

# Dumani Mail

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## PM Modi wishes Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan on his birthday



New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday extended warm birthday greetings to Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan, lauding his contributions to parliamentary functioning and his commitment to democratic values.

In a post on X, PM Modi said, "Warm birthday greetings to Vice President Thiru C.P. Radhakrishnan Ji. He is making numerous efforts to strengthen our collective dream of building a Viksit Bharat. His consistent efforts to enhance the productivity and effectiveness of our Parliamentary proceedings reflect his deep commitment to democratic values."

"Equally inspiring is his unwavering passion for all-round development, with a concern for the poor and marginalised. His public life continues to be guided by dedication,

discipline and a clear sense of purpose. I pray for his good health, happiness and a long life in the service of the nation," he added.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also extended greetings, appreciating V-P Radhakrishnan's contributions to strengthening Parliament and ensuring that the benefits of development reach all sections of society.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, joined in conveying his wishes, praying for the Vice President's long life, good health, and continued dedication to national service.

V-P Radhakrishnan assumed office as the 15th Vice President of India in September 2025. Prior to this, he served as the Governor of Maharashtra and earlier as the Governor of Jharkhand, along with holding additional.

## CM Rekha Gupta, ministers celebrate with jhalmudi, rasgulla

New Delhi: Plates of spicy jhalmudi and rasgullas made for a celebratory spread at the Delhi Secretariat on Monday, where Chief Minister Rekha Gupta joined her Cabinet colleagues to mark the BJP's massive lead in the West Bengal election results.

The informal gathering saw ministers sharing the traditional snacks, with jhalmudi — a popular street food associated with eastern India — taking centre stage in Delhi alongside the dessert.



Calling the result significant, CM Gupta posted on X in Hindi that the victory in West

Bengal held special importance and reflected people's support for the party.

## Jeweller robbed of 75 gm gold, scooter in east Delhi

New Delhi: A jeweller was allegedly robbed of gold jewellery, cash and his scooter at gunpoint in east Delhi's Preet Vihar, police said on Monday.

The incident occurred on Sunday night when the victim, Sukumar Dhara, was returning home from his jewellery shop in Mandawali, they said.

"Dhara, a resident of Laxmi Nagar, was intercepted by unidentified armed assailants on Madhuban Road around 10.30 pm," a senior police officer said.

According to the police, the accused threatened

Dhara with a firearm and forcibly took away his mobile phone and scooter. The victim told police that his box compartment of the vehicle contained around 75 grams of gold jewellery and Rs 3 lakh in cash at the time of the robbery.

"Based on Dhara's complaint, a case was registered and further investigation into the matter is underway," the officer said. The police said multiple teams have been formed to trace the accused and recover the robbed items. CCTV footage from nearby areas is being scanned to identify the suspects.



## Banking cannot be understood only through numbers, models or regulations: RBI Dy Governor

New Delhi: Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Deputy Governor Swaminathan J on Monday highlighted that banking must be understood beyond numbers, models and regulations, emphasising the role of judgment, experience and public purpose in financial decision-making.

Delivering the G Ramachandran Memorial Lecture at Madras School of Economics, he said, "Banking cannot be understood only through numbers, models or regulations, though all three are important. It must also be understood through experience, institutional behaviour and the public purpose that finance is meant to serve."

Drawing from his banking career, he highlighted that credit decisions are inherently uncertain and require informed judgment. "Credit is a judgment about the future. Will this borrower repay? Will this business generate the cash flows it has projected?" he said, underlining that such decisions go beyond theoretical models.

He further noted that banking institutions operate on trust and multiple commitments, including safeguarding depositors' money and ensuring fair access to credit, while also supporting broader developmental objectives.

Emphasising the role of supervision, he said



regulators must look beyond formal compliance to assess underlying risks. "Compliance asks whether the rule has been followed. Supervision asks whether the underlying risk has been understood and addressed," he stated.

He also highlighted the importance of financial stability as a public good, noting that its value often

lies in prevention rather than visible outcomes.

Swaminathan J stressed the need to combine theoretical knowledge with real-world exposure. He said institutions and firms cannot be understood only through reported numbers, as these may not fully reflect underlying risks, governance quality or

operational realities.

He further pointed to the evolving nature of banking, which is becoming more digital and data-driven, while cautioning that key challenges remain unchanged. "These questions cannot be answered by technology alone. They require judgment. They require institutional discipline. They require humility about what we do not know and above all, they require a sense of public purpose," he said.

He added, "Sound finance is therefore not only a matter of profitability, but also of responsibility," highlighting the broader impact of financial decisions on the economy and society.

## Skill, diligence and compassion are wondrous powers of life: PM Modi

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday shared a reflective message on social media under the title "Subhashitam", highlighting the importance of human virtues such as skill, diligence and compassion in overcoming challenges and achieving life goals.

In a post on X, PM Modi said, "Skill, diligence, and compassion are the wondrous powers of our life. Through them, we can not only overcome every challenge, but they also aid in the attainment of our goals."

Along with the message,



the Prime Minister also shared a Sanskrit verse emphasising the value of capability, hard work, education and kindness in human life. The verse reads: "For skilled people, no task

is difficult; for hardworking people, no goal is too far; for educated people, there is no difference between their own country and abroad; and for those who speak kindly, no one is a stranger."

## Delhi High Court dismisses SpiceJet review plea in Rs 144 crore dispute

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court has dismissed a review petition filed by SpiceJet and its Managing Director, Ajay Singh, against an order directing the airline to deposit Rs. 144 crore in an arbitration dispute with Kalanithi Maran and Kal Airways Pvt Ltd. The Court also imposed costs of Rs 50,000.

The Bench of Justice Subramonium Prasad declined SpiceJet's request to substitute the monetary deposit with an immovable property in Gurugram owned by Ajay Singh. During the hearing, senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi and Amit Sibal, appearing for SpiceJet, submitted that the airline is facing financial constraints and that depositing ₹144 crore would cause difficulty. They proposed that the Gurugram property, stated to be free from encumbrances, could be



offered instead.

They also argued that the earlier order contained errors, including observations that similar grounds had been raised before the Supreme Court of India and that there was no material to show the property was unencumbered.

Senior advocate Jayant Mehta, appearing for Kal Airways and Kalanithi Maran, opposed the plea. He submitted that the issue of financial difficulty had already been raised before the Supreme Court, which dismissed the

challenge and imposed costs. He also stated that the review petition sought to revisit issues already decided.

The dispute arises from an arbitration award in favour of Kal Airways and Kalanithi Maran. Earlier, the Supreme Court had upheld the Delhi High Court's direction to deposit ₹144 crore. A subsequent application by SpiceJet to substitute the deposit with property was rejected on March 18, 2026, leading to the present review petition.

## Delhi Police busts counterfeit auto parts unit; two arrested

New Delhi: The Delhi Police has busted a racket involved in manufacturing and supplying counterfeit automobile parts in the national capital, arresting two men and seizing a large consignment of fake products, officials said on Monday.

The raid was carried out by a team of the crime branch following specific inputs about illegal sale of counterfeit motorcycle pistons and clutch plates in the Karol Bagh auto market area, they said.

The police said the raids were conducted on Sunday at two shops in Nai Wala and Karol Bagh, where substantial quantities of fake automobile parts bearing labels of reputed brands were recovered.



## Union minister and Delhi CM send off train with 1,400 pilgrims for Somnath Swabhimaan Parv

New Delhi: The Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta jointly flagged off the 'Somnath Swabhimaan Parv - Somnath Yatra' on Thursday, inaugurating the spiritual journey by dispatching a special train carrying approximately 1,400 pilgrims from Safdarjung Railway Station. The Chief Minister stated that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the entire country is observing Somnath Swabhimaan Parv. She described the Yatra as a historic and cultural initiative dedicated to '1,000 years of unbroken faith', designed to reconnect the people of Delhi with their spiritual heritage.

Launched under Gupta's leadership, the initiative marks Delhi as the first state or Union Territory to send nearly 1,400 pilgrims together on such a large-scale and well-organised Somnath Yatra. During the journey, devotees will visit the Somnath Temple and other prominent religious sites. The Delhi government has covered

the entire cost of rail travel and meals, while the Gujarat government is responsible for accommodation, local transport, and temple visits. Close coordination between the two governments aims to ensure a safe, seamless, and well-managed experience.

Addressing the gathering, Shekhawat described the flag-off from Safdarjung Railway Station as a 'Shivmay Shubharambh', an auspicious and spiritually significant beginning. Alongside CM Gupta and Cabinet Minister Kapil Mishra, he interacted with the pilgrims and extended his best wishes for the journey. He said the Yatra aims to showcase India's cultural heritage and national pride through the timeless legacy of the Somnath Temple, adding, "Indian faith is rooted in a spirit of harmonious unity."

Welcoming the pilgrims, Rekha Gupta said the Yatra reflects India's rich cultural heritage, deep-rooted faith, and civilisational pride. She emphasised, "It is not merely a religious event, but a celebration of the country's thousands of

years of cultural consciousness and enduring faith."

Referring to landmark initiatives such as the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, Mahakal Lok, and the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, she said these transformative efforts have given Indian culture a renewed identity and fresh energy. The Somnath Yatra, she added, carries forward the same spirit. She reiterated that the Delhi government remains committed to strengthening citizens' religious faith and cultural identity and will continue such initiatives in the future.

Kapil Mishra said that under the Chief Minister's leadership, the Delhi government remains dedicated to serving senior citizens, mothers, sisters, daughters, and all devotees. He underlined that this initiative goes beyond organising a pilgrimage, reflecting a broader commitment to strengthening citizens' faith, dignity, and cultural bonds. He expressed hope that the journey would be safe, auspicious, and successful, and that the wishes devotees carry, for their families and for the prosperity of the nation, would be fulfilled.

## Demand for Timber Supply for Bancho Rath Yatra: Sub-Collector Writes to DFO

Keonjhar : The Sub Collector Anandpur has wrote letter to the DFO, Anandpur Wildlife Division to supply wood for the construction of Chariot of Bancho Sri Sri Dadhibaman Jew in the occasion of up coming Car festival.

According to the sources as few months ahead, the local administration has become active regarding observance of upcoming Car festival in Bancho village under Anandapur subdivision.

As the chariot of Devi Subhadra has become old and dilapidated, it has become essential to construct a new one.



In this context, after demand of Sub-Collector of Anandapur has written a letter to the Divisional

Forest Officer Wildlife Division, Anandpur and requested to supply of good-quality timber required for chariot construction. The letter mentions that adequate timber is crucial to ensure the safety and strength of the chariot, and timely supply will help complete the work before the festival.

Meanwhile, members of the Jagannath Committee Pranab Ballav Padhi, Ratikanta Rout, Sudhanshu Rout, Mukesh Rout, Radhagobinda Das, and Ashok Puhana have also requested the DFO for early supply of timber. They stated that as "Rath Yatra is a major religious festival of the region, timely construction of the chariot is very important".

Local residents hope that the administration will take this matter seriously and arrange the timber supply at the earliest, ensuring that the upcoming Rath Yatra is conducted successfully and safely.

## Bethany Convent School of Paradip achieved 100% pass rate in ICSE Class X examination

Paradip - Bethany Convent School, Paradip has once again carved a niche of excellence in academics by achieving a remarkable 100% result in the ICSE Class X Examination 2025-26. All 79 students who appeared for the examination passed successfully, bringing laurels to the institution. Out of them, 71 students secured First Division, reflecting the school's consistent commitment to academic excellence. A total of 11 students scored 90% and above, further highlighting the school's outstanding academic performance.

The school takes immense pride in the exceptional performance of its students, with Rudraditya Parija emerging as the School Topper by securing 95.6%, followed by Umika Mohapatra with 94.6%,



and Subhradeep Patra with 94.4%.

The outstanding result is a testimony to the relentless dedication of the students, the

committed efforts of the teachers, and the constant encouragement and support of parents.

On this proud occasion, Rev. Fr. Sunil Lakra, Principal of Bethany Convent School, congratulated all the successful students on their excellent achievement and wished them good luck for their future endeavours. The school also expresses sincere appreciation to the teachers for their tireless efforts and to the parents for their cooperation and trust, which have played a vital role in this success.

The school fraternity congratulates all the successful students and acknowledges with gratitude the blessings and support that made this achievement possible. Bethany Convent School continues to uphold its tradition of excellence and holistic development in education.

## Violence in medical college area, Local demand to strengthen security

Keonjhar : Patients and their relatives feel scared due to the presence of outsiders at the Dharanidhar Medical college and hospital in Keonjhar, following an incident that took place on Friday. That evening, some antisocial individuals from the local area allegedly attacked a patient and vandalized a vehicle near the medical college, which has become a topic of discussion in the area. Due to lack of proper police security arrangement the patients and their relatives coming to the hospital staying in fear of atmosphere and express dissatisfaction.

It is alleged that some outside brokers and internal security personnel force patients and the next of kin of the deceased to be taken in specific private vehicles and ambulances. The root cause of such incidents is a local person creating a disturbance to move the deceased patient in his vehicle monopoly. As a result, patients face significant trouble and are being heavily exploited. Despite the police being informed, many times, could not taking steps for which such types of incident taking place frequently sources alleged. Even those middlemen are harassing the people who opened shops for selling pet food there and forcefully feeding them without payment. As a result, a controversial situation often arises.

While there is no police out post in the medical college, it operates under the outpost of the district headquarter hospital located about 6/7 kms distance. Therefore, the police security system is not being strengthened. Locals are expressing their opinion that if this is not controlled now, there will be a big riot in the coming days. Regarding this, ASI Bipin Barik, who is in charge of the outpost, said that there was an information regarding the disturbance but no report has been filed. There is always a dispute outside the medical college regarding the transportation of patients/dead patients. The person causing the riot has been identified. Action will be taken soon. Locals demanded a strengthening of the police security system near the hospital and take strong steps to maintain peace and order.

## Following the path of truth and righteousness and showing devotion to God is the fundamental principle of life

Puri: At the conference hall of the Youth Hostel located on Chakratirtha Road, the birth anniversary of Maharshi Narada and World Press Freedom Day were celebrated under the auspices of the Pandit Basudev Mohapatra Memorial Committee.

The meeting was chaired by the president of the memorial committee, Binay Nrusingha Mohapatra. Attending as the chief guest, Justice Manas Ranjan Mishra stated that in Sanatan Dharma, Devarshi Narada is regarded as the mind-born son of Brahma, the creator of the universe. He is worshipped as a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and is considered the first messenger of the cosmos. According to mythology,

Narada Muni was born on the first day of the month of Jyestha. This sacred day reminds us that following the path of truth and righteousness without discrimination and remaining devoted to God is the core principle of life.

The keynote speaker, Odia scholar Dr. Pramod Kumar Dalai, said that Narada Muni is known as the messenger of the gods because he facilitates the exchange of information across all realms. Mythology states that he could travel freely between heaven, earth, and the underworld without any obstacles. He always worked for the welfare of the world and spoke firm truths to uphold righteousness, leading to the

destruction of evil and the victory of truth.

Another guest, Dr. Kartik Kumar Das, mentioned that the day is also observed as World Press Freedom Day. As per Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), freedom of expression must be respected. The day began to be observed following the Windhoek Declaration of 1991 issued by African journalists.

Distinguished guests present on the dais included educationist Bijayalakshmi Das, Professor Ravishankar Mishra, and Kailash Chandra Sahu.

At the beginning, journalist Laxminarayan Pattanayak delivered the welcome address, while Bijay Kumar Panda

presented the welcome song. Participants in the discussion session included Dr. Abhimanyu Bhuyan, advocate Rachita Rautaray, Pandit Sadashiva Mishra, Santosh Kumar Mohanty, Dayanidhi Tripathy, Bipin Bihari Dalai, Suresh Kumar Pattanayak, Pratibha Das, and Deepthi Mishra.

On this occasion, Shivanshu Mohapatra, the youngest grandson of freedom fighter Pandit Basudev Mohapatra, was felicitated for securing the top position in the matriculation examination at Stewart School, Bhubaneswar.

The program was coordinated with the support of Tapan Kumar Sethi and Sandeep Karmakar, and the vote of thanks was delivered by advocate Sarbani Das.

## MYM Jagriti Shakha honours Journalists on World Press Freedom Day

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD, May 4 : On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, the Marwari Yuva Manch Jagriti Shakha Khariar Road organized a felicitation ceremony to honor journalists for their courageous and independent reporting at Agrasen Bhawan Khariar Road in Nuapada District on Sunday, the 3rd May.

On this occasion, 5 journalists of Khariar Road were honoured for independent and impartial journalism. Suresh Achari, Rakesh Sharma, Taleswar Dewangan, Santosh Dubey and Bishu Banchor were felicitated by the Jagriti Shakha by presenting them gifts as a mark of respect.

The proceedings of the programme was conducted by Shakha Coordinator Rachna Jain and former President Santosh Agrawal. Jagriti Shakha President Renu Agarwal and Secretary Sonal



Dongarwal along with press friends were present on the stage.

The active members of Jagriti Shakha Richa Agrawal, Sangeeta

Agarwal, Anita Agarwal, Kanta Jain and Karuna Agrawal were present and cooperated the program to be successful.

## Bari MLA Rewarded Matric A1 Achievers.

Jajpur :- Bari MLA S. Biswaranjan Mallick, on Sunday has recognized with trophy and rewarded four students who achieved A1 grade (Bari Block) in current year matriculation examinations result.

Besides recognition Mallick also awarded Rs. 10,000 each from his salary and assured he will support to all students in their higher studies.

Later Sri Mallick discussed with all regarding their next aims and wished all along with their Parents for this Proud moments.



## Talabira Coal Mine Protest Enters 13th Day

Displaced Families Raise 8-Point Demand, Vow to Continue Agitation.

Sambalpur-(DMS) : The ongoing mass protest by displaced and affected families at the Talabira (II) and (III) coal mines in Khinda Panchayat under Rengali block of Sambalpur district entered its 13th day on Sunday. No concrete solution has yet been reached from either the administration or the companies involved.

The agitation, which began on April 20, is being carried out against the alleged arbitrary functioning of NLC and Adani companies and their neglect of displaced families. Protesters have been staging a sit-in demonstration in front of the main gate of the coal mine.

On the occasion of

International Workers' Day, the agitators organized a rally, marched through nearby villages, and staged a demonstration at the mine gate, raising slogans against the authorities.

The protest is being led by Hemant Kumar Pandey, President of the Matrubhumi organization, along with Manabodh Biswal, Kishore Sahu, Kailash Budhia, Bhimasen Pradhan, Sushant Biswal, Jayaram Budhia, Shatrughna Rohidas, and Naren Budhia. A large number of displaced and affected families have joined the movement.

Key 8-Point Demands:-  
Issuance of appointment letters to all employees and

payment as per HPC recommendations. Direct employment for displaced families as per the 2006 and 2013 rehabilitation policies.

Reinstatement of retrenched workers.

Employment in TOMPL as per prior commitments

Halt blasting operations until complete rehabilitation is ensured

Provision of clean drinking water in Khinda Panchayat

Measures to control pollution caused by coal transportation

Release of workers allegedly held by Durga Company

The organization has clearly stated that the protest will continue until their demands are fulfilled.

## Jitu Munda's village Dianali tube well repaired

Keonjhar: Villagers of Dianali received a water facility in Dianali village. The tube well of the village, which was idle for months, was repaired. As a result, the villagers expressed happiness and said it is done due to Jitu Munda.

However, questions have been raised about the performance of the Water Supply Department. It is reported that about 150 families live in Dianali village. This village located on the side of the road is going through many problems. Dianali village is facing many problems for water. Women are suffering a lot for water. However, after the news of Jitu Munda came to light, the tube well in the village has been

repaired. On the one hand, while the administration is saying that all the idle tube wells were repaired before the hot weather, now the real picture has come to light. Women say that after hitting the tube well, red water comes out after a bucket of water. On Sunday morning, the tube well was repaired by the Rural Water Supply Department. The villagers said that the repairs were not done when they complained earlier. Local Suryamani Mahanta and Nalita Mahanta and others say there is a fight in the village over water because very little water is being received due to a fault. Therefore, after the news about Jitu Munda was published, the villagers are happy that

administrative steps are being taken to solve the village's problems. The villagers said that the village problems will be solved for Jitu. Although the government has ordered to repair all the tubewells before the summer, it is clear from this incident that the instructions of the government are not being followed in reality.

Even though the villagers have informed in writing about the water problem, the officials at the block level are ignoring it. As a result, the non-functional tubewells are not being repaired. Similarly, it remains to be seen what action the government will take against the officials who are violating this. Tribal leader Vinod Nayak

said many officials in the rural water supply department have become complacent because they have worked in one place for a long time and are ignoring the problems of the people.

On the other hand, Jitu Munda's fate has also changed after the news. Besides financial benefits, he received an electric connection to his house, a cot, a bed, an electric fan, a cycle, and many other items from government and private sectors. The village became a famous place, crowded as every day officials, political leaders and people representatives, voluntary organisation and media persons from the state reaching and taking bytes, interviews, making documentary, podocast etc.

## Three retired officials get two years RI sentence



Keonjhar : In a significant anti-corruption development Special Judge, Vigilance Keonjhar Bhagaban Pradhan today convicted three Govt. functionaries of Hatadihi Block, of Keonjhar district to rigorous imprisonment for a period of 2 years and to pay fine Rs.10,000/-.

The convicts Gangadhar Naik, Former Welfare Extension Officer (Retired), Ramesh Chandra Sethy, Former Fishery Extension Officer (Retired), and Srikanta Sethy, Former Progressive Assistant (Retired), all of Hatadihi

Block, of Keonjhar district. According to the press release they were charge sheeted by Odisha Vigilance under prevention of corruption act for misappropriation of the Govt rice received under SGRY ( Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana) during the year 2002-03 for utilisation in labour intensive projects.

Odisha Vigilance will now move the competent authority for stoppage of pension of Gangadhar Naik, Ramesh Chandra Sethy and Srikanta Sethy, as all are retired officials following their conviction.

## Press conference by bank employees' association on Jitu Munda incident

"There will be a protest if action is taken"

Keonjhar : Bank employees association of Odisha Gramina Bank has threatened to protest if any action is taken against Sushanta Kumar Sethy, Branch Manager of the Mallipasi Branch, without completely investigating Jitu Munda's incident. They have told this in a media conference held in Keonjhar on Friday, when the Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC), Northern Division, Sambalpur, directly attributed the entire incident to the Bank Officer's fault. The press meet was organised by Joint Forum of Associations Odisha Grameen Bank Organisation (AOGBO) and Odisha Grameen Bank SC/ST Employees Welfare Council (OGBSCSTEWEC). President of the All Odisha Gramin Bank Officers Association, Manabhanjan Mishra said " The officer has been done the work according to the bank's rules and regulations in the said incident. Therefore, the manager of



Malipasi Odisha Gramin Bank, Nihar Sushant Kumar Sethi, has done nothing wrong. Therefore, if action is taken against him without investigation, there will be a protest".

According to the sources on the instructions of Chief Minister Mohan Majhi, the RDC has conducted an investigation into the incident where Jitu Munda went to the bank carrying a skeleton to withdraw money from the bank.

" The RDC should complete the investigation and submit the report to the government. The government would have taken a decision after completing the investigation. Due to this

reputation of the bank and the bank manager is also getting bad due to blaming the bank and its employees openly without completing the investigation before that. Even if action is taken against the Branch Manager then association will come out in favor of the manager" they warned. President of the SCST Council Deepak Naik, Secretary of the SCST Council Pradyumna Behera, and OGBBO General Secretary Saileshwar Panda were present.

It was revealed that Jitu Munda of Dianali village in Keonjhar district, while walking on his feet in the scorching heat to get his sister's bank deposit, dug up his sister's skeleton from the burial ground, carried it

on his shoulders and placed it in front of the bank. This incident became a hot discussion all over the world. Chief Minister Mohan Majhi ordered the RDC to investigate this. The RDC Sambalpur investigated it by going through the CCTV footage in bank and holding discussions with the bank officials. During the investigation, the RDC held responsible to the bank and bank officers in front of the media for saying it a shameful incident. Since it was Monday and the bank was crowded, Jitu came for money, but the manager and cashier told him to bring the death and legal heir certificate. How could we know that he didn't understand the death certificate and after staying at the bank for some time, he left and brought the skeleton.

The bank was crowded and only two staff members were working. When arrived after some time with the skeleton, we informed the police. The police came and took him away.

## Man gets 20 years RI

Keonjhar : Keonjhar Fast Track Court Judge Bijay Kumar Mishra, while hearing a 14 years minor girl rape case, has sentenced the accused Shiba Naik (24) to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 10,000. For non-payment of fine money, the court ordered six months more RI. According to Special Public Prosecutor Patitapaban Natha, In the year 2022, Siba of Tela-champey village under Banspal block went to the house of one of his relatives in the Tentulikhungti area under Kanjipani police station. There, he raped a minor girl four times on the promise of marriage. After the minor girl became pregnant for 2 months, she asked him to marry her. However, Shiba refused to marry her and decided to marry another girl. The minor girl reported this to the Kanjipani police station on 11 May 2022. The police registered a case under the POCSO Act and arrested the accused. Based on the evidence of 14 witnesses and the police investigation report, the fast track court passed the verdict. The court also directed the District Legal Services Authority, Keonjhar to pay the victim compensation of Rs 10 lakh.

## Jagatsinghpur District ranks 4 th in Matric result

Jagatsinghpur, To-day Metri result published by Board of Secondary Education and Jagatsinghpur district ranks at 4 th Position with Pass Percentage of 97.89 percentage. As per data total 13180 students filled up form but 161 students were absent. As per Metric result 60 passed in A1 grade and 385 passed in A2 grade. In B1 grade 1116, B2 2380, C grade 3427, D Grade 3598, E grade 1878, F grade 275. Total girls students 6085 passed and boys pass rate 6359. Total pass rate 12744 and Jagatsinghpur district ranks at 4 th Position. Gajapati district ranks first by 99.31percentsge, Ganjam district ranks second position with 98.25 percentage and Kandhamal district ranked third position with 98.17 percentage and Jagatsinghpur district at Fourth position. Though pass rate is High but quality of result was not satisfactory as stated by educationist

## 12-Day Protest Continues at Talabira Coal Mines Over Neglect of Displaced Families.

Sambalpur-02/05(DMS) : A protest by displaced and affected families at the Talabira (II) and (III) coal mines in Rengali block has entered its 12th day, with no resolution yet from authorities. The agitation, which began on April 20 at Khinda panchayat, is being held in front of the main gate of the mines against alleged arbitrary functioning by NLC India Limited and Adani Group, as well as continued neglect of displaced families.

The protesters are demanding the fulfillment of an eight-point charter of demands. On Friday, coinciding with International Workers' Day, demonstrators organized a rally across nearby villages and staged a protest at the mine gate, raising slogans against the companies and administrative inaction.

The agitation is being led by members of the Matrubhumi organization,



including its president Hemant Kumar Pandey, along with leaders such as Manabodh Biswal, Kishore Sahu, Kailash Budhia, Bhimsen Pradhan, Sushant Biswal, Jayaram Budhia, Shatrughan Rohidas, and Naren Budhia. A large number of displaced and affected families have joined the protest.

The key demands include issuing appointment letters to all workers engaged by the companies and ensuring wages as per HPC

recommendations; direct employment for displaced and affected families in line with the Rehabilitation and Resettlement policies of 2006 and 2013; reinstatement of retrenched workers; and direct employment in TOMPL for those promised jobs earlier.

Other demands include halting blasting activities until complete rehabilitation of displaced families is ensured, providing safe drinking water to all households in Khinda

panchayat, and taking measures to control pollution caused by coal transportation along the Sambalpur-Rourkela State Highway.

Additionally, protesters have demanded the immediate release of workers allegedly confined within the mine premises by a private contractor company.

Leaders of the movement have stated that the protest will continue until all demands are addressed.

## Paradip Model Police holds "Ama Police programme : Strong action against drug peddlars-ASP Ajinkya

Paradip: An awareness program was organized by Ama Police Samiti at Paradip Model Police Station premises on Friday evening. The program, organized under the presidingship of Babita Dehuri, IIC, Paradip Model Police station and was attended by Ajinkya Baburao Mane, Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP), Paradip. ASP stated that strong action will be taken against drug peddlars. Police have vowed strict action against drug traffickers and smugglers, emphasizing that drug abuse is a serious threat to society.

The programs focus on encouraging the public to act as "safety ambassadors," supporting police by providing information on drug trafficking, and encouraging youth to adopt a "Say No to Drugs" approach. The ASP Mr. Mane encourage citizens to report drug-related activities by sharing information, aiming for a "Nasha Mukti" (Drug-Free) society.

## BSF Jawan cremated with State honor

Keonjhar: The Keonjhar district administration accorded a guard of honor to Ajay Kumar Soren (37), by BSF Jawans and local police on Friday, and the body was handed over to the family members. Officials paid rich tribute to the departed BSF Jawan, at his native Putujhari village under the Anandpur police station in Keonjhar district. He had been working as a BSF jawan in the 91 Battalion BSF, Raiganj, West Bengal for the last few years. He died after feeling sick while engaged in election duty.

According to sources, Ajay was posted in the West Bengal for the election duty on April 23. He fell ill and was admitted to the hospital in West Bengal in a critical state. As his health condition deteriorated followed by a sudden brain stroke, he was shifted to the ICU. On Wednesday he finally lost his battle for life in the medical facility. Later, his body was sent to Odisha's Keonjhar district



and last rites were performed in his native land. On Friday, the body was taken in a large procession from Anandpur police station to his house and then to the burial ground. A mournful atmosphere prevailed in the village and villagers farewell the son of soil in tearful eyes.

Hundreds of villagers, mostly youths from the area gathered to pay their last respects to the brave jawan. The entire Anandpur city was shaken by the chants of "Veer

Jawan Ajay Soren Amar Rehe".

After his mortal remains reached the village, a shadow of grief fell over the local area. His last rites were performed with national dignity. Sub Collector Anandpur Nilamadhab Suna, said, "Yesterday his mortal remains reached his native place. BSF jawans and local police accorded a guard of honour, and the martyr's body was handed over for last rites with state honors. He went to his house to offer condolences".

## Healthcare to the Last Mile: Vedanta Aluminium's efforts in Rayagada and Kalahandi

Bhubaneswar 4th May 2026: Across the interior regions of Rayagada and Kalahandi districts in Odisha, access to healthcare has been shaped as much by distance, terrain and low awareness as it has by proximity to infrastructure. Villages here are largely scattered and transport options limited, with medical facilities concentrated in semi-urban areas from where several sections of the local population live and work.

These circumstances have led to significant challenges in combating seasonal diseases such as malaria and led to the proliferation of undiagnosed chronic conditions and delayed treatments. This dire situation places added pressure on already vulnerable households, particularly tribal and rural communities. In these districts, where healthcare access is frequently disrupted by geographical and livelihood constraints, early diagnosis and continuity of care is critical, yet elusive.

It is within this context that Vedanta Aluminium's Project Aarogya operates, anchoring

healthcare delivery in the lived realities of Rayagada and Kalahandi. In FY26 alone, the initiative benefited nearly 1.26 lakh people across the two districts by taking essential healthcare services to people, building preventive awareness, and strengthening emergency and referral support.

Taking Healthcare Beyond Fixed Facilities

One of the most visible interventions under the project has been the deployment of well-equipped Mobile Health Units, which now regularly cover over 100+ villages in the farthest reaches of Rayagada and Kalahandi. Functioning as portable primary care centres, these units offering consultations, diagnostics and medicines, especially crucial in locations where the nearest health facility may be several kilometres away.

For many residents, this has been their first consistent point of contact with trained medical professionals. "Earlier we ignored small symptoms because visiting a hospital meant losing a workday. Now check-ups happen in the village itself. This

project has been a true boon for our communities." said Bhumita Majhi, a resident of Rayagada. In addition to regular outreach, 12 mega health camps were organised in FY26 across Kalahandi, benefitting over 5,000 patients by bringing multi-specialty services to numerous underserved regions. These camps addressed concerns ranging from general ailments to more complex issues such as orthopaedic issues and eye care, conditions that often go untreated in the absence of specialist access. Early Detection in High-Burden Communities

Health challenges in Rayagada and Kalahandi are often compounded by late diagnosis. Recognising this, Project Aarogya has prioritised preventive screening and early detection, particularly for conditions prevalent in tribal belt districts. In Rayagada, early screening programmes for sickle cell disease and thalassaemia has been undertaken in partnership with district health authorities. These initiatives enable timely counselling, referral and long-term disease management, helping families understand conditions that otherwise remain undetected for years.

## BJB, High School students felicitated for outstanding performance in HSC exam.

Khordha -4/5-A felicitatory meeting was held at BJB High School auditorium under the chairmanship of HM, Bibhu Prasad Senapati for the A-1 and A-2 grade students who achieved success in the 2025-26 high school certificate examination. The old students of the school Debaprasad Majumdar, Bimal Sarangi, Satyabrata Das and the President of the School Management Committee Subhangi Paltasingh and the old teachers of the school Biranchi Kumar Sahu and Anjan Kumar Ray participated as guests. In this felicitatory meeting, the guests wished the students a bright future and advised them to continue working hard and keep the name of the school and the parents high. The teachers of the school expressed their views in their speeches about how the efforts of the students have made the school proud. At the end the headmaster principal of the school advised the children to continue their success in the future as well. He highlighted how this success of the children has created an atmosphere of joy in the hearts of the people of Khordha. The students were felicitated by the school giving them a Gaurav Smarak. Old

student Bimal Sarangi gave ₹2000 to student Jigyansa Lenka and Debaprasad Majumdar gave ₹500 each to students Siddhi Shekhar Chhotray and Jigyansa Lenka and old student Satyabrata Das gave ₹500 each to all the students who got A-1 and A-2. All the teachers and staffs of the school participated in this program.



## AFFIDAVIT

(In the matter of Surname)  
I, Parbati Sha, aged about 46 years, W/o- Late Lalia Sha, resident of At: Station Road Barbil, PO/PS: Barbil, Dist-Keonjhar, Odisha- 758035 do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as follows:-

1. That, I am the deponent and residing at above noted address.

2. That, my actual name is Parbati Sha, W/o- Late Kalia Sha, used for all purposes and the same is recorded in the Aadhaar No.: xxxx xxxx 1850.

3. That, my Daughter's actual name is Rashni Sha but her name is erroneously recorded and registered in Aadhaar Card No. : xxxx xxxx 0684 as Rashni Jha instead of her actual name Rashni Sha.

4. That, it is declared that Rashni Sha and Rashni Jha belongs to one and same person.

5. That, I swear this affidavit today to produce before the concerned authority as and when to treat for necessary correction of my Daughter's Surname.

6. That, the facts stated above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

## FDI Push

IN a step aimed at liberalising a traditionally cautious domain, the Finance Ministry has notified 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in the insurance sector. Increased FDI can bring much-needed capital into this industry. India's insurance penetration — the share of premiums in the country's GDP — was just 3.7 per cent in 2023-24 as well as 2024-25. The insurance density (per capita premium) rose marginally from \$95 to \$97 during this period. These figures are low compared to global standards, and foreign investment can help bridge the gap by expanding outreach, improving infrastructure and enabling companies to design more diverse products. Global insurers often bring advanced risk assessment tools, better technology and managerial expertise, which



can enhance efficiency and customer service. This could ultimately benefit policyholders through competitive pricing, faster claim settlement and innovative offerings tailored to evolving needs.

However, a key concern is the potential erosion of domestic control in a sensitive financial sector. Insurance is closely linked to long-term savings and financial security; excessive foreign dominance could expose the sector to global market volatilities. There is also an apprehension that profit repatriation by foreign firms could limit the reinvestment of earnings within India. Retaining the 20 per cent FDI ceiling for the Life Insurance Corporation of India is a good move, but smaller domestic insurers may struggle to compete with large multinational corporations that possess deeper pockets and established global networks. This could lead to market consolidation, reducing diversity in the long run. Regulatory challenges may also intensify, as authorities must ensure robust oversight to protect policyholders while monitoring complex international operations.

Raising the FDI limit from 74% to 100% is a bold reform with the potential to transform the insurance sector. Its success depends on pragmatic regulation, safeguarding national interests and ensuring that greater investment translates into real gains for consumers.

## Emergency Architecture

INDIA's emergency architecture is entering a new phase. The "Extremely Severe Alert" that rang out across millions of phones on Saturday during a nationwide test by the National Disaster Management Authority and the Department of Telecommunications was more than a technological trial. Using cell broadcast, messages can



be pushed simultaneously to all devices in a defined area, bypassing congested networks and even silent modes. In disaster scenarios, that capability can mean the difference between timely evacuation and chaos.

But early warning is only the first link in the chain. Its value depends on what follows. Here, the performance of the Himachal Pradesh Police under the 112 Emergency Response Support System is instructive. With an average response time of about three minutes 36 seconds and minimal dispatch delays, it shows how integrated control rooms, GPS-enabled patrols and streamlined call handling can translate alerts into action. Such efficiency is particularly critical in terrains like Himachal's, where geography often slows intervention. The broader lesson is about integration. India now has the building blocks of a modern emergency grid: a unified helpline (112), real-time alert capability and improved data-driven policing. Yet, these systems do not operate uniformly. Response times in many states remain significantly higher, reflecting disparities in manpower, training and infrastructure.

Equally pressing is the communication gap. The recent alert triggered confusion because citizens were not adequately informed about test protocols or alert categories. Trust in such systems depends as much on public awareness as on technological reliability. The way forward lies in convergence and consistency. Standardising response benchmarks, investing in local capacity and institutionalising public outreach can turn scattered gains into a nationwide safety net. The test alert was a warning bell. It was more about preparedness.

# Escaping the Cylinder Trap

Raghunath Mahapatra

The latest exchange of threats between the United States and Iran has revived tensions in West Asia and signalled that instability in the Gulf may persist. Even if tensions ease, energy markets rarely return to earlier baselines; they reset at higher risk premiums. This matters for India, which imports nearly 85% of its crude oil and about 60-65% of its LPG requirements. With 20-25% of global crude flows transiting through the Strait of Hormuz, even perceived disruption reverberates quickly. The recent post-war increase in commercial LPG cylinder prices (effective May 1, 2026), alongside rises in domestic (14.2 kg) refills and 5 kg cylinders used by students and migrant workers, underlines a shift: markets are pricing persistent risk. The flame is domestic, but the risk is imported and now recurrent.

Government policy has addressed one side well. The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana has delivered over 10.3 crore LPG connections, expanding clean cooking access and reducing reliance on traditional fuels. NFHS-5 shows improved adoption, while World Health Organization estimates indicate declining exposure to household air pollution, once responsible for over 6 lakh deaths annually. Yet continuity remains fragile. The first cylinder is supported; the refill is exposed. Entry was democratised. Continuity was globalised.

India's earlier insulation from global energy shocks becomes clearer in historical perspective. The oil shocks of the 1970s and the Gulf War drove sharp price spikes, yet their impact on Indian kitchens was limited. LPG penetration was below 20% even in the early 1990s,

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while most households relied on biomass and kerosene. That insulation came from energy poverty, not resilience. Today, clean cooking depends overwhelmingly on LPG, making global disruptions immediate; what was episodic has become structural.

The transmission from geopolitics to the kitchen is rapid. During Gulf tensions, tanker freight and war-risk insurance premiums rise sharply, feeding into the Saudi Contract Price (CP), the benchmark for LPG across Asia. India, consuming over 28-30 million tonnes annually, absorbs these signals almost immediately. Commercial cylinder prices reflect this volatility directly, while domestic refill prices also respond to global shocks. By the time a household pauses or a vendor recalculates, the shock is already priced in. In LPG markets, price formation is anticipatory, not reactive.

Near-universal LPG access combined with import dependence creates the cylinder trap. At the micro level, it binds households to a fuel whose affordability fluctuates with global events: even a Rs.100-Rs.200 rise can alter consumption or delay

purchases. The trap extends beyond households to hospitals, school kitchens, Anganwadis, community feeding programmes, and the food economy—from roadside eateries to large hotels and restaurants—that depend on both commercial and non-commercial cylinders, where price increases are passed on or absorbed as compressed margins. At the macro level, it binds the economy to recurring shocks through import bills, subsidy pressures, inflation, and stress on oil marketing companies. With recent increases in both domestic and commercial cylinders, the risk is not just immediate burden but future escalation, embedding inflation into everyday decisions. The trap is not a shortage of supply; it is dependence.

The macroeconomic costs reinforce this dependence. LPG subsidies expand during price spikes, running into tens of thousands of Crores in earlier cycles. Fuel prices feed into CPI inflation, while oil marketing companies face margin pressures or under-recoveries during controlled pricing periods. In past spikes, these gaps have translated into substantial daily under-recoveries across fuels. A volatile cylinder is not just a

household concern; it is a recurring macroeconomic risk.

Escaping this trap requires moving from crisis management (what the government is doing now) to structural exit without reversing clean cooking gains. A return to firewood or coal at scale is neither feasible nor desirable. The task is to step sideways: reduce dependence on a single imported fuel while preserving universal access. The next five years must focus on lowering marginal dependence, expanding piped natural gas beyond 70+ geographical areas, scaling electric cooking through reliable power supply, and accelerating rooftop solar beyond its current ~15 GW base. Over the following decade, the system must diversify into a multi-fuel ecosystem. With sustained policy support, such diversification could reduce India's effective dependence on imported LPG by roughly one-third to one-half by 2047 and, more importantly, ensure that most households and institutions are no longer tied to a single fuel.

By 2047, the objective should be clear: ensure that most households and institutions have access to at least one cooking option not tied to imported fuels. The answer is not a return to smoke; it is a transition to choice. Reduce dependence, not just manage supply. Diversify fuels, not exposure. Build resilience into kitchens, not stockpiles.

India has already escaped the smoke trap. It must now step out of the cylinder trap before the next distant conflict once again decides the cost of a daily meal.

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

## WB Election: A People's Manifesto

Goutam Saha, Abhijit Roy, and Emili Kundu

It is an election season for West Bengal. Different political parties were knocking on the doors of us, promising a golden future through their election manifestos. We were reading the manifestos of the all the leading parties. Some of them claim that they have consulted the public while drafting their manifestos. Alongside that, they have added their electoral calculations and a dose of political ideology. However, these manifestos are largely tools of political marketing. These documents fail to become true expressions of the hopes and aspirations of local people. They tend to focus on quick-fix solutions, offering little insight into our long-term, complex problems or pathways to address them. For instance, we did not find in any manifesto a meaningful discussion on our hottest cities, how to prevent local ponds from being filled up, or how to revive rivers dying from pollution and water scarcity.

The severe air pollution that is slowly killing us finds little to no mention, nor are there concrete plans to tackle it. There is hardly any thought on waste management—how to handle it or how it could generate new livelihoods and businesses. With the rapid expansion of construction, the disappearance of green spaces in our towns and cities is alarming, yet there is no alternative vision from any parties to protect them. During campaigns, these documents become one-dimensional scripts, often echoed in speeches by political leaders and the manifestos serve as instruments in the competition for power.

Unfortunately, we ordinary people—busy with the struggles of daily life and livelihood—remain unprepared for this democratic exercise. Yet elections shape many aspects of our lives. Is it not possible for us, instead of endlessly scrolling through trivial social media content, to engage with our neighbours and collectively draft a block-level people's manifesto six months before the elections? Can we not place such a manifesto in the hands of local political candidates? These localized manifestos could be used by all political parties while shaping their own agenda. The problems of our communities—our daily struggles—have no political colour; they are raw, unfiltered realities of life. Teachers, researchers, and students in social sciences could assist in creating data-driven, evidence-based manifestos.

Such documents with their diversity, credibility and truthfulness alone would make them resonate with people across political divides.

The idea of non-party collective organization is not unrealistic. The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), India's largest trade union of women, operates without the patronage of any political party. With 3.7 million members across twenty states, SEWA has worked for over 55 years on livelihoods, economic independence, and social empowerment of marginalized women. Even in 2026, SEWA submitted its charter of demands to the Finance Minister of India. Its role in shaping policies like the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act (2008) and the Street Vendors Act (2014) is undeniable. Similarly, a people's manifesto could act as a bridge between citizens and political leaders—making leaders accountable to the real needs of the people and countering the dominance of emotional, ideological campaign rhetoric. Local manifestos, if they were created across every block in Bengal, much of the bitter political conflict due to SIR implementation, we recently witnessed might subside.

A local manifesto would emerge from conversations with all sections of society—homemakers, youth, elderly citizens, workers, and small business owners—approached with a researcher's perspective. It could bring new ideas, new data, and fresh thinking, making it far more grounded and solution-oriented than conventional political manifestos. Let us cite our experiences from our own locality, for example, treatment for tuberculosis patients may be comparatively good in government hospitals in the town we live, but hygiene and cleanliness remain poor.

A farmer friend, residing in a village 40 kilometres away from our town fears the absence of anti-venom in nearby

health centers. Restoring the local small rivers and waterbodies could both protect the environment and boost tourism. Our neighbourhood Yoga instructor, suggests neighbourhood Yoga centres and interfaith prayer spaces to promote health and communal harmony. It is strange that interfaith faith prayer room is a successful practice in New Delhi airport, which our elder sister does not even know.

A schoolteacher points out that if midday meal management were handled by an independent agency under government supervision, teaching quality could improve. A small business owner emphasizes the need for low-interest loans, environmentally sustainable big industries in every district, and strong law enforcement to revive local economies. A local pharma sales representative is afraid of cutting trees rampantly as he is afraid of heat stroke in summer. These diverse pathways of local manifesto can make our vision of progress more innovative and inclusive. Entrusting all responsibility for our development solely to the state, political parties or large corporations reflects our own limitations.

Beyond them lies a powerful force—the community. Even Chanakya, in his Arthashastra, spoke of self-governed villages within a powerful empire like Maurya empire. Even today, many tribal communities in India practice consensus-based governance through village assemblies. Moving from a purely electoral democracy to a participatory democracy is, therefore, deeply rooted in Indian traditions.

A people's manifesto could be an important step in that direction. We should not forget famous Sanskrit saying Sanghoshakti Kalou Yuge", i.e., unity is the greatest power in Kali Yuga.

## Noise Pollution on Human Health

Narayan Chandra Biswal

The word noise is derived from the Latin word 'Nausea', which means sickness in which one feels the need to vomit. Noise is the unpleasant and undesirable sound which leads to discomfort in human beings. The intensity of sound is measured in decibels (dB). The faintest sound that the human ear can hear is 1 Db. Due to increasing noise around the civilizations, noise pollution has become a matter of concern. Some of its major causes are vehicles, aircraft, industrial machines, loudspeakers, crackers, etc. When used at high volume, some other appliances also contribute to noise pollution, like television, transistor, radio, etc. Types of Noise Pollution, Following are the three types of pollution: Transport Noise, Neighbourhood Noise, Industrial Noise.

Causes and Sources of Noise Pollution Following are the causes and sources of noise pollution: Industrialisation: Industrialisation has led to an increase in noise pollution as the use of heavy machinery such as generators, mills, huge exhaust fans are used, resulting in the production of unwanted noise. Vehicles: Increased number of vehicles on the roads are the second reason for noise pollution. Events: Weddings, public gatherings involve loudspeakers to play music resulting in the production of unwanted noise in the neighbourhood. Construction sites: Mining, construction of buildings, etc add to the noise pollution. Effects of Noise Pollution on Human Health. Noise pollution can be hazardous to human health in the following ways: Hypertension: It is a direct result of noise pollution which is caused due to elevated blood levels for a longer duration. Hearing loss: Constant exposure of human ears to loud noise that are beyond the range of sound that human ears can withstand damages the eardrums, resulting in loss of hearing. Sleeping disorders: Lack of sleep might result in fatigue and low energy level throughout the day affecting everyday activities. Noise pollution hampers the sleep cycles leading to irritation and an uncomfortable state of mind. Cardiovascular issues: Heart-related problems such as blood pressure level, stress and cardiovascular diseases might come up in a normal person and a person suffering from any of these diseases might feel a sudden shoot up in the level.

Prevention of Noise Pollution. Some noise pollution preventive measures are provided in the points below. Honking in public places like teaching institutes, hospitals, etc. should be banned. In commercial, hospital, and industrial buildings, adequate soundproof systems should be installed. Musical instruments' sound should be controlled to desirable limits. Dense tree cover is useful in noise pollution prevention. Explosives should not be used in forest, mountainous and mining areas. Noise pollution was not considered to be a major issue earlier. Its impact was not even this severe few decades back. But due to urbanization the issue of noise pollution is increasing and has now become a major concern. Serious measures need to be taken for the prevention of noise pollution to avoid the adverse effect of it on the lives of human, wildlife and environment.

Audiologist & Speech Pathologist, "Dhwani" Kathagola Road, Mangalabag, Cuttack, Mob. : 9438276760

# Nitin Gadkari Reviews New Highway Project Plans For Maharashtra Leads In Bengal And Assam: State BJP Chiefs Call Period As 'Golden Phase'

New Delhi, 4/5: Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Monday reviewed the proposed new high-speed corridors, high-density corridors and other important national highway projects to be taken up in Maharashtra, officials said. "During the review meeting held in the national capital, the Union Minister discussed several key highway development projects, including six-laning of the Nagpur-Bhandara section, four-laning of the Taloda-Burhanpur section, Durg-Gadchiroli-Mancherial corridor, Gadchiroli-Kanker (Raipur-Visakhapatnam) corridor, Gwalior-Nagpur corridor and Nagpur-Hyderabad corridor," according to an official statement. He also held discussions on six-laning of the Bhandara-Raipur section, Lakhnadon-Durg-Raipur corridor, six-laning of the Nagpur-Amravati section, the



Madhya Pradesh-Maharashtra Border-Nagpur Bypass-Borkhedi stretch on NH-44, and six-laning of the Pune-Satara section. Besides, the review meeting included discussions on nine state build-operate-transfer projects covering a total length of 527 km on National Highway (NH) stretches in Maharashtra. These projects include Shirur-Ahilyanagar (four lane), Ahilyanagar-Wadala (four lane), Wadala-Chhatrapati

Sambhajnagar (four lane), Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar-Jalna (four lane), Jalna-Watur (four line), Nanded-Narsi-Degpur (four lane and two lane), Jam-Warora (four lane), Warora-Chandrapur-Bamni (four lane), and Malkapur-Chikhli (two lane) corridors. The review focused on accelerating project planning and execution to strengthen road connectivity and support economic development in the region, the statement said. India's road network has

expanded at a rapid pace in the last 11 years to become the world's second-largest, with national highways spanning across a length of 1,46,560 km in the country. The union government has constructed 57,125 km of national highways during the last five years with average construction of 34,215 lane-km per year. This leads to average annual employment generation of about 33 crore person-days, including direct and indirect employment, according to figures tabled in Parliament recently. This surge in construction has seen the National Highway network expanding by 61 per cent from 91,287 km in 2014 to 1,46,560 km in 2025, according to figures compiled by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. The length of operational access-controlled high-speed corridors and expressways increased from a mere 93 km in 2014 to 3,052 km at the end of 2025.

New Delhi, 4/5: With trends in West Bengal and Assam pointing to a clear majority for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday, the party's state Presidents termed the period as 'golden phase' across the country. The leaders echoed that the mandate is proof of "people's trust" in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. Speaking to IANS, Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva said, "In Assam, we are going to form the government for the third time. In Puducherry, we are also going to form the government. In Tamil Nadu, we are performing well, and in Kerala, our workers have done good work. I feel that under the leadership of the Prime Minister, this is the Bharatiya Janata Party's golden phase across the entire country." He attributed the party's lead in Bengal to PM Modi's leadership. "BJP's victory in West Bengal is also important for every party worker because the ideology



that was started from the land of Bengal by Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, is getting fulfilled today," he added. Sachdeva asserted that PM Modi is capable of meeting every expectation of the people. Assam BJP President Dilip Saikia termed the lead pointing to the party's victory in the state as "historic". He said: "The trust shown by the people of Assam in the work of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, and the historic mandate they have given, is truly

significant. "On behalf of the party, I thank the people of Assam," he told reporters. Saikia promised that the party will make every possible effort to fulfil the hopes of the people in the next five years. "We will work towards fulfilling each of the promises mentioned in the election manifesto," he added. Bihar BJP President Sanjay Sarangi echoed: "It is a wave of saffron on the land of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. The BJP's lotus has bloomed in Bengal.

# No Words Enough To Describe The Huge Mandate: Manoj Tiwari As BJP Leads In West Bengal Fire Safety A Shared Responsibility: Health Secretary

New Delhi, 3/5: As the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) takes the lead in West Bengal according to trends released by the Election Commission of India (ECI), party MP Manoj Tiwari said on Monday that words are not enough to describe the scale of the mandate, calling it "far beyond expression". Speaking to IANS, Tiwari said, "Words are not enough to describe this mandate. This is a mandate far beyond words. I thank mothers, sisters, daughters, children, and every citizen of West Bengal." Referring to early trends, he added that the BJP was leading in more than 195 seats, expressing confidence that the party's vision for the state would now be realised. "The dream of saving Bengal will come true. Today, West Bengal has been saved. The way the Trinamool



Congress supported illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators, the people have made it clear that such politics will not work here," the BJP MP said. Tiwari also praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for earning public trust. "I want to thank PM Modi for building this confidence. Mamata Didi violated that trust, but PM

Modi has restored it. In Assam, we (BJP) are coming to power for the third time. Prime Minister Modi is fully dedicated to the people," he said. Highlighting symbolic gestures, he added, "You must have seen how PM Modi connected with a small 'jhalhuri' vendor. It reflects the emotions of small business owners who stand with him.

New Delhi, 4/5: Emphasising that ensuring safety within institutions is a shared and collective responsibility, Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava on Monday inaugurated the nationwide observance of Fire Safety Week, aimed at strengthening preparedness and prevention systems across healthcare facilities. The week-long campaign, being held from May 4 to May 10, has been launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in partnership with all States and Union Territories and in coordination with other central ministries and departments. The initiative began with a nationwide pledge ceremony centred on the theme "Fire Safety in Health Facilities". Addressing the occasion, Srivastava said this year's broader theme — "Safe Schools, Safe Hospitals, and a Fire-Safety Aware Society:



Together for Fire Prevention" — highlighted the need for collective accountability in ensuring safety standards. "Fire safety week provides an important opportunity to reassess existing infrastructure, evaluate whether facilities have been adequately audited and identify gaps and discrepancies that need to be addressed," Srivastava added. Emphasising capacity building, she stressed that healthcare professionals must be

adequately trained and sensitized to effectively respond to fire emergencies. She further urged all States and healthcare facilities to regularly upload fire safety audit details on the IHIP portal, noting that such practices would institutionalise compliance and serve as a continuous reminder for maintaining safety standards. Highlighting progress, she said over 50,000 participants have already completed fire safety

training through the iGOT platform, including several government institutions, and called for scaling up such efforts. "Through Jan Bhagidari (people's participation), a meaningful and sustained impact can be achieved in strengthening fire safety across the country," she added. Echoing similar concerns, Krishna S. Vatsa, Member and Head at the National Disaster Management Authority, emphasised the need for a proactive, systems-based approach to fire safety in hospitals. "The authority plans to organise five regional programmes along with initiatives at state and district levels to enhance preparedness and capacity building," he noted. Speaking at the event, Sunil Kumar Jha, Director General (Fire Services), highlighted that hospitals are highly sensitive environments where even minor lapses can have severe consequences.

# Delhi CM Rekha Gupta's 'Jhalmuri-Rasgulla Party As BJP Inches Closer To Victory In Bengal Left Staring At Loss Of Last State, To Be Out Of Power After 50 Years

New Delhi, 4/5: 'Jhalmuri', a Bengali snack popularised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the West Bengal election campaign, was the flavour of the celebrations in Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta's office on Monday as the BJP registered an emphatic win in the eastern state. Chief Minister Gupta and her Cabinet colleagues ate 'Jhalmuri' and 'Rasgulla' in the Delhi Secretariat to celebrate the BJP's win in the West Bengal Assembly elections. In a celebratory message on X, CM Gupta said, "Under the leadership of the esteemed Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji, every state in the country is turning saffron. With Assam's hat-trick victory BJP government has also come to power in Bengal. Heartiest congratulations on the resounding victory! Celebrating the win, with 'jhalmuri' and



'rasgulla'. "Earlier, Chief Minister Gupta joined star BJP campaigners in wooing voters in Bengal and campaigned enthusiastically for the two-phase elections in the 294 seats whose results were declared on Monday, bringing the party to power in the state for the first time. While campaigning for BJP candidates

in Kharagpur and Durgapur, among other areas, she highlighted the terror-based rule of the Trinamool government headed by Mamata Banerjee. She visited a tea stall and interacted with its women owner in Durgapur and even hit out at suspected TMC workers who allegedly switched off streetlights during her

roadshow in Kolkata in an attempt to disrupt the event. In one of her election speeches earlier, she said, "Every resident of Bengal who has endured 15 years of politics marked by fear and intimidation is now determined for change." "The sense of oppression has only increased over time, but today people appear to have firmly made up their minds. This time, they are ready to bring a government of the Lotus symbol in Bengal. After the results on May 4, it will feel like a sunrise where everyone is respected," she said. The Delhi Chief Minister also criticised the Trinamool Congress administration, alleging that West Bengal has been in a difficult situation for several years. She raised concerns about the safety of women, claiming that there is an atmosphere of fear.

New Delhi, 4/5: India's Left parties, once a powerful force in national and regional politics, are now confronting the possibility of being out of power across all states for the first time in more than five decades. To understand the magnitude of this moment, it helps to revisit the past. In 1996, veteran CPI-M leader Jyoti Basu, who had already served as Chief Minister of West Bengal for two decades, came close to becoming Prime Minister as part of the United Front coalition. Although Basu was willing to accept the role, his party's Politburo declined the proposal, a decision he later famously termed a "historic blunder". By 2008, the Left still held significant sway at the national level. The Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government, headed by Manmohan Singh, depended on Left support in Parliament. However, the alliance fractured

when Left parties withdrew backing over the Indo-US nuclear agreement, forcing the government to prove its majority in a crucial trust vote. At the time, Left parties governed three states — West Bengal, Kerala, and Tripura — and had a sizable presence in the Lok Sabha. Fast forward to the present, and the political landscape has shifted dramatically. With voter preferences increasingly leaning toward right-of-centre parties, the influence of Communist parties has steadily diminished. Current trends in Kerala suggest that the Left Democratic Front (LDF), led by Pinarayi Vijayan, may lose power. If confirmed, this would mark the first instance since around 1970 that no Left party holds office in any Indian state. The history of Left politics in India, however, is both rich and significant. In the country's first general elections in 1951-52, the

Communist Party of India emerged as the largest opposition group in Parliament. Just a few years later, in 1957, Kerala witnessed a landmark event when a Communist government was democratically elected, the first such occurrence anywhere in the world. The late 1970s marked another high point. In 1977, the CPI-M established its dominance in West Bengal, initiating what would become the longest uninterrupted tenure by any political party in an Indian state. Under Jyoti Basu's leadership, the Left Front governed the state for over two decades, with Basu himself serving as Chief Minister for 23 years before handing over to Buddhadeb Bhattacharya in 2000. The Left retained control in the state until 2011. Tripura, too, emerged as a stronghold. Beginning in 1993, the Left Front secured repeated electoral victories.

# First Time BJP Govt Will Be Formed In Shyama Prasad's Birthplace': BJP On Bengal Lead

New Delhi, 4/5: As the trends, issued by the Election Commission of India, showed the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) lead in West Bengal on Monday, senior party leaders predicted that it will be the first time that the party will form a government in the state, which is the birthplace of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh's founder, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. Notably, the BJP is a political successor of the Bhartiya

Jana Sangh. BJP MP Vinod Tawde said, "BJP's victory in Bengal is crucial for the country's security." He asserted that regime change in Bengal will lead to certain changes in the country. "There will be no place for appeasement politics. People of West Bengal have said that one cannot win with fake promises," he told IANS. According to Tawde, for the past many years, no election was conducted in West Bengal without



any murder. "But that has been made possible this time. I think the entire country is happy about this thing," he said. "Now, with Assam, Bengal and Puducherry, the BJP will have a government in 25 states. This is a good step towards 'Viksit Bharat 2027'," he mentioned. BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh said that the NDA has been blessed by the citizens. "This mandate of the people is for PM Modi so that he

can keep working for the poor and take India to greater heights. 'Maa, Manush and Mati' have wholeheartedly blessed PM Modi," he told IANS. He added: "It is because all three, 'Maa, Manush and Mati' were left sobbing during Mamata Banerjee's reign. The land (Mati) was red with the blood of its children. The people (Manush) were suffering atrocities." Chugh asserted that the mandate in West Bengal, Assam and Pondicherry

proves that the entire nation stands with PM Modi. "It is a reply to those governments functioning with cruelty. The country will function according to the Constitution and not based on a 'Jihadi' mindset," he said. Referring to the Congress trailing in West Bengal, Assam and Pondicherry, Chugh further said, "The results are proof that Lok Sabha Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi is going to lose the next 100 elections as well."

## MEA Monitoring Developments In West Asia, Efforts Focused On Ensuring Safety Of Indians

New Delhi, 4/5: Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Monday that it is monitoring the developments in West Asia and their efforts are focused on ensuring the safety and welfare of the Indian community in the region. While addressing an inter-ministerial briefing on recent developments in West Asia on Monday, Aseem R Mahajan, Additional Secretary (Gulf), MEA, stated that Indian embassies and consulates are operating round the clock helplines to provide assistance to people. He stated that Indian missions abroad are engaged with the resident Indian community to address their concerns. "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. They are proactively assisting our citizens. They are also in close touch with the local governments," said Secretary Mahajan. "Updated advisories are being issued including information related to local government guidelines, flight and travel situation, consular services and the various welfare measures

being undertaken for the community. Our missions are actively engaged with the resident Indian community. They are regularly interacting with the Indian community associations, organizations, professional groups and Indian companies to address their concerns. Welfare of the Indian seafarers in the region is of high priority for us. Our missions are extending all assistance to them including coordination with the local authorities and agencies, extending consular assistance

and assisting for requests to return to India," he added. Additional Secretary Mahajan also mentioned that the flight situation in Gulf is improving with additional flights operating from various destinations to India. He noted that Indian nationals have been advised to avoid travelling to Iran and urged those living there to leave from there with Embassy's support. "The overall flight situation continues to improve with additional flights operating from the region to various destinations in India. UAE airspace is open. Indian and UAE carriers are operating flights from UAE to various destinations in India. Flights are operating from various airports in Saudi Arabia and Oman to different destinations in India. Qatar airspace is partially open. Air India, Air India Express, Indigo and Qatar Airways are operating flights from Qatar to various destinations in India. Kuwait airspace is open. Jazeera

Airways and Kuwait Airways are operating flights from Kuwait to India." "Bahrain airspace is open. Air India Express, Indigo and Gulf Air are operating flights from Bahrain to various destinations in India. Iraq airspace is open and limited flight operations to destinations in the region are available which can be used for onward travel to India. Iran airspace is partially open for cargo and chartered flights. We have advised Indian nationals to avoid travelling to Iran and urged those already there to leave with our embassy's support. So far, our embassy in Tehran has facilitated movement of 2504 Indian nationals out of Iran through land, water routes. Israel airspace is open and limited flight operations have resumed to destinations in the region which can be used for onward travel to India," he added. Iran and the US reached a two-week ceasefire starting on April 8. Later, the two nations held the first round of talks on April 11-12 aimed at ending the conflict. However, the talks collapsed after 21 hours of negotiations.

## IRGC Claims To Hit US Navy Frigate After Ignoring Iran's Warning

Tehran: The Navy of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) on Monday claimed that it hit a US Navy frigate with two missiles that sought to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, the semi-official Fars news agency reported. The US frigate, which had set sail near Iran's southern port city of Jask to cross the Strait of Hormuz "in violation of the traffic and shipping security," was hit after ignoring the Iranian naval forces' warning, Fars cited local sources as saying. It added that after being struck, the frigate was forced to retreat and flee from the region. However, according to a subsequent report by Axios, a senior US official denied that a US ship was hit by Iranian missiles. Xinhua news agency reported. Iran has repeatedly announced that no movement is possible through the Strait of Hormuz without its official permission, and ignoring this warning will be met with a decisive



response from the Iranian armed forces, according to Fars. US President Donald Trump said Sunday the United States will guide ships stranded in the Strait of Hormuz safely out of the restricted waterway on Monday. In response to Trump's claim, Iran's main military command, Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, warned on Monday that "any foreign armed forces, especially the aggressive US army, will be attacked if they intend to approach and enter the Strait of Hormuz," according to the official news agency IRNA. Iran tightened its grip on the Strait of Hormuz beginning February 28, when it barred safe passage to vessels belonging to or affiliated with Israel and the United States following joint strikes on Iranian territory. The United States imposed its anti-Iran blockade on the Strait of Hormuz after post-ceasefire negotiations with Tehran on April 11 and 12 failed to lead to an agreement.

## Ukrainian Drones Could Fly Over Moscow On May 9: Zelensky

Yerevan, 4/5: Citing that the May 9 Victory Day parade in Moscow could be held without any military equipment this time around, Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky on Monday claimed that Russia is steadily weakening. "If that happens, it will be the first time in many, many years. They cannot afford military equipment – and they fear drones may buzz over Red Square," Zelensky posted on X. Speaking at the 8th European Political Community Summit in Yerevan, Zelensky said that Russian President Vladimir Putin will decide what to do next this summer – "expand the war or move to diplomacy. And we must push him toward diplomacy." He said Russia is not strong now and the pressure should be kept through sanctions. Urging the members to oppose the idea of easing sanctions, he called the move important and thanked all those who are fighting against Russia's "shadow oil fleet". He also commented about the conflict in the Middle East, stating that the war in Iran remains



unresolved and it could cause instability for a long time. Zelensky added that the prolonged war in Iran may raise the cost of living in all countries this year "and this could lead to major political shifts." He highlighted that the energy and security cooperation between the European nations needs to be "real cooperation" and they need to help each other prepare

for winter while dealing with energy challenges. The Ukrainian President also asked for a push towards a long-term solution for the Strait of Hormuz and for the people of Iran. "I believe Europe should be able to produce everything it needs to defend against everything – all the ballistic attacks and all other weapons – on its own," Zelensky said

highlighting that Ukraine offers a contribution to Europe's defence, including their drone deals. "Drone Deals mean joint work, joint production, shared protection. Let's move forward on this." He emphasised that the European countries need strong protection across the continent – from drones and all other potential attacks in the air, at sea, and on land.

## Australia's Bondi Terror Attack Inquiry Begins First Block Of Public Hearings

Sydney, 4/5: A landmark antisemitism inquiry established in the wake of the fatal terror attack at Sydney's Bondi Beach started its first block of public hearings on Monday. The first block of hearings, which is held by the Royal Commission on Antisemitism and Social Cohesion, will continue until Friday in Sydney. Commissioner Virginia Bell, a former High Court judge, will preside over the first block of hearings, which will examine the nature and prevalence of antisemitism in Australia and hear from a number of witnesses about their lived experience of antisemitism, Xinhua news agency reported. The circumstances surrounding the Bondi attack will be probed during the second hearing block slated for the end of May, while the third block is set to explore the radicalisation that may be generated through online hate and antisemitism on social media. Bell last week handed down the commission's interim report, which made 14 recommendations, five of which



were not released publicly for national security reasons. The report said that federal, state and territory governments should prioritise efforts to implement consistent firearms laws and a gun buyback scheme to remove surplus and illegal guns from the community. The inquiry was established by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in January after 15 people were killed in a fatal mass shooting that targeted a Hanukkah event at Bondi Beach on December 14,

2025. Alleged gunman Naveed Akram has been charged with murder and terrorism offences over the attack, which authorities claim was motivated by Islamic State ideology. His father and fellow alleged perpetrator, Sajid Akram, was shot dead at the scene. The royal commission will not examine the intention and motivation behind the attack to avoid influencing criminal proceedings. It will hand down its final report by the first anniversary of the attack.

## Hantavirus Outbreak: 3 Dead, 1 Critical As WHO Monitoring Situation

Geneva, 4/5: Three people have died following a suspected Hantavirus outbreak aboard a cruise ship on the Atlantic Ocean, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Monday. The MV Hondius ship, travelling from Argentina to Cape Verde with 150 or so passengers, recorded one confirmed and five suspected cases of the rare but dangerous disease. The WHO said it was monitoring and supporting the public health incident aboard a cruise vessel sailing in the Atlantic Ocean, where a hantavirus outbreak has been confirmed, resulting in three deaths and multiple suspected infections. In a post on X, WHO stated: "WHO is aware of and supporting a public health event involving a cruise vessel sailing in the Atlantic Ocean. To date, one case of hantavirus infection has been laboratory confirmed, and there are five additional suspected cases. Of the six affected individuals, three have died and one is currently in intensive care in South Africa." The organisation added that investigations are ongoing and medical support is

being provided to those affected. "Detailed investigations are ongoing, including further laboratory testing, and epidemiological investigations. Medical care and support are being provided to passengers and crew. Sequencing of the virus is also ongoing." WHO said. Hantavirus is typically transmitted to humans from rodents through contact with their urine or faeces. It can cause severe respiratory illness and, in rare cases, can spread between humans. The disease is considered serious and requires close medical monitoring and supportive care. The outbreak has been reported aboard the MV Hondius, a polar cruise ship operated by tour company Oceanwide Expeditions. According to its published itinerary, the vessel departed Ushuaia in southern Argentina on 20 March and was expected to complete its voyage in Cape Verde on 4 May. The ship is a 107.6-metre (353 ft) expedition cruise vessel designed to carry up to 170 passengers in 80 cabins, along with 57 crew members, 13 guides, and

one onboard doctor. Among the affected is a 69-year-old British national who is currently in intensive care in Johannesburg, South Africa. Authorities have confirmed that one case is laboratory-confirmed, while five others remain under investigation as suspected infections. WHO further noted that it is coordinating with member states and the ship's operators to arrange medical evacuation for two symptomatic passengers and to conduct a full public health risk assessment for those still onboard. "WHO is facilitating coordination between Member States and the Ship's operators for medical evacuation of two symptomatic passengers, as well as full public health risk assessment and support to the remaining passengers on board. WHO is grateful for the rapid actions and coordination," the organization said. The agency has informed national focal points under the International Health Regulations and said a Disease Outbreak News report will be issued for public dissemination.

## Pakistan: Court Once Again Rejects Petitions Of Imran Khan, Wife Bushra Bibi

Islamabad, 4/5: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday rejected the petitions of former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi requesting the suspension of their sentences in the ₹190 million corruption case. The court stated that their main appeals were already fixed for hearing, local media reported on Monday. Asserting that a two-member bench headed by Chief Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar will hear the central appeals on May 7, the court termed the suspension applications infructuous, Pakistan's leading daily Dawn reported. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, who has remained incarcerated since August 2023 for hiding details of Toshakhana gifts, is serving a 14-year sentence at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail in the ₹190m case, also known as the Al-Qadir Trust case. In 2025, an accountability court in Islamabad sentenced Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi to 14 and seven years in prison,

respectively, in the case. The couple has challenged their convictions before the Islamabad High Court. The case alleges that Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi received billions of rupees and land worth hundreds of kanals from Bahria Town Ltd to legalise Pakistani Rupees (PKR) 50 billion identified and returned to the country by the United Kingdom during the PTI-led government. Last week, the PTI condemned the detention of Imran Khan, which has completed 1,000 days, terming it a blatant act of political victimisation, total denial of constitutional and legal justification and called for his immediate release, according to a report. In a statement, PTI Central Information Secretary Waqas Akram said PTI founder Imran Khan is being subjected to political victimisation as the current government, afraid of his popularity and independent stance, is trying to sideline him, the UAE's Gulf Today reported. Akram stated that Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi,

were being subjected to inhumane treatment. He alleged that the PTI founder is being held in solitary confinement, while his family, lawyers, and party leadership were not allowed to meet him, which amounts to a clear violation of fundamental human and legal rights. Earlier in March, Imran Khan's son, Kasim Khan, termed his father's detention "arbitrary" and raised serious concerns over treatment by the Pakistani authorities, which he said breaches international human rights conventions. During the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) session in Geneva, Kasim Khan said that Imran Khan's case was not an "isolated incident" but was the "most visible example" of a much wider pattern of repression in Pakistan since 2022. He spoke about the detention of political prisoners, trial and conviction of civilians by military courts, and journalists being "silenced, abducted or driven into exile," Pakistan daily Dawn reported. Kasim Khan, who said

that his father was being held in solitary confinement, also spoke about the general elections held in Pakistan in February 2024, reiterating PTI's allegations that polls were rigged. He said that Pakistan had made commitments under the GSP-plus framework to uphold international human rights conventions, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations Convention against Torture. He said that Imran Khan is not allowed to meet his family and is being denied medical care. He also highlighted that the trial of civilians in military courts violated treaty obligations, Dawn reported. "My brother and I are not political people. We never wanted to come before bodies like this. [But] my father's life demands that we take action. We cannot stand by as his health deteriorates and he is kept away from us. If the situation were reversed, we know he would not stop fighting until we were free. That is the very least we can do for him," he added.

## Sensex, Nifty End Higher Amid Election Results Volatility

Mumbai, 4/5: Indian equity benchmarks ended higher on Monday but pared early gains to close off the day's highs, as weakness in IT and banking stocks weighed on sentiment amid volatility linked to ongoing election results. The Sensex rose 356 points, or 0.46 per cent, to settle at 77,269.40, while the Nifty gained 121.75 points, or 0.51 per cent, to close at 24,119.30. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, experts said that from a derivatives perspective, the structure remains clearly defined. "Strong put writing at the 24,000 and 23,800 levels indicates firm near-term support, while heavy call writing at 24,200-24,300 continues to cap the upside," an analyst stated. Adani Ports led the gainer pack on Sensex followed by Hindustan Unilever, Eternal and Maruti Suzuki India. On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, Kotak



Mahindra Bank, TCS, IndiGO, ITC and Infosys were among the top losers on the same index. Broader markets outperformed the frontline indices, with the Nifty MidCap and Nifty SmallCap indices rising 0.63 per cent and 0.70 per cent, respectively. On the sectoral front,

realty and metal stocks led the gains, while IT and PSU banking stocks lagged behind, capping the upside in benchmark indices. Meanwhile, global cues remained mixed as oil prices saw a sharp decline during the session. Brent crude dropped as much as 2.45 per cent after US

President Donald Trump announced 'Operation Freedom', aimed at ensuring safe passage for stranded ships in the Strait of Hormuz. The May contract of Brent crude was last seen trading 0.39 per cent lower at \$107.75 per barrel on the Intercontinental Exchange. Analysts said markets may continue to remain volatile in the near term as investors react to evolving political developments and global macroeconomic cues. "Going forward, the market is likely to remain range-bound with a buy on dips, sell on rise approach dominating in the near term," a market expert mentioned. "Investor sentiment remained supported by a favourable election outcome in West Bengal and a better-than-expected Q4 earnings, helping markets look past Middle East-related concerns," as per the analyst.

## Piyush Goyal Holds Talks With Japanese Leaders To Bolster Economic Ties

New Delhi, 4/5: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Monday held talks with a Japanese delegation to strengthen bilateral trade and investment relations. "Met the delegation led by Mr Takayuki Kobayashi, Member of the House of Representatives and Chairperson of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) Policy Research Council, Japan," Goyal said in a post on X. "Discussed strengthening India-Japan economic engagement, enhancing MSME partnerships, and deepening collaboration in key sectors like automobiles, infrastructure, pharmaceuticals, and advanced manufacturing," he added. Goyal also highlighted the need to boost exports from India and improve market access. He reaffirmed India's commitment to further strengthening the business ecosystem, while exploring future pathways under CEPA and broader Indo-Pacific economic cooperation frameworks. As global supply chains realign and businesses look at setting up facilities outside China, India has emerged as a long-term strategic investment destination, with competitive export potential for Japan's mid-sized companies to partner with Indian MSMEs



(micro, small, and medium enterprises) to drive growth. The India-Japan Joint Vision for the Next Decade, adopted during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Tokyo in August 2025, encourages cooperation among SMEs (small and medium enterprises) by fostering visits by Japanese SMEs to India and by expanding downstream industries. Japan aims to help its companies view India as a production base, considering its export-focused policies and its

extensive trade agreement network. Several new sectors have been identified where cooperation between the two countries could accelerate in the coming decade. Semiconductors and electronics are among the most promising areas. Japan's strengths in upstream semiconductor technologies align with India's rapidly expanding electronics market and strong government policy support. India's large domestic market acts as a buffer against global market volatility and provides a solid base

for sustained business growth. Furthermore, its strategic geopolitical positioning further enhances its appeal for targeting markets in the Middle East and in Africa. Japanese firms that establish manufacturing units in India can capitalise on these global connections to expand their international footprint. Besides, India's current and upcoming free trade agreements and bilateral partnerships with major global economies have opened new markets amid global uncertainties.

## Hyundai, Kia's US Sales Drop On Base Effect

Seoul, 4/5: Sales of Hyundai Motor and Kia vehicles in the United States fell slightly from a year earlier, while numbers for hybrid vehicles rose to a new monthly high, the automaker said on Monday. The South Korean automakers sold a combined 159,216 vehicles in the key American market in April, down 2.1 per cent on-year, according to the companies. Hyundai Motor sold 86,513 units, down 1.5 per cent from the previous year, reports Yonhap news agency. Its luxury vehicle brand Genesis sold 6,356 units, up 0.8 per cent on-year. Kia's sales declined by 2.8 per cent from the previous year to 72,703 units. The overall sales decline was due to a base effect from a sales surge last year, as customers rushed to purchase cars ahead of the imposition of Washington's auto tariffs, according to the company. Sales of eco-friendly cars, including electric vehicles (EVs), however, rose 47.6 per cent on-year to 48,425 units. Demand for hybrid cars also grew by the sharpest 57.8 per cent on-year, affected by the U.S. government's decision to terminate EV tax credits. EV sales rose slightly by 7.7 per cent to



7,186 units, according to the carmakers. Meanwhile, online shopping sales in South Korea rose 13.3 per cent from a year earlier to a new monthly high in March, driven by strong demand for Tesla vehicles and transactions in food services, government data showed on Monday. The value of online shopping stood at 25.58 trillion won (US\$17.37 billion) in March, up 3.03 trillion won from a year earlier, according to the data from the Ministry of Data and Statistics. The figure marked the highest monthly level since 2017,

when the ministry began compiling related data. Spending on automobiles and auto accessories surged 109.9 per cent from a year earlier, supported by Tesla models sold through online ordering systems. Sales of food services climbed 14.2 per cent from a year earlier, while that of food and beverages jumped 13.3 per cent on-year, the latest findings showed. Purchases made through smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices rose 11.6 per cent from a year earlier to 19.4 trillion won, also setting a new record.

## RBI, IRDAI Not In Favour Of Banks, Insurers' Entry Into Commodity Derivatives: SEBI Chief

Mumbai, 4/5: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) are not in favour of allowing banks and insurance companies to participate in the commodity derivatives market, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) Chairman Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Monday. Speaking on the sidelines of the IMC Capital Markets Conference at the NSE, Pandey said both regulators have a "valid rationale" behind their stance and are not favourably inclined towards the segment at present. He noted that insurance, in particular, is a long-term business, and there are concerns about how commodity derivatives would align with such investment horizons. "SEBI did not receive a positive response from the banking and insurance regulators during its engagements due to certain concerns surrounding the segment," Pandey added. "Algorithms may move faster than human controls, and digital platforms can become channels for fraud," he said, adding that next-generation AI



tools, while useful for identifying weaknesses, can also exploit vulnerabilities at scale and speed. On the progress of CKYC 2.0, aimed at enabling a unified KYC system across the financial sector, Pandey said the initiative is currently under development. The Central Registry of Securitisation Asset Reconstruction and Security Interest (CERSAI) is leading the effort, with inputs from various regulators. SEBI recently held discussions with CERSAI to identify key issues that need to be addressed and expressed hope that a framework for CKYC 2.0

could be ready by the end of July. Meanwhile, last month, speaking at the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings during an interaction organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the US-India Business Council, Pandey said that India's capital markets are increasingly being recognised as a stable, resilient and globally competitive destination for long-term investments. "Indian markets have evolved into a structural pillar of the financial system, backed by strong macroeconomic fundamentals and a steadily expanding investor base," he said on April 17.

## India Real Estate Transaction Volume Touched \$1.7 Billion In Q1 2026

New Delhi, 4/5: India's real estate investment market sustained exceptional momentum into 2026, with transaction volumes in Q1 CY2026 reaching \$1.7 billion, up 37 per cent year on year, a report said on Monday. The report from JLL said the quarter saw a structural shift toward core asset acquisitions, which surged 178 per cent to \$1.03 billion. The trend has accelerated into Q2, with core asset deals already totalling \$1.48 billion, signalling sustained confidence in stable, income-generating properties. It reflects a fundamental shift toward stable, income-generating properties, while the office sector's dominance underscores strong operational fundamentals, said Lata Pillai, Senior Managing Director & Head of Capital Markets, JLL India. Deal momentum remains strong as cross-border investors successfully close transactions. India's structural evolution positions us well to sustain this growth trajectory through 2026," Pillai said, adding that India's investment market continues to demonstrate remarkable resilience



amid global headwinds. The real estate sector achieved exceptional growth during 2024 and 2025, which emerged as record-breaking years for institutional capital inflows. Collectively, these two years saw institutional capital flow of \$19.4 billion, marking a historic milestone for the industry. The Indian real estate investment market has experienced a pivotal shift, as domestic institutional investors secured a dominant 52 per cent market share in 2025. This milestone represents the first instance of domestic capital leading the sector since 2014, marking a decisive departure from the 2015-2024 decade when foreign institutional investors-

maintained market dominance. Domestic resilience has been instrumental in offsetting reduced cross-border capital flows, as foreign institutional investors adopted a more cautious stance amid persistent geopolitical risks, the report noted. Local institutional investors comprised 72 per cent of total investment volume in Q1 2026. Indian REITs and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs), emerged as pivotal drivers of the domestic capital surge, collectively deploying \$2.8 billion, or 47 per cent of total domestic institutional capital.

## Gold And Silver Prices Slide As Trump Signals Easing US-Iran Tensions

Mumbai, 4/5: Gold and silver prices declined up to 1 per cent on Monday amid signs of easing geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran, following remarks by US President Donald Trump. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold contracts for June 5 opened at Rs 1,51,150, down Rs 382 or 0.25 per cent from the previous close of Rs 1,51,532. At around 11.30 a.m., gold was trading at Rs 1,50,623, lower by Rs 729 or 0.48 per cent. The yellow metal touched an intraday low of Rs 1,50,400, a decline of 0.62 per cent or Rs 952, and an intraday high of Rs 1,51,347. On the other hand, silver contracts for July 3 opened at Rs 2,50,699, down Rs 238 or 0.09 per cent compared to the previous close of Rs 2,50,937. The white metal was trading at Rs 2,49,600, down Rs 1,337 or 0.53 per cent. So far in the session, silver futures hit a low of Rs 2,49,600, a decrease of 1.05 per cent or Rs 2,599, and a high of Rs 2,51,231. Meanwhile, in the international market, both precious metals remained under



pressure. COMEX gold was down 0.55 per cent at \$4,619 per ounce, while silver declined 0.48 per cent to \$76.065 per ounce. A commodity market expert said gold prices extended last week's decline, hovering near one-month lows, as a stronger dollar and elevated crude oil prices weighed on sentiment. The expert further noted that while easing US-Iran

tensions reduced some safe-haven demand, supply risks in the Strait of Hormuz continued to fuel inflation concerns, prompting a cautiously hawkish stance from major central banks, which also weighed on bullion. US President Donald Trump said the United States would initiate efforts to help vessels stranded in the Strait of Hormuz, describing the move

as a humanitarian gesture aimed at assisting neutral countries not involved in the ongoing US-Iran conflict. According to Trump, Washington would launch 'Project Freedom' to guide the stranded ships and their crews safely through the route. However, he warned that Iran would face a strong response if any threat emerged.



## "More power to you for next chapter!": Tiger Shroff congratulates Vijay as Tamil Nadu trends show strong gains

As TVK chief Vijay continues to emerge as a strong force in Tamil Nadu during the ongoing vote counting on Monday, actor Tiger Shroff has congratulated Vijay as trends showed his party gaining strong ground in the state. Sharing his thoughts, the actor praised the trust people have shown in Vijay and wished him well for his political journey. He wrote, "Congratulations to @actorvijay The faith people have in you is amazing to see. More power to you for this next chapter!" Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), led by Vijay, is currently contesting the elections on its own and has made a strong mark. Earlier in the day, TVK workers were seen celebrating across Tamil Nadu, dancing to Vijay's popular 'whistle podu' song and cheering for their leader. Enthusiastic party workers and supporters gathered in large numbers outside the party office in Chennai, waving flags and distributing sweets to celebrate the party's performance. Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) chief Vijay is leading in the Tiruchirappalli East Assembly constituency at the end of the first round of counting by a margin of 6499 votes, following the counting of votes for the Tamil Nadu assembly elections began on Monday. His main rival, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) candidate Inigo Irudayaraj, is trailing behind in the initial round, according to early counting trends. Vijay's entry into politics has changed the political scene in the state, making the contest more competitive. Tamil Nadu politics has mostly been led by two major alliances, the DMK-led alliance, which is trying to stay in power, and the AIADMK-led NDA alliance, which includes the BJP. The counting of votes is still underway, and the final results are yet to be officially announced by the Election Commission.

## Shakira makes history at Copacabana: 2 million fans gather for free Rio Concert

Rio de Janeiro, : The world-famous Copacabana Beach transformed into a musical spectacle on Saturday night as global superstar Shakira performed a free concert that drew nearly 2 million fans. The performance, part of her Las Mujeres Ya No Lloran world tour, turned one of the planet's most iconic beaches into a sea of cheering spectators. Fans began arriving early in the day, staking out prime spots along the sprawling coastline. By nightfall, every inch of the beach buzzed with excitement, as people waved flags, sang along, and awaited the Colombian singer's arrival. Shakira took the stage around 11 p.m., slightly behind schedule, to a thunderous welcome. Drones lit up the sky with a giant message: "I love you Brazil." The singer, reflecting on her deep connection with the country, told the crowd, "I arrived here when I was 18 years old, dreaming about singing for you. And now look at this. Life is magical." The concert featured many of her global hits, including "Hips Don't Lie," "La Tortura," and "La Bicicleta." The show closed with "BZRP Music Sessions #53/66," a song that has resonated widely in recent months following personal life changes. Rio's mayor, Eduardo Cavaliere, took to X (formerly Twitter) to call the event historic, stating that "The She-Wolf made history in Rio", referencing Shakira's 2009 hit. Fans shared emotional stories of growing up listening to her music, describing the concert as a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The event also had a significant impact on the city's economy. Local vendors sold food, drinks, and merchandise, while hotels and restaurants reported a surge in visitors. City officials highlighted that such large-scale concerts not only entertain but also drive tourism and business, benefiting Rio's community as a whole.



## SPORTS

### Indian Chess Prodigy Apaar Saxena Becomes International Master After Remarkable Five-Week Surge

New Delhi, 4/5: Fourteen-year-old Indian prodigy Apaar Saxena has earned the prestigious International Master (IM) title after a remarkable run of performances across Europe, achieving all three required norms in just five weeks. Born in 2012, the young talent from Bengaluru made his mark on the international circuit with a dominant showing at the IM Renome 2 tournament in Bosnia on March 30, where he scored 7/9 to clinch the title and secure his maiden IM norm. He quickly followed it up with another impressive outing at the San Vicente Open in Spain on April 6, once again scoring 7/9 in a highly competitive field featuring over 500 players from 54 countries. Saxena sealed his second norm with two rounds to spare, underlining his consistency and composure. His strong run continued at the Menorca Open later in April, where he posted a performance rating of 2404 and earned significant rating points, narrowly missing a third consecutive norm despite remaining in contention. The decisive breakthrough came at the IM Putnik 114



tournament in Serbia on May 3, where Saxena delivered yet another 7/9 performance, securing his final norm and officially attaining the IM title. During the event, he also surpassed a live rating of 2450, marking a rapid rise from his previous rating of 2185 to an official rating of 2362 as of May 1. Achieving all norms and rating requirements within such a short timeframe highlights an extraordinary surge in form and places Saxena among the most exciting young talents in

Indian chess. "His development has been strongly supported by his school Silicon City Academy of Secondary Education, Bangalore, with encouragement from Principal Sumalini Mam and School Coordinator Shenoy Mam. Apaar did not have any personal coach in the last two years. Prior to that, his coach was Jayaram Ramana. He was taking some courses assistance from different academies like Killer Chess Training and Yuri Vovk courses," Apaar's father,

Prashant, told ChessBase India. Saxena's father has played a key role in overseeing his training, preparation and tournament planning, while his mother, Ruchi Saxena, has been a constant source of support throughout his journey. With this achievement, Saxena adds another milestone to India's growing reputation as a powerhouse in world chess, and his rapid progress suggests even bigger accomplishments may lie ahead

### Madrid Open: Sinner Crushes Zverev To Script Historic Fifth Straight Masters 1000 Title

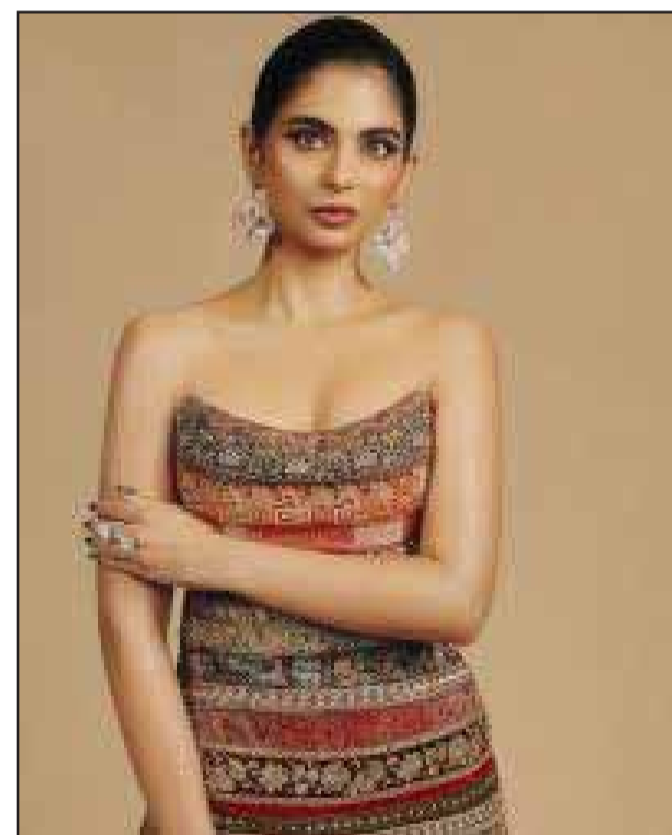
Madrid, 4/5: World No. 1 Jannik Sinner delivered a commanding performance to defeat Alexander Zverev and clinch the men's singles title at the Mutua Madrid Open, creating history with a fifth consecutive ATP Masters 1000 triumph. The Italian needed just 58 minutes to seal a one-sided 6-1, 6-2 victory, extending his remarkable run at the elite level. With the win, Sinner became the first player since the series began in 1990 to capture five straight Masters 1000 titles, underlining his dominance across surfaces. Sinner dictated play from the outset, breaking early and never allowing Zverev to settle into rhythm. He converted

all four break points he earned while not facing a single break point on his own serve. His efficiency on first serves was striking, winning 93 per cent of those points, as he controlled rallies with precision from the baseline. "I started the match very well, breaking straightaway. He was not playing his best tennis today, so I just tried to go with my front foot and I'm very happy obviously about the level I'm playing. Incredible winning another title like this, that means a lot to me. It's been another incredible tournament," Sinner was quoted by ATP. The Madrid crown marks Sinner's ninth Masters 1000 title and completes a dominant stretch that began after his retirement in Shanghai

last October. Since then, the 24-year-old has lifted trophies in Paris, Indian Wells, Miami, Monte-Carlo and now Madrid, dropping only a handful of sets across these campaigns. Notably, Sinner also became the first player to win the season's opening four Masters 1000 events, having earlier completed the 'Sunshine Double' without losing a set and then overcoming Carlos Alcaraz in Monte-Carlo. The Italian now stands on the brink of further milestones. He is one title away from completing the coveted Career Golden Masters, a feat achieved only by Novak Djokovic, and will have the opportunity to do so at the upcoming Rome Masters on home soil.

### Isha Ambani's latest look blends Indian heritage with contemporary fashion

Mumbai: Isha Ambani, daughter of Mukesh Ambani and Nita Ambani, has once again captured attention with a striking fashion statement that celebrates India's rich cultural heritage. Known for her entrepreneurial pursuits, Isha is also making a mark in the global fashion space with her distinctive style choices. Her latest appearance has become a major talking point, featuring a unique strapless dress that seamlessly blends tradition with modern design. The body-hugging, bandage-style silhouette added elegance, while the concept behind the outfit stood out for its cultural depth. A key highlight of the ensemble was its construction using 26 different traditional borders sourced from across India. Each border represented a specific regional embroidery and weaving technique, bringing together the country's diverse artistic heritage into a single outfit. The dress was designed by noted fashion designer Manish Malhotra in collaboration with Isha's label "Swadesh," and styled by celebrity stylist Anaita Shroff Adajania. The outfit featured a rich mix of Banarasi brocade, Kanjivaram silk, Paithani, Kantha, Aari, and Zari work,



highlighting traditional Indian craftsmanship. According to sources, the intricate outfit took nearly 450 hours to complete, underscoring the level of detail and effort involved. Isha kept her accessories minimal with statement earrings and a ring,

pairing the look with stylish heels and subtle hair accessories. The ensemble has been widely appreciated as more than just a fashion statement, serving as a visual tribute to India's textile diversity and craftsmanship on a global stage.

### "Ek chhoti si muskaan...": Anupam Kher recounts sweet office moment with mother Dulari

: Fans are no stranger to the love Anupam Kher has for his mother Dulari Kher, and his latest post is a reminder of that. On Monday, the actor shared a set of pictures from his office where his mother is seen sitting comfortably on his chair, while he stands beside her with a smile. In the post, Kher shared how his mother visited his office last week and sat on his chair and, with a smile on her face, said it is her chair. "Pichhle hafte maa mere office aayi... aur meri kursi par baith gayi. Phir khud hi muskura kar boli -- 'ye toh meri hi kursi hai.' Main bhi muskura diya... kyunki sach yahi hai. Main aaj jo kuch bhi hoon, woh unki

duaon ka nateerja hai...." he wrote. Thanking her for all her sacrifices and love, Kher wrote, "Unke tyag, unki himmat, unke vishwas ka phal hai. Unhone apne sapnon ko thoda peeche rakhkar, mere sapnon ko aage badhaya... Maa... aapki kursi hamesha aapki hi rahegi. Main toh bas use sambhal kar baitha hoon." In a recent interaction with ANI, Kher also spoke about the biggest lessons he has learned from his mother. Talking about her influence on his life, he said that she taught him "patience and tolerance." "My mother got married at the age of 16, so she is 18 years older than me. Yesterday, Harman ji typed a birthday wish for me, and Boman ji had also come, so he was singing an English song.