping its flock together.

Critical Care

THE Supreme Court’s endorsement of uniform ICU (intensive care unit) guidelines offers a ray of hope for India’s fragmented critical care ecosystem. The norms specify that clinically stabilised patients requiring no further organ support or physiological monitoring should be discharged or moved to hospital wards. The court’s insistence on this course of action addresses an issue that is medical as well as ethical: the prolongation of ICU stay. The absence of standardised ICU protocols has created a grey zone where vital decisions are often mired in uncertainty. Overwhelmed and unfamiliar with critical care, patients’ families tend to rely solely on doctors’ advice, which sometimes results in extended ICU admission that provides little

Importantly, the court has laid stress on clinical judgment, preserving the autonomy of doctors while nudging institutions towards accountability. The focus on systemic issues — nurse-to-patient ratio, specialist supervision, infrastructure standards and training — is also laudable. In a country where the quality of healthcare is uneven, these minimum benchmarks could serve as a foundation for more equitable care. The directive to states and union territories to identify priority areas and frame time-bound action plans injects a sense of urgency often missing in policy

medical benefit. The guidelines attempt to correct this imbalance by reinforcing a simple principle — ICUs are not meant for indefinite care.

Importantly, the court has laid stress on clinical judgment, preserving the autonomy of doctors while nudging institutions towards accountability. The focus on systemic issues — nurse-to-patient ratio, specialist supervision, infrastructure standards and training — is also laudable. In a country where the quality of healthcare is uneven, these minimum benchmarks could serve as a foundation for more equitable care. The directive to states and union territories to identify priority areas and frame time-bound action plans injects a sense of urgency often missing in policy implementation.

However, even a well-intentioned roadmap falters when enforcement is half-hearted. The court’s emphasis on monitoring frameworks and coordinated national action is a step in the right direction, but compliance will depend on political will, funding and administrative capacity. Beyond efficiency, the human dimension cannot be ignored. Prolonged ICU stay is traumatic both for the patients and their families. Shifting stable patients to lower levels of care is not just cost-effective; it reflects a humane approach. The push for uniform ICU norms can spur transparency and rational decision-making in India’s healthcare system.

India’s New Divide: Fast and Slow

Raghunath Mahapatra

India has long understood inequality through fault lines: income, caste, gender, geography and education. Those divides remain entrenched and morally urgent. Poverty still shapes nutrition, schooling and security. Caste still influences access, social networks and mobility. Gender still imposes unequal care burdens, safety constraints and lower workforce participation. Geography separates dynamic cities from underserved districts. Education inequality continues to shape career prospects for millions. None of these injustices has receded enough to be ignored.

Alongside them, another form of inequality is rising in the country, less visible than poverty and less discussed than caste: a new divide between the fast and the slow. It is the divide between those who move quickly through markets, institutions and technology, and those who lose time in systemic delay. Some Indians now live in minutes, while much of India still waits in queues. In approvals, logistics transport and dispute resolution, delay carries measurable economic cost. In a modern economy, speed is a productive asset; friction is a regressive tax.

International institutions increasingly recognise that access, time and state capacity shape inequality. The OECD has shown how unpaid burdens reduce women’s economic opportunity. The World Economic Forum has linked infrastructure access to participation in work and enterprise. The World Bank has highlighted how India’s digital public infrastructure compressed decades of financial inclusion into a few years. The lesson is clear: unequal access to speed can become unequal access to opportunity, growth and dignity.

India has begun addressing these frictions. GST reduced interstate bottlenecks. FASTag accelerated toll movement. RBI-enabled payment systems transformed transaction speed. PM Gati Shakti seeks integrated logistics planning, while freight corridors aim to move cargo faster. Many states have introduced single-window systems. These are meaningful reforms, but not yet sufficient. India still has islands of velocity inside oceans of delay: a citizen may make an instant UPI payment yet wait months for a permit. A firm may receive money in seconds yet spend years resolving a dispute. A start-up may register online swiftly yet face analogue compliance thereafter.

In earlier eras, land, inheritance and capital determined advantage. Today, time saved increasingly becomes income earned. Speed is a productive asset; delay is a silent cost. In a country where aspiration is accelerating faster than institutions, it is not lack of ambition but the friction of delay that increasingly determines who converts effort into outcome. The worker who moves faster gains more productive hours and higher earnings potential. The entrepreneur who clears approvals early reaches markets first. The student with reliable broadband accesses opportunities others struggle to reach in time.

This is no longer a marginal difference. It deepens older inequalities. A poor citizen may endure scarcity, but scarcity compounded by delay becomes suffocation. A woman burdened by unpaid work loses ground when transport systems fail her. A first-generation graduate falls behind when connectivity falters. A small manufacturer is weakened when clearances stretch into months.

According to the TomTom Traffic Index 2025, commuters in Bengaluru lost around 168 hours to congestion. These are lost labour hours, lower productivity and foregone

participation. A DPIIT–NCAER study estimates India’s logistics cost at 7.97% of GDP in FY24. The World Bank’s Doing Business indicators placed contract enforcement in India at roughly 1,445 days, locking up capital and delaying productive redeployment. When workers wait on roads, goods in transit and capital in courts, growth wanes with them. Every avoidable queue erodes national income by reducing output and slowing productivity.

India has begun addressing these frictions. GST reduced interstate bottlenecks. FASTag accelerated toll movement. RBI-enabled payment systems transformed transaction speed. PM Gati Shakti seeks integrated logistics planning, while freight corridors aim to move cargo faster. Many states have introduced single-window systems. These are meaningful reforms, but not yet sufficient. India still has islands of velocity inside oceans of delay: a citizen may make an instant UPI payment yet wait months for a permit. A firm may receive money in seconds yet spend years resolving a dispute. A start-up may register online swiftly yet face analogue compliance thereafter.

Developed economies recognised earlier

that reducing friction is itself a growth strategy. Japan protects worker time through efficient transit. Singapore reduces uncertainty through predictable approvals. South Korea universalised broadband early. Germany and the Netherlands turned logistics reliability into export strength. They are richer not only because they possess more capital, but because they waste less time. Modern prosperity is organised speed.

If India is serious about Viksit Bharat by 2047, it must treat time saved as capital invested. Older inequalities cannot be repaired in a slow-growth economy, and institutional friction is an economic handicap. The next reform shift is from allocating resources to accelerating flows. Until the speed of the state approaches the speed of the market, progress will remain uneven. In a global race for capital, slower economies increasingly lose investment to faster rivals.

India’s next reform agenda must therefore focus on democratising speed: faster justice, urban mobility, broadband completion, MSME credit flows, single-window approvals, and dashboards measuring permit days, freight turnaround and case disposal. Efficiency and speed must be treated as public goods, not premium purchases. Public policy must reduce friction in economic processes and narrow India’s new divide between fast and slow. Traditional inequalities persist, but speed increasingly shapes who rises despite them. If wealth buys comfort, speed now buys futures. If left unaddressed, delay and a widening divide between fast and slow movers could derail India’s path to Viksit Bharat by 2047.

The writer is Former

Senior Project Associate
HSS Department, IIT Kanpur

Farming in crisis amid rising temperatures: challenges and solutions

Dr. Vijay Garg

Climate change has become a serious challenge not only for environmental concerns, but also for agriculture. Continuous rising temperatures, irregular rainfall, heat intensity and changing weather cycle have challenged the traditional understanding and experience of farmers. The cultivation that once moved at the rhythm of the season is today shaking under the weight of uncertainties.

Farming in an agricultural country like India directly depends on the weather. But now the constant increase in temperature is affecting the productivity of crops. Major crops such as wheat, paddy, corn are sensitive to high temperatures. For example, a wheat crop requires cold weather to ripen, but if the temperature rises suddenly during this period, the grains shrink and production declines.

Along with this, the increasing incidents of heatwave (Loo) are not only damaging crops, but also adversely affecting the health of farmers working in fields. The moisture of the soil decreases rapidly, which increases the demand for irrigation. In such areas where there is already a shortage of water, the situation becomes more severe.

The effect of rising temperatures is not only limited to production, but it is also increasing the cost of farming. Increasing need for more irrigation, fertilizers and pesticides increases the expenses of farmers, while the decrease in production reduces income. Due to this double pressure, the economic condition of farmers is getting weak.

In addition, the uncertainty of weather has also affected sowing and harvesting time. Sometimes the rain happens before time, sometimes it dries for a long time. This disrupts the crop cycle and makes it difficult for farmers to take the right decision. Traditional agricultural wisdom, which was handed down for generations, is no longer sufficient in the face of changing weather.

Efforts are needed on many levels to deal with this crisis. First, climate-resilient agricultural methods will have to be adopted. The development and use of drought-resistant and ready crop varieties in a short time is necessary. Modern irrigation techniques such as drip and sprinklers should be promoted to enable more efficient use of water.

The role of government is also very important. Farmers must provide facilities such as accurate weather information, crop insurance and reasonable support prices. At the same time, agricultural research and innovation must be promoted so that new technologies can be developed to adapt to changing climate. Agriculture is considered to be the backbone of India’s economy, but today this backbone is being

burnt by the heat of ‘global warming’. Scientists believe that an increase in temperature of just 1 °C to 2 °C can reduce the yield of crops from ** 15% to 20% **.

**1. Major challenges and effects **

*** Maturing crops ahead of time: ** Temperature increases cause wheat-like crops to ripen before their natural period. This is called ‘terminal heat stress’. This leaves the grain small and light, which causes a huge drop in production.

Water crisis and growing demand of irrigation: ** Due to heat, soil moisture rapidly ends. As a result, crops need more irrigation than normal, which increases pressure at the ground level. *** Outbreak of insects and diseases: ** Hot environment is favorable for many types of insects. Studies show that temperature increases increase the metabolic rate of insects, causing them to cause more damage to crops. *** Effect on horticulture and cash crops: ** The problem of ‘Sunburn’ is being seen in fruits like mango, lychee and lemon. Also, both the quality and quantity of crops such as coffee and potatoes are being affected.

2. Economic and social impact

About **80% farmers in India are small and marginal. The direct meaning of crop deterioration is a decrease in income and debt burden. The loss of the agricultural sector due to climate change is also affecting the country’s GDP.

**3. Solution: Climate-friendly agriculture **

To deal with this crisis, it has now become mandatory to change traditional farming methods:

** Selection of heat-tolerant varieties: ** Indian Agricultural Research Institute and other institutions are developing such seed varieties that can withstand high temperatures. Farmers will have to adopt these new varieties (such as wheat varieties).

Malching technology: The layer of crop residues in the field keeps the moisture safe and temperature is controlled. *Suchm irrigation: ‘Less water, more crop’ principle should promote drip irrigation so that one drop of water is used correctly.

** Use of biological fertilizer: ** Chemical fertilisers instead of organic fertilizers and vermicompost increases the water holding capacity.

** Fasal diversification: ** Only wheat-dhan cycles will grow such crops that can survive in less water and uneven weather, like thick grains

Ultimately, saving agriculture in this era of increasing temperature is not only the responsibility of farmers, but the shared responsibility of the whole society. If concrete steps are not taken in time, this crisis can reach food security. Therefore, it is necessary that we empower agriculture in a more sustainable, flexible and scientific approach so that the sky of grain can be protected for future generations.

Dr. Vijay Garg Retired Principal Malout Punjab



AI in Social Media: Shaping Conversations, Choices, and Culture

Dr Vijay Garg

Social media has transformed how people connect, communicate, and consume information. Today, a new force is quietly redefining this space—Artificial Intelligence (AI). From the posts we see to the ads we click, AI is working behind the scenes, influencing not just our online experiences but also our thoughts, behaviors, and even social norms.

The Invisible Engine Behind Your Feed

Every time you open a social media app, AI algorithms decide what appears on your screen. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and X analyze your likes, shares, comments, and watch time to curate personalized content. This makes feeds more engaging but also creates “filter bubbles,” where users are exposed mainly to views similar to their own.

Content Creation Gets Smarter

AI is not just curating content—it is creating it. Tools powered by AI help users generate captions, edit photos, enhance videos, and even produce entire posts. Features like automated filters, face recognition, and recommendation tools have made content creation easier and more accessible. However, this also raises concerns about authenticity, as it becomes harder to distinguish between real and AI-generated content.

The Rise of Influencer Intelligence

Brands and influencers are increasingly using AI to understand audience behavior. AI tools analyze trends, predict engagement, and suggest optimal posting times. This data-driven approach has turned social media into a strategic marketplace where content is designed not just to express, but to perform.

Misinformation and Deepfakes

While AI enhances user experience, it also brings serious risks. AI-generated deepfakes and misleading content can spread rapidly, making it difficult to verify truth. Social media platforms are now investing in AI systems to detect fake news, but the battle between creation and detection continues.

Mental Health and AI Algorithms

AI-driven feeds are designed to maximize engagement, often by showing emotionally charged or highly stimulating content. This can lead to excessive screen time, comparison culture, and anxiety—especially among young users. The same intelligence that connects people can also isolate them if not used responsibly.

Privacy in the Age of Data

AI thrives on data. Every click, search, and interaction is recorded and analyzed. While this helps improve user experience, it also raises questions about privacy and data security. Users often remain unaware of how much of their personal information is being used to shape their digital world.

The Future: Balance Between Innovation and Responsibility

AI in social media is not inherently good or bad—it depends on how it is used. As technology evolves, there is a growing need for ethical AI practices, transparent algorithms, and informed users. Governments, companies, and individuals all have a role to play in ensuring that AI serves society rather than manipulates it.

AI has become the backbone of modern social media, quietly guiding what we see, think, and share. It has made platforms smarter, faster, and more engaging—but also more complex and, at times, more risky. The challenge ahead is not to resist AI, but to understand it, question it, and use it wisely.

Because in the digital age, it’s not just about scrolling—it’s about knowing who (or what) is shaping the scroll. Dr Vijay Garg Retired Principal? Educational columnist Eminent Educationist street kour Chand MHR Malout Punjab

Bengal Poll Campaign Gave Me Same Feeling As Ram Temple Inauguration: PM Modi

Kolkata, 27/4: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday wrote an open letter in Bengali to the people of West Bengal ahead of the second phase of the two-phase Assembly polls in the state scheduled on April 29. In the letter, the Prime Minister said that during his entire campaign in West Bengal, he experienced the same feeling that he had during the inauguration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, in January 2024.

"I felt a unique internal force and inspiration during my campaign in West Bengal. Despite back-to-back campaign programmes, and that too in this scorching heat, I never felt tired. I felt like visiting a holy place in every campaign rally and roadshow. 'Every time I met the devotees of Goddess Kali, I felt as if the Goddess was providing me with that internal strength. During the inauguration of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya



in January 2024, I went through several rituals for 11 days, including fasting. During my campaign rallies in West Bengal this time, I had the same feeling," read the open letter from the Prime Minister. PM Modi also said that he would never forget the warmth he received from the

people of West Bengal through their enthusiasm. "After every such programme, I used to watch pictures of the programmes, read messages of love through letters from different people, and also reply to those letters. The love that I received from the people of West Bengal is the greatest asset in my life," the

Prime Minister said. PM Modi said that during his campaign rallies, he also sensed how keen the people of West Bengal, especially the youth, were to take the state on the path of progress. "The youth want a free environment to move forward in life. Women want open skies and free movement. Every citizen and every family in West Bengal wants change. They have spent a long time under fear. Now they want trust. Now they want the Bharatiya Janata Party to govern the state," the Prime Minister said. He also said that he considers it his responsibility to serve the people of West Bengal and ensure their safety and security. "It will be a great honour for me to convert every challenge in West Bengal into an opportunity and a prospect. I will never move away from that responsibility. I am eager to celebrate the oath ceremony of a BJP Chief Minister with all of you next month," the Prime Minister wrote.

Rajnath Singh Arrives In Bishkek To Attend SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting

Bishkek, 27/4: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday arrived in Kyrgyzstan's Bishkek to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' Meeting. "On his arrival at Bishkek to attend Meeting of Ministers of Defence of the SCO Member States from 27-28 April 2026, Hon'ble Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh ji was welcomed by Ambassador Singh at Manas airport on 27 April 2026," the Indian Embassy in Bishkek posted on X. Before departing for Kyrgyzstan, Singh stated that he will highlight India's commitment towards global peace amidst the current security challenges prevailing in the world and also convey India's consistent stance on zero tolerance for terrorism and extremism. "Leaving for Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan. Looking forward to attend the SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting scheduled to be held tomorrow.



Shall highlight India's commitment towards global peace, amidst the security challenges prevailing in the world, apart from conveying India's consistent stance on Zero Tolerance for Terrorism and Extremism. Will also be interacting bilaterally with the counterparts of other SCO Member states and with the Indian Community at Bishkek," Rajnath Singh posted on X. During the

meeting in Bishkek on Tuesday, the Defence Ministers of various SCO member countries will discuss several issues related to the defence and security of the region. According to the Ministry of Defence, the ministers will also discuss issues related to international peace, counter-terrorism and defence cooperation among SCO member states.

Don't Worry About Didi's Goons': HM Amit Shah Tells Bengal Voters

New Delhi, 24/7: On the last day of campaigning for the second phase of West Bengal Assembly elections, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday exhorted voters to exercise their franchise fearlessly on April 29 and not "worry about Didi's goons". "Don't worry about Didi's goons; the Election Commission has deployed CAPF at every nook and cranny. Today, I'm saying it as I go — after the elections, a BJP government is coming. Even so, CAPF will stay right here for the next 60 days," said HM Shah on X, assuring voters that central forces deployed by the poll panel will protect them even after the announcement of results on May 4. The Union Home Minister's call to voters for taking part in elections coincided with the culmination of the campaign for the second phase of Assembly elections in West Bengal. Earlier, ahead of voting on 142 Assembly constituencies on April 29, the ECI on Monday decided to further strengthen the surveillance mechanism by bringing the approach



roads to critical or hypersensitive polling stations under CCTV coverage. "In the first phase of polls, there were two CCTVs within the polling station premises, one within the polling room and the other just outside the polling room, to ensure elimination of electoral malpractices within the polling station premises. But there were some reports in the first phase of polls of voter intimidation outside the polling stations. So, this time, the ECI has decided to install CCTV outside the polling stations as well to keep the different approach roads to the

polling stations under strict surveillance," an insider from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer said. The number of CCTV installations to monitor activities at the approach roads will depend on the sensitivity of the polling stations concerned, he said. The ECI also announced that flying squads and security agencies have so far seized cash, liquor and other freebies worth Rs 510.10 crore in Bengal — nearly Rs 200 crore more than the Rs 339 crore worth of inducement items recovered during the 2021 Assembly elections.

Nominations For Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar To Close On July 31: Official

New Delhi, 24/7: The Ministry of Women and Child Development on Monday said that the nominations for the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP) will close on July 31. The prestigious national-level award, conferred annually to recognise exceptional achievements of children aged 5 to 18 years, are given only to an Indian citizen residing in the country, said an official statement. The awards are given to children who deserve recognition at the national level in the fields of bravery, sports, social service, science and technology, environment and arts and culture. Nominations from any citizen will be received only through the National Awards Portal on <https://awards.gov.in>. Self-nomination & recommendations for the awards, both shall be considered, said the Ministry. The last date for receipt of online applications is July 31, it said. Earlier in the day, the Union



Home Ministry also issued a reminder about July 31 being the last date for nominations/recommendations for the Padma Awards to be announced on the occasion of Republic Day 2027. The nominations process was launched on March 15 with the stipulation that these will only be received online on the Rashtriya Puraskar Portal (<https://awards.gov.in>), said an official

statement. The Padma Awards, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri, are amongst the highest civilian awards of the country. The Home Ministry said the nominations/recommendations should contain all relevant details specified in the format available on the Portal, including a citation in narrative form (maximum 800 words), on the exceptional achievements/

service of the person recommended in her/his respective field/discipline. Details related to Padma Awards 2027 nominations are also available under the heading 'Awards and Medals' on the website of Ministry of Home Affairs (<https://mha.gov.in>) and on the Padma Awards Portal (<https://padmaawards.gov.in>). The statutes and rules relating to these awards are available on the website with the link <https://padmaawards.gov.in/AboutAwards.aspx>. Instituted in 1954, these Awards are announced on the occasion of the Republic Day every year. The Awards recognise 'work of distinction' and are given for distinguished and exceptional achievements/service in all fields/disciplines, such as, Art, Literature and Education, Sports, Medicine, Social Work, Science and Engineering, Public Affairs, Civil Service, Trade and Industry.

India Monitoring Developments In West Asia, Continues Outreach To Gulf Nations: MEA

New Delhi, 24/7: India continues to closely monitor the developments in the West Asia region and expand its outreach to Gulf nations, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Monday. Addressing an inter-ministerial briefing on recent developments in West Asia on Monday, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal highlighted that National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval was on an official visit to UAE recently, where he held talks with President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. "On the direction of the Prime Minister, India has continued to expand its outreach to countries in the Gulf region. We had the National Security Advisor Shri Ajit Doval paying an official visit to the UAE on 25th and 26th of April. He called



on the President of the UAE, where he conveyed the greetings of our Prime Minister to him and both sides discussed measures to further deepen India UAE Comprehensive Strategic

Partnership. They also discussed the regional situation as also other issues of mutual interest. "This marks the second high level visit from India to the UAE within a month. Earlier,

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had visited UAE on 11th-12th of April. He met his counterpart in the UAE as also called on the President of the UAE, wherein he conveyed gratitude for ensuring the well-being of the Indian community during the conflict. EAM also thanked the President for his guidance to further strengthening of the India UAE Comprehensive Strategic Partnership." mentioned Jaiswal. During the same briefing, MEA's Additional Secretary (Gulf), Aseem R Mahajan, stated that the ministry continues to make efforts to ensure the safety and welfare of the Indian community in West Asia. He stated that a dedicated special control room continues to remain operational in the ministry which is responding to

queries from Indian nationals and their families. "Ministry of External Affairs continues to closely monitor the developments in the Gulf and West Asia region. Our efforts are focused on ensuring the safety and welfare of the Indian community in the region. We are in constant touch with the state governments and union territories for sharing information and to coordinate our efforts. The dedicated special control room in the ministry is operational to respond to queries from Indian nationals and their families. Our embassies and consulates in the region are operating round the clock helplines to provide timely assistance," Mahajan said. "They are proactively assisting our citizens.

Kejriwal's Letter To Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma Stirs Fresh Row

New Delhi: Justice Lokpal Singh, a former judge of the Uttarakhand High Court, on Monday reacted strongly to a letter penned by Arvind Kejriwal to Delhi High Court judge Swarana Kanta Sharma, in which the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor stated that he would neither appear before her personally nor be represented by legal counsel in proceedings related to the Delhi Excise Policy case. In his communication, Kejriwal said that he has lost hope of getting justice from the judge and would follow Mahatma Gandhi's path of "Satyagraha". He said the decision was taken after listening to his "inner voice" and added that he would reserve his right to challenge any order before the Supreme Court. "My hope of getting justice from Justice Swarana Kanta is shattered. Therefore, I have decided to

follow Gandhiji's Satyagraha. I have made a decision based on the voice of my conscience. I will reserve the right to appeal Justice Swarna Kanta's decision in the Supreme Court," the letter stated. The latest development comes days after Justice Sharma had rejected Kejriwal's plea seeking her recusal from hearing matters connected to the alleged Delhi Excise Policy case. Reacting to Kejriwal's unprecedented action, former Uttarakhand High Court judge Justice Lokpal Singh told IANS, "The letter written by Arvind Kejriwal should be seen as a case of contempt of court. Once a decision had come against him, where Justice Sharma refused to recuse herself from the case, he had the right to challenge that order. But nowhere in the rules of procedure is there any provision to write such a letter to a judge."

India Poised To Become 2nd Country After Russia To Operate Fast Breeder Reactor

New Delhi, 24/7: India is poised to become the second country after Russia to operate a commercial-level fast breeder reactor as the indigenously designed 500 MWe Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam in Tamil Nadu achieved first criticality on April 6, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Monday. Addressing a workshop of MPs and MLAs on

"Small Modular Reactors", the minister said, this reactor, developed by the Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR) and built by BHAVINI, marks the start of the second stage of India's three-stage nuclear power programme, using uranium-plutonium mixed oxide fuel to produce more fuel than it consumes. With this achievement, India moves toward leveraging its

vast thorium reserves in the third stage of its nuclear strategy. Once fully operational, India will be the second country in the world, after Russia, to be operating a commercial-level fast breeder reactor, he added. Dr Singh said that the significance of this achievement lies in the fact that with this, India moves toward leveraging its vast thorium reserves in the third stage of its

nuclear strategy. Currently, Russia is the only country operating commercial fast breeder reactors (FBRs), with India in the advanced stage of commissioning its own. While several nations have historically developed or operated experimental fast reactors, specifically the US, the UK, France, Japan, Germany, and China, most of these programmes are currently shut down. Referring

to recent developments in India's three-stage nuclear programme, Dr Singh said that the successful establishment of the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor marks a significant step towards the second stage of the programme, enabling more efficient utilisation of nuclear fuel and paving the way for future use of India's vast thorium reserves. The Minister further stated that nuclear energy

will play a crucial role in India's clean energy transition and long-term sustainability goals, particularly in achieving the target of 100 GW nuclear power capacity by 2047. Highlighting emerging requirements, Singh said that sectors such as Artificial Intelligence, data infrastructure and advanced manufacturing will increasingly depend on

reliable and continuous sources of clean energy, where nuclear power will be indispensable. The minister also underlined the importance of initiatives such as Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), policy support, and the SHANTI Act, enabling greater participation of the private sector in scaling up India's nuclear energy capacity.

11 Ships From Five Nations Sail Through South China Sea During Multilateral Exercise Balikatan

Manila, 24/7: As many as 11 ships from the Philippines, Japan, Australia, Canada, and the USA sailed together in the South China Sea during Exercise Balikatan on Monday. Ships from the Armed Forces of the Philippines, Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force, Royal Australian Navy, Royal Canadian Navy, US Coast Guard and US Navy are participating in the multilateral maritime event during the exercise. "Balikatan is a longstanding annual exercise between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the US military that represents the strength of our alliance, improves our capable combined force, and demonstrates our commitment to regional peace and prosperity," the Philippine Navy stated while highlighting that the exercise addresses challenges, promotes regional stability and maritime security. The US Navy asserted that the exercise demonstrates a collective commitment to ensuring maritime security across the Indo-Pacific. The Balikatan, or shoulder-to-shoulder exercise, which runs till May 8, is being joined by a total of 17,000 personnel from seven countries, including Canada, France, Australia and New Zealand. The



military exercise is aimed at enhancing defence interoperability among the participants, including Japan's Self-Defence Force (JSDF) which has joined the large-scale drill with Philippines and United States. According to Japan's leading Kyodo news agency, since 2012, the JSDF has participated in the disaster response aspect of the annual

exercise and held only observer status. A defence pact between Japan and the Philippines that allows reciprocal visits of the two nations' forces, which took effect last year, has expanded the fields of the exercises. Japan can participate in. On April 17, the Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force destroyer JS Ikazuchi sailed through the Taiwan Strait. The

vessel is taking part in the Balikatan exercise till May 8. Kyodo detailed that Tokyo had long refrained from sending MSDF vessels through the strait to avoid provoking Beijing, until September 2024, when the destroyer Sazanami became the first to do so. Two MSDF ships subsequently passed through the strait in February and June 2025.

Bruce Springsteen Condemns Shooting Incident At White House Correspondents' Dinner

Los Angeles, 24/7: The Boss, Bruce Springsteen has condemned the recent shooting at the White House Correspondents' Dinner. The Born to Run hitmaker has been one of Donald Trump's most vocal and high-profile critics but he has expressed his gratitude that the president, members of his administration and the guests at the event were not injured during the events, when an armed man allegedly fired a gun after evading security outside the ballroom at the Washington Hilton hotel, where the dinner was being staged, reports 'Female First UK'. Speaking on stage in Austin, Texas, during his Land Of Hope and dreams tour, Bruce said, "We begin tonight with a prayer for our men and women overseas, we pray for their safe return. We also send out a prayer of thanks that our President, nor anyone in the administration, nor anyone attending, was injured in last night's incident. We can disagree". He further mentioned, "We can be critical of those in power, and we can peacefully fight for our beliefs, but there is no place in any way, shape, or form for political violence of any kind in our beloved United States". As per 'Female First UK', the 76-



year-old rocker has traded barbs with the president multiple times in recent years. Earlier this month, Trump branded Springsteen a "dried up prune" and called for his supporters to boycott the legendary singer. He wrote on his Truth Social platform, "Bad, and very boring singer, Bruce Springsteen, who looks like a dried up prune who has suffered greatly from the work of a really bad plastic surgeon, has long had

a horrible and incurable case of Trump Derangement Syndrome. "The guy is a total loser who spews hate against a President who won a Landslide Election. MAGA SHOULD BOYCOTT HIS OVERPRICED CONCERTS, WHICH SUCK. SAVE YOUR HARD EARNED MONEY (sic)". Trump's Truth Social diatribe came after Springsteen made a fresh attack on his administration during a concert.

S. Korea's President Lee, Google Deepmind Ceo Discuss Responsible Use Of Ai

Seoul, 24/7: President Lee Jae Myung on Monday met with Demis Hassabis, co-founder and CEO of Google DeepMind, to discuss cooperation on the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) and global partnerships.

Lee highlighted the government's strong interest in AI and plans to ramp up investment during the meeting, as Hassabis was in South Korea for talks on expanding collaboration, including on a government-led initiative to advance AI-driven science and technology, reports Yonhap news agency. "They shared the view that, if used effectively, AI could become a powerful tool to address major global challenges, such as low growth, the climate crisis and health care issues, opening the door for new prosperity, while also carrying risks of being abused in warfare or deepening inequality," Kim Yong-beom, presidential chief of staff for policy, said in a briefing. Lee stressed the need to prepare for changes in the job market driven by AI adoption, while Hassabis agreed on the need for a new economic model that redefines work and addresses the redistribution of wealth, Kim said. The president also introduced



plans to establish a "global AI hub" to lead cooperative projects with governments, international organizations and companies to ensure that benefits of AI development are widely shared, and asked DeepMind to serve as a key partner in the initiative, according to the aide. Hassabis said AI should be actively applied to areas that advance science, technology and human well-being, while emphasizing the importance of ensuring systems adhere to human-defined safeguards. "I think it will be very beneficial for the world if it's used in the right way," he said, adding that a key challenge is ensuring AI systems remain within appropriate "guardrails." DeepMind is widely

known for developing AlphaGo, which defeated Lee Sedol in a historic five-game human-versus-machine match in Seoul in 2016, marking a major milestone in artificial intelligence. Hassabis was also awarded the 2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his contributions to AI-based protein structure prediction research. During the meeting, Hassabis presented Lee with a Go board signed by himself and Lee Sedol, Kim said. Earlier in the day, the Ministry of Science and ICT signed a memorandum of understanding with Google DeepMind to strengthen cooperation in AI-led innovation under its "K-Moonshot" initiative, covering joint research in science and technology, talent development and the responsible use of AI.

Togo-Flagged Tanker With Indian Crew On Board Attacked By Iran In Oman

New Delhi, 24/7: The Iranian coast guard fired shots towards a Togo-flagged chemical tanker, MT Siron, which was boarded by individuals, including Indian sailors, at the Shinas Outer Port limits in Oman on April 25, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways revealed on Monday. The vessel was near other ships when the Iranian Coast Guard intervened and fired warning shots, Mandeep Singh Randhawa, Director at the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, stated during an inter-ministerial briefing on the recent developments in West Asia. He mentioned that the ministry is coordinating closely with the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Indian missions, and maritime stakeholders to ensure the safety of seafarers and continuity of operations in the region. According to Randhawa, the DG Shipping control room has so far handled 7,780 calls and 16,650 emails, maintaining communication with 2,770 Indian ships, with 12 reporting updates. "The situation is under close watch, with no cause for



concern at present," he noted. On April 22, Iran attacked a ship in the Strait of Hormuz that was on its way to Mundra Port in India. The attack took place only a few hours after US President Donald Trump had announced an indefinite ceasefire. It was one of the two ships that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGC-N) announced it had attacked and taken over,

according to the Iran's government-run Press TV. IRGC-N identified the ships it attacked as the MSC-Francesca, and the Epaminodas, it said. Two shipping monitoring sites said that Liberian-flagged Epaminodas was on its way to Mundra in Gujarat from the Jebel Ali port in Dubai. On April 18, Iran attacked two Indian ships in the Strait that had

received permission to traverse it. India had lodged a strong protest with Iran over the incidents. IRGC-N said the two ships were attacked because they were "operating without authorisation". A British Navy monitoring outfit confirmed that two ships were fired upon by IRGC gunboats and that one of them reported being immobilised, and the other was damaged.

STATE

MCL family bids warm farewell to CVO Shri PK Patel

Sambalpur, April 27, 2026: A warm and respectful farewell was accorded to Shri Pranab Kumar Patel, Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO), Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), in recognition of his exemplary services and significant contributions to the organisation.

A 'Samman Samaroh' was organised at the company headquarters here to extend heartfelt gratitude to Shri Patel. The ceremony was graced by Chairman-cum-Managing Director Shri Uday Anant Kaole, along with Director (HR) Shri Keshav Rao, Director (Finance) Shri Ajit Kumar Behura and Director (Technical) Shri Sanjay Jha. Senior officers, Executives and employees of MCL were also present in large numbers to extend their best wishes.

Speaking on the occasion, the CMD appreciated Shri Patel's professionalism, integrity and unwavering commitment towards strengthening vigilance mechanisms in the company. His tenure was marked by proactive initiatives, transparency and a strong emphasis on ethical governance.

As a token of appreciation and a cherished memento, Shri Keshav Rao presented a heartfelt poem penned by him in honour of Shri Patel. The gesture added a deeply personal touch to the occasion, reflecting admiration and fond memories



associated with Shri Patel's tenure at MCL.

An officer of the Indian Railway Stores Service (IRSS, 1998 batch), Shri Patel had assumed charge as the ninth CVO of the company on April 28, 2021. An engineering graduate from NIT Rourkela and a postgraduate (M.Tech.) from IIT Kharagpur, Shri Patel played a pivotal role in promoting transparency, accountability and vigilance awareness across the organisation during his tenure as CVO. In his farewell address, Shri Patel expressed gratitude to the management and employees of MCL for their support and cooperation during his tenure. He conveyed confidence that the organisation would continue to scale new heights with its strong commitment to integrity and excellence.

Iran Presents New Proposal To US For Reopening Hormuz, Ending War: Report

Washington, 24/7: Iran has presented the United States with a new proposal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and end the war, while postponing nuclear negotiations to a later stage, according to a report, which cited a US official and two sources familiar with the matter. According to US media outlet Axios, the proposal aims to break the current stalemate in the negotiations and bypass the internal disagreements within the Iranian leadership over the scope of nuclear concessions it is willing to make. "But lifting the blockade and ending the war would remove President Trump's leverage in any future talks to remove Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium and convince Tehran to suspend enrichment — two primary war objectives for Trump," the report said. Meanwhile, citing three US officials,

the report further noted that the US President is expected to hold a Situation Room meeting on the conflict on Monday (local time) with his top national security and foreign policy team. The sources told Axios that Trump's team would discuss the stalemate in the talks and potential next steps. In an interview with Fox News on Sunday (local time), Trump signalled that he wants to continue the naval blockade to halt Iran's oil exports, with an aim that it will get Tehran to give up in the coming times. "When you have vast amounts of oil



pouring through your system... if for any reason this line is closed because you can't put it into containers or ships... what happens is that line explodes from within... They say they only have about three days before that happens," Trump was quoted as saying in the interview with Fox News by Axios.

RBI Unveils Final ECL Norms, Sets April 2027 Deadline For New Asset Classification Framework

Mumbai, 27/4: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday released its final guidelines on asset classification and provisioning for lenders, marking a significant shift toward a more forward-looking risk assessment framework. The rules, which were first proposed in draft form in October last year, will come into force from April 1, 2027, despite banks urging the regulator to delay implementation. At the heart of the new framework is the introduction of the Expected Credit Loss (ECL) approach, a global standard that requires banks to proactively estimate potential losses on their loan portfolios. Unlike the existing system, which largely relies on incurred losses, the ECL model compels lenders to account for likely future defaults and build adequate financial buffers in



advance. Under the new norms, banks will adopt a "staging framework" to classify financial assets based on changes in credit risk since initial recognition. If there is no significant increase in credit risk, the asset will fall under Stage 1, where lenders will provide for losses based on a 12-

month expected credit loss estimate. However, if credit risk has risen meaningfully, the asset will move to Stage 2, requiring provisioning based on lifetime expected losses, even if the loan is not yet impaired. Stage 3 will include credit-impaired assets, where borrowers are already

facing financial stress. These assets will attract the highest level of provisioning, reflecting the elevated risk of default. The RBI clarified that while the ECL-based staging system will reshape how banks assess and provide for risk, the existing norms for identifying non-performing assets (NPAs) will remain unchanged. "The draft Directions proposed amendments to the existing standardised approach framework for calculating the capital charge for credit risk with the objective of enhancing its robustness, granularity, and risk sensitivity as well as convergence with the international standards," the central bank said in its circular. Loans will continue to be classified as NPAs if repayments are overdue for more than 90 days.

New Zealand's Pledge To Facilitate \$20 Billion In Investment To Catalyse Infra, Manufacturing: CII

New Delhi, 27/4: The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Monday said that New Zealand's commitment to facilitate \$20 billion in investment over 15 years is expected to catalyse the development of industrial infrastructure, manufacturing ecosystems, and innovation clusters across India. Hailing the signing of the India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the apex industry chamber said that the FTA's provision of 100 per cent duty-free access for Indian exports is expected to unlock significant opportunities for trade expansion in the coming years. "The FTA marks a significant milestone for Indian industry and will substantially enhance the competitiveness of Indian exports. By eliminating tariffs on key sectors such as textiles, leather, ceramics, and auto components, it unlocks new avenues for scale, market diversification, and sustained export growth," said Chandrajit



Banerjee, Director General, CII. "The agreement will enhance productivity, reduce trade costs, and provide strong support to MSMEs. By fostering innovation, attracting investment, and strengthening global linkages, while safeguarding key sectors, it reinforces India's long-term growth trajectory and resilience in the global economy," he mentioned. Key sectors such as transport and automotive,

pharmaceuticals, plastics and rubber, electrical and electronic equipment, and mechanical machinery are poised to scale up exports, enhance competitiveness, and strengthen their presence in global markets. Notably, the pact is aimed at doubling bilateral trade to \$5 billion over the next five years, signalling strong growth potential and renewed momentum in economic

ties. Looking ahead, the agreement's innovative linkage between trade and investment is particularly noteworthy. The agreement opens up promising avenues for future collaboration across high-growth sectors such as advanced manufacturing, agritech and food processing, digital technologies, pharmaceuticals, etc. By leveraging India's scale and digital capabilities alongside New Zealand's innovation strengths, both countries can co-create solutions, drive productivity, and build globally competitive industries. Partnerships in sustainable and green manufacturing are expected to further align with global climate goals and support the transition to low-carbon growth pathways. "We look forward to working closely with stakeholders in both nations to fully realize the potential of this agreement and to strengthen this strategic partnership for the future," said Banerjee.

Goldman Sachs Raises Crude Oil Forecast Up To \$90 As Hormuz Closure Tightens Supply

New Delhi: Analysts at Goldman Sachs have raised their forecast for Brent crude — the international oil benchmark — to \$90 per barrel for the fourth quarter, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude pegged at \$83 per barrel, as the prolonged closure of the Strait of Hormuz continues to tighten global supply, according to multiple reports. The brokerage said the disruption has triggered 'extreme' inventory drawdowns, with an estimated 14.5 million barrels per day of crude production losses from the Persian Gulf pushing global stockpiles to decline at a record pace of up to 12 million barrels per day in April. The supply shock, driven by the ongoing US-Iran conflict and a near halt in shipments through the critical Strait of Hormuz, has significantly altered the global oil balance. The market is now expected to see a deficit of about 9.6 million barrels per day in the current quarter, compared to a surplus last year. Brent crude has already surged nearly 50 per cent since the conflict escalated in late February, with futures hovering above \$100 per barrel, raising concerns over inflationary pressures and a potential drag on global economic growth.

India Set For AI-Led Venture Capital Growth As Global Funding Hits Record \$330.9 Billion



New Delhi, 27/4: India is poised for an AI-led surge in venture capital (VC) investments, as global funding more than doubled to a record \$330.9 billion in the first quarter of 2026, driven by a wave of artificial intelligence (AI)-led megadeals, according to a report released on Monday. In its latest report, KPMG said that global VC funding rose sharply from \$128.6 billion in Q4 2025 to \$330.9 billion in Q1 2026, even as the number of deals declined to 8,464 from 10,097, indicating a shift towards fewer but larger transactions. "AI-first businesses are expected to see strong demand going forward and are likely to drive the next phase of VC investment growth in India," said Nitish Poddar, Partner and National Leader, Private Equity at KPMG in India. Commenting on India, the report noted that

artificial intelligence (AI) is emerging as a key investment theme, although the country is still at a nascent stage in terms of AI adoption and service delivery. Moreover, the Americas accounted for over 80 per cent of the total, it said. Globally, VC funding surged from \$128.6 billion in Q4 2025 to \$330.9 billion in Q1 2026, even as deal volumes declined to 8,464 from 10,097, indicating a shift towards fewer but larger transactions. The report highlighted that ten megadeals worth over \$2 billion each contributed more than \$206 billion to the total investment value, with a majority of these deals focused on AI companies, particularly in the US. The Americas dominated global VC activity during the quarter, accounting for over 80 per cent of the total investment, with funding

rising to \$270.1 billion. The US alone contributed \$267.2 billion, more than double its previous record high. In comparison, Europe recorded VC investments of \$25.7 billion — a 14-quarter high — while Asia saw funding increase to \$31.8 billion, a 12-quarter high. Sector-wise, software remained the top destination for VC funding, attracting a record \$225.2 billion in Q1 2026, nearly matching the sector's total investment for the entire previous year. Meanwhile, global exit value also more than doubled to \$413.5 billion during the quarter, largely driven by large mergers and acquisitions (M&A), while IPO activity remained relatively subdued. The report added that despite strong momentum, geopolitical tensions, rising oil prices, and inflationary pressures could weigh on VC activity in the coming quarters.

India-NZ FTA Likely To Lift Gems And Jewellery Exports To \$50 Million: Apex Body

New Delhi, 27/4: The India-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement expected to significantly boost gems and jewellery exports, with industry estimates projecting a rise to \$50 million over the next three years, said an apex industry body on Monday. The agreement, which was signed on Monday, provides zero-duty access for Indian exports to New Zealand and is being seen as a strategic step to diversify India's export markets, according to the Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC). Domestic gem and jewellery exports to New Zealand currently stand at around \$16.61 million, and with improved market access under the FTA, the figure is projected to rise threefold over the next three years, according to the apex industry body. GJEPC Chairman Kirit Bhansali said: "In today's turbulent global environment, India's continued progress in advancing and concluding FTAs is enabling the industry to strategically diversify its export markets and reduce overdependence on any single geography, such as the US or regions like the GCC." According to him, the FTA, following the



Australia agreement, is a timely step in this direction. "India's gems and jewellery exports to New Zealand currently stand at around \$16.61 million, and with zero-duty access under the agreement, we expect this to grow to nearly \$50 million over the next three years," he added. He said New Zealand, with its high per capita jewellery consumption, presents strong potential for Indian exporters, while the duty advantage over competitors such as China and Thailand is expected to improve India's market share across multiple jewellery categories. The council also highlighted that the agreement is likely to support employment generation across

key manufacturing hubs in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and West Bengal, while strengthening retail and investment linkages in the region through diaspora and local partnerships. Recent Indian investments in New Zealand's jewellery retail segment further indicate growing bilateral engagement, with the FTA expected to support both export expansion and long-term economic cooperation. India and New Zealand signed the historic FTA on Monday. The agreement was signed under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his New Zealand counterpart, Chris Luxon.

Stock Market Cheers India-New Zealand FTA As Sensex Ends 639 Points Higher

Mumbai, 27/4: Indian equity benchmarks closed near the day's high on improved investor sentiment after India-New Zealand FTA finalised in the national capital. The agreement which sealed in the presence of Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and his New Zealand counterpart Todd McClay removes tariffs on 100 per cent of India's exports to New Zealand, and either sharply reduces or removes tariffs on 95 per cent of the country's imports from New Zealand. At the closing bell, the Nifty ended 0.81 per cent or 194.75 points higher at 24,092.70 and the Sensex settled 0.83 per cent or 639.42 points higher at 77,303.63. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, experts said that the 24,300-24,400 zone continues to remain a crucial resistance band. "On the downside, 23,900 now acts as an immediate support zone, while a break below this range could lead to further weakness toward 23,800 crucial support level," an analyst stated. Adani Ports, Sun Pharma, NTPC, Tech Mahindra, Tata Steel were among the top gainers on



Sensex. On the other side, Axis Bank, BEL, Trent and ICICI Bank were among top laggards on the 30-share pack. Broader markets outperformed the benchmark indices during the session. The Nifty MidCap rose 1.55 per cent, while the Nifty SmallCap gained 1.96 per cent. On the sectoral front, gains were led by the Nifty Pharma, Nifty Realty and Nifty IT indices. In contrast, the Nifty Private Bank and the Nifty Financial Services lagged behind the broader market. Investor sentiments also improved as

reports suggested a possible de-escalation in tensions involving Iran and the United States. Experts said that the positive mood followed news that Iran has approached the US with a proposal to reopen the strategically crucial Strait of Hormuz. Meanwhile, Rupee traded marginally stronger near 94.16 up by 0.07 per cent. "In the near term, rupee is expected to trade in a range of 93.75-94.50, with volatility likely to remain elevated," a market experts stated.

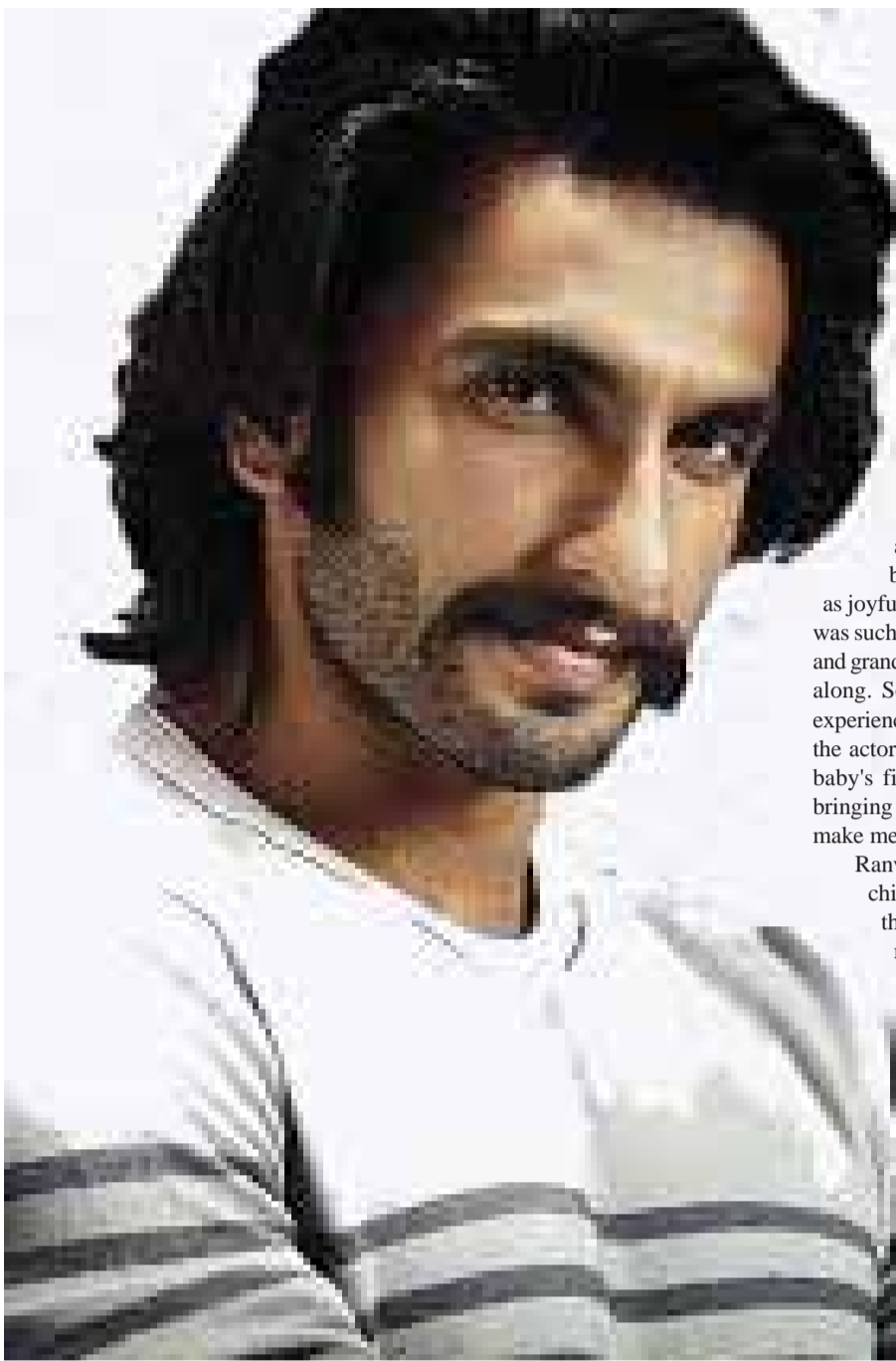
UBS Downgrades Indigo, Cuts Target Price To Rs 4,940

Mumbai, 24/7: Shares of InterGlobe Aviation Limited, the parent of IndiGo, opened flat with negative bias on Monday, as global brokerage UBS downgraded the stock and trimmed its price target, citing rising macroeconomic headwinds and sustained pressure on airline profitability. However, it recovered from early losses and were trading at Rs 4,560.50, down by Rs 37.40 or 0.83 per cent during noon trade. UBS lowered its rating on the stock to "neutral" from "buy" and cut its price target to Rs 4,940 from Rs 5,480, flagging growing concerns over the operating environment for airlines. The downgrade comes at a time when geopolitical tensions, particularly the ongoing US-Iran conflict, have triggered heightened volatility across global markets and driven a sharp surge in energy prices. The brokerage noted that the aviation sector has been particularly vulnerable, with jet fuel spot prices nearly doubling



in recent months amid supply concerns across multiple regions. While these developments have weighed on global carriers, UBS acknowledged that IndiGo remains relatively better positioned than many of its international peers due to its scale and operational efficiency. Domestically, the Indian government's intervention to limit the rise in Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices has provided some

relief. For April 2026, ATF prices were capped at a 9 per cent increase, significantly lower than the 115 per cent surge seen in international prices in March. This move has helped cushion the immediate impact on airlines operating in India. In last five days, IndiGo shares were down by Rs 153.50 or 3.26 per cent. The stock has delivered a positive of Rs 461 or 11.25 per cent in last one month.

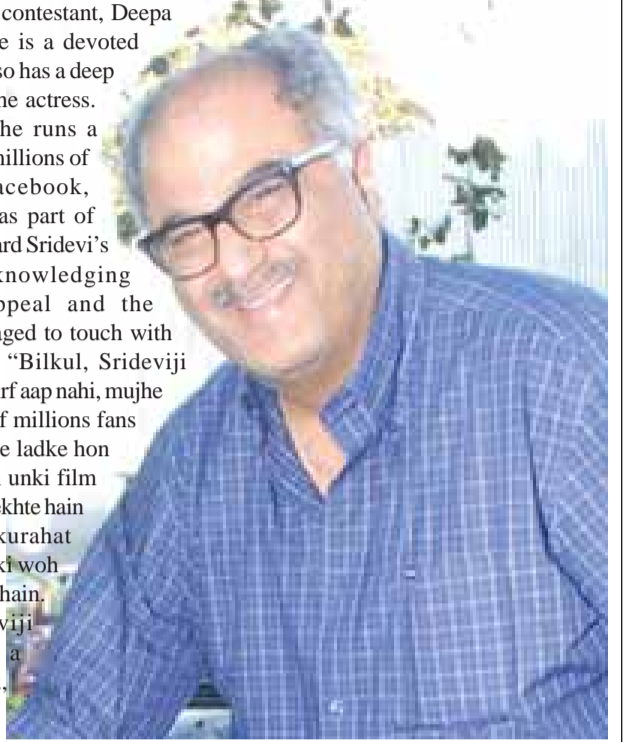


"It is a little extra special for us...": Ranveer Singh takes daughter Dua to first live musical show

Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh has offered a rare glimpse into his personal life, sharing a heartfelt family moment as he and wife Deepika Padukone took their daughter Dua to her first-ever live musical performance. The couple spent a Sunday morning at the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC), where they attended the Cocomelon Live musical. Speaking in a video shared by the official handle of NMACC, Ranveer described the experience as joyful and memorable. "It was a beautiful Sunday morning spent. There was such great energy in the theatre. All the kids and their mummy and papa and grandparents were enjoying the show, having a blast, singing and dancing along. So much fun, happiness, joy and colour. It was a really lovely experience," he said. Highlighting the emotional significance of the moment, the actor added, "It is a little extra special for us because this is our Dua baby's first show. And I am very grateful to the team at NMACC for bringing us these experiences from around the world and allowing us to make memories that last a lifetime." The family update comes shortly after Ranveer and Deepika announced that they are expecting their second child. The couple shared the news on Instagram with a post featuring their daughter Dua holding a pregnancy test that indicated a positive result. Ranveer and Deepika welcomed Dua on September 8, 2024. The couple married on November 14, 2018, in Lake Como, Italy, after a six-year relationship. They first met while working on Sanjay Leela Bhansali's 'Goliyon Ki Raasleela Ram-Leela' and went on to star together in films such as 'Bajirao Mastani' and 'Padmaavat'. On the professional front, Ranveer was last seen in 'Dhurandhar: The Revenge', released on March 19. The film has sustained a strong theatrical run, contributing to the Dhurandhar franchise surpassing the Rs 3000 crore mark globally. Deepika Padukone, meanwhile, is set to appear next in 'Raaka' alongside Allu Arjun. She will also feature in 'King', an action thriller directed by Siddharth Anand and headlined by Shah Rukh Khan.

Boney Kapoor Reacts To Heartfelt Tribute To Sridevi On 'Tum Ho Naa': Means A Lot

Mumbai: The latest promo of the forthcoming show "Tum Ho Naa - Ghar Ki Superstar" saw a heartfelt moment as host Rajeev Khandelwal expressed his deep admiration for the late legendary actress Sridevi. It all started as Rajeev complimented a contestant on her saree. However, he was left pleasantly surprised on learning that the saree the contestant was wearing once belonged to Sridevi. The contestant, Deepa Bhatia, revealed that she is a devoted fan of the late icon and also has a deep personal connection to the actress. She further said that she runs a dedicated fan club with millions of followers across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as part of her mission to carry forward Sridevi's glorious legacy. Acknowledging Sridevi's timeless appeal and the countless lives she managed to touch with her craft, Rajeev said, "Bilkul, Sridevi actually hai hi aisi hasti. Sirf aap nahi, mujhe lagta hai unke millions of millions fans rahe hain hum sab. Chaha ladke hon ya ladkiyan, aaj bhi hum unki film dekhte hain, unka kaam dekhte hain toh chehre pe ek muskurahat rehti hai. Aisa nahi lagta ki woh humare beech mein nahi hain. (Absolutely, Sridevi actually was such a personality. Not just you, I think she has millions and millions of fans among all of us. Whether boys or girls, even today, when we watch her films, see her work, a smile comes on our faces. It doesn't feel like she is not among us)." Reacting to the emotional interaction, filmmaker Boney Kapoor expressed gratitude for the heartfelt tribute to his late wife. Taking to the comment section of the post, Boney mentioned, "Thank you for all the respect you have for my wife, Sri. Means a lot to us. Warm regards. (sic)" "Tum Ho Naa", hosted by Rajeev Khandelwal, is slated to premiere on 28th April, at 9:00 pm only on Sony Entertainment Television & Sony LIV.



SPORTS

'Me And My Coach Have All Things Sorted': Manu Bhaker Targets Asian Games And World C'ships Glory

New Delhi, 27/4: Double Olympic medalist Manu Bhaker is gearing up for a fresh competitive cycle with renewed focus, setting her sights on the Asian Games and World Championships as she looks to rediscover peak form following her success at the 2024 Paris Olympics. Looking ahead, Manu expressed excitement over shooting's return to the Commonwealth Games programme for the 2030 edition, which India is set to host. The sport had notably been excluded from both the 2022 Birmingham Games and the upcoming Glasgow edition. "My first breakthrough was in the

Commonwealth Games, which was in 2018, Australia (Gold Coast)," Manu told the media on the sidelines of NRAI's 75th anniversary event here. Manu expressed disappointment that shooting was not being part of the 2022 and the upcoming 2026 editions of the CWG, but said she was looking forward to the 2030 edition of the event, set to be hosted by India (Ahmedabad). "It is sad, but at the same time, I am also looking forward to the 2030 Games. We will be hosting the Commonwealth Games, so I am looking forward... I am sure India will do great," she stated. After a relatively quiet phase post-Paris, where she clinched two bronze

medals, Manu said she and her coach have already mapped out a clear roadmap for the upcoming season, with the Los Angeles 2028 Olympic qualification cycle now underway. "We have the Asian Games (in Japan) and the World Championships coming up at the end of this year, so definitely we are looking forward to the two major competitions. So, the preparations that my coach and I have, we sat down some time back, and we planned what the competitions (coming up) are and what the preparedness is. I feel we have all the things sorted, and hopefully we will do very well," she expressed. The 22-year-old

also reflected on her evolving mindset, revealing how her journey around the Paris Olympics brought about a deeper sense of spirituality that continues to guide her approach, as she said, "I am a very spiritual person. That journey began around the Olympics (Paris 2024), and I'm really happy to be continuing on that path." Having already established herself on the Olympic stage, Manu will now aim to translate her experience and preparation into consistent performances across major global events, as she builds towards the next Olympic cycle.

IPL 2026: Sunil Narine, Rinku Singh Help KKR Clinch Super Over Win Over LSG

Lucknow, 27/4: Sunil Narine's double strike and Rinku Singh's decisive boundary helped Kolkata Knight Riders clinch a dramatic Super Over victory against Lucknow Super Giants and get off the bottom spot in the points table in a tightly contested clash in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at the BRSABV Ekana Stadium in Lucknow on Sunday. After both teams were tied at 155, the 16th such instance in the tournament's history, thanks to a last-ball six from Mohammed Shami, it paved the way for the first Super Over of the ongoing season to take place. LSG sent out Nicholas Pooran and Aiden Markram, followed by Rishabh Pant. Narine was entrusted with the ball and immediately swung the contest in KKR's favour. Pooran was bowled on the first delivery while attempting a slog sweep. After Pant managed a single, Markram fell to a brilliant relay catch involving Rovman Powell and Rinku Singh near the boundary



rope, meaning LSG could make only one run in their Super Over innings - the lowest score in the one-over shootout in an IPL game. In reply, KKR relied on Rinku and Powell to finish the job. Prince Yadav was given the responsibility of defending four runs, as Mohsin Khan, who had taken a five-for

earlier, was subbed out. As soon as Prince missed the yorker, Rinku opened the bat face and sliced through the square boundary on the off-side, and the boundary sealed victory for KKR off the very first ball of their chase. The finish capped a remarkable night for Rinku, who earlier smashed four sixes in the final

over to take LSG past 150 by hitting his highest T20 score of 83 not out off 50 balls, and took four catches in the outfield in regular game time. With Narine delivering with precision under pressure, Rinku's composure and power ensured KKR got their second win of the season.

'Golmaal 5' cast reunites for Ooty shoot schedule



Ooty, filmmaker Rohit Shetty has officially kicked off the Ooty shooting schedule for 'Golmaal 5', marking a major milestone for one of India's most successful comedy franchises. The announcement came through his Instagram handle, where he shared a nostalgic video featuring himself riding alongside key members of the film's lead cast. The post signals not just the start of production, but also a reunion that fans have been waiting for. Among the most talked-about moments in the clip is the return of Sharman Joshi, who was part of the original 2006 film and played the character Laxman. His presence has sparked excitement among long-time followers of the series. In his

caption, Shetty reflected on the franchise's enduring popularity. "Riding through positive vibes since 20 years," he wrote, acknowledging the legacy that began with 'Golmaal: Fun Unlimited' in 2006. The original film starred Ajay Devgn, Arshad Warsi, Joshi, and Tusshar Kapoor, and went on to become a major box-office success. Over the years, the Golmaal franchise has evolved into one of Bollywood's most recognisable comedy brands, known for its slapstick humour and ensemble cast. The newly released footage hints at a return to the franchise's roots, with the core cast, often referred to by fans as the "Golmaal gang", reuniting on screen. The Ooty schedule also suggests that Shetty is continuing

his signature style of staging large-scale, high-energy sequences in scenic outdoor locations. The response online has been immediate and enthusiastic. Fans flooded the comments section with messages celebrating the reunion, with many calling it a revival of "childhood memories." One fan wrote, "So good to see Sharman Joshi back in this franchise." A second social media user wrote, "THE OG'S ARE BACK." "Can't explain my excitement," wrote a third user. Golmaal 5 is produced by Rohit Shetty Picturez in association with T-Series. While the storyline remains under wraps, Shetty recently confirmed that Akshay Kumar will also play a key role in the upcoming film.

Legendary photographer Raghu Rai passes away at 83; nation, celebs, mourn

Mumbai, Renowned Indian photographer Raghu Rai passed away on Sunday morning while undergoing treatment at a private hospital. He was 83. His demise has triggered a wave of grief across the journalism and photography fraternity. One of India's most celebrated photographers, Rai began his career in 1965 at the age of 23. In 1966, he joined The Statesman as chief photographer and worked there for nearly a decade. He later served as a picture editor for a

Kolkata-based weekly. In 1971, his work was recognised by legendary photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, who nominated him to join Magnum Photos. Rai was awarded the Padma Shri in 1972 for documenting the 1971 India-Pakistan war and the plight of Bangladeshi refugees. He also received the Photographer of the Year award in the US in 1992 and was honoured by the French government with the Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters in 2009. In 1982, Rai joined India

Today as Picture Editor-cum-Visualiser-cum-Photographer, marking a significant phase in his professional journey. Soon after the news broke, several prominent personalities expressed grief and paid tribute to the legendary photographer. Actor Amitabh Bachchan said Rai's work "defined visual storytelling in India," while actor Anupam Kher called him "a chronicler of India's soul." Filmmaker Shekhar Kapur described Rai as "a master who showed the world India through a compassionate lens."