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English Daily



Fresh Plea Filed in SC for Constitutional Validity of Waqf Bill



New Delhi, (HS) : A fresh plea has been filed in the Supreme Court challenging the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, claiming it was a "blatant intrusion" into the rights of a religious denomination to manage its own affairs in the matter of religion. President Droupadi Murmu on Saturday gave her assent to the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025, which was earlier passed by Parliament after heated debates in both Houses. Several petitions have been filed in the top court challenging the validity of the bill. The fresh petition has been filed by Samastha Kerala Jamiathul Ulema, a religious organisation of Sunni Muslim scholars and clerics in Kerala. The plea, filed through advocate Zulfikar Ali P S, said these amendments would distort the religious character of Waqfs while also irreversibly damaging the democratic process in the administration of Waqf and Waqf Boards.

"Hence, it is submitted that the 2025 Act is a blatant intrusion into the rights of a religious denomination to manage its own affairs in the matter of religion which is protected under Article 26 of the Constitution of India," the plea said. It alleged that the 2025 Act was against the federal principles of Constitution as it takes away all powers of the state governments and State Waqf Boards in connection with Waqfs and accumulates all powers into the hands of the Central government. "The cumulative effect of these provisions will be highly detrimental to Waqfs at large and the Muslim community will be deprived of large tract of Waqf properties on account of operation of these provisions," the plea said. Several pleas, including those by Congress MP Mohammad Jawed, AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi and AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan, were filed in the top court challenging the validity of the

PM Inaugurates New Pamban Bridge, India's 1st Vertical-Lift Sea Bridge



New Delhi, (HS) : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated the New Pamban Bridge - the country's first vertical-lift sea bridge - in Tamil Nadu on the occasion of Ram Navami. PM Modi also flagged off a Coast Guard ship - which passed under the bridge - and the new Rameswaram-Tambaram (Chennai) train. PM Modi, who arrived in Tamil Nadu after a three-day visit to Sri

Lanka, also performed a puja at the Ramanathaswamy temple in Rameswaram and laid the foundation stone of various rail and road projects worth over Rs 8,300 crore in the state.

According to the Ministry of Railways, the 2.07-kilometer-long bridge, spanning the Palk Strait in Tamil Nadu, stands as a testament to India's engineering prowess and visionary infrastructure development.

Located in the Ramanathapuram district, the bridge connects Rameswaram Island with Mandapam on the mainland. Built at a cost of over Rs 700 crore by Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) - a Navratna PSU under the Ministry of Railways - the bridge features a 72.5-metre navigational span that can be vertically lifted to 17 metres, allowing ships to pass below safely. The bridge can also

support two railway tracks, though it currently operates on a single line. It is cleared for train speeds up to 80 kmph and is built to handle increased rail traffic and heavier loads. According to a government release, the new bridge has a projected lifespan of 100 years. It has been constructed with special engineering techniques that reduce the need for frequent maintenance, and uses stainless steel reinforcement, fully welded joints, high-grade protective paint, and a polysiloxane coating to protect against corrosion in the harsh marine environment. The Pamban Bridge is being compared to famous ones like the Golden Gate Bridge in the USA, Tower Bridge in the UK, and the Oresund Bridge between Denmark and Sweden because of its modern design and technology.

The old Pamban Bridge was built in 1914 by British engineers. It used a manually operated Scherzer's span (a type of rolling lift bridge). The pass over was shut to rail traffic due to safety concerns. On the way back from Sri Lanka, PM Modi witnessed

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CM Leaves for Delhi to Attend Odisha Investors Meet and MoU Signing Ceremony



Bhubaneswar, (DMC) : Chief Minister Shri Mohan Charan Majhi has left for New Delhi, where he will hold significant discussions aimed at propelling Odisha towards greater industrial advancement and economic growth.

During this two-day event, he will address various stakeholders and industry leaders, sharing the vision for Odisha's future and emphasizing the reforms and initiatives taken by the Odisha government to create an enabling environment for investments. The state will sign some key MoUs that will not only strengthen the current industrial ecosystem but will also attract significant

investments that will create jobs and spur economic development in our state. MoUs will be signed with the Indian Oil Corporation Ltd, Petronet LNG, and Indian Strategic Petrochemical Reserves Ltd, among others. These collaborations underscore the state's commitment to make Odisha a leading hub for petrochemicals and chemicals and serve to position the state as a key player in the nation's strategy for sustainable growth.

With the agenda to attract diverse industrial investments to the state, the CM will visit the facility of HCL Tech campus in Noida which symbolizes the

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IMD Issues Yellow Warning for Thunderstorms Across Odisha from April 8



Bhubaneswar, (DMC) : The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow warning for thunderstorms accompanied by lightning and gusty surface wind speeds reaching 30-40 km/h. These weather conditions are very likely to occur in the afternoon/evening hours across Odisha starting from April 8. According to the midday weather bulletin, light to moderate rain or thundershowers are expected to occur at one or two places in the following districts, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Angul, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Jajpur, Bhadrak, Balasore, Gajapati, Ganjam, Kandhamal, Rayagada, and Koraput. Dry weather is expected to prevail in the remaining districts of the state. The IMD has also issued a yellow warning for thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds in the afternoon/evening hours in the same districts mentioned above. On April 9, light to moderate rain or thundershowers are very likely in the afternoon/evening hours at one or two places across the districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Rayagada, Koraput, Malkangiri, and Nabarangpur. Dry weather is expected to persist in the other districts. A yellow warning for thunderstorms with gusty winds is also predicted for the above-mentioned areas. Similarly, on April 10, light to moderate rain or thundershowers are expected at one or two places in the districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Angul, Dhenkanal, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Deogarh, Sundargarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Koraput, and Malkangiri. Dry weather is likely to prevail in the remaining districts. The IMD has issued a yellow warning for thunderstorms with lightning and gusty winds for these areas.

BJP Has Become A Movement: CM on Party's 'Sthapna Diwas'

Bhubaneswar, (DMC) : On the occasion of the Bharatiya Janata Party's 45th 'Sthapna Diwas', hundreds of party leaders and workers, including Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, party's Odisha President Manmohan Samal, party in-charge Vijay Pal Singh Tomar, and several others, gathered at the BJP state headquarters in Bhubaneswar to commemorate the foundation day of the saffron front. BJP President Manmohan Samal thanked the people of Odisha, stating that the party currently has 40 lakh members in the state, with a target to double this number this year.

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi extended his greetings, saying, "Heartiest greetings and congratulations to everyone on the foundation day of the world's largest political party, Bharatiya Janata Party. With dedicated efforts from each member, worker, and leader, the party has become a nationwide movement. Let's remember the determination and sacrifices of our workers and personalities who contributed to the party's growth and work together to build a developed India and Odisha." Before the celebration at the party office, President Manmohan Samal



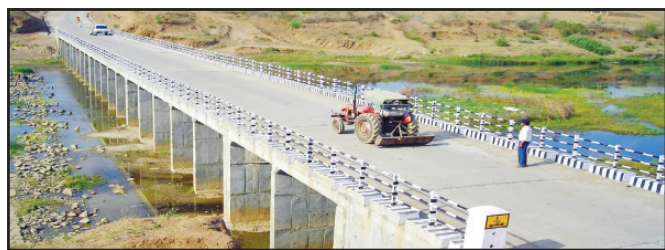
hoisted the party flag at his residence in Bhubaneswar with a few workers. Hundreds of party workers gathered at the BJP headquarters, showcasing their support for the party and its leadership. "Today marks the 46th foundation day of the BJP, and it coincides with the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami. There is great enthusiasm among our karyakartas. Over the years, the party has gone through many struggles, and today, we are in power under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the third

time, just as we were once led by the great Atal Bihari Vajpayee," said state unit President Manmohan Samal. Samal added that the party is blessed that the people of India have given it the mandate to serve them for the third time in the country and first time in Odisha. The state BJP president asserted that the BJP now represents every section of the society.

"From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Dibrugarh to Gujarat, the party organisation has spread across the nation. We stand committed

to the hopes and aspirations of the people. In Odisha too, the people have placed their trust in us. We are fully committed to building a Viksit Odisha and contributing to the vision of a Viksit Bharat. We will work tirelessly to fulfill this dream," said Samal. Deputy Chief Minister KV Singh Deo and his wife MP Sangita Singh Deo also celebrated the party foundation day at their residence in Bolangir in the presence of local leaders and workers. Local MLAs attended the event, highlighting the party's unity and strength nationwide.

Central govt sanctions 26 new roads and two bridge projects to Odisha under PM JANMAN Yojana



Bhubaneswar, (DMC) : The Central government approved 26 new roads and two bridge projects in Odisha under the PM Janman Yojana. Under the PM Janman Yojana, 63.271 km roads will be constructed. The Central government thus sanctioned Rs 69.65 crore for the road construction in Odisha. As of now, under the PM Janman Yojana 211.14 km long, 66 road projects and four bridge projects had been sanctioned and recently the Ministry further sanctioned 26 new roads and 2 new bridge projects to be built. The Ministry of Rural Development has allotted Rs 219.40 crore for the project. PM-JANMAN was launched for the socio-economic welfare of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) on November 15, 2023, on the occasion of Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas. It stands for The PM Janman yojana is aimed at the socio-economic welfare of PVTGs and under it 26 new roads will be built (PM-JANMAN)

Odisha widens crackdown on illegal coal mining, warns of strict action

Bhubaneswar, (DMC) : Authorities in Sundargarh district launched a massive raid against alleged illegal coal mining in the Telendihi reserve forest under Gopalpur forest range, on Sunday. The effort led to the dismantling of makeshift tents purportedly used by mining operatives.

The crackdown involved approximately 30 officials from multiple agencies, including the Sundargarh Deputy Collector, Sadar Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO), Hemgir tehsildar, and representatives of the forest department. Meanwhile, the Union Minister of Tribal Affairs and senior BJP leader from the district, Jual Oram, has asserted that should the allegations of coal theft be proven, those accountable will



face consequences, irrespective of their identity and clout. "This (the allegation) has already been reported by the media and now the government will seek detailed

reports on the matter. Facts and figures in the alleged illegal mining will be verified and actions will accordingly be taken. Whoever will be found guilty, no matter

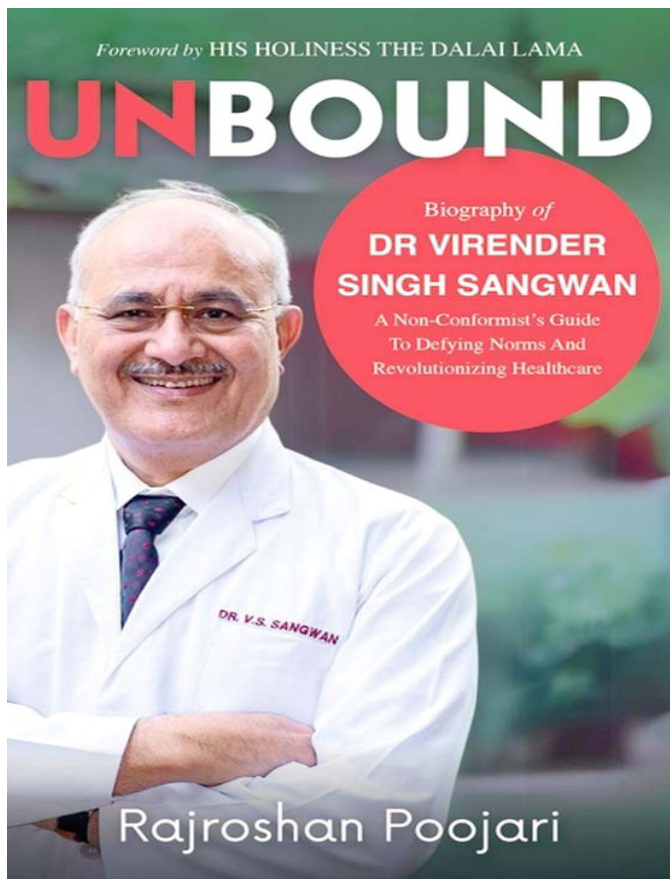
what his position is, would face action," the Union Minister said to mediapersons. "DGP-Odisha has directed to intensify the enforcement drive in Sundargarh

district against the illegal mining of major and minor minerals," senior cop Brijesh Rai expressed. "The revenue forest (Telendihi) comes under the acquisition of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL). We found mining carried out at several places and it appears that mining activity is still going on. Perhaps, the coal mining was started around 2-4 years ago," Sundargarh Sub-Collector Dasarathi Sarabu stated.

"When we reached the spot found that coal was dug at some places and quarried coal ores were stacked at some others. No one was spotted at the site. The stacked coal ores would be around 10 truckloads. We will keep a strict vigil on the ongoing mining activity and nab the wrongdoers red-handed," the Sub-Collector added.



Biography of a Trailblazing Ophthalmologist



Bhaskar Parichha

'Unbound' by Rajroshan Poojari narrates the remarkable journey of Dr. Virender S. Sangwan, who rose from a modest Indian village to become a leader in global medical innovation. This book highlights his pioneering contributions to regenerative medicine and stem cell research, which have significantly advanced eye care worldwide. Fueled by an unwavering commitment to making healthcare accessible, Dr. Sangwan has developed groundbreaking techniques, including the simple limbal epithelial transplantation (SLET), that have changed the lives of countless individuals. It is a compelling tale of perseverance, empathy, and the profound impact of medical advancements. Rajroshan Poojari, an emerging storyteller, skillfully intertwines elements of suspense, insight, and a touch of humor. Renowned for his contributions to psychological thrillers and

biographies, his works—such as *Road to Mekong* and *A Whisper from Beyond*—have enchanted audiences from various literary backgrounds. As mentioned in the book, LVPEI was still in its infancy, having been established for only three years, and the medical community was uncertain about its long-term viability. Dr. Mohinder had witnessed numerous ambitious private hospitals emerge, create a buzz, and then vanish without a trace. Without a consistent influx of financial support, even well-intentioned medical institutions of significant scale struggled to endure, particularly in the face of bureaucratic pressures and the influence of the medical establishment. Following his fellowship, Virender would find his career prospects considerably limited; his specialized training in the cornea would become a restrictive, career-narrowing commitment. If these circumstances unfolded, he would be left with only the most minimal

Unbound

job opportunities. Instead, he might want to contemplate the most straightforward option—a government position at a respected university—especially since it was readily available to him. Furthermore, and perhaps most crucially, separating from his wife just a year into their marriage would subject him to a torrent of speculation from both society and family—uncles, aunts, friends, acquaintances, relatives, and countless others who closely observe the lives of newly married couples.

The narrative goes like this: 'They had been married for over a year by then. Just earlier that month, Vandana had divulged the blissful news of her carrying their first child. But the fateful call from LV Prasad had sent all her plans into a tailspin. To Virender, it seemed practically and financially illogical to have Vandana trail him into the unknown city. Vandana,

on the other hand, couldn't imagine how she would manage everything by herself. Her first pregnancy was sure to bring with it a flurry of unknowns and having her husband by her side would mean the world. Although not completely removed from these worries, Virender continued to root his conviction in his intent. He envisioned a progressive future for their family; one bereft of mediocrity and such other bureaucratic clichés that the medical profession tends to drone into. He knew that their only hope for a fulfilling life was in pursuing excellence in their respective fields and LVPEI offered him just that. Their exhaustive training methodologies and a future-seeking approach made it the foremost destination in India to pursue his ophthalmic training.' 'Their emotionally charged discussions spilled late into the night, until they had exhausted themselves trying to convince each other, and finally

crying themselves to sleep. This went on for several days, their talks still pitted at a rigid impasse. The news of the commotion soon reached Vandana's parents. They were wary of airing their reservations directly to their son-in-law, but through covert measures, decided to request some family friends to visit the couple and convey their thoughts, and maybe even find a way to dissuade Virender from making the preposterous decision.'

This book is essential for those who are enthusiastic about science, social change, and the life-altering possibilities of accessible healthcare. It provides a profound and moving narrative of an individual whose efforts are making a significant difference in the world, impacting one patient at a time.

Rajroshan Poojari

Penguin Random House

Gurugram

The Story of Shanaz Hussain Intertwining Politics and Culture

Dharma Raj

Shanaz Hussain is a prominent figure in the field of beauty and wellness, renowned for her expertise in herbal cosmetics and skincare. She has made significant contributions to the beauty industry through her innovative products and holistic approach to skincare. With a strong emphasis on natural ingredients, Shanaz Hussain has developed a range of beauty solutions that cater to various skin types and concerns.

Her commitment to promoting the use of herbal remedies has not only empowered individuals to embrace their natural beauty but has also inspired many to adopt healthier skincare practices. Through her work, she has established herself as a leading authority in the realm of beauty, earning recognition both nationally and internationally. 'Flame: The Inspiring Life of My Mother, Shahnaz Husain' by Nelofar Currimbhoy masterfully weaves together the personal and professional narratives of one of the most captivating figures of our era, encouraging readers to pursue their aspirations. This compelling biography takes the reader on an extraordinary journey through the life of a woman who built a renowned business from the humble setting of her own porch.

Flame : The Inspiring Life of My Mother Shahnaz Husain



As one delves into her story, you will encounter the numerous obstacles she overcame and the significant victories she attained, ultimately showcasing the remarkable strength of determination and vision in achieving one's dreams.

Nelofar is a graduate of Lady Shri Ram College and pursued further studies in Beauty Therapy at ITEC in London. She currently

serves as the President of the Shahnaz Husain Group of Companies, playing a crucial role in its expansion. In addition to overseeing the national distribution network, she has a keen interest in the research and development sector, where she enjoys uncovering ancient Ayurvedic formulations for global marketing. The author skillfully illustrates the extraordinary highs and inevitable lows experienced throughout her dynamic mother's life. In this engaging narrative, Shahnaz is presented in an unprecedented light, highlighting her courage and unwavering determination as a woman steadfast in her quest for success. She often challenges the circumstances that fate has dealt her, demonstrating a remarkable resilience that inspires and captivates the reader.

Through vivid descriptions and poignant storytelling, the author brings to life the complexities of Shahnaz's journey, making her struggles and triumphs resonate deeply with the audience.

Nelofar Currimbhoy

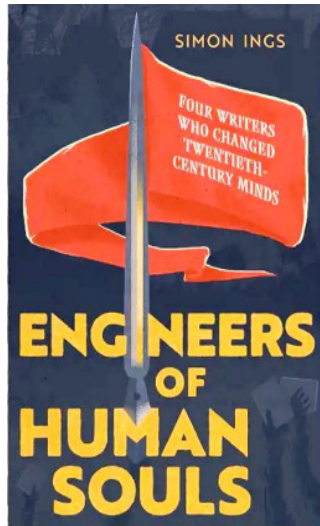
Rupa Publications

New Delhi

Bhaskar Parichha

Engineers of Human Souls: Four Writers Who Changed Twentieth-Century Minds by Simon Ings explores the intricate relationships and shared experiences of four influential literary figures whose works profoundly shaped political ideologies and cultural conversations throughout the 20th century. The authors under scrutiny—Maurice Barrès, Gabriele D'Annunzio, Maxim Gorky, and Ding Ling—each engaged with authoritarian regimes, leading to complex legacies that are marked by extraordinary artistic innovation as well as significant moral challenges.

Ings meticulously examines how these writers navigated their political environments, revealing the duality of their contributions to literature and the ethical implications of their affiliations with power. Through this analysis, the book highlights the enduring impact of their ideas on contemporary thought and the ongoing dialogue surrounding the role of the writer in society. While Barrès pioneered the politics of



identity, using literature to advance nationalist ideologies. His work laid the groundwork for political movements that emphasized cultural and racial identity, D'Annunzio's poetry and theatrical persona became a blueprint for fascism. His flamboyant style and political activism influenced Mussolini's regime and contributed to the rise of authoritarian aesthetics. As a dramatist of the working class, Gorky became a vocal supporter of Stalin, aligning his literary output with Soviet propaganda. His relationship with Stalin exemplifies the

ENGINEERS OF HUMAN SOULS: Four Writers Who Changed Twentieth-Century Minds

dangerous entanglement between creative individuals and totalitarian power.

A Maoist writer, Ding Ling's stories initially critiqued societal injustices but later served to justify the regime that imprisoned her. Her work reflects the complexities of navigating artistic integrity under oppressive systems. The book examines how these writers' aspirations for influence led them to collaborate with dictators, transforming them into figures of political significance. It highlights how literature can both inspire and manipulate, becoming a tool for ideological control and societal transformation. The narratives delve into the moral struggles these writers faced as they balanced artistic ambition with political loyalty. Simon Ings, known for his previous works like *Stalin and the Scientists*, brings a nuanced perspective to this historical exploration. His background in science

fiction and cultural analysis enriches the storytelling, making it both intellectually stimulating and accessible. This book serves as a cautionary exploration of the precarious relationship between artistic expression and authoritative power structures. It offers profound insights into the reciprocal influence that exists between writers and political entities, highlighting how authors can shape political discourse while simultaneously being shaped by the prevailing political climate.

Through a series of reflective analyses, the text delves into the complexities of this interaction, illustrating the delicate balance that artists must navigate in their creative endeavors amidst the pressures and expectations imposed by those in positions of authority.

SIMON INGS

Hachette India

New Delhi

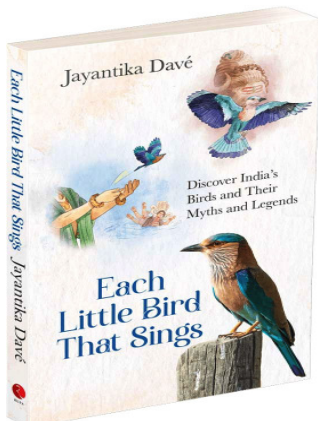
More than a Bird-watching Book

Each Little Bird That Sings

Arun Mishra

Jayantika Davé has dedicated more than fifty years to her passion for birdwatching, a hobby she was introduced to at an early age by her knowledgeable grandfather, K.N. Davé, an ornithologist. She is the author of the book "100 Indian Garden Flowers" and resides in both Gurugram and Shyamkhet, Uttarakhand. It is natural that she writes a book on India's birds, their myths and legends.

Have you ever seen a bird and wished you could identify it right away, without getting lost in complicated classifications and scientific terms? Each Little Bird That Sings simplifies bird identification by categorizing 250 common Indian birds based on their main color and size, making it easy for even novices to recognize them quickly. This book goes beyond the conventional field guide, offering a multifaceted exploration of avian life. It not only features high-quality photographs that aid in the identification of various bird species



but also weaves together captivating narratives and folklore sourced from Indian scriptures, mythology, and real-life bird watching encounters. The inclusion of exquisitely hand-drawn illustrations further elevates these stories, adding layers of meaning and significance to each avian discovery.

Whether one is a beginner in bird watching, a passionate nature lover, or an individual who enjoys engaging narratives, this book promises to transform one's understanding and appreciation of the birdlife that inhabits your surroundings.

Jayantika Dave

Rupa Publications

New Delhi

Candid and Captivating

Dharma Raj

In 1917, amidst the colonial rule in India, Mohandas K. Gandhi launched a satyagraha movement in partnership with local farmers in Bihar. This initiative was pivotal in establishing the foundation for a non-violent struggle aimed at achieving India's independence from British colonialism. Fast forward to over a century later, New Delhi became the site of one of the most significant non-violent protests by farmers in modern history.

This contemporary movement began in the states of Punjab and Haryana in June 2020 and reached its peak in the capital by November 2020. By January 2021, hundreds of thousands of farmers and agricultural laborers had mobilized to oppose three contentious farm laws that were introduced during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, which they perceived as oppressive and detrimental to their livelihoods. Farmers Protest! A Movement for Our Times by Namita Waikardetails the farmers' protest continued until the Indian Government finally relented and withdrew the laws. Namita pursued her studies in Biochemistry at the University of Mumbai. Currently, she serves as

the managing editor for the People's Archive of Rural India (PARI), where she directs and contributes to the Grindmill Songs Project and manages its translation initiatives. She is also a co-founder of a chemistry databases company based in Pune, a venture that reflects her extensive background as both a biochemist and a software project manager. The text provides a comprehensive analysis of the significant disconnection that many individuals living in urban areas of India experience in relation to their agricultural roots. This disconnection is characterized by a profound lack of understanding regarding the intricate processes involved in the journey of food from the farm to their dining tables. Urban dwellers often possess minimal awareness of the various stages that food undergoes before it reaches their plates, including the cultivation, harvesting, and distribution processes. Moreover, their knowledge about the lives and circumstances of the farmers and agricultural workers who dedicate their efforts to growing this food is even more limited. This gap in understanding highlights a broader issue of alienation from the agricultural sector, which is crucial for sustaining urban populations. The implications of this



disconnection are significant, as they can lead to a lack of appreciation for the labor and resources involved in food

production, ultimately affecting consumer behavior and attitudes towards agriculture and food security.

Farmers Protest! A Movement for Our Times

'Farmers Protest' seeks to illuminate the underlying factors contributing to the resistance of Indian farmers, while also emphasizing their critical position as the frontline responders to the myriad challenges presented by climate change. This initiative aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic and environmental issues that have led to widespread discontent among the farming community. By articulating the farmers' grievances and the systemic inequalities they face, the project endeavors to foster greater awareness and dialogue regarding their essential contributions to sustainable agriculture and food security in the context of an increasingly volatile climate.

The most genuine and captivating book addressing one of India's most delicate topics.

Namita Waikar

Yoda Press

New Delhi

Revolutionizing Northern Odisha's Rail Stations: Amrit Scheme Brings Modern Infrastructure

Bhubaneswar, (DMC):The Indian Railways, as parts of its Amrit Station Scheme has undertaken redevelopment of various railway stations in the northern parts of Odisha. This redevelopment aims to transform key railway stations with modern facilities, enhancing the overall travel experience for passengers and promoting regional economic growth.The redevelopment will focus on improving infrastructure, modernizing amenities, and ensuring seamless connectivity to support both passenger comfort and commercial growth.

The selected stations in the northern region of Odisha are expected to undergo significant enhancements in design, technology, and passenger services. The initiative is in line with the ongoing efforts to modernize the Indian Railway network and provide an efficient and user-friendly travel experience for all.Modern Infrastructure: Stations will feature modern platforms, upgraded ticketing facilities, waiting areas and improved cleanliness standards, ensuring convenience and comfort for all passengers.

Increased Accessibility: The redevelopment will include FOBs with lifts and escalators to improve accessibility for senior citizens, differently-abled passengers, and families with children. Sustainable and Eco-

Friendly Design: The stations will adopt green building principles, integrating renewable energy solutions, water conservation practices, and waste management systems, in line with Indian Railways commitment to sustainable development.

Improved Circulating areas in the premises: Through these Redevelopments, a perceptible improving in the Station Circulating areas have been planned with Drop-on and Drop-out lanes along with adequate parking places.

State-of-the-Art Passenger Amenities: Amenities like Wi-Fi, digital displays, advanced security systems, improved catering services and modern waiting lounges will enhance the overall travel experience.

Economic Growth: The redevelopment project aims to stimulate local economies by boosting tourism, improving connectivity and creating employment opportunities in the region.The Northern Odisha region, with its rich cultural heritage and diverse landscapes, will benefit significantly from these upgrades. The railway stations at major hubs like, Rairangpur, Baripada, and Keonjhar will soon offer enhanced travel experiences, making it easier for passengers and tourists to explore the region's vast heritage and eco-tourism potential.The Indian Railways is committed to



ensuring the timely completion of these projects, and work is set to commence in phases. The redevelopment project is expected to be completed in the coming few years.The stations undertaken in this redevelopment initiative include Kendujhargarh, Barbil, Jaroli, Baripada, Rairangpur, Betnoti, and Badampahar.

Here's an update on the progress of these stations: Kendujhargarh Station: Kendujhargarh Railway Station is undergoing significant upgrades with a sanctioned cost of ₹10.16 crore. Currently, the project is going on with key improvements in progress. The scope of work includes the construction of a new station building equipped with modern amenities for passengers,

alongside enhancements to the existing building's front façade. Additionally, a 12-meter-wide Foot Over Bridge (FOB) is being constructed, along with platform surface improvements and the installation of LED signages, Coach Indication Boards and Train Indication Boards.

The station will also feature an additional 20 bays of platform shelter. Ongoing work includes the construction of the new station building, the FOB, platform surfaces, platform sheds, toilets, waiting halls and circulating areas, all aimed at improving the overall passenger experience.Barbil Station: Barbil Railway Station is currently undergoing major upgrades with an approved budget of 17.7 crore. The project includes the construction of a new, state-of-

the-art station building designed with modern amenities to enhance passenger comfort. In addition, the existing building's front façade will be renovated, and other modern features will be integrated. The project also encompasses soft upgrades, such as improvements to the Goods Shed, which are valued at ₹10 crore. As of now, approximately 31% of the work has been completed.

Jaroli Station: Jaroli Railway Station is currently undergoing major upgrades with an approved budget of ₹8.6 crore. The project includes the construction of a new, state-of-the-art station building designed with modern amenities to enhance passenger comfort. In addition, the existing building's front façade will be renovated, and other modern features will be integrated.As of now, approximately 24% of the work has been completed.Baripada Station: Baripada Railway Station is undergoing extensive upgrades with an approved budget of 15.354 crore. The project includes the construction of a new, state-of-the-art station building, designed to provide modern amenities for enhanced passenger comfort. In addition, the front façade of the existing building is being renovated, and several other contemporary features are being incorporated. As of now, approximately 80% of the work has been completed,

with the new station building already finished. Ongoing work includes the development of the circulating area, platform shelter (PF shed), and platform surfacing. Rairangpur Station: Rairangpur Railway Station is undergoing significant upgrades with an approved budget of 7.4 crore. The project includes the construction of a new, state-of-the-art station building, designed to offer modern amenities that will enhance passenger comfort.

Additionally, the front façade of the existing building will be renovated, and other contemporary features will be added.As of now, approximately 32% of the work has been completed. Soft upgrades are also underway, with a target completion date set for July 2025.Betnoti Station: Betnoti Railway Station is undergoing substantial upgrades with an approved budget of ₹14.146 crore.The project involves the construction of a new, state-of-the-art station building, designed to provide modern amenities for enhanced passenger comfort. As of now, approximately 50% of the work has been completed. Soft upgrades are also in progress, with a target completion date set for July 2025. The platform shed has already been completed, and work on platform surfacing and the new station building is ongoing, with the project slated for completion by June 2025.

Badampahar Station: Badampahar Railway Station is undergoing significant upgrades with an approved budget of ₹12.22 crore. The project includes the construction of a new state-of-the-art station building, designed to offer modern amenities that will enhance passenger comfort.

As of now, approximately 34% of the work has been completed. Soft upgrade works are currently underway, with a target completion date set for April 2025. Additionally, the project will feature the installation of a 3-meter-wide Foot Over Bridge (FOB) for improved accessibility.The ongoing redevelopment of the Amrit Stations in Northern Odisha is a vital part of Indian Railways' commitment to modernizing its infrastructure and improving passenger services across the country.

With the progress seen in these stations, the project is on track to offer enhanced travel facilities and bolster local economies.Indian Railways is confident that the completion of these station redevelopment projects will significantly enhance the travel experience for the people of Odisha and contribute to the state's growth. We look forward to the timely completion of these projects and are committed to delivering world-class infrastructure.

75-Day Countdown To International Day of Yoga To Begin In Odisha Tomorrow

Bhubaneswar/New Delhi, (DMC): A 75-day countdown to the International Day of Yoga (IDY) will be launched in Odisha with Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga on Monday hosting the grand Yoga Mahotsav 2025.The event, coinciding with World Health Day on April 7, will feature a grand Common Yoga Protocol demonstration from 6.30 a.m. to 8 a.m. at Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar, an official said on Sunday.

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Ayush and Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Prataprao Jadhav and Deputy Chief Minister of Odisha Pravati Parida would



also attend the event.Joint Secretary of Ayush, Monalisa Dash shared insights about the benefits of practicing the Common Yoga Protocol (CYP), which will be a highlight of the 75-day Countdown to the IDY.CYP is the foundation of International Day of Yoga, and it is available in 22 different

languages.Last year, the Braille edition of the CYP was launched, promoting inclusivity. More than 24 crore people have directly participated in IDY so far."Every year, the number of participants increases, and new records are being made. This year too, we are expecting to set a new milestone in participation," said

Dash.The 75-day countdown is an important event in the observance of IDY every year.The Ministry hopes to kindle a "Mass Movement for Health and Wellbeing" through Yoga in the 75-day run-up to IDY-2025.

The 50th and 25th-day milestones will be commemorated, said a statement.The Ministry of Ayush, as the Central coordinating body for IDY, has been instrumental in transforming the celebration into a global movement. Over the past decade, it has launched numerous initiatives and collaborations to further amplify the reach and impact of Yoga worldwide.

Odisha Govt extends visit of All secretaries & govt officials till April 30

Bhubaneswar, (DMC): Odisha government has extended all secretaries and government officials visit till April 30. The deadline was extended by one month from March 31.

All the department secretaries and officials have been directed to visit one district for a minimum of two days and stay overnight. During their district visit, the all secretaries will check the status of Gopabandhu Jan Aarogya



Yojana, Antyodaya Gruha Yojana, potable drinking water, Setubandha Yojana, Panchasakha Sikhya Yojana, Subhadra Yojana, Poshan

Abhiyaan in the said districts.Further the secretaries will check the condition of the students in the tribal hostels and discuss about their problems.In

a letter to all department secretaries and senior officials, Development Commissioner Anu Garg said on Tuesday and extended the duration of the visit.

Odisha Governor, CM congratulate Sudarsan Pattnaik for British Sand Master Award

Bhubaneswar,(DMC): Odisha Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati and Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi congratulated sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik for being awarded 'The Fred Darrington', 1st British Sand Master Award at the Sandworld Sand Sculpture Festival in Weymouth, UK.The Governor congratulated Pattnaik on becoming the 1st Indian artist to win the 'Fred Darrington' British Sand Master Award."

His 10-ft sand sculpture of Lord Ganesha beautifully conveys the message of World Peace," he said. CM Majhi in a post on X said, "Heartiest congratulations to Padma Shri awardee and eminent sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik on being honoured with the first British Sand Master Award, 'The Fred Darrington'."He conveyed the message of peace through his 10-



feet-tall giant statue of Lord Ganesha at the International Sand Art Festival held in Weymouth. His contribution has further enhanced the cultural heritage of our country and state on the global stage," he said. Sudarsan Pattnaik has been honoured with The Fred Darrington Sand Master Award for his contributions to the field. During the Sandworld 2025 International Sand Art Festival, Pattnaik created a 10-feet-high sand sculpture of Lord Ganesha with the message of "World Peace".

Odisha Police sets stage for 73rd All India Police Hockey Championship 2025

Bhubaneswar,(DMC): The 73rd edition of the All-India Police Hockey Championship 2025 was officially launched with a spirited and ceremonial curtain-raiser event at the Police Bhawan in Bhubaneswar. Organized under the auspices of the All-India Police Sports Control Board, the event marked the commencement of one of the most prestigious tournaments in the Indian Police Sporting Calendar.

During the occasion, Odisha's Director General of Police, Yogesh Bahadur Khurania expressed pride in the state hosting the championship for the second time. "We are honored to once again welcome teams from across India to our soil. This tournament embodies values like discipline, teamwork, dedication, and excellence-qualities that resonate deeply with the police force," he stated.The championship will be held from



April 7th to April 15th at the internationally renowned Kalinga Hockey Stadium in Bhubaneswar. A total of 48 matches will take place, with 26 men's teams and 9 women's teams competing.

Teams from various Central Armed Police Forces, including the CISF, CRPF, ITBP, BSF, and SSB, have arrived in Bhubaneswar, bringing with them a rich tradition of competitive spirit and camaraderie. This year, teams from 21 states will participate.One of the most

anticipated moments of the evening was the unveiling of the championship's official mascot, "ASHA." Inspired by the true story of an injured elephant calf rescued by Odisha's Forest Department and now nurtured at Nandan Kanan Zoo,

ASHA symbolizes resilience, compassion, and Odisha's commitment to wildlife conservation. A short video narrating her story moved many in the audience, highlighting the deeper values that underpin the

tournament."ASHA is more than just a mascot-she represents Odisha's spirit of strength and sustainability," said Shri Khurania. "We hope ASHA will inspire every player and spectator throughout this championship."

To ensure high standards of fairness and professionalism, the tournament will be officiated by referees and technical officials appointed by Hockey India. The presence of several international-level players further elevates the competitive edge of the

championship, promising exciting, top-tier action on the field. The evening concluded with a media interaction session, setting the tone for an exhilarating week of hockey in the heart of Odisha. As the tournament kicks off at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium, all eyes will be on Bhubaneswar-a city that continues to champion the cause of Indian hockey, both on and off the field.

Present at the event were ADGP (Headquarters) and Vice Chairman of AIPHC-2025, Dayal Gangwar, ADGP (SAP) and Vice Chairman of AIPHC-2025, Rajesh Kumar, IGP (Training) and Organizing Secretary of AIPHC-2025, Anup Kumar Sahoo, along with Team Managers, Captains, Observers from the All-India Police Sports Control Board, and senior officers of the Odisha Police.



Swachhata Abhiyan Marks Odia Pakhya Celebration Across Odisha

Bhubaneswar, (DMC): As part of the ongoing "Odia Pakhya" celebrations, being observed for the first time across Odisha from 1st April to 14th April, a statewide Swachhata Abhiyan (Cleanliness Drive) was held today. The campaign was organized in and around temples, heritage monuments and tourist spots across various districts.

The primary goal was to promote cleanliness in these culturally significant locations, thereby fostering a healthy and aesthetically pleasing environment for both locals and visitors. The drive, which spanned across all blocks and districts, saw enthusiastic participation from district and block-level administrations, municipal and Panchayati Raj representatives, voluntary organizations, youth groups, local

residents and public representatives.Together they undertook cleaning activities around temple premises, village shrines and in the iconic heritage sites. In addition to the hands-on cleaning activities, participants spread awareness about the importance of maintaining cleanliness and hygiene at public places. They also shared their joy and sense of participation in this unique

cultural celebration by uploading photos of the Swachhata Abhiyan on the official Odia Pakhya website i.e (Odiapakhya.com). The campaign received widespread appreciation and served as a reminder that cultural pride goes hand in hand with civic duties. It not only highlighted Odisha's glorious traditions but also emphasized the value of a clean and sustainable environment.

One killed, over 20 injured as bus carrying Bangladeshi tourists overturns on Bhubaneswar-Puri NH

Bhubaneswar, (DMC): In a tragic incident, one person was killed and more than 20 passengers sustained serious injuries after a bus carrying Bangladeshi tourists overturned near Uttara on the Bhubaneswar-Puri National Highway in the wee hours of Sunday.As per reports, around 100 pilgrims from Bangladesh's Chittagong had arrived in India on March 17 in two buses. The

group included several senior citizens and at least 17 children. After visiting significant pilgrimage sites like Ayodhya and Dwarka, they were heading to Puri to seek the blessings of Lord Jagannath. However, the mishap occurred at around 3 AM today when the driver of one of the buses reportedly fell asleep at the wheel, causing the vehicle to swerve off the road and plunge into a roadside ditch.

All the injured were immediately rushed to Capital Hospital for treatment. However, tragedy struck again when one of the ambulances transporting the injured crashed into the parapet of an over-bridge near Shishu Bhavan Square. As a result of the impact, the passengers inside the ambulance reportedly sustained additional injuries. Further investigation into the matter was underway.

Migrant Laborer's Suspicious Death of Gajapati



Paralakhemundi, (DMC): At Gajapati district one migrant laborer who had gone for earning died. His death still gruelling all suspicions. Belonged to Rajiuka under Adava police limits named

Tuku Bastray went to Kerala. He called by phone on 2nd April to return home. But yesterday night at Pune of Maharashtra he died, which information his family received by police. As per

information he married one woman of Mohana later their family life on conflict & both detached each other. That woman married to another youth so also the deceased, too, remarried another woman.

But surprisingly both united again & went to meet his first wife. At Mathura lodge his dead body located. So deceased's family complained against his first wife who killed him. After enquiry family demanded to bring dead body of that person.

Herd of 18 elephants in Sadar range, spreading Panic

Keonjhar, (DMC): A herd consisting of 18 elephants have camp near the canal of Bhatunia village in Sadar forest range area causing panic in last two days, for which people of that area are terrified and passing sleepless night. According to the sources Yesterday evening, the elephant herd with calves from Ambadahara area come to Tikarpada village area and later crossed the railway line and reached Bhandanalisahi Mango orchard. As a result, the people of the local area have been terrified for two days. To protect the crops in the fields, farmers from Tikarpada, Kudiaghara, Mahadeiyoda, Kadgarh, Bhatunian, Narsinghpur,

Kenduposhi villages, along with forest team and hundreds of locals chased the herd to drive away from that area. On Sunday morning the elephants were bathing in the canal. Hundreds of people were seen gathering to see them. During their movement the elephants, besides eating various crops in the garden, has been trampled and destroyed acres of vegetables field, the farmers alleged. During the day, a large crowd gathered to see the herd. While the forest department staff has been monitoring the elephant herd's movements, they are planning to chase it away from the forest in the evening. It has been demanded that the government provide immediate assistance to the

affected farmers. While the locals are chasing away the elephants to protect their crops and livelihood, some are allegedly harassing the elephants in various ways, causing the elephants to wander around in frustration. There is a danger of people approaching the elephants to take selfies or take pictures of the elephants. Therefore, the forest department is requested to look into this as there is a possibility of elephant attacks. The forest department official seem to be helpless while driving the herd in to the forest but failed to do so. "We are aware of the people not to go near the elephant. Compensation will be paid to the victim for any damage" said Ajit Das, Range officer, Sadar range.

Jajpur MP demands for Ethanol Plant

Jajpur, (DMC): Jajpur MP Dr. Rabindra Narayan Behera has met with Sri Chirag Paswan, Central Minister who has assigned for Jajpur Loksabha and demands for ethanol plant in Jajpur.

This plant will support to the farmers who farms sugarcane in the different areas of the district. It also Increase farmers' earnings by creating an additional market for sugarcane-based product, Dr. Behera said. However this was a



great initiative taken by Dr. Behera towards the development of Jajpur farmers, Jajpurian wished Dr. Behera in this regard.

Blood Donation Camp Organised in Khariar Road

Nuapada/Khariar Road, (DMC): In a bid to meet require of blood in case of shortage in blood bank Nuapada, on the occasion of 2624th Bhagwan Mahavir Jann Kalyan Mahotsav a voluntary blood donation camp was organised by Jain Mitra Mandal at Jain Sthanak Bhawan Khariar Road in Nuapada District on Sunday. As much as 50 units of blood were collected during the camp.

Medical team from Nuapada were present to collect blood. Jain Mitra Mandal President Rakesh Sanklecha, Secretary Jitendra Gothi, Vice President Ashish Soni, Sonu Gandhi, Manoj Daga, Dr. Swasti Khamari, along with all the members of JMM cooperated the camp to be successful.



Ram Navami Observed at Paralakhemundi



Paralakhemundi, (DMC): At district headquarter of Gajapati Sri Ram Navami observed. At Keviti street, near Municipal office & Rajguru street junction devotees prayed & offered diyas. Various rituals taken place. Prasada also distributed.

programs in large numbers to explore this opportunity. Mr Prasanna Kumar dash, the Principal of the school conducted this programme coordination with all the teachers of the school. These Talent Fiesta classes are going to be held on every Sunday throughout the year and training will given the students on Modern Dance, Odissi,

Art and Craft, Vocal Music (Songs) and Chess by famous trainer of Angul. This facility is open to all the students of all the School situated in Angul. Miss Asmin Mohapatra co-ordinated this bi function. A large numbers of Students from different Schools with their parents participated in this programme.

Opening ceremony of Talent Fiesta classes at St. Xavier's High School, Mishra pada, Angul

Angul, (DMC): The opening ceremony of Talent Fiesta classes has taken place at St. Xavier's High School, Mishra pada, Angul. Former Secretary, State election commission, Bhubaneswar, Mr Azad hind panigrahi attended this function as Chief guest.

The chairman of Xavierian Educational foundation, Mr Kuldeep Ratha as chief speaker, Mr Dwarika Prasad Nanda, the president of Angul Journalist Association as guest of honour and Mrs Smita Pattnaik, the program coordinator of St Xavier's School attended as special guest of this event. The honorable chief guest Mr Azad hind panigrahi in his speech, described the importance of Art,



Dance, Song and Music for the all round development of a child's personality. Honourable chief speaker Mr Kuldeep Ratha explained the efforts of Xavier's High School and requested the guardians to encourage their

children to participate in different programs. Honourable guest of honour, Mr Dwarika Prasad Nanda praised the tireless efforts of management and School and advised Students of Angul to take part in different

Shree Arun Kumar Pradhan honored as Karmaveer Award

Talcher, (DMC): An award ceremony was organized by the Talcher Koyala khani majdur sangh, affiliated to the Bharatiya Majdur sangh, at jumde Bhawan in the South Balanda, Talcher, the coal town of Angul district. It is to be noted that this felicitation ceremony is being held in honour of the senior worker of TKKMS and his retirement after serving 25 years and 7 months in Mahanadi Coal Field Limited.

Mr. K. Lakshma Reddy prabhaari of coal industry of BMS, was the chief guest in this program. As a special guest, Shri Ranjan Behra, National Working President of ABKMS, Kishore chandra pradhan, BMS president of TKKMS, Biren khilar General Secretary, Sudarshan Mohanty, Senior Worker and thousands of BMS workers honored and felicitated as karmaveer to Mr. Arun Kumar Pradhan and praised his work style. Shri Pradhan has fought for the rights of coal miners by holding several important positions including President of TKKMS, Vice President of ABKMS and member of JBCCI. Mr. Arun Kumar Pradhan says that the late Dr. Devendra Pradhan, father of the present Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, introduced him to the ideology of Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh and Devendra Pradhan is his uncle (Mama).

The 19th death anniversary of former minister late Gangadhar Mohapatra held

Puri, (DMC): The 19th death anniversary of eminent freedom fighter, popular leader of Odisha, eminent lawyer and former minister late Gangadhar Mohapatra was held under the chairmanship of Dr Nilakanta Pati, President of the organization, at the Gandhi Smriti Peeth Sabhagriha. On this occasion, Ms. Pratima Panda, Retired District Judge and Chairperson, Permanent Lok Adalat, Puri Inauguration, Mr. Santosh Kumar Sethi, Deputy Director Information and Public Relations Department, Puri were the keynote speakers and highlighted the life and ideals of late Gangadhar Mohapatra. Like every year, 2024 Rafat Sahin, the best graduate of Gangadhar Mohapatra Law

College, was honoured by the Memorial Committee. On this occasion, Rupranjan Tripathi, Dr. Hemanta Kumar Chotaray, Prabasini Mishra, Chandrashekhar Maharana, Chakradhar Mohapatra, Sita Ballabh Mohapatra, Rama Ballabh Mohapatra, Janaki Ballabh Mohapatra, Laxmiballav Mohapatra, Pushkar Mohapatra, Shivaprasad Mishra, Gairahari Pradhan, Birendra Bhushan Hota, Satyabrata Rath, Nalinikanta Nayak, Lala Ananta Kumar Singh, Mandakini Acharya, Suryanarayana Rath, Mandakini Rath, Suryanarayana, Shakti Prasad Patnaik, Mohammad Saheb, Laxmidhar Jena, Bijay Kumar Mohanty, Byomkesh Chinnara,

Purna Chandra Samanta, Ritesh Mohapatra, Rabinarayan Mohanty, Radhakanta Das, Subash Chandra Mohapatra, Puri Bar Association Secretary Sarat Chandra Rayaguru and Minati Mishra were also present. At the end, Birendra Bhushan Hota proposed a vote of thanks. Like every year, the statue installed at Biswanathpur, the birthplace of Gangadhar Mohapatra, was garlanded and Gopinath Dev was worshiped. Later, students who scored the highest marks were awarded by the institute at Gopinath Dev Nodal Vidyapeeth. Educationists Radhakanta Das, lawyer Pushkar Mohapatra, principal of the vidyapith and all colleagues were present on the occasion.

Massive turn out in Ram Navami celebration: Paduka from Chitrakoot, Darbar from Bobbili went around Rayagada town in a devotional atmosphere

Muniguda, (DMC): Rayagada Ramanavami Festival Committee had been preparing for a long time to celebrate Ramanavami with great pomp. As resolved by committee, Rayagada, a grand procession started from Kodanda Ram Temple near Jagannath Mandir and passed through main road, over bridge, Kapilas Hotel Chowk, Jyoti Mahal Chowk & culminated near Venkateswara Temple.

Thousands of Ram devotees holding saffron flags & wearing Uttariyas, who took part in the Jatha, raised several mantras, hymns and slogans enunciating Ram. Jay Sriram. Anna Prasad was distributed to all the devotees. On this auspicious occasion, Shri Ram Paduka from Chitrakoot-Chhattisgarh,



Darbar (King's Court Yard) from Bobbili-Andhra Pradesh were taken around the city in a well-decorated chariot, pulled only by women devotees, for the people to see. It went around Rayagada town in a devotional atmosphere with beating of drums & bells. Rayagada was bustling with several religious activities on the occasion of the holy Ram Navami. While this procession was going around, hundreds of devotees

were seen adding up at every square. The entire town was decorated in saffron color flags for the Ram Navami festival. Volunteers were given the responsibility of maintaining peace and order by the committee. Strict security arrangements were made by the police administration. Several outfits took part namely Biswa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal, RSS, BMS, Ram Sena, Shri Ram Jhanki, several Bhajan

Kirtan mandalis, students of various schools and colleges and various traditional dance groups and other Hindu religious civic societies participated. Under the convenorship Bidya Bhusan Panda & Members Shyama Dash, Ajay Chullet, Rajesh Naidu and Ram Krishna Panigrahi, many dignitaries named BJP President Gopi Anand, BJP Ex-Presidents Siba Pattanaik & Siba Ullaka, Vice-President Tutu Dash, MP

candidate Kaliram Majhi, Councillor Manjula Miniyaka, Press Club President Jogeswar Das, Zilla Sambadika Sangha President Badal Tah, BMS Secretary Ganesh Sahu, Minority Cell President B Nagaraju, Odisha Adivasi Manch State Convenor Bidulata Huika joined the rally. The event was graced by saint Chaitanya Ram ji (Buchi Baba).

As a token of brotherhood, Muslims and other entities distributed curd water & ruh-afza cold drinks. Similarly, another procession started from the local PHD Khinkhina Jhar Hanuman Temple and ended there after going round the town and prasad sevans. This year the religious fervor without any untoward incident has been appreciated by the general public.

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CM Leaves for...

strides Odisha needs to take toward integrating technology and innovation into the industrial framework. He will also be engaged in one-on-one meetings with influential industry captains from diverse sectors, where he will discuss potential partnerships that can further enhance Odisha's industrial landscape. This visit is not merely an event; it represents a critical leap into a future filled with possibilities for Odisha. The efforts to build a robust industrial ecosystem in Odisha are driven by the vision of "Purvodaya," the resurgence of Eastern India, and the state determined to seize this opportunity.

PM Inaugurates...

the Ram Setu and shared an aerial video. "On the way back from Sri Lanka a short while ago, was blessed to have a Darshan of the Ram Setu. And, as a divine coincidence, it happened at the same time as the Surya Tilak was taking place in Ayodhya. Blessed to have the Darshan of both. Prabhu Shri Ram is a uniting force for all of us. May His blessings always remain upon us," he wrote in a post on X. Ram Setu, also known as the Adams Bridge, is a chain of shoals linking India and Sri Lanka. It stretches 48 km between Rameswaram Island, off the southeast coast of India, connecting the Mannar Island in Sri Lanka. It separates the Gulf of Mannar (south), an inlet of the Indian Ocean, from the Palk Strait (north), an inlet of the Bay of Bengal.

Adani Foundation's Vision Care Program Provides Eye Care in Dhamra

Dhamra, (DMC): Access to quality eye care in rural Odisha has become easier, thanks to Adani Foundation's Vision Care Programme. The initiative has benefited over 18,000 people in Dhamra, Bhadrak district, including school-going children, women, senior citizens, and truck drivers. Among the beneficiaries is 47-year-old Renuka Bhuyan from Dhamra, who struggled with poor eyesight for years. With the Foundation's support, she received new spectacles and regained her confidence in managing daily life. Similarly, Satya Sourav Mohapatra, a 14-year-old student of Rambhila High School, overcame his vision problems and is now able to focus better in class. Launched in August 2024, the Vision Care Programme provides free eye screenings, spectacles, and referrals. Aligned with the National Programme for Control of Blindness & Visual Impairment (NPCBVI), the initiative addresses the lack of awareness, infrastructure, and affordability in rural areas. In Dhamra alone, the programme has screened over 12,800 students, 5,000 truck drivers, and 500 women. Nationwide, the initiative has conducted over 1,17,000 screenings across 11 states. Since 1996, Adani Foundation - the CSR arm of the Adani Group - has been committed to social development in education, healthcare, and livelihoods, reaching 9.1 million lives across 19 states and 6,769 villages in India.

35 Tola Gold ornaments Looted from Cashew Mill Owner at Gajapati



Paralakhemundi, (DMC): On a traumatic incident goons looted 35 Tola Gold ornaments with Thirty thousands cash from the residence of Pradeep Kumar of Garabandha of Gajapati district. The house owner was proprietor of cashew mill reported at Garabandha Police Station. As per information family left for Tripitri on April 1st. Today returns home. After returns home they seen goons entered home from backside. They broken Locker and looted 35 tola of gold with 30000 cash. Police started searching with dog squad.

Rudra's Greatness to Perform Last Rites of Unidentified Body

Khordha, (DMC): Khordha Rotary Club President & social activists Rudra Nath Dutta has shown humanity by honoring the dead body of a stranger. On March 31 at 9 pm, an unknown vehicle hit a person, aged about 35 to 40 years old, near the Daleiput Overbridge on National Highway No-16 near Khordha Sadar. Police Station & he fell in a pool of blood. Ashok Kumar Routray, a home guard of Sadar Police Station, who was passing by saw this and informed the police station. The Police rescued the person & took him to the Khordha District Headquarters Hospital, but the doctor declared him dead. The Sadar Police Station, Khordha registered a case vide no- 89/25 & the body of the deceased was autopsy on the April-1.

After the autopsy for identification, the body was preserved in the morgue of the district headquarters hospital for 96 hours. However, since the identity of the deceased could not be found, the magistrate ordered for the cremation of the body. After learning this, the president of the Rotary Club, Khordha Rudranath Dutta contacted the Sadar Police Station for last rites of the body. With the consent of IIC, Sadar police station, Kanhu Charan Swain, the last rites was performed at the Barunai cremation ground in the presence of the investigating officer of the case, Jayanta Bhata. Rotary Club Secretary Sanjaya Burman, senior citizen & Rotarian Dev Prasad Majumdar, Rotract Chinmayee Das, Amit Pradhan, Ajaya Martha, Lokesh Nayak were present and co-operated. Intellectual Masses praised Rudra's greatness. Previously, Rudra and his accomplices had already perform last rites of 7 unknown individuals.

Water Scarcity Felt by Deer Like Human Found in Front of BDO Quarter

Paralakhemundi, (DMC): As summer prevailed scarcity of water rising not only human beings but also for animals. For drinking water one deer found in Gosani block headquarter of Gajapati district. That used to move various nearby villages for water as pond, canal are dried. Later at block headquarter that was found. Forest staff rescued that animal after treatment left at forest. BDO arranged water in his



quarter where those animals & birds use to drink & return back.

Waqf Bill Discussion Breaks Record for Longest Debate in RS

New Delhi, (H.S) : The extensive and rigorous debate on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill in the Rajya Sabha last week came as not just another defining moment of the Parliamentary journey, but it also set a new benchmark by scripting new record of having longest discussion in the history of the Upper House. The debate on the Waqf Bill 2025 in Rajya Sabha saw unprecedented debate and fiery exchanges too, and proceeded at a stretch for more than 17 hours, surpassing the last longest debate in 1981. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju took to social media on Sunday to share glimpses of the 'facilitators' of the longest ever discussion in Rajya Sabha. Taking to X, Mr Rijiju shared pictures and wrote: "With MoS Arjun Ram Meghwal, Murugan, Secretary, Adl. Secretary & JS in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. Discussion on Waqf



Amendment Bill for 17 hours, 2 minutes in Rajya Sabha broke the earlier record time discussion on ESMA (16 hours 55 Minutes) created in 1981!"

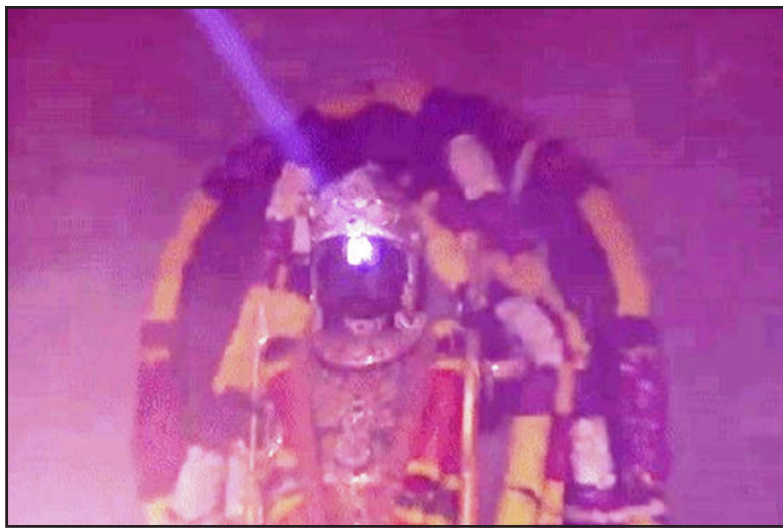
With MoS @arjunrammeghwal Ji, @Murugan_MoS Ji, Secretary, Adl. Secretary & JS in the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs. Discussion on

Waqf Amendment Bill for 17 hours, 2 minutes in Rajya Sabha broke the earlier record time discussion on ESMA (16 Hrs 55 Minutes) created in 1981. April 3, the penultimate day of Budget Session, saw Rajya Sabha witnessing its longest-ever sitting in the history of the House, lasting from 11:00 a.m. on

Thursday to 4:02 a.m. the following day. After the passage of the Waqf Bill from both houses of Parliament, Mr Rijiju spoke to newsmen on Friday and called it a new record in Parliamentary proceedings and a testament to dramatic discussion without disruption. A day ago, Lok Sabha cleared the Bill after a 12-hour-long marathon debate. Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Thakkar also hailed the passage of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025, as a "historic legislation" and called it a powerful reminder of what can be achieved through dialogue and shared purpose. Mr Thakkar congratulated the Upper House members for joining the "unprecedented" sitting and said, "The Rajya Sabha etched its name in the annals of legislative history."

"The sitting began at 11 a.m. on April 3 and continued till 4.02 a.m. the next that is, this day. The longest in its history," he said, complementing members for their 17-hour initiative to debate the legislation. "This would send a very great message to people at large and enhance belief in this great institution. The Rajya Sabha has, once again, set the democratic standards worth emulation by others," he said. Overall, the Rajya Sabha functioned for a total of 159 hours in the Budget Session, with productivity standing at 119 per cent.

Ayodhya's Ram Janmabhoomi temple witnesses 'Surya Tilak'



Ayodhya, (H.S) : On the occasion of Ram Navami on Sunday, the Ram Janmabhoomi Temple in Ayodhya witnessed the 'Surya Tilak' illuminating the forehead of Ram Lalla.

The 'Surya Tilak' occurred exactly at noon when a beam of sunlight was precisely directed on the forehead idol of Ram Lalla and formed a celestial tilak. Visuals showed priests offering prayers to Ram Lalla during the Surya Tilak. Earlier in the day, large crowds gathered at the temples across Uttar Pradesh in Ayodhya and Sambhal. Authorities heightened security across different zones, with drone surveillance and zonal arrangements to manage the large influx of pilgrims. Speaking to ANI, Ayodhya Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Rajkaran Nayyar said, "A large number of devotees are arriving on the occasion of Ram Navami. We have divided the areas into different zones. Drones are being used for crowd management and security purposes. "In a recent development, additional SP Madhuban Singh said on the arrangements at the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi temple. "People come in large numbers to offer prayers on the occasion of Ram Navami...Police personnel have been deployed in large numbers to ensure the safety and security of devotees...Proper parking arrangements have also been made," he said. In Sambhal, too, security personnel were deployed in large numbers at temples and nearby areas, and officials monitored the situation closely through surveillance systems.

Earlier today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended the greetings of 'Ram Navami' and wished for fresh enthusiasm in the lives of countrymen. Taking to X, PM Modi said, "Heartfelt greetings to all countrymen on the occasion of Ram Navami. May this holy and sacred occasion of Lord Shri Ram's birth festival bring new consciousness and fresh enthusiasm into all your lives and continuously provide new energy to the resolve of a strong, prosperous, and capable India. Jai Shri Ram!"

Overwhelmed by work pressure, Kerala techie dies by suicide

KOTTAYAM, (H.S) : A young computer engineer was found dead after falling from his flat at Kanjikuzhi in Kottayam on Sunday morning. The deceased was identified as Jacob Thomas (23), an employee of a private company in Ernakulam, who was staying in Skyline Flat at Muttambalam in Kanjikuzhi. The incident took place at around 5:30 am on Sunday. Prior to his death, Thomas had sent a video message to his mother in the early hours of the day. Later, when the parents woke up in the morning, they found their son dead after falling from his flat. According to police, Thomas' relatives revealed that Thomas had taken his own life after being overwhelmed by work pressure. Relatives said that Thomas had been working from his residence until late at night and was struggling with excessive stress from his job. Thomas started working as a software engineer four months ago after completing his studies.

Centre to implement new tariff line regime on rice exports from May 1

CHANDIGARH, (H.S) : The central government will implement a new tariff regime on rice exports from May 1. The regime seeks to classify rice based on processing method, variety, and GI tagging -- a step that is expected to enhance the global branding of Indian rice. Minister of State for Commerce, Jitin Prasada, in a written reply to Parliament had recently stated that the new structure will primarily divide rice into three major categories. The categories include processing-based (Parboiled and other types) variety variety-based (Basmati and non-Basmati) and GI tagged varieties (Rice registered under the Geographical Indications Registry). "The new tariff items have been created by amending the Customs Tariff Act, 1975, effected through the Finance Act 2025, passed on March 29, 2025," he said. Ranjit Singh Jossan, Vice President of The Basmati Rice Millers and Exporters Association, said, "More than 20 GI-tagged rice varieties cultivated in over ten states will directly benefit from the reform. The varieties, protected under the GI Act of 1999, will gain better recognition in global markets and maintain their authenticity and quality."

21 Cities See Temperatures Above 42 Degrees

Bengaluru, (H.S) : Twenty-one cities across five states in India registered temperature of 42 degrees Celsius and above today. National capital Delhi will have to grapple with the heat wave for the next three days. Besides Delhi, it will sear cities across Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and even in Odisha. The spike in the first week of April involved major deviations at every city, ranging from above three degrees to 6.9 degrees. The met office indicated the decrease in wind speed has a role to play, especially in Delhi. "The predominant surface wind speed will likely be 8-10 kmph during the morning.

Rahul Gandhi asks youth to join 'White T-shirt Movement'

Patna, (H.S) : Ahead of his scheduled visit to Bihar on Monday, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has urged the state's youth to join the 'White T-shirt Movement'. The Leader of Opposition will join the ongoing 'Palayan Roko, Naukri Do' yatra in Begusarai on Monday. Later, he will participate in a seminar on safeguarding the Constitution of India in Patna. He will also address the party workers at the state Congress headquarters before returning to Delhi. In a video clip posted on social media platform 'X', Rahul Gandhi asked the youth in Bihar to join the 'Palayan Roko, Naukri Do' yatra in white T-shirts.

He said, "This yatra is against unemployment, paper leak, inflation, reduction in government jobs and



privatisation that is not helping you. Join this yatra in white T-shirts to send a message to the world and put pressure on the Bihar government. We have to change the Bihar government. We want to mobilise your energy and build a new Bihar." Hundreds of youth, whose appointment is pending despite clearing the Army recruitment exams, will also

Punjab farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal ends his indefinite hunger strike



CHANDIGARH, (H.S) : After 131 days of fast-unto-death, farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal on Saturday announced that he would end his indefinite hunger strike, which began on 26 November last year. However, he stated that he would continue leading the farmers' movement with renewed strength. Addressing a 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' organised at Sirhind in Fatehgarh Sahib district, Dallewal, chief of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political), said, "You (farmers) all have asked me to end the fast unto death. I am indebted to you for taking care of the agitation. I respect your sentiments, I accept your order." "Even as I wanted to continue with the fast till all the 12 demands are met, but as more and more demands were pouring in asking me to visit various states to mobilise farmers for national level struggle for bigger issues concerning farming, going by those appeals and aiming to reach out to farmers from across the country I decided to accept those appeals," he added.

He added that the struggle for a legal guarantee on minimum support price (MSP) for crops, based on the C2+50 per cent formula, will continue. "For that, all need to come prepared and, if need be, we will again start the morcha at the appropriate time," he said. Indications of Dallewal breaking his over four-month-long fast had emerged on Friday when farmer leaders close to him welcomed the appeal made by Union Agriculture Minister Shriraj Singh Chouhan urging him to end his fast and lead farmers in the next round of meetings on 4 May. Union Minister of State for Railways Ravneet Singh Bittu also appealed to Dallewal to end his fast. Dallewal began his indefinite hunger strike on 26 November last year to press for various demands of the agitating farmers, including a legal guarantee on MSP. Though he agreed to attend the proposed meeting with Union ministers on 4 May, Dallewal questioned the government's credibility. "How can we trust the governments which stabbed in the back by arresting farm leaders by inviting them for talks? But despite all this, we will attend the next round of meetings even if we are arrested again," he said. Farmer leader Abhimanyu Kohad said there was immense pressure from farmers who wanted Dallewal to visit them. "Thus going by it, he decided to end the fast and lead farmers in their fight," Kohad added. Though Dallewal began taking medical aid at the Khanauri protest site after the Union government had invited farmer leaders for talks in January, he did not end his fast. On 19 March, he was detained by Punjab Police and moved between two hospitals in Jalandhar before being rushed to Park Hospital in Patiala on 24 March. He was discharged on 3 April. On 28 March, the state government informed the Supreme Court that Dallewal had ended his 123-day-long hunger strike, but the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) strongly refuted this claim at the time.

Farmer forums Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha had earlier called for 'Delhi Chalo-02' on 13 February last year, but were stopped by Haryana Police using tear gas shells. The farmers then began morchas at the Shambhu and Khanauri borders, which were forcibly lifted by Punjab Police on 19 March this year.

Former Kerala Minister MA Baby elected as General Secretary of CPI(M)

Madurai, (H.S) : Former Kerala education minister MA Baby was elected as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) at the party's 24th All India Conference in Madurai on Sunday. Mariam Alexander Baby, commonly known as MA Baby, was a member of the Rajya Sabha of the CPI (M) from 1986 to 1998.

The party highlighted that the newly elected Central Committee has 20 per cent women members. "The CPIM 24th Party Congress has elected an 85-member Central Committee with one vacancy. The new Central Committee elected an 18-member Polit Bureau with Comrade M.A. Baby as



the General Secretary. 20% of the Central Committee members are women," the party said in a post on X. The position of party general secretary became vacant following Sitaram Yechury's death last year. Subsequently, Prakash Karat assumed the role of interim coordinator.

"Everything Will Be Finished": Sacked Teachers Target Bengal Government

Kolkata, (H.S) : The Supreme Court judgment cancelling the appointment of more than 25,000 teachers and other school staff in West Bengal has sparked a massive political row, with the ruling Trinamool Congress and the Opposition BJP and CPM trading barbs. But away from this din is the silence of uncertainty that faces 25,753 sacked employees, who are wondering how to pay bills and put food on the table.

NDTV spoke to two teachers whose appointments have been cancelled. They spoke of the EMI burden, ailing parents, schoolgoing children and how the Supreme Court judgment had turned their world upside down. Pratap Roychowdhury taught in a school in South 24 Parganas near Kolkata, till yesterday. "If a man loses his job, you can imagine how it impacts his family. There are home loans, EMIs and many people are dependent on him. Everything will be finished," he said. The bench of Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar yesterday cancelled the appointments of all 25,753 teachers and other staff appointed by the West Bengal School Service Commission in 2016 for massive irregularities. "In our opinion, this is a case wherein the entire selection process has been vitiated and tainted beyond resolution.



Manipulations and frauds on a large scale, coupled with the attempted cover-up, have dented the selection process beyond repair and partial redemption. The credibility and legitimacy of the selection are denuded," the court said. The court said that while the untainted candidates, whose names did not come up during the investigation, need not return the salaries they received in the last eight years, they would no longer have their jobs. The court has asked the state government to repeat the selection process within three months. Mr Roychowdhury held the state government responsible for what they are going through. Asked if he expects

any help from the state government, he replied, "This government engineered this scam. What can we expect from them?"

Amit Ranjan Bhuyan taught physical science to students of Class 9 and 10. He doesn't have a job anymore. "We studied, cracked a competitive exam and got a job. Some people resorted to corruption. It would not have been possible without the state government's support. But those untainted like us were expecting that we would be able to continue in our jobs. This judgment has destroyed our lives. I have a nine-year-old daughter, my wife and my mother. There are EMIs, how will we look for new jobs now," he said. Mr Bhuyan said the state government cannot escape

responsibility for the damage they have done. "Why so much corruption? The state government is responsible. But the Supreme Court should have given relief to those not involved in corruption. Why did I lose my job?" The sacked teacher said the road ahead is very tough. "If I were 25-26, I would have cracked another exam. The confidence levels are different then. I am 39 now, which job will I be eligible for? The Supreme Court has said we can take the same exam in three months. Is it possible to crack the same competitive exam after 10 years? I do not know whether I will be able to. The judgment gave the same punishment to those involved in corruption and those not involved. I have been honest all my life, and my academics are good. This is unfair," he said.

In the aftermath of the verdict, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee alleged that opposition parties BJP and CPM had conspired to effect a collapse of Bengal's education system. She also said she cannot accept the verdict personally, even though her government would implement it. The BJP has hit back, with party MP Sambit Patra alleging that lakhs of people are paying for the Trinamool Congress government's corruption. "Where is Rahul Gandhi now? Where are INDI alliance partners? Didi will go to jail, surely," he said.

Gang Violence, Shark Attacks: US Flags Travel Risks In The Bahamas

US, (H.S): The US State Department has issued a renewed warning for travellers heading to The Bahamas, urging them to be cautious due to rising crime, poorly regulated boating and recent shark attacks. The advisory, updated on March 31, lists violent crimes such as armed robberies, burglaries and sexual assaults.

These incidents, according to the department, can occur anywhere in The Bahamas but are most frequent in Nassau and Freeport on New Providence and Grand Bahama islands. A particularly high-risk area underlined in the advisory is the "Over the Hill" neighbourhood in Nassau, south of Shirley Street, where gang violence has led to death of residents. Tourists are also advised to be cautious when booking vacation rentals, especially those lacking private security. The State Department recommends locking all doors and



windows and not answering doors unless the visitor is known. Travellers are also advised to avoid physically resisting any robbery attempt and to thoroughly check their luggage for firearms or ammunition before departure.

The advisory also warns that firearms and ammunition, even in small quantities or by accident, are illegal in The Bahamas. Authorities have detained US travellers for possession of such

items, sometimes preventing them from leaving the country and leading to jail time and heavy fines. Apart from crime, the advisory speaks of safety concerns around water activities.

The boating industry in The Bahamas is described as poorly regulated, with reports of injuries and fatalities. Some watercraft are unsafe, and operators may lack proper licenses or insurance. "Due to the risks, US government employees are prohibited from

using jet skis and personal watercraft rented from independent operators on New Providence and Paradise islands," the advisory read. There have also been reports of sexual assaults by jet ski operators, particularly near downtown Nassau beaches. Tourists are warned not to swim alone, be cautious of watercraft operating close to shore, and assess their physical fitness before snorkeling.

The advisory says to be aware of weather and water conditions, as well as to be vigilant in public restrooms. Shark attacks have become another safety concern. The State Department recommends travellers enroll in the Smart Traveller Enrollment Program (STEP) to receive updates and help during emergencies. It also urges US citizens to purchase travel insurance that includes evacuation coverage and review the CDC's travel health information.

Iran Denies Reports of Casualties in US Airstrike on Yemen

Tehran, (H.S): No Iranian personnel were killed in a recent US airstrike on Yemen, according to Iran's Tasnim news agency, which is known to have close ties to the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC). The statement came in response to a claim made by Yemen's Minister of Information, Moammar al-Eryani, who posted on social media platform X on Friday that 70 members of the Houthi group - including senior field commanders and Iranian experts from the IRGC - were killed in a US strike on Tuesday. The attack reportedly targeted a Houthi gathering in Al-Fazah, a coastal area in the Red Sea port city of Hodeidah, Xinhua news agency reported. Tasnim dismissed the report as false, stating: "The released report about the martyrdom of Iranian forces in Yemen is not correct. Follow-ups by Tasnim's reporter indicate that



the claim is false and no Iranian has been martyred in Yemen." Tasnim added that the "false" news appeared to be in line with the anti-Iran psychological warfare aimed at escalating tensions in the West Asia region. It reiterated previous statements by Iranian officials asserting that Houthi forces are fighting the US and Israel independently. Earlier on Saturday at least one person was killed and four others wounded when airstrikes by US forces hit a solar energy store and

a house in Yemen's northern city of Saada, medics reported. Medics described the casualty toll as preliminary, adding that civil defence teams were working to extinguish fires and search for victims at the targeted sites in the Hafsin area of western Saada city, the capital of the namesake Saada province, Xinhua news agency reported. Earlier, the Houthi group denied US claims that an American airstrike had targeted a meeting of its military leaders in the Red Sea port city of Hodeidah in.

S. Korea Reports Additional Avian Influenza Cases, Total At 46

Seoul, (H.S): South Korea has confirmed additional cases of highly pathogenic avian influenza, raising the total number of infections for the current season to 46, the government said on Saturday. According to the Central Disaster Management Headquarters, the latest outbreaks were reported at poultry farms located in the central cities of Cheongju and Asan.

In response, authorities have dispatched initial response teams to the affected farms to control access, conduct culling operations and carry out thorough epidemiological investigations. To prevent further spread and ensure early detection of potential infections, the government is conducting intensive inspections. Meanwhile, South Korea confirmed four additional highly pathogenic avian influenza (AI) cases in less than a week, the agriculture ministry said earlier



this week. The four cases were reported at poultry farms in three adjacent cities in the central region - Cheonan, Sejong and Cheongju - since Wednesday, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The latest case broke out at a poultry farm in Sejong, which has some 89,000 chickens. The country reported its first outbreak for the season on October 29.

Authorities said they have been taking necessary measures to prevent further spread of the virus, asking livestock industry workers across the nation to sterilize their farms, facilities and cars by Wednesday. The ministry

said the latest AI cases are expected to have limited impact on the domestic supply of eggs, but will continue to monitor the situation. Some 1.8 percent of 77.6 million chickens at poultry farms nationwide have been culled since late October due to the bird flu, according to the ministry.

Avian influenza antigens of the H5 strain was earlier detected in a dead wild mammal in the first case reported in South Korea. The bird flu antigens were detected in the body of a wild leopard cat found near a reservoir in the southwestern county of Hwasun, 277 kilometers south of Seoul.

Houston, (H.S): Fort Bend County judge K P George, a prominent Indian-American elected official, was arrested Friday on two felony counts of money laundering stemming from allegations of wire fraud and falsification of a campaign finance report. Mr George, a Democrat who has served as county judge since 2018 and won re-election in 2022, was booked into the county jail around 3:30 pm and released after posting \$20,000 for bail.

The charges carry a maximum prison term of 10 years. He has denied any wrongdoing and claimed the indictments are politically driven. According to court records and the Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office, Mr George is accused of laundering between \$30,000 and \$150,000. Officials confirmed the new charges are unrelated to a separate 2023 indictment in which Mr George and former chief of staff Taral Patel were accused of manufacturing fake



racist attacks against Mr George's 2022 campaign by creating fraudulent social media accounts." These charges are unrelated to the pending misdemeanor," the DA's office said in a statement. "Our office remains committed to the integrity our public deserves and the ethics to which all prosecutors are sworn."

In a statement Friday, Mr George denied any wrongdoing and claimed the indictments were politically driven. "I have full faith in the judicial system and will vigorously defend my innocence," he said, accusing the DA's office

of "improper treatment". The District Attorney's Office rejected the claim and emphasised the investigation had been conducted in accordance with legal and ethical standards. The arrest has intensified political pressure on Mr George.

Fort Bend County Treasurer Bill Rickert publicly called for his resignation, citing concern over "fake racism scandals" and now the money laundering charges. Former Precinct 4 Constable Trever Nehls, who challenged Mr George in 2022, echoed the sentiment, saying, "This

indictment is not surprising. I saw during the campaign how lies and hate were used to manipulate voters." The charges against Mr George and Mr Patel have drawn widespread attention, particularly in Fort Bend, one of Texas's fastest-growing and most demographically diverse counties. An indictment like this, especially involving alleged financial misconduct, can severely erode public trust even before a trial,"

said Dr Elena Martinez, a political analyst at the University of Houston. "Given Fort Bend's national profile, this case is likely to draw attention well beyond the county line." Mr George's office announced Thursday -- just a day before his arrest -- that the annual State of the County address, originally scheduled for May 8, had been postponed until further notice. No reason was given at the time. The District Attorney's Office said the investigation remains ongoing.

Africa CDC Calls For Self-Reliance As Africa Faces Surging Health Emergencies

Addis Ababa, (H.S): As Africa faces an "unprecedented surge" in public health emergencies, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has called on African countries to strengthen domestic financing mechanisms to address emerging and existing public health challenges. The Africa CDC made the call in two latest reports - Africa CDC Annual Report 2024 and Africa's Health Financing in a New Era Report, both released Thursday. Highlighting the agency's strides in promoting disease control and health security across Africa, the

two reports list challenges that risk reversing the continent's decades of progress in public health, Xinhua news agency reported. Data from the African Union's specialised healthcare agency show that the continent, over the past 24 months, has witnessed an "unprecedented surge in public health emergencies," rising by about 41 per cent - from 152 disease outbreaks in 2022 to 213 in 2024. It said the surge in disease outbreaks has placed "immense pressure on already fragile health systems, exposing deep-seated vulnerabilities and severely

weakening the continent's capacity for timely and effective response." Africa's health sector is facing a financing crisis, driven by a sharp decline of 70 per cent in official development assistance from 2021 to 2025, the Africa CDC said. It noted that the situation is further worsened by the continent's heavy external dependency with over 90 per cent of vaccines, medicines and diagnostics being externally sourced, leaving countries vulnerable to global supply chain shocks. "Without decisive action, Africa CDC projects the continent could reverse two

decades of health progress, face two to four million additional preventable deaths annually. A total of 39 million more Africans could be pushed into poverty by 2030 due to intertwined health and economic shocks," the Africa CDC said in its health financing report. Underscoring its commitment to addressing the continent's public health challenges, the Africa CDC, in its annual report, outlined achievements across six strategic priority areas. These priorities include strengthening integrated health systems, promoting local manufacturing of health products,

enhancing early warning and surveillance systems, fortifying national public health institutes, improving laboratory systems and networks, as well as ensuring robust emergency preparedness and response to health threats. The report highlighted the Africa CDC's "instrumental role" in supporting national responses to several major public health emergencies in 2024, including in addressing the mpox outbreak that affected over 20 African countries and the Marburg virus disease in Rwanda, while also supporting 15 African countries dealing with cholera outbreaks.

US Senior South Asia Official Visiting Pakistan Will 'Underscore' Counterterrorism

New York, (H.S): US President Donald Trump's administration is sending a senior State Department official to Pakistan to "underscore" counterterrorism cooperation while looking at promoting economic ties. The State Department said on Saturday that Eric Meyer, the senior official of the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, will lead an interagency delegation on a three-day visit to Islamabad. It said Meyer will "engage with senior officials to underscore the vital importance of our continued collaboration on counterterrorism".

Meyer "will meet with senior Pakistani officials to expand opportunities for American businesses in Pakistan and promote the deepening of economic ties between our two countries", it said. The media note highlighted the delegation's intent to "advance US interests in the critical minerals sector at the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum". The top US regional position, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, is vacant, and Trump's nominee Paul Kapur is awaiting Senate approval.

Former President Joe Biden had virtually ostracised the military-backed governments of Pakistan and had not invited any of its prime ministers to Washington or visited that country. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif made overtures to Trump by capturing ISIS-Khorasan leader Mohammad Sharifullah, the mastermind of the suicide bombing that killed 13 US military personnel near the Kabul Airport during the US withdrawal from



Afghanistan in 2023 and handing him over to the US. In his address to Congress last month, Trump thanked Pakistan "for helping to arrest this monster". Sharifullah's capture and extradition was Pakistan's attempt to show it could - if it wanted to - cooperate with the US on counterterrorism. With that out of the way, the Trump administration which has fewer ideological compunctions and takes a transactional approach, is now viewing Pakistan's business potential - as seen in the Meyer delegation's agenda.

Islamabad has launched a campaign to promote its mineral resources, drawing the attention of Washington, which is looking for strategic minerals. The Mineral Forum that Meyer will be attending says on its website that its mission is to "establish Pakistan as a key force in the global mining economy, leveraging its vast mineral wealth to drive ... global supply chain resilience". Pakistan's media has been touting the availability of copper, chromite (from which chromium is derived) and, even, lithium needed for large batteries. US trade with Pakistan was only \$7.3 billion in 2024, with the US running a deficit of about \$3 billion. Trump announced last week that he is imposing a 29 per cent reciprocal tariff on Pakistan.

"He's A Lunatic": Thousands Protest Against Donald Trump Across US

Washington, United States, (H.S): Tens of thousands of protesters flooded the streets of major US cities on Saturday to oppose the divisive policies of President Donald Trump, in the largest demonstrations since his return to the White House. Opponents of the Republican president's policies -- from government staffing cuts to trade tariffs and eroding civil liberties - rallied in Washington, New York, Houston, Florida, Colorado and Los Angeles, among other locations. "I am so angry, I'm so mad, all the time, yes.



across the world, and causing devastation to people here at home," said Diane Kolifrath, 64, a bike tour guide. "They're gutting our government." In Los Angeles, a woman dressed as a character from dystopian novel "The Handmaid's Tale" waved a large flag with the message: "Get out of my uterus," a reference to Trump's anti-abortion policies. In Denver, Colorado, one man in a large crowd of protesters held up a placard reading "No king for USA." The rallies even extended to some European capitals, where demonstrators voiced opposition to Trump and his aggressive trade

policies. "What's happening in America is everyone's problem," Liz Chamberlin, a dual US-British citizen told AFP at a London rally. "It's economic lunacy... He is going to push us into a global recession." And in Berlin, 70-year-old retiree Susanne Fest said Trump had created "a constitutional crisis," adding, "The guy is a lunatic." In the US, a loose coalition of left-leaning groups like MoveOn and Women's March organized "Hands Off" events in more than 1,000 cities and in every congressional district, the groups said. Trump has angered many

Americans by moving aggressively to downsize the government, unilaterally impose conservative values and sharply pressure even friendly countries over borders and trade, causing stock markets to tank. "We're out here to stop the, honestly, fascism," protester Dominic Santella told AFP in Boston. "We're stopping a leader from... jailing his opponents, stopping him from jailing just random people, immigrants." Many Democrats are irate that their party, in the minority in both houses of Congress, has seemed so helpless to resist Trump's moves.

At the National Mall, just blocks from the White House, thousands heard speakers including Representative Jamie Raskin, a Democrat who served as impeachment manager during Trump's second impeachment. "No moral person wants an economy-crashing dictator who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing," he told the crowd. Activist Graylan Hagler, 71, also addressed the protest, saying: "They've woken up a sleeping giant, and they

haven't seen nothing yet." "We will not sit down, we will not be quiet, and we will not go away." Saturday's demonstrations were largely peaceful. An upbeat atmosphere prevailed on a mild day in Washington, with protesters ranging from the elderly to young couples with infants in strollers. A Women's March shortly after Trump's first election in 2016 drew an estimated half-million protesters to Washington. Organizers for the latest Washington rally had predicted a turnout of 20,000 but by Saturday afternoon said the number appeared considerably larger.

As Trump continues upending Washington, his approval rating has fallen to its lowest since taking office, according to recent polling. But despite global pushback to his sweeping tariffs and bubbling resentment from many Americans, the White House has dismissed the protests. The Republican president, still popular with his base, shows no sign of relenting. "My policies will never change," Trump said Friday.

RBI to cut rates again? All eyes on central bank as it will commence FY26's first MPC meet

New Delhi, (H.S): The Reserve Bank of India's rate-setting panel is set to take its first monetary policy decision of the financial year in a review meetings starting Monday, amid a significant moderation in headline inflation over recent months. A Reuters poll of economists forecasts a 25 basis point cut in rates at the meeting. The RBI typically conducts six bimonthly meetings in a financial year, where it deliberates interest rates, money supply, inflation outlook and various macroeconomic indicators.

The other five meetings are scheduled for June 4-6, August 5-7, September 29-October 1, December 3-5, and February 4-6. In the previous MPC meeting on February 7, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had unanimously decided to reduce the policy rate by 25 basis points (bps) from 6.5 per cent to 6.25 per cent. This was the first rate cut in about 5 years. The repo rate is the rate of interest at which the



RBI lends to other banks. India's appointment of Poonam Gupta, a former World Bank economist who has advocated for lower interest rates in the past, boosts the case for monetary policy easing in Asia's third-largest economy, analysts said.

Gupta becomes the RBI's first woman deputy governor in over a decade and will likely join the monetary policy committee, which cut interest rates for the first time in five years in February under new Governor Sanjay Malhotra. Bloomberg quoting the economists expect

more .. rate cuts next week as Malhotra pivots to a more growth-friendly approach than his predecessor, Shaktikanta Das. Gupta's previous work has bolstered their hopes further. A well-known economist and government adviser, Gupta worked for nearly two decades at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. She succeeds Michael Patra, who was head of the monetary policy department at the RBI and who retired in January.

In an opinion piece published in The Economic Times after the last policy decision, Gupta had called the earlier repo rate of 6.5% "unjustifiably high" at a time when growth is slow. The South Asian economy expanded at its weakest pace since the pandemic in the last fiscal and is forecast to grow at 6.3% to 6.8% for the current financial year. The "RBI needs to strengthen all its functions to become the central bank" of a

developed India, she wrote. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), under the leadership of new Governor Sanjay Malhotra, announced a 25 basis point reduction in the repo rate, lowering it to 6.25%. Malhotra revealed that the committee unanimously decided to maintain a neutral stance, a shift made in October of the previous year,

indicating a flexibility to adjust policy rates in response to the evolving economic environment. Additionally, the December policy included a 50 basis point reduction in the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR), bringing it down to 4%, aimed at enhancing liquidity and supporting credit growth. For the financial year 2024-25, the RBI has projected India's real GDP growth at 7.2%, while the Economic Survey forecasts a 6.4% growth, in line with the National Statistical Office (NSO) estimate.

Goyal Assures DeepTech Startups of Big Push From 10,000 Crore Fund

New Delhi, (H.S): Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal announced on Saturday that the government will provide a substantial outlay for deeptech startups from the Rs 10,000 crore Fund of Funds scheme. Addressing the Startup Mahakumbh 2025 here, the minister said he has directed the SIDBI to prioritise smaller startups while disbursing funds through the scheme. "I want SIDBI to have one centre in every state to help startup founders and entrepreneurs explore new ideas," he said.

Goyal expressed confidence in the country's potential in deep technology, artificial intelligence, and data analytics. "This is the foundation on which I am confident India will foray in a big way into the world of innovation. We will make our presence felt on the global stage," he remarked. The minister also urged Indian investors to recognise the huge potential of the country's startup ecosystem as the young people were doing excellent work which



could be accelerated with greater domestic investment. He assured young entrepreneurs that the government would play the role of a facilitator and not a regulator to promote the startup ecosystem. He urged them to provide feedback on ways to facilitate the ease of doing business.

Taking a dig at the opposition parties, Goyal said: "Some political parties call themselves by the same name as the country - India - but they are pained when programmes like Startup Mahakumbh are successful." Minister Goyal had earlier sparked a debate with a comparison on Friday between

Chinese and Indian startups to underscore the need for greater focus on high-end technology. However, he had also emphasised that he was confident India would emerge as a global leader in innovation and technology-driven growth.

This is the base - the foundation - on which I am confident, India will foray in a very big way into the world of innovation. We will make our presence felt on the global stage. I go back extremely satisfied with the work done with our young startups. Young India is raring to go. And they are ready to capture the world," Goyal had said.

Women own 39.2% of bank accounts in India : Govt report



New Delhi, (H.S): Women own 39.2 per cent of bank accounts in the country and the proportion is even higher at 42.2 per cent in rural areas, according to a government report. The Statistics and Programme Implementation Ministry (MoSPI) released the 26th edition of its publication titled "Women and Men in India 2024: Selected Indicators and Data" on Sunday.

The publication offers a comprehensive overview of the gender landscape in India, presenting selected indicators and data across key areas like population, education, health, economic participation, and decision-making, all sourced from various Ministries/ Departments/ Organizations. A MOSPI statement said that the report highlights that women own 39.2 per cent of all bank accounts and contribute to 39.7 per cent of total deposits. Their participation is the highest in rural areas, where they make up 42.2 per cent of

account holders. It stated that there is a rise in DEMAT accounts over the years, indicating growing participation in the stock market. From March 31, 2021, to November 30, 2024, the total number of DEMAT accounts increased from 33.26 million to 143.02 million, marking more than a fourfold rise. Male account holders have consistently outnumbered female account holders, but female participation has also shown a growing trend.

The number of male accounts rose from 26.59 million in 2021 to 115.31 million in 2024, while female accounts increased from 6.67 million to 27.71 million during the same period. Rising percentage of female-headed proprietary establishments across manufacturing, trade, and other services sectors over the years 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 has been observed, it stated.. The total number of electors increased from 173.2 million in 1952 to 978 million in

2024, with a notable rise in female voter registration. Female voter turnout varied over the years, reaching 67.2 per cent in 2019 but slightly declining to 65.8 per cent in 2024. The gender gap in voting has narrowed, with female turnout surpassing male turnout in 2024. Over the years, there has been an increase in the number of startups recognized by DPIIT with at least one-woman director, reflecting a positive trend in female entrepreneurship. The total number of such startups rose from 1,943 in 2017 to 17,405 in 2024.

The primary and higher Secondary levels (students) have consistently high GPI (Gender Parity Index), indicating strong female enrolment. Upper primary and elementary levels saw fluctuations but remained close to parity. The LFPR (labour force participation rate) in usual status for ages 15 years and above has improved from 49.8 per cent (2017-18) to 60.1 per cent (2023-24), it stated. "Women and Men in India 2024:

Selected Indicators and Data" serves as a crucial resource, highlighting both progress in gender equality and persistent disparities. By analyzing socio-economic indicators and highlighting trends, it empowers policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders to develop gender-sensitive policies fostering sustainable and inclusive development.

Washington, (H.S): DC's decision to impose reciprocal tariffs on its key trade partners, including India, has put American buyers in a tough spot. Buyers are reassessing existing orders, with some seeking discounts. They are also exploring the best possible sources for imports, given the varied but steep reciprocal tariffs, exporters said.

Some exporters are worried that buyers may face liquidity issues, considering the sharp rise in import tariffs from 60 countries. The US' average import tariff has been as low as 3 per cent until now. If buyers face liquidity pressure, payments to Indian exporters may be delayed, and the payment cycle could get elongated, they said. Separately, calculations are underway to gauge the impact on prices.

On April 2, US President Donald Trump signed an executive order introducing new reciprocal tariffs, imposing additional ad valorem duties ranging from 10 per cent to 50 per cent on imports from several countries. The baseline 10 per cent duty took effect on Saturday, with additional country-specific duties coming into force from April 9. An 'individual reciprocal higher tariff' will be imposed on 60 countries with which the US has the largest trade deficits. In India, Customs authorities are working towards faster clearance of goods by April 9, when the



reciprocal tariffs are expected to kick in. The priority is to dispatch as many consignments as possible - either by ship or by air - before April 9. Ajay Sahai, director-general and chief executive officer of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations, said they expect demand to slow down over the next few weeks as buyers evaluate the situation with respect to the additional duties, since India is not the only country facing high reciprocal tariffs."

There's uncertainty at the moment. Buyers are calculating their liquidity position in light of the tariff hike. They will also need to assess whether their buying volume will remain the same or be reduced. This assessment will have to be made across all countries," Sahai said. Overall, every country's exports to the US will slow down as a result of this drastic step, dampening demand for at least the next few weeks. Chandrima

Chatterjee, secretary general of the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry, said some buyers are asking for discounts, although the full picture will emerge in a couple of weeks. Chatterjee further noted that India's neighbouring rivals, such as Vietnam, have already offered zero-duty access to the US. If accepted, it will impact India's competitiveness in the textile sector.

The US has announced a 46 per cent reciprocal tariff on Vietnam. Two Gujarat-based mid-sized exporters said that no negotiations have begun with buyers yet, as clarity is still lacking. "The situation is quite volatile, so as of now, no negotiations on price have begun. As manufacturers and exporters, we don't yet know how much tariff will be levied, how much we can absorb, and to what extent we can pass it on. Therefore, it's too early for negotiations," said the promoter of one firm. He

added that they are keeping a close watch on raw material prices. "China is likely to keep prices competitive, as it is facing a 34 per cent tariff. With its massive capacities, it needs markets. So, raw material prices are likely to remain competitive," he said. The US has exempted imports of pharmaceuticals, energy, and certain minerals from reciprocal tariffs.

However, Trump has said he plans to impose additional tariffs on pharmaceuticals. The quantum and timeline are not yet known. Bhavin Mehta, vice-chairman of the Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (Pharmexcil), echoed this view, saying raw material prices may stay competitive due to China's excess capacities. "In the past two to three years, China has built huge active pharmaceutical ingredient capacities, and with the US market becoming a tough entry for them, they will need to sell their production somewhere.

Hence, prices may remain competitive," he explained. Exporters feel that each company will take a different approach. "Everyone has a different strategy for sourcing and will price accordingly. So, there's unlikely to be any uniform negotiation - it will be on a case-by-case basis," said a veteran executive who previously headed a large pharmaceutical firm in Mumbai.

Stock Short Selling Reaches \$4.38 Billion In 1st Week Of Resumption In South Korea

New Delhi, (H.S): Short selling activity in South Korean amounted to 6.4 trillion won (\$4.38 billion) in the first week after a more than a year-long ban was lifted, the bourse operator said on Sunday. Last Monday, short selling was allowed for all listed firms following a suspension imposed in

November 2023 after a series of naked short selling violations involving several global investment banks was discovered, reports Yonhap news agency. According to the Korea Exchange, short selling on the main KOSPI and secondary KOSDAQ markets averaged 1.28 trillion won per day, totalling 6.4

trillion won for the week. The weekly figure marked a sharp rise from the daily average of 788.4 billion won tallied during a month just before the country banned the trading practice. Foreign investors accounted for 90 percent of the short selling activity on the main KOSPI, while institutional investors took up 9 percent. Last week, the KOSPI fell

3.62 percent to close at 2,465.42 points on Friday, and the tech-laden KOSDAQ also suffered a 0.92 percent drop to finish at 687.39. Foreigners sold a net 5.86 trillion won over the one-week period, The Financial Supervisory Commission, the country's financial regulator, also drew up new regulatory changes.

GeM Showcases Startup Power at Startup Mahakumbh 2025, Unlocks New Growth Avenues for Innovation-Driven India

New Delhi, (PIB): The Startup Mahakumbh 2025 concluded in New Delhi on Saturday, marking significant participation and highlighting the growing strength of India's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Among the key participants was the Government e Marketplace (GeM), which showcased its role in supporting startup growth and underlined the potential of public procurement as a tool for promoting innovation and inclusive development. As a strategic presenting partner, GeM engaged with a wide range of startups, investors, policymakers, and industry leaders during the event. Its participation reflected an ongoing effort to support the growth of Indian startups by facilitating access to government markets,

encouraging new opportunities, and contributing to the broader vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat. The event saw sector-focused pavilions that celebrated India's strength in DeepTech, AgriTech, BioTech, MedTech, Artificial Intelligence, Gaming, and more.

GeM's presence underscored its mission to bridge the gap between innovators and government buyers, enabling faster scale, market validation, and meaningful contribution to India's global innovation standing. GeM's impact at the Mahakumbh was further amplified through a high-energy panel discussion that drew a packed audience and featured sharp insights from GeM leaders, industry experts, and policymakers. The panel covered key themes such as: Charting

India's Growth Story, Boosting State Procurement Through Startups, Emerging Technology as a Service, Driving Startup Growth via GeM Categories, Unlocking Opportunities with Central Government Buyers. The sessions reinforced GeM's role in transforming public procurement into a launchpad for India's next generation of entrepreneurs.

Speaking on the theme of government-startup collaboration, CEO, Government e Marketplace (GeM), Shri Ajay Bhadoo said, "Let's work together and unlock the true potential of public procurement in driving startup growth, inclusive development, and Atmanirbhar Bharat." His keynote address underlined the transformative potential of platforms like GeM in scaling

innovative homegrown solutions and supporting startups with policy-driven opportunities. During the three-day event, GeM responded to over 2500 startup queries, facilitated 1000+ startup registrations and cataloguing, and hosted more than 1500 interactive sessions-including one-on-one mentoring and group engagements-focused on onboarding and skilling through GeM's Learning Management System (LMS).

GeM's Pavilion hosted over 70 innovative startups, including 30 startup pods awarded free of cost to winners of GeM's Start-o-nauts Challenge. So far, GeM has enabled over 38,500 Crore in transactions for 30,000+ startups, reinforcing its position as a true catalyst in India's innovation ecosystem.

New Delhi, (H.S): India's Business Correspondent (BC) sector will cross Rs 147 billion by financial year 2025 (FY25), charting an impressive 19 per cent compound annual growth rate (CAGR), said a report by BLS E-Services. As per the report by digital service provider, growth is being driven by the expansion of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), deeper penetration of Basic Savings Bank Deposit Accounts (BSBDAs), and the increasing popularity of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes that channel subsidies and welfare funds directly to beneficiaries.

Business Correspondents are bank-appointed representatives who deliver essential banking services in underserved and remote areas. Functioning on a commission-based model, BCs operate as the extended arm of formal banking institutions, enabling last-mile delivery of financial services. They earn either a fixed fee or a percentage of the transaction value, depending on the type of service provided.

According to the report, the industry grew from Rs 47 billion in FY2018 to Rs 102 billion in the financial year 2023 (FY23). The report added that as rural households adopt formal financial services, transaction



volumes have spiked, particularly in areas where physical bank branches remain scarce. "With over 1.35 million BC agents operating across India as per PMJDY report, these banking intermediaries are enabling millions of people-especially in rural regions-to access financial services.

From cash deposits, withdrawals, and remittances to bill payments, Aadhaar-enabled services, and microfinance lending, BCs have become an essential bridge between formal banking institutions and the underserved population," said Shikhar Aggarwal, Chairman, BLS E-Services. The report further added that the rise in BSBDAs under PMJDY has also contributed significantly to the sector's momentum. As per the report, the number is expected to exceed 550 million by FY2025

from 380 million accounts in 2020. Most of these accounts are held by rural customers, and the majority of transactions--such as benefit disbursements under DBT, cash withdrawals, and remittances--are executed through BCs using Aadhaar authentication. According to Lokanath Panda, COO, BLS E-Services,

"The Business Correspondent (BC) industry is projected to grow at a 19 per cent CAGR from FY22 to FY25P, expanding from Rs 102.9 billion to Rs 147.4 billion. Key growth drivers include the expanding rural outreach of BCs, rising BSBDAs accounts and deposits, increased transaction volumes, and the growing adoption of government DBT schemes". The report added that the technological integration has further strengthened the BC model.



Shreya warns fans against 'weird' Twitter ads using her AI-generated pictures

Shreya Ghoshal's X (formerly Twitter) account was hacked and she regained control of it on Sunday. Here's what she said.

Singer Shreya Ghoshal revealed last month that her X (formerly Twitter) had been hacked, and she was trying her best to regain control. On Sunday, she informed fans that she had finally regained control of the account but warned fans against AI-generated ads

using her name and likeness on the platform. "I am back!! I will be talking and writing here often..Yes my X account has been in trouble as it got hacked in February. Now I have finally had the help from the @X team after lot of struggles in establishing a proper communication. All is well!! Now I am here," wrote Shreya while updating fans. She then warned fans about ads running on X with her likeness and name, writing,

"Also, there are many weird ads that are running which are articles about me with very absurd headlines and AI generated pictures. These are click baits, which lead to spam/fraudulent links. Please keep reporting these ads. I have no power in putting them down. I have tried my best. These are X ad regulations, which allow such ads to run. Hope they solve these matters soon." Shreya also posted a video expressing happiness at

regaining her account. But she warned fans against clicking on the X ads, writing, "There are some ads, there are some articles which keep running as ads which are clickbaits. These are ads which are running with breaking news or with something negative and sensational headline. When people click on it, there's spam or fraudulent links in it."

The singer asked fans to report these, adding that she has tried to get them

blocked multiple times and has been unsuccessful. "X has to do something about it to ensure such ads don't run. It's not just me, many other celebrities are facing this. Please don't click, you know they're fraudulent and AI-generated," she said.

Shreya recently sang Naa Naa Hyraanaa from Game Changer, Hileesso Hilessa from Thandel, Nafarmanian from Pintu Ki Pappi and Baby Chiki Chiki from Kadhalikka Neramillai.

Shivaji Satam Aka ACP Pradhyuman's Exit from Show after 27 Years

Days after reports surfaced about Shivaji Satam's exit from the iconic TV show CID, the makers officially announced the death of his character, ACP Pradhyuman. In a post shared on X (formerly Twitter), Sony TV confirmed, "ACP Pradhyuman is no more," marking the end of an era for the beloved series. The



makers shared a picture of the

actor as ACP Pradhyuman and wrote, "In the loving memory of ACP Pradyuman... A loss that will never be forgotten." In the loving memory of ACP Pradyuman... A loss that will never be forgotten? The Internet did not seem happy with the makers' decision to dismiss Shivaji Satam from CID.

Jacqueline's Mother Kim Fernandez Dies after Suffering a Stroke

Jacqueline Fernandez's mother, Kim Fernandez, has died after suffering a stroke on Sunday.

Kim Fernandez was admitted to the ICU on March 24 following a stroke. Upon receiving the news, the actress reportedly flew in to be by her mother's side. Kim, who resided in Manama, Bahrain, had previously faced a similar health crisis in 2022 and had been hospitalised in Bahrain back then as well. After Kim was shifted to Mumbai's Lilavati Hospital, Jacqueline and her father, Elroy Fernandez, were seen visiting her. A video of the actress arriving at the hospital quickly made the rounds on social media. In the clip,



Jacqueline was seen rushing inside. Her father was also captured by the cameras. Among those who showed their support during the difficult time was Salman Khan, Jacqueline's Kick co-star, who was also spotted visiting the hospital.

Reports suggest that Jacqueline was originally scheduled to perform at the IPL 2025 match between Rajasthan Royals and Kolkata Knight Riders in Guwahati on March 26. However, she opted out of the performance to remain with her family.

Sri Lanka Sided Gave Birth to T20 Cricket: PM



Colombo, (HS) : Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that he believes Sri Lanka's 1996 World Cup-winning side with their aggressive and unique style of batting gave birth to T20 cricket.

In an interaction with the members of the World Cup winning squad including Sanath Jayasuriya, Chaminda Vaas, Aravinda de Silva, Marvan Atapattu, Ravindra Pushpakumara, Upul Chandana,

Kumar Dharmasena and Romesh Kaluwitharana, PM Modi discussed cricket and the strong relationship between India and Sri Lanka during his visit to the island nation. "Welcome, I feel very happy that I got the opportunity to meet all of you. Your team is such that is still remembered in India, the beating that you guys gave, the people have still not forgotten," the PM joked. He highlighted how India's 1983 World Cup win and Sri

Lanka's 1996 victory played transformative roles in the global cricketing landscape. "When India won the World Cup in 1983 and when you guys did it in 1996, both victories changed the world of cricket. I believe that the birth of T20's was from the way you guys played in that tournament," he said. The PM recalled India's visit to Sri Lanka in 1996 despite a bomb blast, calling it a strong symbol of sportsmanship and enduring friendship. The PM

gave an example of how he visited Sri Lanka immediately after the 2019 terror attacks and said that the spirit of India remains the same. "I remember when India decided that 'we will go and play' when all teams were running away after the bomb blasts, I had seen that all the players appreciated us. The difficulties that Sri Lanka were facing, we did not leave them alone. Sportsman spirit won against the bomb blasts and we still carry the same spirit," said PM Modi.

The Sri Lankan players requested PM Modi to support the development of a high-quality cricket ground in the northern part of Sri Lanka, especially Jaffna. The cricketers appreciated and thanked PM Modi for India's generous assistance during Sri Lanka's economic crisis. PM Modi reiterated India's commitment to the "Neighbourhood First" policy, citing India's support to Myanmar during a recent earthquake as another example.

IPL: Bumrah Joins MI Ahead of RCB Clash

Mumbai, (HS) : Rehab completed, as Mumbai Indians' marquee pacer Jasprit Bumrah joins his teammates at the franchise ahead of the high-profile Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 clash against Royal Challengers Bengaluru. Bumrah has been out of action since the back injury he sustained during the Sydney Test in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in January this year. He missed Mi's first few games of the campaign, with his absence contributing a lot to the franchise's poor start. With Bumrah now close to a return, MI's hopes of making a strong comeback have also received a big boost. Bumrah has been the pivotal figure in MI's bowling attack since making his IPL debut in 2013. Touted as the finest pacer across formats in the world, Bumrah has featured for MI in 133 matches, picking up 165 wickets. While it is not clear if Bumrah will be given the go-ahead for the RCB clash on April 7, he does have a realistic chance of playing the franchise's match against Sunrisers Hyderabad on April 17. In fact, SRH all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy is already excited about facing Bumrah in the match. "I would be grateful for the challenge. He is one of the best bowlers in the world right now, and facing him would be an exciting contest. If I manage to score some runs against him, I would be very happy. Competing against top bowlers like Bumrah is what makes the game exciting," Reddy said on JioHotstar's show Gen Bold. "This generation of Indian cricket has been shaped by legends like Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, and others. They have taken Indian cricket to new heights, and we aspire to carry forward their legacy. Players like Jasprit, Rohit and Virat are truly golden assets to Indian cricket," he added.



Dhoni Breaks Silence on IPL Retirement

New Delhi, (HS) : Speculations over MS Dhoni's retirement from the Indian Premier League (IPL) have been spreading like wildfire ever since Chennai Super Kings' clash with the Delhi Capitals on Saturday. Dhoni, who is aged 43, has been a part of many retirement speculations in the past, but with his performances hitting a new low, especially from the batting standpoint, many feel that this season is likely to be his last for CSK as a player. Speaking to Raj Shamani in a podcast, however, Dhoni cleared his stance, putting an end to all rumours on the subject of retirement.

During the podcast, Dhoni said that he is not going to make up his mind about prolonging his playing career anytime soon. After the 18th edition of the IPL concludes in May, Dhoni is keen to use the next 10 months in deciding what he wants to do next year. "I am still playing the IPL and one year at a time. I am 43, by the end of this IPL season, I will be 44 in July. So I have 10 months to decide whether I want to play one more year and it's not me deciding; it's my body, whether you can play or not," he said on Raj Shamani's podcast. Since the start of the IPL 2025 season, Dhoni has impressed one and all with his wicket-keeping abilities and fitness. His mind has also remained as sharp as ever, while his reflexes have shown no signs of a decline. But it's with the bat that Dhoni has struggled. Though Dhoni has only been dismissed once in 4 matches this campaign, he hasn't succeeded in finishing even a single innings on a strong note. In the match against Delhi Capitals, Dhoni could only score a 26-ball 30 as the Super Kings succumbed to a 50-run loss.



IWL 2024-25: HOPS FC Defeat Odisha 3-2 to Continue Battle for Survival

Bhubaneswar, (DMC) : HOPS FC defeated defending champions Odisha FC 3-2 in an enthralling relegation battle at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar in IWL 2024-25 on Sunday. The two teams were level 2-2 at the break. The visitors were faced with a difficult situation, where anything short of a win would see them get relegated at the end of the season. However, the Delhi side stepped up their game.

Kiran Pisda's (13' og) own goal had put HOPS in the lead, while Pooja (34', 90') netted a brace. Neha (14') and Pyari Xaxa (45+1') were the two scorers for Odisha FC. HOPS took the lead against the run of play, when Gladys Amfobea ran down the right in the 13th minute, and played a low cross across the goal. Kiran, attempting to clear the ball, turned it into her own net. Kiran redeemed herself a minute later, when she sent in a cross from the left that struck the cross-bar and fell at the feet of Neha, who smashed it in. Odisha had the upper hand, but HOPS took the lead once again. Gladys, from the left this time, sent in another low cross



that ricocheted off the far post, and was then tapped in by Pooja. Odisha FC drew level again in the first half injury time, when their Ghanaian forward Jennifer Yeboah fed a through ball to Pyari, who finished it at the far post. Buoyed by the second equaliser, Odisha stepped on the gas and created frequent chances. Lynda Kom Serto had a couple of close chances after the hour mark. Her 65th minute long ranger went agonisingly over the

cross-bar. A minute later, she was played through inside the HOPS box, and it took a fine save from Odisha FC goalkeeper Anshika to keep her out.

HOPS were on the back foot, but they were, by no means, out of the contest. Gladys was played through on the left, as she slipped the ball under Anshika. The Ghanaian thought she had scored, but Odisha's Malati Munda slid in to clear it off the line. With a minute of regulation time left on the clock, Gladys created yet another opportunity to keep her side's hopes alive. She proceeded down the right and cut it back for Pooja, whose shot was deflected out. The ensuing corner created some confusion in the Odisha box, as the ball fell to Pooja, who volleyed it home. Jennifer had a chance to put Odisha back level again in injury time when Lynda Kom played her through behind the HOPS defence, but the latter's shot was straight at the keeper. A late free-kick earned by Jennifer saw Lynda Kom stand over the dead ball. Her shot aimed at the top-left corner went inches wide.

Coolie release date: Rajinikanth film to clash with War 2; fans call it 'Salaar vs Dunki 2.0'



Lokesh Kanagaraj's Rajinikanth-starrer Coolie's release date was announced on Friday. The much-awaited film will clash with Ayan Mukherji's Hritik Roshan and Jr NTR-starrer War 2 on August 14, ahead of Independence Day. Here's how fans reacted to the news, wondering if it'll be another Salaar vs Dunki, wondering 'Who's taking the crown?' The team of Coolie announced the news of its release on Friday evening, writing, "Sound-ah yethu! Deva Varraaru #Coolie

worldwide from August 14th." This announcement came after the producers Sun Pictures teased the announcement on Thursday. The new monochrome poster released during the announcement shows Rajinikanth whistling as his forehead bleeds and his hair is in disarray. Fans were thrilled to finally have a release date for one of the most-awaited films from Tamil cinema.

It did not go unnoticed that War 2 was also releasing on the same date. Fans immediately began picking sides, with some rooting

for Coolie and others for War 2. However, everyone seemed to agree that both films releasing on the same day would cause a massive clash. "Can we Declare This THE BIGGEST CLASH OF THE DECADE?" questioned on X (formerly Twitter) user, while another wrote, "#Coolie declares War on #War2." Some even made memes on the clash, making WWE references and calling it the 'biggest battle'. Coolie will feature an ensemble cast apart from Rajinikanth, including Nagarjuna, Upendra, Soubin Shahir, Sathyaraj, Shruti Haasan, Reba Monica John, Junior MGR and Monisha Blessy. Aamir Khan is rumoured to play a cameo. The film with music by Anirudh Ravichander will not be a part of the Lokesh Cinematic Universe (LCU) with Kaithi, Vikram and Leo. War 2, the 6th film in the YRF spy universe, will mark Jr NTR's debut in Bollywood. Kiara Advani will also star in the sequel to the 2019 film War.

India Shines at World Boxing Cup 2025 with 6 Medal Wins

New Delhi: New India made a remarkable debut at the World Boxing Cup 2025, held in Foz Do Iguacu, Brazil, bringing home an impressive haul of six medals, including a historic gold. This marks the first-ever appearance of the Indian boxing team in the prestigious international tournament. Leading the pack was Hitesh, who clinched gold in the 70kg category, becoming the first Indian boxer to achieve this feat in the World Boxing Cup. His opponent, Odel Kamara from England, was unable to compete in the final due to an injury. Abhinash Jamwal added a silver medal to India's tally after a hard-fought match against Brazil's Yuri Reis in the 65kg final. Additionally, four Indian boxers



- Jadumani Singh Mandengbam (50kg), Manish Rathore (55kg), Sachin (60kg), and Vishal (90kg) - claimed bronze medals in their respective categories. Hitesh credited the team's success to the 10-day preparatory camp in Brazil, which provided crucial tactical training. "This tournament has given us fantastic

exposure at the highest level. I am proud to bring home the gold," he said. India fielded a 10-member team for the tournament, which also marked the country's first international boxing event since the Paris Olympics. The performance reflects India's growing prominence on the global boxing stage.