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## All Efforts Must Be Made To Safeguard Citizens From West Asia Crisis: PM Modi

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday chaired a special meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to review measures taken by various Ministries/Departments and also discussed further initiatives to be taken in the context of the ongoing West Asia conflict. Prime Minister directed all concerned departments to take all possible measures to ameliorate the problems of citizens and sectors affected by the ongoing global situation.



Modi said that all efforts must be made to safeguard the citizens from the impact of this conflict. Prime Minister also emphasised smooth flow of authentic information to the public to prevent misinformation and rumour mongering. Prime Minister assessed the availability of critical needs for the common man. He discussed availability of fertilisers in the country and steps being taken to ensure its

availability in the Kharif and Rabi seasons. He said that all efforts must be made to safeguard the citizens from the impact of this conflict. Prime Minister also emphasised smooth flow of authentic information to the public to prevent misinformation and rumour mongering. Aspects relating to sectors like energy, agriculture, fertilisers, aviation, shipping and logistics were discussed at the meeting.

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## CM Majhi Inaugurates Visa Application Centre At Baba Saheb Ambedkar Bus Terminal

BHUBANESWAR, (Correspondent): Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi today inaugurated the new Visa Application Centre operated by VFS Global in Bhubaneswar, marking a significant milestone in enhancing access to international visa services for the people of Odisha.



Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister highlighted that the establishment of this centre reflects Odisha's growing global connectivity and commitment to citizen-centric services. He noted that such initiatives enhance ease of travel, promote industries & tourism, and support international engagement. The CM said that there was a growing need for a Visa application centre in the State. Considering this

need, the State Government had requested the central Government to facilitate opening up of such a centre in Bhubaneswar. We are happy that the central Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has extended full support and cooperation in the opening of this centre here. He further said that the newly

launched centre stands as a testimony to the growing demand for convenient and accessible visa services in the region. It will significantly benefit residents of Odisha, who previously had to travel to Kolkata to submit their visa applications. The state Government has provided approximately 3,000 square feet for

this state-of-the-art facility inside the Baba Saheb Ambedkar Bus Terminal at Barmunda in the city, said the CM.

In its first phase of operations, the CM informed that the centre will cater to visa services for the following ten countries: the United Kingdom, Ireland, Austria, Estonia, Italy, Malta, Switzerland, Japan, Morocco, and

Egypt. Additional missions are expected to be introduced in the near future, further expanding the range of services available to applicants, he added. The centre is designed to provide a seamless and efficient application experience to applicants. VFS Global currently provides visa services on behalf of 53 countries in India through a network of over 560 visa application centres across 20 cities. Zubin Karkaria, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of VFS Global, has been instrumental in building the organization into the world's largest visa and consular services provider. Under his leadership, the company serves 70 governments across 167 countries, promoting innovation, responsible technology, and secure mobility solutions.

## Domestic LPG, Petrol And Diesel Prices Unchanged Despite Jump In Global Cost: Govt

New Delhi: The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas clarified on Wednesday that only the price of commercial LPG have been increased in the country, while that of domestic LPG has been left unchanged to protect households from the sharp rise in the cost at which the cooking gas is being imported amid disruptions due to the Iran war. "Prices of commercial LPG cylinders, used by industries and hotels, are deregulated, market determined and revised normally on a monthly basis. Their consumption is less than 10 per cent of the total LPG consumed in the country," the Ministry said in a statement



posted on X. The April 1 price increase in commercial cylinder price is due to a 44 per cent surge in the Saudi Contract Price: from \$542/MT in March to \$780/MT for April, as 20-30 per cent of global LPG supplies are stuck in Strait of Hormuz, the statement added. "In line with the commitment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the domestic consumer

continues to be comprehensively protected with the price of a 14.2 kg domestic cylinder at Rs 913 remaining unchanged. Similarly, the subsidised price of LPG cylinders for the poor under PMUY scheme remains unchanged at Rs 613," the statement explained.

It further stated that at current prices, the public sector oil marketing companies

are incurring an under-recovery of Rs 380 per cylinder. Cumulative losses by end-May will reach approximately Rs 40,484 crore. Last year also, out of total losses of Rs 60,000 crore as much as Rs 30,000 crore were absorbed by the oil PSUs and Rs 30,000 crore by the Government of India, in order to insulate Indian citizens from high international LPG prices, the statement said. The Ministry also pointed out that India's domestic LPG price remains one of the lowest in the world as compared to Pakistan where the price is Rs 1,046 per cylinder, Sri Lanka at Rs 1,242 while in Nepal it is at Rs 1,208. n April 1, 2026.

## Trump Attends Top Court Hearing On Citizenship

Washington: US President Donald Trump on Wednesday attended Supreme Court oral arguments on birthright citizenship, becoming the first sitting president known to appear in person for proceedings at the nation's highest court, as justices weighed a challenge to his executive order restricting automatic citizenship.

Trump's motorcade arrived shortly before arguments began, and he later departed after Solicitor General D. John Sauer presented the administration's case. Cameras are not permitted inside the courtroom. "I'm going," Trump had told reporters a day earlier at the Oval Office. The case centres on Trump's order seeking to limit birthright citizenship to children with at least one parent who is a US citizen or legal permanent resident. Lower courts have blocked the policy, prompting the administration's appeal.

The 14th Amendment states that all persons born or naturalised in the United States,

and subject to its jurisdiction, are citizens — a principle long interpreted to grant citizenship to nearly all born on US soil.

During arguments, justices questioned the administration's interpretation. Chief Justice John Roberts raised concerns about how the order could lawfully limit citizenship for large groups. Justice Elena Kagan also challenged the government's reading of the Constitution, questioning whether noncitizens are outside the US jurisdiction. Justice Neil Gorsuch and Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson examined the administration's reliance on "domicile"—the legal residence of parents—as a basis for determining citizenship, probing whether that approach aligns with precedent. Sauer argued that the amendment was intended to grant citizenship to formerly enslaved people and their children, not to those without permanent legal status. He said the administration's test hinges on whether individuals have a lasting allegiance to the

United States.

Opposing the administration, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) lawyer Cecilia Wang told the court that birthright citizenship is a settled constitutional guarantee. "Ask any American what our citizenship rule is, and they'll tell you: Everyone born here is a citizen alike," she said, adding that the principle was placed "out of the reach of any government official to destroy." Outside the court, demonstrators gathered in support of birthright citizenship, holding placards and banners criticising the administration's move. Trump has repeatedly criticised the Supreme Court in recent weeks, including after rulings against some of his policies. "I love a few of them, I don't like some others," he said when asked which justices he would be watching most closely. His presence in the courtroom drew attention, with critics arguing it could be seen as an attempt to influence proceedings.

## 29 Dead After Russian An-26 Military Transport Plane Crashes In Crimea

Moscow: Six crew members and 23 passengers were killed when a Russian An-26 military transport plane crashed in Crimea, the Russian Ministry of Defence confirmed early Wednesday. The aircraft collided with a cliff, a source at the scene told TASS news agency. The Russian defense ministry said late Tuesday that the An-26 had lost contact during a scheduled flight over the Crimean Peninsula, Xinhua news agency

reported. According to preliminary information, the crash was caused by a technical malfunction, and no hostile fire targeted the aircraft. "On 31 March at around 18:00 Moscow time, contact was lost with the An-26 military transport aircraft whilst it was on a scheduled flight over the Crimean Peninsula," the defence ministry said. "The search and rescue team has located the crash site of the An-26 aircraft. According to

reports from the scene, the six crew members and 23 passengers on board were killed," the ministry added. The ministry report did not say how many people were on board, but it made no mention of any survivors on the An-26, a light tactical military transport that has for decades been a mainstay that can carry cargo and up to 40 passengers over short and medium distances. In a similar incident earlier in December

2025, Russia reported a deadly military aviation accident involving an Antonov transport aircraft. On December 9, an Antonov An-22 crashed during a test flight near the village of Ivankovo in the Ivanovo region, located east of Moscow. The aircraft had taken off following repair work, suggesting it was undergoing post-maintenance testing when the incident occurred. Russian authorities confirmed that there were no survivors.

## New Income Tax Act, 2025 Comes Into Force From April 1

New Delhi: India's direct tax system entered a new phase on April 1, 2026, as the Income Tax Act, 2025 officially came into force. The Income Tax Department announced the rollout through a message on X, calling it a step towards a simpler and more user-friendly tax framework aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat. The new law replaces the decades-old Income Tax Act, 1961, marking one of

the biggest overhauls in India's direct taxation system. The government has focused on making the language clearer and removing outdated provisions that had made compliance complicated for taxpayers over the years. Officials said that the objective is to reduce confusion, improve transparency, and cut down on unnecessary litigation. Along with the new Act, the Income

Tax Rules, 2026, have also come into effect from the same date. These rules, notified by the Central Board of Direct Taxes, replace the earlier rules and introduce changes in deduction limits, updated PAN-related requirements, and simplified reporting formats. The government believes these changes will make filing returns easier for both individuals and businesses.

# Vijay's Campaign Song Gains Traction As Tamil Nadu Heads For April 23 Polls

Chennai: Actor-turned-politician Vijay has stepped up his election campaign with the release of a high-energy song that is gaining traction across digital platforms ahead of the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. With the slogan "Ungal Vijay Naan Varen! Whistle Podu Ready Ah?", the campaign track sets the tone for his outreach as the state prepares for a high-stakes electoral contest on April 23 across all 234 constituencies. As campaigning gathers pace, major political parties, including the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK), along with their alliance partners, have already announced their



candidates. Emerging players such as Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) and the Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) have also entered the fray with full candidate lists, making the contest more competitive. The nomination process began on March 30,

marking a key stage in the election calendar. Candidates from various parties have started filing their nominations, leading to heightened political activity across the state. Vijay, among the prominent faces in the election, is contesting from two constituencies — Perambur in Chennai

and Tiruchy East. He recently filed his nomination in Perambur and has begun campaigning, drawing sizeable crowds. The campaign song reflects his political messaging, blending entertainment with an appeal for change. With lines such as "Mela Pogaudhu State,

Enga Whistle Satham Ketta; Nallavanga Vaazha Nee Whistle-ku Adi Otu", it calls on voters to back a governance model focused on integrity and public welfare. The song's visuals and energetic presentation have resonated with younger audiences and Vijay's supporters, contributing to its wide circulation on social media. Political observers note that such campaign tools are increasingly being used to engage voters, particularly in Tamil Nadu, where cinema and politics have historically been closely linked. As polling day approaches, parties are expected to further intensify their campaigns, making the upcoming Assembly elections a closely watched contest.

# CBSE Rolls Out Curriculum On Computational Thinking, AI For Classes 3-8 From 2026-27

New Delhi: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Wednesday launched a CBSE curriculum on Computational Thinking (CT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) for students of Classes 3 to 8, to be introduced from the 2026-27 academic session. The initiative, themed "AI for Education, AI in Education", aims to build foundational digital and analytical skills among young learners by integrating future-ready competencies at an early stage. The launch event in New Delhi was attended by Minister of State for Education Jayant Chaudhary, along with senior officials from the Ministry of Education, NCERT, and CBSE. Pradhan described the move as



a structured integration of AI into school education. "This curriculum will infuse new energy into the education sector. It will foster logical thinking, fresh perspectives, and a culture of innovation among children," he said. He added that it would enable students to better understand and engage with a technology-driven future. The curriculum includes structured modules, teacher handbooks, and a defined assessment framework. It focuses on developing computational thinking — including logical reasoning, problem-solving, pattern recognition, and the ethical use of technology. Students will also be introduced to practical applications of AI in everyday contexts, alongside building digital literacy, critical thinking, and responsible use of technology.

# 'Haunted By Ghost' Of Friend He Murdered, Chhattisgarh Man Surrenders

Raipur: In a chilling case that blends crime with superstition, a man in Bhagwanpur area under Gandhinagar Police Station of Chhattisgarh's Ambikapur district, on Wednesday, surrendered to police after self-proclaims of "being haunted by visions of his deceased friend's ghost", leading to the recovery of the body buried inside his own house. The incident occurred on the intervening night of March 24 and 25. According to the accused statement, Brijlal Agariya (35) had gone to the house of Mithlesh Kujur (37) while drunk and insisted on having a drink together. As it was the holy period of Navratri, Mithlesh refused,



sparking a heated argument that soon turned into a physical scuffle. In the altercation, Brijlal damaged Mithlesh's mobile phone. Enraged by this, Mithlesh picked up a stick and bludgeoned Brijlal to death on the spot. To conceal the crime, Mithlesh and his wife Rajkumari (36) dug a pit inside their house, placed the body in it,

covered it with a plywood board and piled soil over it. The couple then fled their home and hid at a relative's place. However, Mithlesh soon began suffering intense mental trauma. He repeatedly claimed to see the "ghost" of his friend demanding that his last rites be performed. Speaking to

IANs, Rahul Bansal, City Superintendent of Police, said that tormented by fear and guilt, he decided to confess but his "ghost story" is not digestible. "In fact he (Mithlesh) could not hide his crime and it was difficult for him to conceal the dead body for a long time. Under fear and psychological pressure, he confessed his crime. Police are investigating the matter and actual reason behind the murder. Police have sensed something else and will reach the conclusion soon." On Tuesday night, Mithlesh voluntarily walked into Gandhinagar Police Station and confessed to the murder. Acting on his statement, a police team rushed to the spot.

# MP HC Will Consider Videography Objections In Bhojshala Row: SC

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday disposed of a plea filed by the Maulana Kamaluddin Welfare Society in the ongoing Bhojshala Temple-Kamal Maula Mosque dispute, expressing confidence that the Madhya Pradesh High Court will duly consider all objections, including those arising from videography conducted during the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) survey. A Bench comprising Chief Justice of India Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M. Pancholi observed that there was "no doubt" the Madhya Pradesh High Court would examine the objections in accordance with the

principles of natural justice. The Bench was hearing a civil appeal arising out of a Special Leave Petition filed by the Muslim side challenging the course adopted by the Indore Bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court in dealing with objections to the ASI survey report. Dismissing the appeal, the apex court noted that "there is no dispute that the survey report was supplied to the parties, and some of them have submitted their objections," while also recording that the ASI had conducted videography and photography of the disputed site. Taking note of the appellant's contention that certain objections were captured during the videography process,

the Bench said: "We have no doubt that the learned High Court, after seeing such videography, shall consider those objections too, along with other objections made by the parties, in accordance with the principles of natural justice." The top court further directed that the Madhya Pradesh High Court shall take an appropriate decision on all objections, "including those which are found arising from the videography." Importantly, the Supreme Court clarified that it had not expressed any opinion on the merits of the dispute and left all issues open for adjudication by the Madhya Pradesh High Court. "All the issues are left open to be adjudicated by the High

Court. The parties may, accordingly, raise their respective contentions," the order stated. During the hearing, senior advocate Salman Khurshid, appearing for the petitioner, argued that certain activities at the site, including excavation, were contrary to earlier directions of the Supreme Court, and that objections raised by the mosque management were captured in the ASI's videography. On the other hand, counsel Vishnu Shankar Jain, appearing for the Hindu side, submitted that the Madhya Pradesh High Court had not yet taken a final decision and was proceeding in terms of the apex court's earlier directions for a time-bound hearing.

# Murshidabad Rally: Owaisi Backs Humayun Kabir, Criticises Trinamool And BJP

Kolkata: AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Wednesday launched his Assembly election campaign in West Bengal, addressing a rally in Murshidabad district in support of Humayun Kabir's Aam Janata Unnayan Party (AJUP). At a public meeting in Naoda, Owaisi accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Prime Minister Narendra Modi of having a political understanding. The Trinamool Congress supremo and the Prime Minister are hand in glove in New Delhi and Bengal. In 2005, Mamata Banerjee threw files on the floor of Parliament, protesting against infiltrators in Bengal. In 2014, PM Modi



started targeting poor Muslims as infiltrators. This is nothing but an understanding between the two. I am asking the Trinamool Congress to explain how the BJP MLAs' strength grew here from 3 in 2016 to 77 in 2021," he said. The Hyderabad MP's party has entered into an electoral alliance with Kabir's AJUP for the West Bengal Assembly

elections. Owaisi alleged that the Trinamool Congress had failed to protect poor Muslims and Dalits in the state and had not delivered adequate welfare measures. "But people have already chosen Humayun Kabir as a leader of Muslims and Dalits. So I decided to support him as an alliance partner. If the AIMIM-AJUP

alliance wins in Murshidabad and other districts, we will support onion farmers through cold storage and agro-industries," he said. Addressing members of the minority community, Owaisi said, "If you have leadership, then your voice will also be raised. If you do not have a leader on your side, then you will be silenced. You will be suppressed. You will be crushed." Kabir, who was present at the rally, began his campaign speech by referring to Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee's recent rally at Naoda. "I am fortunate that he sought votes in his

own name, presenting himself as a Trinamool Congress candidate in place of Sahanaj Mumtaz Begum to quell dissent within the party over ticket distribution. I challenge them to defeat me by a margin of 70,000 votes," he said. Later, speaking to IANS about the alliance with AIMIM, Kabir alleged that the Trinamool Congress government, which has been in power for three consecutive terms, has failed the people due to corruption. "This government should be uprooted from power. Under my leadership, we have joined hands with Owaisi sahib, and we will fight them in the elections," he said.

# Trinamool Apologises For Mahua Moitra's Remarks On Gujarati Community

Kolkata: The Trinamool Congress on Wednesday rendered an unconditional apology for the recent derogatory comments by Trinamool Congress Lok Sabha member Mahua Moitra about the Gujarati community, in which she questioned their contribution to India's freedom movement. "Bengalis are proud people. We led the freedom struggle against the British. Where were the Gujaratis? Look at the history of Kalapani. Almost 68 per cent of those who were killed and imprisoned in Kalapani were Bengalis. Then there were the Punjabis. Can you show me a single Gujarati who was there? Only your hero Savarkar, who wrote letters apologising," Moitra had said at a press

conference recently. Her comments attracted sharp criticism from opposition parties. Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal assembly, Suwendu Adhikari, highlighted her remarks in his campaign, especially at the Bhabanipur assembly constituency in South Kolkata, which has a substantial number of Gujarati voters. Adhikari appealed to the Gujarati community in Bhabanipur to give a fitting reply to Trinamool Congress in the forthcoming elections, stressing that the community is proud of freedom fighters like Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Incidentally, in Bhabanipur, Adhikari is pitted against the Trinamool Congress candidate and West Bengal Chief Minister, Mamata

Banerjee. He is also contesting from his native constituency of Nandigram in East Midnapore district. Realising that Moitra's comments were backfiring ahead of the two-phase assembly elections later this month, Trinamool Congress fielded Ashim Basu, a party councillor from Bhabanipur, to condemn and apologise for her statements. Basu explained the party's stand through a video statement posted on his official social media handle. In the video, he read out a statement from the Chief Minister apologising to the Gujarati community. "I personally apologise to my Gujarati brothers and sisters. I am proud of you. This has been discussed with the concerned MP. We do not condone this comment.

## Dhamra Port Celebrates Odisha Day with Cultural Pride and Enthusiasm

**D h a m r a ,** (Correspondent): Dhamra Port celebrated Odisha Day (Utkal Diwas) on April 1 with great enthusiasm and pride, paying tribute to the state's rich cultural heritage, history, and legacy. The celebration reflected the true spirit of Odisha, as employees and associates came together in a festive atmosphere to honour the state's identity and values. The event was graced by Mr. Devendra Thakar, CEO, Dhamra Port, who inaugurated the celebration by lighting



the ceremonial lamp. The occasion was further enriched with the collective rendition of 'Vande Utkal Janani' by the officers present. Addressing the gathering, the CEO paid rich tribute to

Odisha's glorious heritage and legacy, reaffirming Dhamra Port's deep-rooted association with the state and its continued commitment to Odisha's progress and community.

## O.P. Jindal School Celebrated Utkal Diwas with Grandeur

**Angul** – (Correspondent): Utkal Diwas was celebrated with great enthusiasm and festivity in a delightful atmosphere at the O.P. Jindal School campus. At the beginning, the Head of the Odia Department, Sirish Kumar Mishra, highlighted the significance of Utkal Diwas. The program was formally inaugurated with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by the Principal, Dr. Ashwini Kumar Sahu, along with other senior teachers. Floral



tributes were offered to the portraits of eminent personalities of Odisha. On this occasion, everyone collectively sang 'Vande Utkala Janani', and students presented a captivating Odissi dance performance. The celebration became vibrant with speeches

delivered by students. The speakers emphasized the importance of celebrating Utkal Diwas and shed light on the rich heritage, culture, and traditions of Odisha. A poetry session (Kavi Sammelan) was also organized for the students. On this

occasion, the Principal, Dr. Ashwini Kumar Sahu, extended his greetings and encouraged students to preserve and uphold the glory and heritage of the land of Utkal. Prizes were distributed to students who excelled in various competitions held during the event.

## RPF Detains Muslim Cleric With 14 Minors At Cuttack Station, Probe Underway

**Cuttack:** The Railway Protection Force (RPF) in Cuttack has detained a Maulana for allegedly bringing 14 minor boys from Bihar to Odisha under suspicious circumstances, officials said on Wednesday.

The minors were reportedly brought by train from Kishanganj and Araria districts in Bihar to Cuttack. During routine checking at the railway station, RPF personnel intercepted the group and questioned them.

The accompanying cleric, identified as Mohamed Margubur Rahman, failed to provide satisfactory answers regarding the purpose of the journey, raising suspicion among officials.

Preliminary inquiry revealed that Rahman hails from the Pikol Gram Panchayat area under Salipur police limits in Cuttack district, where he runs a madrasa at Sainpara Masjid. He claimed that the children were being brought for religious education. However, authorities are verifying the authenticity of this claim. Officials are also probing whether due procedures and documentation were followed for transporting the minors across state lines.

## SOA FIGURES IN QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS IN MEDICINE CATEGORY

**Bhubaneswar,** (Correspondent): Siksha 'O' Anusandhan Deemed to be University (SOA) here has achieved a significant milestone by securing a position in the 701-850 band in the QS World University Rankings 2026 by subject under the Life Sciences and Medicine category, reinforcing its rising stature in global academic and research excellence. Further strengthening its national standing, the Institute of Medical Sciences and SUM Hospital, faculty of medicine of SOA,



was ranked 15th in the country by the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) in 2025. The University was also placed 15th by NIRF in the university category underscoring its consistent performance across key academic indicators.

Established as a premier healthcare destination in eastern India, IMS and SUM Hospital has been serving the people of Odisha and the neighbouring states since 2005. Over the years it has emerged as a trusted name in healthcare,

committed to delivering quality and affordable medical services to all sections of society. The institution continues to expand its infrastructure and integrate advanced medical knowledge and technologies supported by a team of skilled professionals and domain experts.

These achievements reflect SOA's unwavering commitment to excellence in medical education, research and patient care further consolidating its position as a leading institution at both national and global levels.

## 5-DAY 'PAKHALA UTSAV' KICKS OFF AT SOA HOTEL MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

**Bhubaneswar,** (Correspondent): A five-day 'Pakhala Utsav', organised with the objective of celebrating and popularizing Odisha's traditional dish comprising cooked rice soaked or lightly fermented in water, kicked-off at the School of Hotel Management (SHM), faculty of hospitality and tourism management of SOA Deemed to be University here, on Wednesday. 'Pakhala', a hydrating meal, is said to provide relief from the effects of high temperature and

prevent heatstroke and is traditionally consumed in homes in Odisha round the year. The festival was inaugurated by SOA Vice-Chancellor Prof. Pradipta Kumar Nanda who expressed happiness that the institute was promoting Odisha's rich culture, handloom and handicrafts while highlighting the benefits of state's iconic dish.

The culinary spread will be available to the public from April 1 to 5. Visitors can enjoy the food in the institute between 12 noon and 3 pm on the festival days

(priced at Rs. 250 per head) in an ambience of a vibrant rural setting featuring mud huts, earthen pots and bamboo structures while the students, faculty and staff will be sporting traditional Odia outfits. 'The theme for this year's festival is: 'Odia Village: Handloom and Handicrafts Heritage' offering the visitors a peep into the state's rich rural traditions. 'Pakhala', also known by other names or its variants, is also popular in several eastern Indian states as also the neighbouring countries of Nepal, Bangladesh and parts of Myanmar.

## 78 Police Officers Awarded With DGP Award For Outstanding Service

**Bhubaneswar** (Correspondent): A special DGP Award ceremony was held today at the Police Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, where Director General of Police (DGP) Yogesh Bahadur Khurania awarded 78 police officers and employees with medals in recognition of their distinguished service and outstanding achievements. The event was organised as part of the Odisha Police Foundation Day celebrations. Senior officers and personnel from various units were honoured for their exemplary performance in

maintaining law and order, anti-Naxal operations, crime prevention, and other critical duties. DGP Khurania personally presented the medals to the awardees. Prominent recipients included Additional Director General of Police (Anti-Naxal Operations) Sanjeeb Panda, Additional Director General of Police (Women and Child Crime Prevention Branch) S. Saini, Inspector General of Police (Operations) Dr. Deepak Kumar, Inspector General of Police (Crime Branch) Dr. Sarthak Sarangi, DIGP (Independent Intelligence Branch) Akhileshwar

Singh, DCP (Bhubaneswar) Jagmohan Meena, DCP (Cuttack) Khilari Rishikesh Dyandeo, SP (Special Branch) Sunil Kumar Nanda, and SP (Police Training Institute, Bairi) Ashok Kumar Dehuri.

Along with them, 29 officers from the Special Operations Group (SOG), 7 from the Special Branch, 10 from the SIW, and other personnel from various departments received medals for their meritorious contributions. In a special gesture, DGP Khurania also presented a medal to Bimal Kumar Kanar, Inspector of Badagada

Police Station in Ganjam District. The station was recently recognised as the Best Police Station in Odisha for 2025 by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The ceremony was attended by many senior police officers, personnel, and representatives from the media. Speaking on the occasion, DGP Khurania appreciated the dedication and hard work of the force and said such recognitions motivate personnel to continue serving the people of Odisha with greater commitment and professionalism.

## Bargarh Celebrates Odisha Day with Cultural Fervour, Launches 'Odia Party-2026'

**Bargarh,** (Correspondent): The twin celebrations of Odisha Day and Bargarh District Formation Day were marked with grandeur and civic enthusiasm across the district on Tuesday. Organised by the district administration and the Information & Public Relations Department, the event brought together officials, students, artists, and citizens in a vibrant

display of cultural pride.

District Magistrate & Collector Aditya Goyal led the celebrations as the chief guest, joined by senior officials and public representatives. A cleanliness drive under the 'Samarpan' campaign kicked off the day, with participants cleaning key public spaces, including Gandhi Chowk.

A public meeting

and photo exhibition highlighting Odisha's rich legacy and the contributions of eminent "Barputras" drew significant attention. Cultural performances, especially Sambalpuri art and patriotic songs, added colour to the occasion.

The formal launch of 'Odia Party-2026'—a state initiative to promote Odia language, culture, and traditions—was a

key highlight. Addressing the gathering, the District Magistrate emphasised unity, development, and the preservation of linguistic identity.

The event concluded with the felicitation of achievers, the garlanding of iconic leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and B. R. Ambedkar, and a tree-planting drive across the town.

## Labourer Battles Crocodile, Escapes With Severe Injuries In Jajpur

**Jajpur** (Correspondent): A 61-year-old labourer was critically injured after being attacked by a crocodile while bathing in the Kharasrota river at Jokadia village in Jajpur district on Wednesday.

The injured has been identified as Gurucharan Dehuri, a resident of Harichandanpur village in Keonjhar district. He had reportedly come to Jokadia along with his wife to work as a daily wage labourer engaged in groundnut harvesting. According to reports, the incident occurred in the afternoon when Gurucharan went to the river to bathe.

## Kharif Paddy Procurement Period Extended By Seven Days

**Bhubaneswar:** (Correspondent) The Odisha government has extended the Kharif paddy procurement period by seven days to ensure that no farmer's token lapses during the ongoing season. Announcing the decision, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra emphasised that the extension was aimed at protecting the interests of farmers. He stated that the move would allow all registered farmers to sell their produce without any disruption. So far in the current Kharif season, the state has procured 77 lakh metric tonnes of paddy. As many as 18.64 lakh farmers have successfully sold their harvest, with payments of Rs 22,884 crore already transferred directly into their bank



## Paradip port registers historic high cargo handling in FY 25-26 : Best ever in its history

**PARADEEP,** (Correspondent): Paradip Port Authority (PPA) has once again emerged as the leading Major Port on the eastern coast of India, reinforcing its strategic significance in the region. PPA achieved a significant milestone by joining the elite 155+ Million Metric Tonnes (MMT) Club, recording an impressive cargo throughput of 156.45 MMT during FY 2025-26, the best ever in its history, since it became operational in 1966 marking a growth of



4.01% over the previous financial year. Despite challenging market conditions, including a decline in export demand for Iron ore and West Asia crisis, which impacted import of Limestone, Fertilisers raw materials,

still Paradip Port maintained its dominant position. It continued to lead in cargo handling among all ports—both major and non-major—on the eastern coast of India. PPA maintains its position, as best performing bulk port by

registering the highest berth productivity among all Indian Ports. The berth productivity stands at 35059 MT per day per berth against the national average of around 18,000 MT, almost double of national average. Strategic system improvements and enhanced operational efficiencies played a key role in driving this growth. Coastal cargo handling accounted for 42.06% of the total volume, reaching 65.81 MMT, establishing Paradip

Port as the leading port in coastal shipping among Indian Major Ports. During the fiscal year, Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants (POL) handling grew by 25.68%, while steel cargo recorded a strong increase of 43%. Additionally, coal handling rose by 4.44%, container traffic registered a growth of 7.77%, and flux handling increased by 18.32%. LPG handling surged by 105%, reflecting a well-rounded performance across all major cargo segments.

## EDITORIAL

### The Rise of Invisible Content Creators

In today's digital world, content is everywhere—on social media feeds, websites, videos, podcasts, and even in the captions we casually scroll past. While millions of influencers and creators enjoy fame and recognition, there exists a vast, often overlooked group working silently behind the scenes: invisible content creators. These are the writers, editors, scriptwriters, designers, and strategists whose work shapes the digital experience, yet whose names rarely appear in the spotlight. Invisible content creators are the backbone of the modern content ecosystem. From crafting engaging blog posts and viral social media captions to writing scripts for popular videos and advertisements, their contributions are everywhere. Many influencers, brands, and public figures rely heavily on these professionals to maintain their online presence. However, the credit for such content typically goes to the face of the brand rather than the minds behind it. The rise of these unseen creators is closely tied to the rapid growth of the digital economy. As businesses compete for attention in an overcrowded online space, the demand for high-quality, consistent content has skyrocketed. This has led to the emergence of freelance writers, ghostwriters, and digital strategists who operate quietly, often juggling multiple clients while remaining anonymous. One of the key reasons for their invisibility is the nature of their work. Ghostwriting, for instance, is built on the idea that the creator remains hidden while someone else takes ownership of the content. Similarly, many companies prefer a unified brand voice rather than highlighting individual contributors. As a result, talented creators willingly trade recognition for steady income and professional opportunities. Despite their lack of visibility, these creators hold immense influence. They shape public opinion, build personal brands, and even drive social trends. A powerful tweet, a compelling video script, or a well-written article can reach millions and leave a lasting impact—all without revealing the identity of its true creator. However, this invisibility comes with its challenges. Lack of recognition can limit career growth, personal branding, and creative satisfaction. Many invisible creators struggle with issues like underpayment, job insecurity, and creative burnout. Without public acknowledgment, building a portfolio or gaining credibility becomes more difficult.

## Autism and Emotional Development of Children



Narayan Biswal

Autism is a psychological and/or mental disorder that has been under study for several years now. Scientists, pharmaceutical companies, and physicians are working hand in hand to find out more about this disorder and discover possible treatments that will help the recognized autistic people and their families. To diagnose whether a person is autistic or not, a series of tests and observations need to be done. Physicians normally use a questionnaire or other screening instrument to gather information about a child's development and behavior. The questionnaire should be answered by the parents or guardians who are most often with the suspected child. Some screening instruments rely solely on parent observations; others rely on a combination of parent and doctor observations. If screening instruments indicate the possibility of autism, doctors will ask for a more comprehensive evaluation.

It was in 1911 when autism first came into view. Eugen Bleuler, a known Swiss Psychiatrist, coined the term autism, however, the term is first applied to adult schizophrenia. Several decades after, in 1943, a physician, named Leo Kanner, from Johns Hopkins University was able to give a full description of autism or people with autistic behaviors.

There are three types of autism as described by psychology-related studies. These include classical autism, high functioning autism, and Asperger syndrome. Based on several combined types of research, autism or coined as Autism

Spectrum Disorder is a neurological disorder that is permanent or for the whole lifetime although the symptoms become very prominent during the age of 3-5. It is said to affect one's ability to learn, communicate and socialize. They also have problems with the most basic sensory organs like the sense of hearing, sight, smell, touch, and taste. Because of this, they have the tendency to have other interconnected problems including social problems, language disorders, eating & stomach disorders, and seizures. People who are autistic do not even look like they have any abnormality or disorder although, with deeper observation, they will seem "out-of-sync" with the world.

It is common knowledge that autistic children require special attention for their special needs. Needless to say, this special attention must not only come from the autistic person's house but also to another environment like the schools where the autistic child frequents. Children since birth live with their parents. Their immediate environment is with their parents in a place they call home. Children, even those with autism disorders, have gained confidence, trust, and love for their parents and treat their family and home as their comfort zone. The biological and physiological needs of the children, as well as, their proximity with their parents allow the latter to share many experiences that influence and shape the development of the children. Because of this, parents are considered as the prime carers and educators of their children as well as the major providers of special, love, care, and attention that is normally given to autistic people.

The importance of relating with parents is clearly seen in the impact of involvement on parents' lives and the outcomes of involving

parents in their child development. Margy Whalley in the book *Involving Parents in their Children's Learning* has cited that parents feel valued because their ideas and opinions matter. They are able to establish friendship among each other and can extend support when needed. Parents become more confident because they gain support in parenting and ideas and information about child-rearing. Parents learn to understand why their children act the way that they do and how they can support their children at home. Children with an autistic spectrum disorder have been described with both hypoactivity and hyperactivity. The hyperactivity seen in children with autism may be part of a pattern of hyper arousal behaviors, such as hyperactivity, hyper vigilance, stereotyped body movements and even self-stimulation. The distractibility and poor attention span of some of these children often compound their already serious educational problems. Methylphenidate, a commonly used drug to improve attention span, has been used in autism, other choices include clonidine and naltrexone.

Love, attention and care as well as education are to be embraced by all. Everybody is entitled to benefit from the result attained through education regardless of the capacity of the person, regardless of how he or she would like to be educated. People who have been assessed as autistic should not be deprived from the taste of reality. A normal setting of home and education is most helpful on his condition. The condition might be of many limitations, expenses to be incurred, insufficient facilities, need for special attention, and yet a consideration should also be given because those people deserve fair treatment.

## Four peace mantras



Ajaya Kumar Behera

A question that is often asked is whether we can make this world a more peaceful place. Yes,

it is a possibility and all it requires is a little intention, attention and commitment to manifest it. Each one of us has the potential to create an oasis of assurance and security around. When people exercise this power to be beacons of peace, then it can create waves of positivity, joy and celebration across the planet. We need to shake off our despondency and look at life with renewed energy, zeal and enthusiasm. We need to have the right tools to be happier and spread it to people around us. Here are four simple and easy to follow mantras that can help us:

Inner peace is the key to outer peace: Only a wealthy person can share wealth with others. Similarly, we need to recognise that a

wealth of deep peace is within our own being. Usually, we expect the outer world – boss, spouse or anyone else – to behave in a certain way so that we feel peace inside. However, it is the other way around: the more we are connected to the peaceful core within, the more peace will manifest around. Our vibrations are more powerful than we think them to be and can even help influence others.

Success is the by-product of inner peace: Peace is neither the mere absence of conflict nor is it about being passive and inactive. It is a bubbling positivity which brings about unending enthusiasm. It forms the foundation for being effective in the world around us. When the mind is quiet the intellect becomes sharp, emotions become light, behaviour becomes endearing and our life becomes a celebration. These are the manifestations of deep peace and are key ingredients for success. It is a state serene dynamism – calm on the inside, energetic on the outside!

Take charge of your peace of mind: Peace is our true nature, but we still have to make the choice to access it. We need to spend just a few minutes a day to practise some breathing exercises and be with ourselves in silence and meditation. This can bring about a beautiful depth to our personality and give us the strength to gain over situations. Only one person can make this happen in our life and that is YOU.

Be cool, it's all going to pass: To sustain inner peace, knowledge about life is very important. We may find meditation very peaceful, but when we open our eyes and mix with people, we come back to the same old pattern. A question that often arises is, 'Should we never get upset, should we always be smiling?' No! We do get upset, fight and argue but we can also snap out of it in an instant. We can do it like it's all a play and see that it doesn't stick to our minds. Every state of mind is temporary and changes with time and space. Remembering this aspect can help us relax and calm down.

## The Expanding Realm of Beggary



Kishan Bhawnani

On the global stage, India is currently advancing rapidly toward the ambitious goal of 'Developed India 2047.' As it emerges as the world's

fourth-largest economy amidst economic growth, a digital revolution, global diplomacy, and infrastructural expansion—there exists a social reality that casts a serious shadow of doubt over this developmental journey: the pervasive problem of beggary. From rural areas to metropolitan cities—at bus stands, railway stations, marketplaces, religious sites, and even outside corporate offices—the sight of women, the elderly, youth, and children begging has become a common occurrence. This is not merely a social issue; rather, it is a matter that raises profound questions concerning the nation's pride, the effectiveness of its governance, and the true nature of its development. I, Advocate Kishan Sanmukhdas Bhavnani of Gondia, Maharashtra, wish to highlight that the most pressing question is this: When both the Central and State governments are implementing numerous welfare schemes for women, the elderly, children, and the youth, why is this segment of the population still compelled to beg? Does this indicate a failure in the implementation of these schemes? Or is the problem far more complex, involving factors such as economic inequality, social exclusion, mental health issues, a lack of education, and even organized crime? It is evident that viewing beggary solely through the lens of poverty would be an oversimplification; it is a multifaceted problem that demands a multi-pronged approach for its resolution. Friends, if we were to analyze this issue in depth to truly understand it, three primary reasons behind begging emerge: compulsion, profession, and habit. The category of "compulsion" comprises those individuals who are genuinely economically destitute who possess no stable source of income and have been left deprived of social safety nets. As a "profession," begging is often linked to organized syndicates that coerce women and children into begging. Conversely, begging as a "habit" is observed among those who have come to view it as an effortless means of earning an income. A single, uniform solution is not feasible for these three distinct categories; each requires a specific, tailored policy and strategy.

Friends, turning to the ground reportage I have presented here: in Gondia known as the "Rice City" and situated at the easternmost edge of Maharashtra Tuesday marks a special occasion, transforming the town into a veritable fairground for beggars. This influx consists

not only of locals but also of numerous beggars—comprising women, the elderly, children, and the youth—who arrive from outside the region specifically to solicit alms. This phenomenon, which I personally witnessed while conducting ground reporting throughout the day on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, demonstrates that this issue is no longer merely an individual predicament; it has evolved into a deeply entrenched social and cultural problem. When specific days or occasions within a society become designated exclusively for the act of giving alms, we inadvertently end up encouraging the practice of begging itself. This situation gives rise to a vicious cycle in which the donor perceives themselves as accruing spiritual merit, while the recipient transforms the act into a permanent, sustainable source of income.

Friends, if we now turn our attention to government schemes and financial provisions, news reports circulating across various government radio channels and media outlets on March 31, 2026 such as the report from just two days prior regarding a disbursement of approximately ₹2,36,00,805 highlight that the funds allocated to local bodies by the 15th Finance Commission are intended to strengthen basic infrastructure at both rural and urban levels, boost employment opportunities, and ensure social welfare. These funds are channeled through Panchayats and municipal bodies to support initiatives in healthcare, sanitation, drinking water, education, and social security. However, the fundamental issue here is not the allocation of funds, but rather their implementation. If these funds were to reach the intended beneficiaries effectively, problems such as begging could undoubtedly be significantly reduced. Yet, it is frequently observed that due to corruption, administrative negligence, and a lack of awareness, this assistance fails to reach those who are truly in need.

Friends Furthermore, government schemes are often so convoluted that the average citizen is unable to access their benefits. Digital procedures, extensive documentation requirements, and the bureaucratic ordeal of making repeated rounds to government offices become formidable barriers for those who are already marginalized. Consequently, they opt for the path of least resistance: begging. In this context, it is imperative that we view begging not merely as a law-and-order issue, but also through the lens of human rights and social justice. If an elderly person is begging on the streets, it represents not merely a personal failure on their part, but a collective failure involving the family, society, and the State alike. Similarly, if a child is found begging, it constitutes a direct violation of their fundamental rights to education and protection.

Friends, if we consider the elimination of begging from a legal perspective, it becomes clear that the problem cannot

be effectively resolved through legislation alone; rather, it requires a comprehensive approach involving socio-economic reforms, rehabilitation, and a humane outlook. Nevertheless, should the government wish to establish a strict and holistic framework—drawing upon the concepts I have outlined—the following 10 potential laws (or bills) could be enacted: (1) \*Beggary Prohibition and Rehabilitation Act\*—This law would ban begging in public spaces while simultaneously mandating the establishment of rehabilitation centers for beggars. (2) \*Child Beggary Protection Act\*—Under this legislation, severe penalties (imprisonment coupled with heavy fines) would be imposed on those who compel children to beg, while the children themselves would be provided with education and protection. (3) \*Senior Citizen Protection and Rehabilitation Act\*—This law would facilitate legal action against family members or responsible individuals who force the elderly into a situation where they must beg, while also ensuring the provision of shelter and pensions for senior citizens. (4) \*Women's Beggary Eradication Act\*—This legislation would mandate strict action against gangs or individuals who coerce women into begging, alongside the implementation of secure rehabilitation schemes specifically for women. (5) \*Organized Beggary Gang Control Act\*—A specialized law targeting mafias or gangs involved in orchestrating begging operations, wherein human trafficking and forced begging are designated as grave criminal offenses. (6) \*Mandatory Skill Development and Employment Act\* This law would make it mandatory to provide skill training and employment opportunities to beggars during their rehabilitation phase. (7) \*Prohibition of Beggary in Public Places Act\* This legislation would impose a ban on begging at specific public venues—such as railway stations, bus stands, religious sites, and markets and prescribe penalties for any violations. (8) \*Social Security and Minimum Income Guarantee Act\* A legal guarantee of minimum income, food, housing, and healthcare facilities for the poor and homeless, ensuring they are not compelled to resort to begging. (9) \*Charity Regulation and Transparency Act\* A prohibition on giving alms directly in public places, establishing a system wherein donations are channeled through authorized institutions or NGOs. (10) \*Rehabilitation Center Regulation and Monitoring Act\* Establishing standards for all rehabilitation centers, ensuring regular inspections, and safeguarding human rights. These 10 potential laws present a robust framework for addressing this issue. The Beggary Prohibition and Rehabilitation Act, the Child Beggary Protection Act, and special laws for women and senior citizens are all essential measures. In particular, strict action against organized begging rackets is imperative, as this constitutes not merely economic exploitation but also a form of human trafficking. However, merely imposing a ban

on begging will not suffice. The problem can be eradicated from its roots only if legal measures are integrated with education, employment, social security, and rehabilitation; otherwise, strict laws will merely mask the problem rather than resolve it. Nevertheless, the enactment of laws alone will not be sufficient. Anti-beggary laws already exist in several Indian states, yet their impact has remained limited. The primary reason for this is that such laws often focus on punitive measures, whereas the true solution to the problem lies in "rehabilitation" and "empowerment." If an individual is arrested for begging but lacks any alternative means of livelihood, they will inevitably revert to their previous predicament upon their release. Therefore, it is essential that rehabilitation centers be transformed from mere shelters into hubs for skill development and employment generation. Provisions such as the Mandatory Skill Development and Employment Act can play a pivotal role in this regard. If beggars are provided with training and subsequently offered employment opportunities—whether in small businesses, handicrafts, the service sector, or other fields they can achieve self-reliance. Concurrently, measures such as social security and minimum income guarantees are also of paramount importance. If every citizen were guaranteed a minimum standard of living encompassing food, housing, healthcare, and education the need for begging would naturally diminish. Furthermore, the culture of charity itself requires redefinition; rather than giving alms directly, people should be encouraged to channel their assistance through authorized institutions and NGOs. Here, the roles of both the media and society become crucial. We often mock the economic conditions of other nations on international platforms, yet we tend to overlook the ground realities within our own country. If we truly aspire to become a "Developed India," we must honestly confront our internal challenges.

Therefore, if we study and analyze the entirety of the aforementioned details, we will find that the solution to the problem of begging lies in a holistic approach one where legislation, social reform, economic empowerment, and human empathy work in tandem. This is not solely the responsibility of the government, but also that of society, the family, and every individual citizen. We must understand that eradicating begging is not merely an endeavor to improve the "nation's image," but rather a solemn pledge to provide a life of dignity to millions of people. If we take this issue seriously and undertake coordinated efforts, we can not only bring about a reduction in begging but also truly build an India where no one is compelled to hold out their hand for their livelihood. This, in the truest sense, is the path toward a "Developed India 2047" an India where development is reflected not merely in statistics, but in the life of every single citizen.

## District-level Odisha Day and 33 Subarnapur District Foundation Day - 2026 Celebrated

SUBARNAPUR (Correspondent) --- Today, on the occasion of the celebration of the 91st District-level Odisha Day and 33rd Subarnapur District Foundation Day - 2026, the district administration conducted a town tour with patriotic music played by a loudspeaker at 4.00 am. At 7.30 am, the district administration garlanded the statues of great men and sons of Baraputra located in Subarnapur town. From 8.00 am, Subarnapur Collector Dr. Nruparaj Sahu distributed clothes and sweets to the homeless at the Swadhar House in Subarnapur town, fruits and sweets were



distributed to the homeless at Utkal Balashram, and clothes and sweets were distributed to the homeless at Leprosy colony. Then at 9.30 am, a general meeting was held at Subarnapur Town Hall under the chairmanship of Additional District Magistrate (General) Anjalina Pradhan to celebrate the district

level Odisha Day and District Foundation Day 2026. Collector Dr. Nruparaj Sahu was the chief guest in this meeting, while Additional District Magistrate (Revenue) Rajendra Majhi, Chief Development Officer and Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad Aswini Kumar Meher, Sonepur Municipal Council Chairperson,

Tamasi Tamasmita Nayak, Chief District Medical and Public Health Officer, Dr. Usharani Dash and Sonepur Sub Collector Dr. Soumyarupa Rath were the guests of honour. Dr. Jyoti Ranjan Bahidar, Lecturer, Sonepur College participated in this general meeting as the chief speaker. In this general meeting, the

guests delivered their speeches on Odisha Day and District Foundation Day. On this occasion, the Collector spoke about the culture and traditions of our Odisha state and reminded the students and teachers of the great men and women of Odisha in his speech. The main speaker gave a factual speech on the formation of Odisha state and Subarnapur district on the occasion of Odisha Day and District Formation Day, along with his speech on Odisha identity. The Chief Development Officer and Executive Officer, District Council gave his speech on the development work of the district.

## The third degree of the police surrounded the office of RonoHunkar District Collector against the Kangaroo Court

Jajpur (Correspondent) Jajpur Sadar police station IIC and other police officers who committed third degree physical and mental torture, suspended from their jobs and arrested the person who courted Kongaru, came out in a huge procession and surrounded the District Collector's office. Kangaroo court and Jajpur Sadar Police detaining three youths for two to three days and committing third degree torture inside the police station have been strongly protested. On the call of the Major, the Youth Students Front, Ambedkar Foundation, Bhim Army, Santal Samaj, Bari Development Council and fifteen other organizations joined in this protest. A huge rally came out from near on



Biju Patnaik street of Jajpur town and the police officers stormed into the District Collector's office shouting various slogans about the inefficiency of the district administration. And representatives of the state's bahun society Abhiram Malik, Manas Jena, Rajya Das, Lilu Das Anil Malik, Nihar Ranjan Samal, Tikina Parida, Dushmanth Jena, Bhairab Prasad Behera, Sasmita Jena, Lilu Das, Bibhram Biswajit, and Biswanath Patra joined the major and strongly protested against the

kangaroo court and police torture in the old capital of Odisha. Jajpur Sadar Police Station IIC reached the spot with a police team after seeing the tension at the scene. And a platoon of police force was deployed near the district culture building. The agitators presented a demand letter to the Chief Minister through the Deputy District Collector. The agitation was withdrawn after the sub divisional magistrate Jajpur took the incident seriously and contacted Jajpur Sadar SDPO and Jajpur SP to take immediate action.

## Malkangiri district prepares for Census-2027, collector launches census chariot

Malkangiri, correspondent : The Malkangiri district administration has expressed its readiness to make the upcoming Census 2027 a success. District Collector Prathmesh Arvind Rajshirke flagged off the Census chariot-2027 from the Collector's office premises. Through this chariot, people will be made aware about the house census and the census process. The current census will be conducted in two phases. Through digital self-enumeration, the public can provide their data online using the se.census.gov.in portal between April 1 and 15. For the area-level census, enumerators will go door-to-door from April 16 to May 15 to collect data through 33 questions. 1279 enumerators and 222 observers have been deployed in the district for this major task. The census will be conducted from April 1 to April 15 and the actual census will be conducted from house to house for the thirty days from April 17 to May 15. The census will be conducted in February 2027.

## Young woman dies after falling from 3rd floor in Cuttack

Cuttack (Correspondent) : A young woman tragically died under suspicious circumstances after falling from the third floor of a building in Cuttack's Badambadi area late on Tuesday night. Initial reports suggest that she fell while speaking on the phone from the terrace. Upon receiving information, the local

police promptly arrived at the scene and rushed the victim to SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH), where she was declared dead on arrival. The deceased, originally from Jagatsinghpur, had been residing in a rented accommodation in Badambadi and was employed in Naraj. Police from Badambadi Police Station have

launched an investigation into the incident, and a scientific team is also examining the scene to determine the cause of the fall. Authorities have informed the family of the deceased, who have called for a thorough investigation to determine whether the death was accidental or involved foul play. While the exact cause of the

incident remains unclear, there is speculation about a possible love-related angle. Police are currently questioning neighbors and gathering information to uncover more details. Authorities have assured that a comprehensive investigation is underway and further information will be provided once the probe is complete.

## Self-Census Process Launched in Jajpur



JAJPUR (Correspondent) : For the first time across the country, an advanced digital-based census process has been launched from today. Under this new system, citizens can participate in the 'self-census' by submitting their own details through an official website or mobile application. In this context, the initiative has also commenced in Jajpur district. District Collector Shri Ambar Kumar Kar personally took part in the process and marked the launch of the self-census drive by submitting his own details. The self-census

process, scheduled to continue from April 1 to April 15, includes a total of 33 important questions. The District Collector has appealed to all residents of the district to actively cooperate in this national exercise. Officials from the Census Directorate, the Municipal Executive Officer, the Additional District Magistrate (General & Miscellaneous), along with two master trainers, enumerators, and supervisors were present during the inauguration programme conducted by the District Collector.

## Pucc checks to intensify from April 2

Cuttack (Correspondent) : The State Transport Authority (STA) has decided to enforce strict checking of Pollution Under Control Certificates (Pucc) across the state from April 2. Vehicles without valid Pucc will face legal action. Meanwhile, the One-Time Settlement (OTS) scheme for traffic violators, which allowed payment of 50% of fines, ended on Tuesday. Despite being in force for five months, only about 25% of the ?1300 crore fines have been recovered. The STA has proposed extending the scheme to boost collections. Sources indicate the scheme may be extended for another month, as many citizens are willing to pay but remain confused about the payment process due to different systems used by the Transport Department and police. Additionally, the ongoing special enforcement drive against traffic violations has been extended till April 10, with strict checks on both light and heavy vehicles.

## Teacher Biranchi Dash Honoured with 'Nation Builder Award'

Kantabanji, correspondence: Biranchi Narayan Dash, a dedicated teacher and Junior Red Cross counsellor from Turekela block, has been conferred with the prestigious "Nation Builder Award" in recognition of his outstanding contribution to education and social service. Currently serving as a teacher at Pakhanamunda Upper Primary School, Dash received the honour at a special ceremony held at Jayadev Bhawan in Bhubaneswar. The award was presented by Utkal Gaurav Foundation in association with Rotary Club, along with a certificate and memento. Dash has been widely appreciated for his multifaceted social initiatives. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he actively distributed dry and cooked food to the needy and also ensured feeding of stray animals, including cows, dogs, and monkeys in Harishankar. His continuous efforts in promoting education, social awareness, and humanitarian values have made a

significant impact in the region. He has been actively involved in campaigns such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, prevention of child marriage, anti-addiction drives, plastic-free awareness, blood donation and organizing blood donation camps, road safety campaigns, forest protection, tree plantation, and forest fire prevention awareness. He is also known for helping accident victims with immediate medical support and motivating students towards achieving success in various fields. At present, Dash is serving as the Cluster Resource Centre Coordinator of Hial Cluster. Over the years, he has received numerous accolades including titles like 'Prakruti Bandhu', 'Adarsha Shikshak', and 'Raktaveer' for his contributions to society and literature.



## PM-USHA Sponsored Documentary Film Workshop Concludes with Grand Valedictory on Utkal Diwas at J&MC, Berhampur University

Gopalpur (correspondent) The Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Berhampur University had organized a week-long National Workshop on Documentary Film Production from March 14 to 20, 2026, funded by the prestigious PM-USHA (MERU) grant from the Ministry of Education, Government of India. The workshop was held under the guidance of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Geetanjali Dash, Chairman of the P.G. Council, Prof. Sukanta Kumar Tripathy, Convener & Head of the Department Dr. Bandita Kumari Panda and Co-convener, Dr. Neha Pandey. Prof. Ganesh Sethi, Dr. Jayanta Kumar Panda, Dr. Chinu Bohidar

and Mr. Agni Kumar Behera supported the event. The valedictory function of the workshop was held on 01 April 2026 at the New Conference Hall, Berhampur University, where all the documentaries created by the students were successfully screened. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from faculty members and students of various departments, making it a vibrant and engaging academic gathering. In her address, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor Prof. Geetanjali Dash expressed immense happiness and appreciation for the initiative, stating that the workshop and its outcomes were the best gift the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication could have offered her on the

occasion of Utkal Diwas. The workshop was guided by a panel of renowned external experts who visited specifically to work with the students. The experts included Pranab Das, National Award-winning filmmaker known for socially impactful storytelling; Sankhajeet De, National Award-winning filmmaker celebrated for innovative documentaries and short films; Amarendra Mohapatra, Senior Editor and State Award winner, acclaimed for his technical expertise in film editing; Amarjeet Mohanty, Director of Photography recognized for his visual storytelling skills; and Radhakanta Barik, freelance cinematographer noted for his creative work in independent and documentary filmmaking.

## On behalf of the Utkal Divas Celebration Committee, rituals and a "Swabhiman Padayatra" were organized at Nimapada

Nimapada (Correspondent) : On the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the formation of a separate Utkal (Odisha) province, the Utkal Divas Celebration Committee organized rituals and a self-respect march in Nimapada. At 6 AM, after offering prayers at the local Purneswar Mahadev temple, a grand procession started from Devi Mandap under the leadership of youth organizer Adarsha Das of the Nimapada area. The procession paid floral tributes to the statues of Mahatma Gandhi, Biju Patnaik, Utkalmani Pandit Gopabandhu Das, and martyr Uchhab Mallik. Accompanied by traditional instruments



like ghanta, madal, and conch groups, the rally moved through the market area. Later, at Dolabedi Chhak, hundreds of Paika groups performed an impressive Paika Akhada (martial art) display. After offering tributes to the statue of freedom fighter Mohan Das, the gathered crowd collectively sang "Bande Utkal Janani." Subsequently, a meeting was conducted under the leadership of

senior leader Bijayananda Das. Distinguished guests present included Jyoshnarani Bastia, Prasanna Kumar Pati, Ajay Kumar Mishra, Jogesh Chandra Mishra, Sachikanta Sahu, educationist Jagat Prasad Sabut, Ranjit Rath, Bhakta Bihari Mishra, Artabandhu Senapati, Pranab Kumar Swain, Rabindra Kumar Padhi, Basanta Kumar Mahanti, Prashanta Kumar Sahu, Krushna Chandra Patra, Biswajit Behera, Smruti Ranjan Ojha, Ayush Sahu, Adyanshu Das, Soumya Ranjan Das, and many other local residents, making the celebration grand and memorable. In conclusion, Samir Ranjan Rautaray, the coordinator of the Utkal Divas Celebration Committee, expressed gratitude to all dignitaries and contributors. He also affirmed that in the coming years, Utkal Divas would be celebrated on a much larger scale in Nimapada with the participation of self-respecting citizens.

**EAST COAST RAILWAY**  
e-Tender Notice No. ETELCNBBST-383E, Dated : 25.03.2026

**NAME OF WORK: UPGRADEATION AND RENOVATION OF ELECTRICAL WIRING AND CHANGE / REPLACEMENT ELECTRICAL ASSETS IN SERVICE BUILDINGS UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF CHIEF ELECTRICAL ENGINEER-I/ BHUBANESWAR & CHIEF ELECTRICAL ENGINEER-II/BHUBANESWAR**

Approx. Cost of the Work : ₹ 47.48 Lakhs, EMD : ₹ 95,000.00, Completion Period of the Work : 12 Months.

Tender Closing Date & Time : At 1500 hrs. of 24.04.2026.

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : [www.irps.gov.in](http://www.irps.gov.in)

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender. The tenderers/bidders must have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate and must be registered on IREPS Portal. Only registered tenderer/bidder can participate on e-tendering.

The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (check-list) of tender form (second sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of tender documents, submission of Annexure-B, C, and G1 duly filled and signed by Chartered Accountant.

Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer (Jr) (Civil) Bhubaneswar

## Mona Singh, Mihir Ahuja, Babita Ashiwal open up on 'Maa Ka Sum' ahead of release

As the upcoming series 'Maa Ka Sum' is all set to arrive soon, its cast recently sat down to speak about the heart of the story, the bond between a mother and her son. Actors Mona Singh and Mihir Ahuja, along with producer Babita Ashiwal, opened up about the show and what makes it special. Talking about the core idea of the series, Mona Singh spoke about how the show focuses on "honesty, respect and freedom" in relationships between parents and children. She went on to share how the story reflects changing times and how families are becoming more open and understanding. "I think this is the biggest strength. And this show wants to tell people that there should be such relationships. You see, time is changing, society is changing and people are becoming progressive. So there should be an openness between children and their parents." "It should not be that the mother is different at home and outside. You know, she is honest, she is authentic. And there is freedom, boundaries of course. But this relationship is built on honesty, respect and freedom.



So I feel that many families will learn a new way to deal with their kids," she added. Producer Babita Ashiwal shared that what drew her to the story was the strong "mother and son" relationship at its centre. Speaking from her own experience as a single mother, she said the subject felt real

and close to her life. She also pointed out that such stories are seen across all sections of society. "The subject was so interesting, but it was more important than Maths and Mathematics. What was attractive in this story was the relationship between mother and son.

## Priyanka Chopra heaps praise on Ranveer Singh-starrer 'Dhurandhar: The Revenge'

A strong box office run and widespread industry acclaim have positioned 'Dhurandhar: The Revenge' as one of the biggest cinematic successes of 2026, with the film crossing the Rs 800 crore mark within just two weeks of its release on March 19. Directed by Aditya Dhar, the action drama has garnered praise from audiences, politicians, and film personalities alike. The film stars Ranveer Singh in the lead role, alongside an ensemble cast including Arjun Rampal, R. Madhavan, Sanjay Dutt, and Rakesh Bedi. Actress Yami Gautam also appears in a cameo. Adding to the chorus of appreciation, global star Priyanka Chopra took to social media to commend the film and its cast. Referring to Ranveer Singh as her friend, she congratulated him and the team for their work. In her post, she wrote, "Congratulations mere dost @ranveersingh... Aditya, you're a man with a mission. Dhurandhar in every way is a revelation. Thank you all for your artistry." The film, a sequel to last year's 'Dhurandhar', has shown remarkable performance at the box office. According to trade analyst Taran Adarsh, the film crossed Rs 800 crore by the end of its second weekend. 'Dhurandhar: The Revenge' marks Aditya Dhar's second directorial venture after his National Award-winning debut 'Uri: The Surgical Strike', which starred Vicky Kaushal. The film's music, including the track 'Aari Aari' composed by Shashwat Sachdev in collaboration with Bombay Rockers, has also contributed to its popularity among audiences.



## 4 eye protection tips: 'Never rub your eyes...'

Summer is incomplete without swimming. With floaties and mimosas in hand, spending time in the pool is a great way to beat the summer heat. But as you splash around, your eyes are often exposed to chlorine and bacteria, triggering eye-related problems. Taking a few precautions beforehand can help you enjoy the pool time without compromising your eye health.



HT Lifestyle connected with Dr Himanshu Mehta, senior ophthalmologist at the ASG The Vision Eye Centre, who emphasised that it is important to protect your eyes.

"Eye-related problems may occur if you don't take proper care. Some of the problems include

burning, itchy eyes and even corneal infections. Also note, never rub your eyes, as this can cause further damage," he said, naming a few possible complications that can arise from exposure to pool water without adequate precautions.

1. Shower before swimming  
Shower before swim to wash off any

oils/lotions that may be applied to the face.

This prevents these substances from mixing with chlorine.

Avoiding this mixing stops the formation of chloramines, which are the main cause of burning and itchy eyes.

2. Wear well-fitted swimming goggles

Must for eye safety.

Use goggles that fit

well to prevent water from entering while swimming.

Broad-rimmed, non-leaky goggles create proper suction around the eyes.

Goggles keep pool chemicals out of the eyes and help maintain the tear film.

Anti-glare and anti-fog goggles help keep vision clear underwater.

## 5 strategies to calm down heart palpitations



That sudden flutter in your chest when you're anxious or overwhelmed can feel terrifying - but in many cases, it's not a sign of a failing heart. Palpitations are often driven by adrenaline surges during stress, panic or fatigue, making them the body's reflex response rather than a dangerous cardiac event. The key is to stay grounded, calm your system and identify what's triggering the sensation in the first place. A cardiologist and heart-transplant specialist with expertise in advanced heart failure and mechanical circulatory support, has shared five ways you can calm down heart palpitations. In an Instagram video posted on December 8, the cardiologist explains that palpitations are often harmless and simply the body's response to a stressor - but advises seeking immediate medical attention if they occur alongside other concerning symptoms.

He states, "Heart palpitations feel dramatic - like your heart is skipping, fluttering, or buzzing out of nowhere.

But here's what I tell my own patients: most palpitations are your body reacting, not your heart failing."

He outlines five ways to calm your heart:

Slow your breathing  
According to Dr Yaranov, taking slow, deep breaths can help control the fluttering in your chest. He explains, "A long, controlled exhale pulls you out of 'fight-or-flight' and settles the rhythm faster than anything else."

Vagal maneuvers  
Dr Yaranov recommends doing vagal maneuvers - actions that

stimulate the vagus nerve - to calm down irregular heart rhythms. He highlights, "Vagal maneuvers - a gentle bear down or even cold water on your face - can interrupt the adrenaline loop that's driving the sensation."

Find the trigger  
Palpitations can occur for a variety of reasons, and pinpointing the trigger often helps uncover the underlying cause - once that cause is addressed or removed, the palpitations usually settle on their own. The cardiologist elaborates, "Caffeine, alcohol, nicotine, stress, poor sleep, dehydration,

spicy foods - your heart almost always has a reason. Remove the trigger and the palpitations often fade."

Rehydrate  
Dehydration and low electrolyte levels are common triggers for palpitations, which is why timely rehydration can often help steady your heartbeat and restore its normal rhythm. Dr Yaranov points out, "Low fluid or electrolytes make the heart irritable. Half of the "random" palpitations I see are actually dehydration in disguise."

Stay calm  
Maintaining your composure can help settle heart palpitations, as it lowers adrenaline levels and prevents that surge of stress hormones from further aggravating your heartbeat. Dr Yaranov highlights, "Adrenaline palpitations feel scary but are rarely dangerous. But if there's chest pain, fainting, shortness of breath, or episodes that keep coming back - that's when you get checked."



## 7 month old survived rare liver disease, brain haemorrhage: 'Condition continued to worsen...'

Major ailments and life-threatening complications can occur in young children. What makes this more serious is that treatments typically performed at an older age are often highly complex or involve major surgeries. For infants, these procedures can be challenging because of their sensitive and fragile physiology. However, recovery is still possible through timely intervention and specialised medical support.

One such case is that of a critically ill seven-month-old infant from Nepal, suffering a congenital liver disorder complicated by a life-threatening brain haemorrhage, who was successfully treated by doctors at Narayana Hospital, Gurugram.

It highlights that even infants can develop serious and life-threatening conditions, making early detection and timely, specialised care crucial for recovery.

The Gurugram doctors shared more details about the process with HT Lifestyle, right from the turn of aggravation to treatment that led to recovery.

Early signs

The infant appeared healthy at birth but soon developed persistent jaundice and pale stools. Doctors diagnosed the child with biliary atresia, a

rare liver disorder affecting bile flow. The baby underwent a Kasai surgery in Nepal, but the condition worsened over time.

Dr Manoj Kumar Singh, liver transplant surgeon, outlined how the condition progressed: "The condition continued to worsen and progressed to severe liver damage (biliary cirrhosis) with high pressure in the liver blood vessels (portal hypertension)." Subsequently, repeated episodes of bleeding in the stomach and intestines were also observed.

How did the liver disorder aggravate?

Liver transplant surgeon Dr Sanjay Goja at Narayana explained what went wrong and what was observed that triggered the alarm: "The situation became more serious when doctors discovered a large collection of blood on the left side of the brain." The main reason this happened was that the damaged liver affected the child's ability to clot blood. Neurosurgeon Dr Utkarsh Bhagat added why it became an emergency, "Soon, the bleeding increased and began putting pressure on the brain, pushing it from its normal position and creating a risk of brain herniation, a life-threatening condition if not treated immediately."

# PL 2026: Ngidi, Natarajan Pick Three Each As DC Restrict LSG To 141

Lucknow: Delhi Capitals (DC) produced a brilliant bowling effort as Lungi Ngidi and T. Natarajan picked three wickets each to haunt Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) to 141 in 18.4 overs at the Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium, Lucknow on Wednesday. Asked to bat first, LSG came up with a new opening batting pair as skipper Rishabh Pant promoted himself to the top order but was removed early in the innings of an unfortunate run out. A strange moment in what might have been a caught-and-bowled chance for Mitchell Marsh turned into a run-out. Mukesh Kumar got a slight touch on the ball, which hit the stumps at the non-striker's end, catching Pant short of his crease at seven runs. Earlier, Mukesh Kumar set the tone with an exceptional start with the new ball,



conceding less than a run a ball in three overs during the powerplay; he also got some swing and seam movement, but most importantly, he did not give Mitchell Marsh much room to work with outside off stump. Skipper Axar Patel then brought himself on to bowl to the right-handers and struck in standard style by deceiving Aiden Markram (11) with a skiddy, angled delivery that cramped his room

and bowled him out after hitting him for a six on the previous ball before. Delhi Capitals capped off a strong first phase of the match by restricting LSG to 48/2 at the conclusion of the powerplay. Ayush Badoni's stay was brief as LSG slipped to 49/3 in the seventh over, with the batter edging a regulation length delivery of T Natarajan slanting away outside off to the keeper while attempting to free his

arms and go over the infield. Ngidi recovered from a costly start to deliver a possible ball of the season. He tricked Nicholas Pooran (8) with a well-disguised dipping slower ball from round the wicket. The delivery angled into the stumps and completely confused Pooran. He committed early to the flick but realised too late that the ball hadn't reached him, leaving him unable to adjust in time. Capitals gained

control of the game as Mitchell Marsh battled through a slow, tempered pitch, with the exception of a boundary when he hit a six over square leg off Kuldeep Yadav. Attempting to go against the wrong'un, he misjudged it, leading to an easy catch for the fielder at long-off, getting out on 35 runs from 28 balls. Debutant Mukul Choudhary (14) showed great intent early, hitting a reverse scoop four followed by another boundary behind the wicket to Kuldeep, and added 34 runs with Abdul Samad. However, he was removed in the next over as Kuldeep tricked him with a googly, only to edge it back to the bowler. Samad showed some fight till the end, but was removed by Natarajan for 36 as the rest of the batters fell for just three runs in the end. Ngidi and Natarjan started with the ball for Delhi, picking three wickets each after Yadav picked two.

# From Delivering Milk To First Career Gold At KITG 2026, J&K Wrestler Hamam Hussain's Dreams Come True

Ambikapur: When Jammu and Kashmir's Hamam Hussain isn't occupied with wrestling practice, he assists his elder brother in delivering milk door-to-door. Hussain and his brother have been selling milk to support their family since their father died five years ago, all while pursuing his wrestling ambitions.

All those efforts finally paid off at the Khelo India Tribal Games 2026, where the 28-year-old wrestler from Jorawar village in Jammu won the men's 79kg freestyle gold, defeating Mohit Kumar of Himachal Pradesh and earning his first national gold in 14 years of wrestling. "My elder brother was also a wrestler and had competed at the state level. After our father passed away, all responsibilities came on our shoulders. My brother had to quit wrestling and started selling milk. I would go



with him to deliver milk, as it was necessary for us to run the family. But he motivated me to continue wrestling and took me to dangals," Hussain told SAI Media. "The buffaloes our father left behind became our source of livelihood. My brother ran the household by selling milk, and I helped him. But once I stepped into the mud akhada, I was fascinated with the sport," said the father of one, who belongs to the Hussain tribe in Jammu. Despite having limited facilities, Hamam never lost hope. He trains almost 20 km from his village in a mud akhada and commutes about 40 km to Jammu

format practice, while still managing his work duties. "The SAI centre is in Jammu and we live in a lower region, so it is quite far for us. It is difficult to go there regularly for practice. We usually go only when there are competitions there; otherwise, we train in mud akhadas. I don't have a personal coach. Senior wrestlers in the akhada guide us. When we train on mats, there are coaches there. In villages, we don't get the kind of facilities that wrestlers in cities have. If we get better facilities, wrestlers from our region can win more medals at national and international levels," he said.

# Palaash Mapara Takes Sole Lead With Five Straight Wins In All India Chess Masters

Mumbai: Palaash Mapara (5 points) continued his dominant run, scoring his fifth consecutive victory to emerge as the sole leader after Round 5 of the All India Chess Masters (Season 3), being played at the Mumbai Chess Centre, in Mumbai on Wednesday. Playing with the black pieces on the top board, Palaash displayed sharp tactical understanding to outplay Punit Dodiya (4 points). A strong chasing pack of five players—Shriram Mhasane, Pratik Yadnik, Yashraj Rathi, AGM Rajveer Nahar, and Shreyansh

Somaiya—are close behind in joint second place with 4.5 points each. On the second board, Yashraj Rathi and Pratik Yadnik settled for a draw, sharing the point. Meanwhile, Shreyansh Somaiya and AGM Rajveer Nahar impressed with fluent victories while playing with the black pieces. Shreyansh defeated Ahaan Kataruka (3.5 points) on the third board, while Rajveer got the better of Shrirang Agarkar (3.5 points). Shriram Mhasane also delivered a strong performance, defeating

Anay Banka (3.5 points) on the sixth board. Earlier on Tuesday, putting up a solid, calculated performance, Palaash Mapara (4 points), playing with white pieces, cleverly defeated Dhruv Muthe (3 points) on the third board at the end of the fourth round of the All India Chess Masters (Season 3), played at the Mumbai Chess Centre, Pedder Road on Tuesday.

Pratik Yadnik (4 points), also playing with the white pieces, scored his fourth successive win, defeating Aditya Siddharth (3 points) on the fourth board.

# Iraq Ends 40-Year Drought, Beat Bolivia To Claim Final FIFA WC 2026 Berth

Monterrey: In a historic achievement, Iraq have ended the 40-year-old wait to qualify for the FIFA World Cup 2026 with a thrilling 2-1 win against Bolivia in the final match of the qualifiers played at the Monterrey Stadium on Wednesday. Iraq last played the multi-national tournament in 1986, which was also co-hosted by Mexico, but the team could not perform well as they exited from the group stage. And now, after 40 years, they will return to the same place and compete with 47 teams to get their first FIFA



World Cup trophy. Iraq took the early lead in the match when Luton Town striker Amir Al Ammari picked out Al Hamadi from a corner,

who nodded his header past the goalkeeper. However, Bolivia didn't back down to the pressure as they made a strong

comeback in the 38th minute with Moises Paniagua equalizing with a powerful effort from 12 yards following Ramiro Vaca's defense-splitting pass. Iraq's Hussein restored his side's advantage in the 53rd minute, timing his run to perfection to meet Marko Farji's cross with a low first-time volley from eight yards. Bolivia, bidding for its first finals berth since 1994, pushed for a late goal in a tense finish, but Iraq defended resolutely to secure the last of the 48 World Cup spots. "I've got to give so much thanks to

the players. Their work ethic, they showed the real Iraqi mentality of fighting and putting their bodies on the line, that's why we won the game," Iraq head coach Graham Arnold said after the match. The 62-year-old, who was Australia's head coach at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, praised his team's South American rivals. "It was a very tough match. Full credit to Bolivia, they played well. Just through the great defending from our players, we defended the crosses really well. That's why we won the game," he added.

# Deaf cricketer Sibun Nanda selected in national team

Bhubaneswar (Correspondent): The Odisha Deaf Cricket Association (ODCA) proudly extends its heartfelt congratulations to Sibun Nanda on his remarkable selection to Team India's Deaf Cricket Squad for the upcoming international series against South Africa. The tour will feature 3 T20 matches and 2 One Day Internationals (ODIs), scheduled from 26th April 2026 to 2nd May 2026. Sibun Nanda, a versatile all-rounder from Berhampur Sadar in Ganjam district, Odisha, is well known for his quick running between the wickets and exceptional fielding abilities. He is regarded as one of the finest fielders in deaf cricket today.



He has been associated with Ganjam District since 2020. Initially excelling in athletics, Sibun later pursued his passion for cricket after completing his schooling and joined Ganjam District to participate in domestic matches under the Odisha Cricket Association (OCA). He was nurtured by the OCA and earned selection in the prestigious Cooch Behar Trophy for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 seasons, which further

motivated him to continue his cricketing journey. An enthusiastic and determined individual, Sibun thrives on challenges and has embraced the spirit of team sport by competing with players from diverse backgrounds. Cricket has played a vital role in enhancing his confidence and interpersonal skills, helping him overcome life's challenges.

# ALL-INDIA INTER-UNIVERSITY RUGBY CHAMPIONSHIP 2026 KICKS OFF AT KIIT-KISS

BHUBANESWAR, (Correspondent) The All-India Inter-University Rugby Championship (Men & Women) 2026, hosted by KIIT & KISS under the aegis of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), was inaugurated at the Rahul Bose Rugby Stadium, KIIT University, Bhubaneswar, marking a major milestone in India's university sports calendar. The championship, featuring 67 men's and 61 women's teams with over 2,000 participants, will be held from 2nd to 6th April 2026 across two world-class venues—the Rahul Bose Rugby Stadium, KIIT and the Multi-Purpose Outdoor Stadium, KISS, offering players an excellent competitive



environment. The Rahul Bose Rugby Stadium holds a special distinction as India's only World Rugby-certified ground, eligible to host international matches. Supported by world-class infrastructure, including both natural turf and synthetic playing surfaces, the championship ensures

optimal playing conditions for all participants. As the Rahul Bose Rugby Stadium is newly developed, and this marks the first-ever tournament being hosted at the venue, a traditional Puja and Havan were conducted before the formal inauguration. The formal proceedings of the

inaugural ceremony began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp and the presentation of bouquets. Prof. (Dr.) Gaganendu Dash, Director General, Sports & Yoga, KIIT & KISS, delivered the welcome address, extending greetings to all participants and dignitaries. He highlighted the transformative contributions of Prof. (Dr.) Achyuta Samanta, Hon'ble Founder, KIIT, KISS & KIMS, has been promoting rugby in Odisha and India since 2006, noting that the sport's growth and the emergence of talent are a result of his vision through world-class infrastructure, advanced training systems, and the engagement of high-quality international

coaches. Prof. (Dr.) Saranjit Singh, Vice Chancellor, KIIT University, followed with an address emphasising the institution's commitment to integrating sporting excellence with academic development. The Chief Guest, Prof. (Dr.) Achyuta Samanta formally declared the championship open. In his address, he welcomed all the players, managers, technical officials and esteemed guests and underscored the role of sports in holistic development and reaffirmed KIIT & KISS's mission to create world-class opportunities for young athletes across the country.

# Aditya Aluminium Inaugurates Jal Vahini Project to Address Summer Water Scarcity

**Sambalpur (Correspondent):** Aditya Aluminium, Lapanga, as part of its community development initiatives under CSR, inaugurated the Jal Vahini Project at Bomaloi Gram Panchayat of Rengali Block. The initiative aims to provide safe drinking water to local communities during the acute summer season.



Considering the severe water scarcity faced by nearby villages during summer and responding to requests from the local community, Aditya Aluminium has launched this Jal Vahini programme. Under the initiative, drinking water will be supplied through tankers for a period of 90 days, covering 23 villages and 126 hamlets across 7 surrounding Gram Panchayats,

ensuring access to safe drinking water at the doorstep of residents. The inauguration ceremony was held at Bomaloi Gram Panchayat in the presence of senior officials of Aditya Aluminium, including Unit Head Shri Jagannath Prasad Nayak, HR Head Shri Vinoda Nanda Thakur, CPP Head Shri Gulshan Tiwari, Smelter Plant Head Shri Sandeep Singh, Shri Suresh Das, Civil Head Shri Ranjit Kumar, Shri Manoj

Sharma, Shri Nil Madhav Pati, CSR Head Shri Ravi Niwas and Shri Manoranjan Behera, along with members of the Civil and CSR teams and local residents. The dignitaries flagged off the water tanker, marking the launch of the initiative. The event was also attended by Rengali Block Chairman Shri Satyanarayan Agrawal, Bomaloi Sarpanch Smt. Saraswati Pradhan, former Sarpanch Shri Sheshdev Pradhan,

and other Panchayat representatives.

On the same occasion, another community development initiative was undertaken with the foundation stone laid for the construction of the Subhadra Shakti Kendra at Lapanga Panchayat by Lapanga Samiti Member Shri Kiran Behera in the presence of women Self-Help Group members. The centre will serve as a training and livelihood hub for SHG women, supporting skill development and income generation activities. The initiative reflects Aditya Aluminium's continued commitment to improving the quality of life of communities in its surrounding areas.

# Vedanta Iron Ore Odisha Builds Community Bonds through Volunteerism

**Bhubaneswar (Correspondent):** Vedanta Iron Ore Odisha (IOO) successfully concluded its Employee Volunteerism Week (EVW). The initiative, part of Sesa Employee Volunteering Activity (SEVA) reinforces the company's enduring commitment to strengthening community partnerships and fostering positive change across its host regions.



The initiative connected Vedanta employees with community members across Nadidhi, Rengalbeda, Koida, Guali, and Joda villages in the Sundergarh and Kendujhar districts of Odisha. Focused on youth empowerment, wellness, and environmental awareness, EVW is an initiative that Vedanta IOO regularly organises as part of its community engagement efforts.

Throughout the week, employees participated in a series of meaningful initiatives that reached over 330 community members. Specially formed employee teams enhanced the reach and effectiveness of the outreach, dedicating their time and efforts to community centric activities centred on education, empowerment, and recreation. Reflecting on the initiative, Mr. Biswanath Sahoo, Chief Operating Officer Vedanta IOO, shared: "At Vedanta, we believe that 'giving back' is fundamental to sustainable growth. Employee Volunteerism Week embodies the spirit of partnership we strive for. One where our people work alongside the community to drive meaningful change. I am incredibly

proud of our teams' dedication and remain committed to fostering these bonds for a prosperous, shared future." Key highlights of the week included an awareness session on menstrual hygiene for adolescent girls at the Guali Residential School. Vedanta IOO employees came forward for this noble cause and collectively distributed sanitary napkins to the students. In addition, a self defence training program was conducted for the students of ITI Koida, aimed at promoting personal safety, awareness, and confidence among youth. Workshops on

financial management and marketing essentials were also organised for local Self Help Groups (SHGs), helping to strengthen their entrepreneurial and livelihood capabilities. Sharing her experience, Ms. Padmini Baliarsingh, Principal, ITI Koida, said: "The Self Defense Training Session organised by Vedanta IOO at our institute was extremely insightful and effective. The training emphasized awareness, confidence building, and personal safety, which are crucial in today's environment. The initiative by Vedanta IOO is well appreciated for its commitment to community development & student empowerment."

# Students of Saraswati Shishu Vidya Mandir Unit-III Celebrate Utkal Divas with Green Mission

**Bhubaneswar (Correspondent):** Saraswati Shishu Vidya Mandir, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar celebrated Utkal Divas with great enthusiasm, commemorating the formation of Odisha as a separate state and honouring its rich cultural heritage. The programme aimed to instill a sense of pride among students for Odisha's language, traditions, and glorious legacy. The celebration commenced with floral tributes to eminent personalities who contributed to the formation of Odisha, followed by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp. The



occasion was graced by Chief Guest Sri Madhusudan Das, reputed social worker and Abahak of Odisha Punahirman Abhiyan. Addressing the gathering, the Chief Guest highlighted the importance of

preserving Odisha's cultural identity and urged students to contribute towards the development of society with dedication and responsibility. Emphasizing environmental

protection, he appealed to all patrons to plant at least ten saplings each. He also encouraged students to prepare seed balls from seeds of large native trees and hand them over to their respective class teachers so that they can be used for promoting greenery. Students presented a vibrant cultural programme featuring Odia patriotic songs, traditional dances, speeches, and recitations showcasing the state's rich cultural diversity. The performances reflected deep respect for Odisha's heritage and filled the atmosphere with patriotic fervour.

# Utkal Divas celebrated at Hitech Science and Commerce College

**Bhubaneswar (Correspondent):** Utkal Divas was celebrated with great enthusiasm at Hi-tech Science and Commerce College located in Hitech Medical College campus. Students should acquire knowledge and also learn about the glorious chapters and traditions of Odisha. If the college is closed on Nationalism Days, students are deprived of learning about the glory of this day, said the college Principal Dr. Chittaranjan Sahoo.



Students should acquire sufficient knowledge about the country, caste and nation, said the college's professor of Odia Language and Literature Department and international Odissi dance artist Dr.

Chittaranjan Sahani. The ceremony was attended by senior professor of Physics Dr. Muralidhar Swain, Head of the Department of English Dr. Sarat Kumar Nayak, Head of the Department

of Chemistry Dr. Dharmendra Kumar Jena, Head of the Department of Biology Pravat Kumar Sahoo and English Department Professor Priyabrata Sethy explained the students about the history of Odisha. The students sang the national song Bande Utkal Janani and dance and music programs were organized by Mathematics Department Professor and renowned musician Alok Kumar Sahu and Botanical Science Faculty Professor Subhadarshini Sahu.

# East Coast Railway Retains No. 1 Position in Freight Loading

**Rayagada (Correspondent):** East Coast Railway (ECoR) has once again emerged as the top freight loading zone in Indian Railways for the financial year 2025-26, reinforcing its leadership in the sector.



During the year, ECoR achieved a record freight loading of 286.3 million tonnes, marking an increase of around 10.4% compared to 259.25 million tonnes in the previous financial year. This is the highest ever freight loading recorded by the zone.

2024-25, reflecting a growth of over 10%. Notably, this is the seventh consecutive year that ECoR has crossed the 200 million tonnes mark in freight loading.

steel, cement, alumina, fertilizers, and food grains—essential for power generation, infrastructure development, and heavy industries.

The zone also registered a significant rise in freight revenue, earning ₹29,456.60 crore in 2025-26, compared to ₹26,691.82 crore in

ECoR contributed 17.1% to the total freight loading of Indian Railways, highlighting its crucial role in transporting key bulk commodities such as coal, iron ore,

In the passenger segment as well, the zone recorded encouraging growth. During 2025-26, ECoR carried 97.64 million passengers and earned ₹2,495.51 crore, compared to

93.52 million passengers and ₹2,371.09 crore in the previous year, showing a 5.25% increase in passenger traffic.

This consistent performance has been driven by efficient freight operations, better wagon utilization, improved terminal management, infrastructure strengthening, modern signalling systems, and enhanced customer engagement. East Coast Railway continues to play a vital role in the growth and efficiency of Indian Railways and remains committed to further improving its services and capacity in the coming years.

# KIIT & KISS Celebrates Odisha Divas

**Bhubaneswar (Correspondent):** Odisha Divas was celebrated with great enthusiasm by KIIT and KISS on Wednesday. On this occasion, floral tributes were paid to the illustrious sons of Odisha, followed by a remembrance of their significant contributions toward the formation of a separate Utkal Province.



Attending the event as the chief guest, KIIT and KISS Founder Dr Achyuta Samanta stated that Odisha is set to complete 100 years of its formation as a separate state in 2036. He noted that while Odisha has made remarkable progress across various sectors

over the years, KIIT and KISS have also been contributing for more than three decades to the development of education, healthcare, tribal empowerment, sports, literature, and culture in the state.

harmony.

Dr. Samanta further emphasised that KIIT and KISS will continue to play a significant role in Odisha's growth journey in the coming years. He added that the Odia community today stands as a symbol of cooperation and

Among others, KIIT Vice Chancellor Prof. Saranjit Singh, Pro-Vice Chancellors Dr. C B K Mohanty, Prof. K. D. Raju, and Registrar Prof. J R Mohanty also shared their views on occasion, calling upon everyone to come together and extend their cooperation towards the continued development of Odisha. The programme concluded with cultural performances presented by artists from KIIT and KISS.

# Sensex, Nifty Start FY27 On Positive Note, Snap 2-Day Losing Streak

**Mumbai:** Indian stock markets ended Wednesday's session on a strong note, although they gave up a large part of their early gains as optimism around easing tensions between the US and Iran faded later in the day. The benchmark indices Nifty and Sensex both closed higher, snapping their two-day losing streak. The Nifty settled at 22,679.40, up 348 points or 1.56 per cent, while the Sensex rose 1,186.77 points or 1.65 per cent to end at 73,134.34.

# Bank of Maharashtra Opens its 65TH Branch of Bhubaneswar Zone, Odisha

**Bhubaneswar (Correspondent):** Bank of Maharashtra, one of the premier public sector banks has opened a new branch at Lochapada in Ganjam District. With this addition, the Bank has now 7 branches in Ganjam District & 65 branches in the state of Odisha. The bank also announced its plans to further strengthen its presence and customer reach in the state of Odisha. The new branch was



inaugurated by Rama Prava, Padma Lochana Patro, N Dhanurdhar Patro along with Dilip Kumar Raulo, Zonal Manager, Bhubaneswar Zone, Sanjib

Kumar Dash, Deputy Zonal Manager, Bhubaneswar Zone and Branch Manager of Lochapada Branch Soukat Roy were present on this occasion. On this occasion, Sri Tripathi appreciated the service rendered by the Public Sector Banks and stated that the people of Lochapada should come forward to avail themselves of the services and benefits offered by the Public Sector Banks.