



# DUMANI MAIL

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English Daily



## Centre approves 8.25% interest on employees' provident fund for FY25

**New Delhi, (HS) :** The government has ratified the rate of interest on employees' provident fund at 8.25 per cent for FY25, enabling retirement fund body EPFO to deposit the annual interest accumulation in the post-retirement funds of over 7 crore subscribers. EPFO, on February 28, had decided to retain the interest rate of 8.25 per cent on employees' provident fund (EPF) deposits for the financial year 2024-25, equal to the rate provided in the preceding fiscal. The approved rate of interest for 2024-25 was sent for concurrence of the Ministry of Finance.

"Ministry of Finance has given concurrence to 8.25 per cent rate of interest on the EPF for 2024-25 fiscal year and labour ministry sent a communication regarding this to the EPFO on Thursday," a labour ministry official told PTI. Now the interest amount as per the rate ratified for FY25 will be credited into the accounts of over seven crore subscribers of EPFO. The decision on interest rate was taken at the 237th meeting of the central board of trustees of the EPFO chaired by Union Minister for Labour & Employment Mansukh Mandaviya in New Delhi on February 28. Compared to many fixed-income instruments, EPF offers relatively higher and stable returns, ensuring steady growth on post-retirement savings. In February 2024, the EPFO had increased the interest rate marginally to 8.25 per cent for 2023-24, from 8.15 per cent in 2022-23. In March 2022, EPFO had lowered the interest on EPF for 2021-22 to an over four-decade low of 8.1 per cent, from 8.5 per cent in 2020-21. The 8.10 per cent rate of interest on EPF for 2020-21 was the lowest since 1977-78, when it stood at 8 per cent.

## PM calls for collaboration at the NITI Aayog Governing Council meeting to achieve Viksit Bharat by 2047



**New Delhi, (HS) :** Calling for an increase in the speed of development, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that if the Centre and all the States come together and work together like Team India, no goal is impossible. The Prime Minister, who chaired the 10th Governing

Council Meeting of NITI Aayog, said Viksit Bharat (developed India) is the goal of every Indian and "when every state is Viksit, then Bharat will be Viksit". "This is the aspiration of its 140 crore citizens," he said.

## New Covid variants NB.1.8.1 and LF.7 detected in India, INSACOG data



**New Delhi, (HS) :** Amid a surge in cases of Covid-19, two new variants of coronavirus responsible for the disease have emerged in India, according to the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG). While one case of a newly emerging Covid-19 variant NB.1.8.1 has been recorded, four instances of the LF.7 type have also been detected in India.

According to data from the INSACOG, one case of NB.1.8.1 was identified in April in Tamil Nadu, and four cases of LF.7

were detected in Gujarat in May, according to PTI news agency. As of May 2025, the World Health Organization (WHO) classifies LF.7 and NB.1.8 subvariants as "Variants Under Monitoring", not as "Variants of Concern or Variants of Interest". "Considering the available evidence, the additional public health risk posed by NB.1.8.1 is evaluated as low at the global level," the WHO said. "Currently approved Covid-19 vaccines are expected to remain effective to

"We should focus on one goal, to make Bharat Viksit by

2047. We should have the aim of making each State Viksit, each city Viksit, each Nagar Palika Viksit and each village Viksit. If we work on these lines, we will not have to wait till 2047 to become Viksit Bharat," he said, according to a post on X by Niti Aayog.

"We should work in a manner

so that policies implemented bring change in the lives of common citizens. Only when people feel the change, it strengthens the change and transforms the change into a movement. We have a great opportunity as a team to fulfil the aspirations of 140 Crore people," he added. The Prime Minister said the governments must work towards inclusion of women in work force. "We must make laws, policies so that they can be respectfully integrated in the workforce," he added. According to posts by NITI Aayog on X, PM Modi said India is getting rapidly urbanized and the states should move towards future ready cities. "We should work towards future-ready cities. Growth, innovation, and sustainability should be the engine for the development of our cities," he added. He suggested that states should develop at least one tourist destination at par with global standards and by providing all facilities and infrastructure. One State: One Global Destination. "It would

**Continued P-4**

## CM Unveils Odisha's Ambition to Become \$1.5 Trillion Economy by 2047



**Bhubaneswar, (DMC) :** Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Saturday outlined an ambitious growth vision for the state at the NITI Aayog Governing Council meeting in New Delhi, declaring that Odisha aims to become a \$1.5 trillion economy by 2047. Addressing the meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Majhi asserted that

Odisha is poised to be a driving force in India's economic development over the next quarter century.

The Chief Minister stated that Odisha had recorded a 7.2 percent growth rate in 2024-25, surpassing the national average of 6.5 percent. He attributed this performance to the Centre-state synergy under the 'double

**Continued P-4**

## CM Mohan Majhi expresses grief on Forester's death in Odisha, grants ex-gratia of Rs. 30 lakh

**Bhubaneswar, (DMC) :** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has expressed deep grief on Saturday over the Forester's death in Odisha. He has also granted an ex-gratia compensation to the next of kin. According to reports, the forester identified as Prahlad Pradhan was on patrol in the Rajmohanpur forest of Hindola Range of Dhenkanal district when the unfortunate incident took place. The CM has expressed his condolences to his family of the deceased Forester and announced a compensation of Rs. 30 lakhs. He has also directed the PCCF (Principal Chief Conservator of Forests) to go to the spot and conduct further investigation. In a tragic incident, a forester in-charge was killed as a poacher shot at him. The forester has been identified as Prahlad of Hindola area in Dhenkanal district of Odisha. According to reports, the forester was initially critically injured in a poacher's gunshot. He and his



team had gone to catch the poacher and was shot. He was admitted to Angul Medical College. According to information available, the Forest Department received information about the presence of

poachers near Rajmohanpur area in Hindol police station late last night. Later the Forester and his staff were surrounded by the poachers. At this time, the poachers suddenly opened fire. In

this, in-charge forester Prahlad became critically injured. He was admitted to Angul Medical College where he breathed his last. An investigation has been initiated in this regard.

## Odisha Plus 2 admission form fill up starts today, to continue till June 30

**Bhubaneswar, (DMC) :** The process of the Odisha Plus 2 admissions will begin from Saturday that is May 24, informed the Higher Education Department of Odisha. The application for registration for +2 in Odisha under CHSE will start from May 24 and will continue till June 30. Students can apply through the SAMS portal. The first merit list will be released on July 7. Admission will be

held from July 8 to July 14. Odisha Plus 2 admission shall end by July 14, classes will start from July 24. The results of the Class 10 examination were recently published. The overall pass rate for HSC was 82.77 percent. The pass percent of girls was much higher than that of boys. The pass rate of girls is 87.24 percent. The matriculation

**Continued P-4**

## Monsoon Arrives in India, Earliest onset over Indian Mainland Since 2009

**New Delhi, (HS) :** The southwest monsoon hit Kerala on Saturday, marking its earliest arrival over the Indian mainland since 2009 when it reached the southern state on May 23, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. Normally, the southwest monsoon makes its onset over Kerala by June 1 and covers the entire country by July 8. It starts retreating from northwest India around September 17 and withdraws completely by October 15. The monsoon had set in over the southern state on May 30 last year; June 8 in 2023; May 29 in 2022; June 3 in 2021; June 1 in 2020; June 8 in 2019; and May 29 in 2018, IMD data



showed. Data available since 1975 showed that the monsoon reached Kerala the earliest in 1990 (on May 19), 13 days before the usual date.

According to meteorologists, there is no direct

relationship between the onset date and the total rainfall over the country during the season. The monsoon arriving early or late in Kerala does not mean it will cover other parts of the country accordingly. It is

characterised by large-scale variabilities and global, regional and local features, an IMD official said. The IMD in April forecast above-normal cumulative rainfall in the 2025 monsoon season, ruling out the possibility of El Nino conditions, which are associated with below-normal rainfall in the Indian subcontinent. According to the IMD, rainfall between 96 per cent and 104 per cent of the 50-year average of 87 cm is considered 'normal'. Rainfall less than 90 per cent of the long-period average is considered 'deficient'; between 90 per cent and 95 per cent is 'below normal'; between 105 per cent and 110 per cent is 'above normal'; and

more than 110 per cent is considered 'excess' precipitation. India saw 934.8 mm of rainfall in 2024, 108 per cent of the average and the highest since 2020.

In 2023, it recorded 820 mm, 94.4 per cent of the average. In 2022, it saw 925 mm; 870 mm in 2021; and 958 mm in 2020, according to IMD data. The monsoon is crucial for India's agriculture sector, which supports the livelihood of about 42 per cent of the population and contributes 18.2 per cent to the country's GDP. It is also essential for replenishing the reservoirs critical for drinking water and power generation across the country.

## Odisha Rains are Pre-Monsoon, Not Kalbaisakhi: IMD

**Bhubaneswar, (DMC) :** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday clarified that the recent spell of rainfall across parts of Odisha is of pre-monsoon origin and not related to Kalbaisakhi (Nor'wester) activity, as erroneously reported by some media outlets. IMD scientist Umasankar Das stated that several reports have incorrectly described the showers as Kalbaisakhi events. "The cloud systems responsible for the current rainfall are not moving in from the west or northwest, which is characteristic of Kalbaisakhi storms. Instead, these systems are advancing inland from the sea, a typical pre-monsoon pattern," he said. Das urged media outlets to verify meteorological information before publication and avoid spreading misinformation that could confuse the public. "This is not Kalbaisakhi rain, but pre-monsoon rainfall. Do not mislead people by providing incorrect information," Das cautioned.





# Familiarizing the Indian Constitution

Bhaskar Parichha

There could not have been a better time than this to read a book on the Indian Constitution written by a distinguished author and a parliamentarian himself. Our Living Constitution: A Concise Introduction & Commentary by ShashiTharoor is a fascinating book on the Indian constitution which celebrates seventy five years existence. ShashiTharoor is the bestselling author of twenty-seven books, both fiction and non-fiction. His latest books are A Wonderland of Words: Around the Word in 101 Essays, Pride, Prejudice, and Punditry: The Essential ShashiTharoor, and Ambedkar: A Life.

Says the book : 'The Constitution of India is of paramount importance to every Indian. It bestows fundamental rights on all citizens, speaks in their name, charges those it empowers to protect these rights, and seeks to shield the people from abusers of power and privilege. It creates the basic frame work of our

democracy, including the three main organs of the state-the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary. The Constitution defines their powers, delimits their jurisdictions, demarcates their responsibilities, and regulates their relationships with one another, and

with the people. It privileges an idea of India that transcends religious, ethnic, linguistic, and other sub-national identities. In the words of its principal architect, Dr BabasahebAmbedkar: 'Our Constitution provides us a magnificent structure beneath which all Indians, of all castes, creeds and languages, can equally seek shelter.' Nevertheless, in spite of its

importance and worth, and the observation that it appears to be popular at this time, a limited number of individuals possess a comprehensive understanding of the different facets of the Constitution that are presently under discussion and scrutiny. While

## Our Living Constitution: A Concise Introduction & Commentary

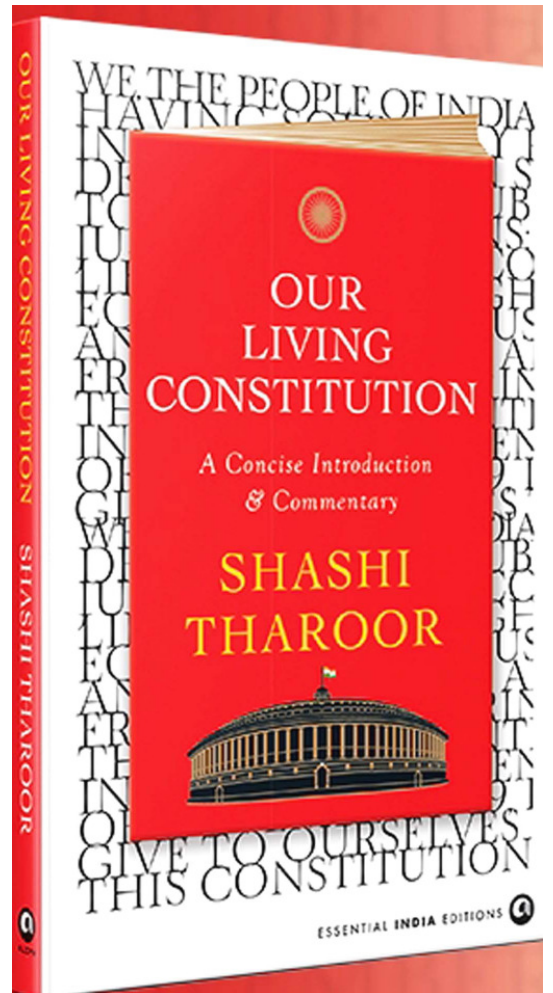
there have been many analyses and interpretations of the Constitution, there exists a scarcity of accessible literature for discerning laypersons that would allow them to become acquainted with its fundamental components, historical context, and immense significance. Our Living Constitution aims to address this deficiency. With the insightful scholarship, persuasive arguments,

and accessible writing that characterize his works, bestselling author and prominent public intellectual ShashiTharoor offers readers an engaging account of the world's longest written national Constitution. He outlines the various components of the Constitution, starting with its impactful preamble and subsequently delving into its historical origins. He examines the civic nationalism that inspired India's Founding Fathers, which in turn endowed the Constitution with its progressive values, pluralism, tolerance, liberalism, and emphasis on individual rights. He evaluates how it has successfully resisted efforts by autocrats and religious extremists to alter its fundamental framework. Despite progress, significant dangers remain. In the twenty-first century, the increasing prevalence of sectarianism and illiberalism threatens the very foundation of Indian society and the Constitution that upholds it. This situation calls for continuous

vigilance and proactive measures to safeguard against these risks, ensuring that the core values and principles of India are not undermined.

So, Tharoor argues : 'There is no reason to lose hope. Over the past five years, democracy- and liberty-loving citizens of India have risen to reclaim our republic....' Will they prevail? Will the Constitution continue to protect and advance the idea of India? Our Living Constitution provides nuanced answers to these important questions. For individuals who wish to comprehend the constitution, the functioning, and the associated challenges, this book is essential reading. This book is informative, knowledgeable, and clear. It propels the reader to comprehend the Constitution that protects every facet of our lives.

**Shashi Tharoor**  
**Aleph Book Company**  
**New Delhi**



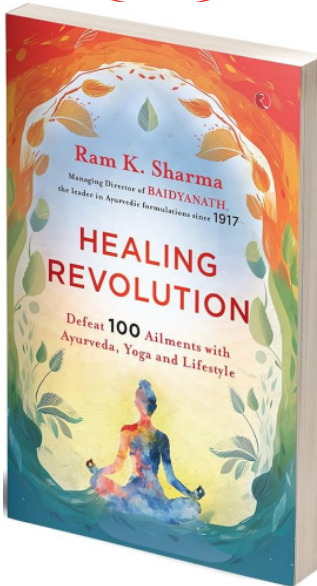
## Ayurveda, Yoga and Life

Dharma Raj

The practices of Ayurveda and Yoga present numerous therapeutic benefits that enhance overall wellness and create balance within the body and mind. Ayurveda, an age-old medical tradition, focuses on the necessity of customized treatment that aligns with a person's specific constitution, referred to as dosha. This comprehensive approach not only addresses physical health concerns but also encompasses emotional and spiritual aspects, culminating in a holistic healing process. Through the application of herbal treatments, dietary modifications, and lifestyle adjustments, Ayurveda strives to restore internal harmony, thereby increasing vitality and fortifying the body's defenses against diseases.

Healing Revolution: Defeat 100 Ailments with Ayurveda Yoga and Lifestyle by Ram K. Sharma is an easy guide for healing and preventing 100 common ailments using the ancient sciences of Ayurveda and Yoga, combined with time-tested principles of mindful living. Ram K. Sharma, a fervent advocate of Ayurveda and a consistent yoga practitioner, holds the position of Managing Director at Baidyanath, a company specializing in Ayurvedic and herbal medicine with a legacy spanning more than a century. Additionally, he is a Board Member for 10 companies and

## Healing Revolution



has previously served as a Board Member for the South Asia Young Presidents' Organization (YPO). Sharma utilizes his experiences as the custodian of Baidyanath, a manufacturer of Ayurvedic formulations and products since 1917, to provide practical solutions for rectifying imbalances in the mind, body, and spirit.

He addresses a range of ailments, from digestive problems and stress to skin conditions and chronic fatigue, offering tailored dietary recommendations, herbal treatments, yoga practices, and daily routines that not only relieve physical symptoms but also foster long-term wellness. An essential read for a healthy lifestyle.

**Ram K. Sharma**  
**Rupa publications**  
**New Delhi**

## When AoG becomes WoL

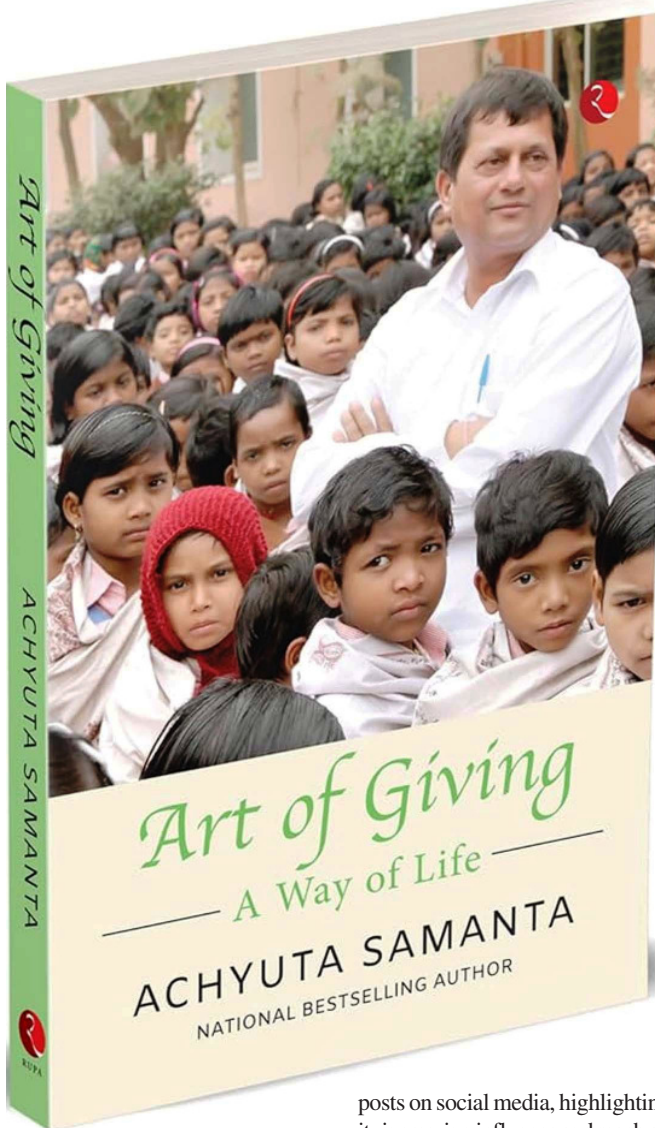
Dharma Raj

Dr. Achyuta Samanta is a distinguished educationist, philanthropist, and social worker. He established the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), which has offered free education and resources to 80,000 tribal children over the last twenty years, as well as the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), a renowned global university. A former Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha), he has been honored with numerous international and national accolades. Dr. Samanta advocates for the Art of Giving as a lifestyle and is committed to the goals of eradicating poverty, hunger, and illiteracy.

In 'Art of Giving - A way of Life', Dr. Samanta delves into the universal notion of giving that transcends religious and cultural boundaries. Drawing from his own experiences of hardship, lack, and ultimate success, he underscores that genuine wealth is found not in material goods but in the act of giving-whether through physical resources or intangible acts of kindness. This book provides practical insights on fostering compassion in all areas of life, from the significance of self-love to the effects of giving on mental well-being. Dr. Samanta's vision goes beyond personal satisfaction, advocating for societal change and encouraging readers to adopt the Art of Giving as a core principle for creating a more empathetic and harmonious world.

According to the book, Art of Giving (AOG) has garnered a remarkable following of over 10 million people, with conveners strategically positioned in more than 300 locations across 120

## Art of Giving: A Way of Life



countries. This extensive network includes representation from all Indian states as well as every panchayat and block in Odisha. The campaign launched in 2025 generated more than 1.5 million

posts on social media, highlighting its increasing influence and reach on a global scale. An interesting read.

**Achyuta Samanta**  
**Rupa Publications**  
**New Delhi**

## Climbing the Majestic Himalayas

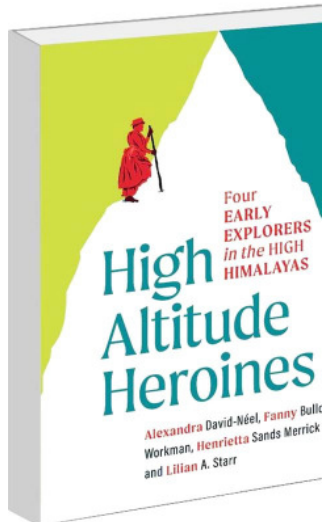
Bhaskar Parichha

Among the typical narratives of mountaineering and early exploration in the Himalayas, there exist a few hidden treasures-trailblazing women who overcame all obstacles, challenging the prevalent stereotypes regarding gender, to explore and conquer the lofty Himalayas. This remarkable compilation of bold explorations features narratives from four of these 'high altitude heroines'- Alexandra David-Néel, Fanny Bullock Workman, Henrietta Sands Merrick, and Lilian A. Starr.

These extraordinary women challenged the prevailing gender norms of their time, boldly stepping into domains and circumstances that were typically considered unsuitable for females. Alexandra David-Néel (1868-1969) was a Belgian-French explorer, spiritualist, Buddhist, anarchist, opera singer, and author. She is best recognized for her 1924 journey to Lhasa, Tibet, at a time when it was off-limits to foreigners. Fanny Bullock Workman (1859-1925) was an American geographer, cartographer, explorer, travel writer, and mountaineer, particularly known for her work in the Himalayas. She was among the pioneering female professional mountaineers. Henrietta Sands Merrick (1879-1944) was an American traveler and the first woman to gain membership in the Himalayan Club. Lilian A. Starr served as a nurse at the Church Missionary Society's hospital located in Peshawar. The book features distinctive, firsthand narratives that explore the landscapes, cultures, and obstacles faced in the Himalayan region during an era when few Westerners, particularly women, dared to venture there. These stories provide deep insights into the lives of local communities, the intricacies of early travel, and the personal struggles these adventurers encountered. The essays are celebrated for their literary finesse and historical importance, positioning the book as a significant addition to the conversation surrounding Himalayan exploration and the history of women.

Alexandra David-Néel recounts her covert expedition to Tibet and its capital, Lhasa, in 1923. Accompanied by a young lama named Yongden, she endures the severe travel conditions, frequent bouts of illness, and the constant threat posed by border control and military forces to achieve her objective, ultimately becoming the first Western woman to reach the 'forbidden city'. American geographer and travel writer Fanny Bullock Workman shares her remarkable exploratory journey in 1906

## High Altitude Heroines

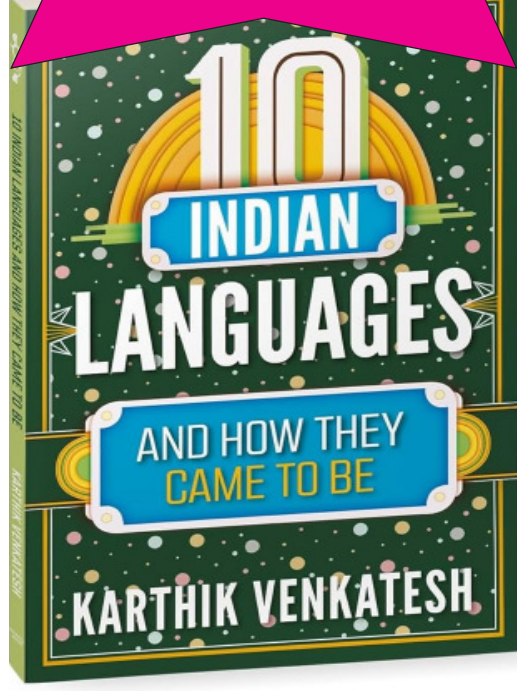


around Nun Kun, the mountain massif situated on the border of Jammu and Kashmir. At the age of forty-seven, she ascends Pinnacle Peak without any contemporary equipment and while dressed in her expansive skirts, achieving an altitude record for women. Henrietta Sands Merrick describes her thrilling expedition through and around Ladakh in 1931. Accompanied by her friends Sandy and Margot, as well as her orderlies Happy and Gulam, she ventures to one of the world's deepest gorges, witnesses the 'Devil Dances' at Hemis, and spends a night under the stars at the Khardong Pass. Lilian A. Starr, a nurse affiliated with the Peshawar Hospital, embarks on a journey to the tribal region of Tirah, located near the Khyber Pass, to rescue a young girl who has been kidnapped by the Afridis. As she confronts formidable tribal leaders and navigates the picturesque Khanki Valley, she successfully negotiates the release of the girl. The book is an important addition particularly for reviving and celebrating the travel writings of women from British India, offering engaging and often overlooked viewpoints on exploration and adventure.

This unique collection is filled with captivating stories of exhilarating climbs in frigid temperatures, dangerous expeditions into the unknown, and rare insights into life in the majestic Himalayas, making it a must-read for enthusiasts of adventure and travel literature.

**Alexandra David Néel and 3 others**  
**Speaking Tiger Books**  
**New Delhi**

## 10 Indian Languages and How They Came to Be



## Languages and Their Roots

Bhaskar Parichha

India presents a rich tapestry of languages, encompassing thousands of distinct tongues, which can be categorized into four primary language families: Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Austroasiatic, and Tibeto-Burman. The Indo-Aryan languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Odia, and Assamese, are derived from Sanskrit and are predominantly spoken in North and Central India. In contrast, the Dravidian languages, such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam, predate the arrival of Indo-Aryan languages and are primarily found in South India. Additionally, Austroasiatic languages, exemplified by Santali, and Tibeto-Burman languages, such as Bodo, are utilized by various tribal communities. These languages have developed through a complex interplay of local cultural influences, invasions (notably by the Mughals and the British), and significant literary movements, including Bhakti and modern nationalism. The majority of writing systems can be traced back to Brahmi, with scripts like Devanagari (used for Hindi and Marathi), Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia showcasing regional variations.

10 Indian Languages and How They Came to Be by KarthikVenkatesh discusses ten Indian languages-among the approximately one thousand languages spoken in India-and their evolution, transformation, and development. The languages covered include Tamil, Telugu, Brahui, Santali, Khasi, Kokborok, Manipuri, Marathi, Punjabi, and Hindi. The book delves deeply into the rich and varied histories of these languages throughout the ages, examining the cultural shifts as well as the political and social dynamics that have shaped

their evolution. It provides a comprehensive look at their literary traditions, tracks the changes in their writing systems, and emphasizes key historical moments that have played a crucial role in both preserving and reshaping these ten Indian languages. Through the use of text, subtexts, tables, and illustrations, he introduces the ten languages belonging to the Dravidian family, the Astro-Asiatic family, the Sino-Tibetan family, and the Indo-Aryan family. A distinct chapter is dedicated to the Brahmi script and the narrative of Hinglish. Regarding Hinglish, he states: 'Linguists call this phenomenon of multi-lingual speakers alternating between two or more languages during a single conversation, 'code-switching' or 'code-mixing. Code-switching is different from 'borrowing' when a word from one language is borrowed and used in another without translation. A good example of this are the words, 'kindergarten' (German for children's garden), 'bazaar' (Persian for market) and 'ballet' (from French). Code-mixing goes beyond borrowing. It is to actually think and articulate in two or more languages to make oneself clearly understood. This kichdi of English and a local language is not an exclusively Indian phenomenon, though. Other such tongues exist: Spanglish (Spanish and English) has been observed in many parts of the US, and Taglish (Tagalog and English) is spoken in the Philippines.'

For readers seeking to comprehend the major languages of India in broad and straightforward terms, without relying on dense text, this is a book worth acquiring.

**Karthik Venkatesh**  
**Penguin/Duckbill**  
**Gurugram**



## Principal Secy Usha Padhee Reviews Key Drainage Channels In Bhubaneswar



**Bhubaneswar,(DMC):** In a proactive initiative to tackle urban flooding and improve the sustainable management of water bodies, Usha Padhee, Principal Secretary of the Housing & Urban Development Department, conducted an early morning site visit to the Ganguanala and Daya West Canal areas in Bhubaneswar on Saturday. The visit, undertaken in coordination with the

Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA), was aimed at assessing the condition of key drainage channels and associated water bodies, which are critical to the city's flood management infrastructure. Padhee was accompanied by senior officials including BMC Commissioner Rajesh Pravakar Patil, BDA Vice Chairman Dr. N. Thirumala

Nayak, Additional Secretary Satrugan Kar, along with senior engineers and urban planners from both BMC and BDA. During the field inspection, the team evaluated existing challenges such as silt accumulation, encroachment, and structural obstructions. Detailed discussions were held on both short-term and long-term strategies for desilting, cleaning, and restoring the

natural flow of water through the channels. The need for integrated planning to enhance the water-carrying capacity and ecological value of these urban waterways was also highlighted.

Speaking on the occasion, Padhee stressed the importance of a holistic approach that combines engineering interventions with ecological restoration and community participation. She instructed the concerned departments to prepare a time-bound action plan, aligned with Bhubaneswar's broader vision of becoming a flood-resilient and environmentally sustainable city. The visit reflects the government's commitment to proactive governance, sustainable urban development, and environmental conservation.

## Red alert at Bhubaneswar airport extended, complete ban on entry of visitors



classified as sensitive, is under increased scrutiny due to its strategic and operational relevance. The reports also added that the airport's anti-hijacking cell has been reactivated and will remain operational. A Secondary Ladder Point Check (SLPC) has also been reinstated. The steps provide an additional layer of security screening just before passengers board their flights, including extra baggage scanning and personal frisking, which is usually reserved for emergency or special situations. Adding to the tense atmosphere, an unclaimed handbag discovered at the

airport on May 9 triggered a bomb scare. The area was immediately evacuated, and the bomb disposal squad, along with a canine unit, was deployed. After a thorough inspection, the bag was found to contain harmless items like diapers and a charger. It was eventually traced back to a woman passenger arriving from Hyderabad, and no threat was established. However, the incident highlighted the requisite need for heightened vigilance at a time when India issued a NOTAM barring Pakistani aircraft from Indian airspace further until June 23.

## ISKCON Faces Backlash For Unscheduled Rath Yatra Celebration



**Bhubaneswar, (DMC):** Eminent sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik expressed his displeasure after the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) organised an unscheduled Rath Yatra in Sandton, South Africa, ignoring appeals from the Shri Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) and

devotees to preserve the cultural and spiritual sanctity of Lord Jagannath's festival. In a tweet, Pattnaik stated, "Jai Jagannath, very unfortunate to see Jagannath Ratra Yatra was already celebrated in Africa by ISKCON. After so many requests from @SJTA\_Puri and all the devotees, again they have deviated the unification of Ratha

Yatra dates to preserve the cultural and spiritual sanctity of Maha Prabhu Jagannath." Despite direct requests from Gajapati Maharaja Diabyasingha Deb, the titular king of Puri, and the SJTA to adhere to traditional dates, ISKCON's decision to proceed with non-traditional schedules has sparked outrage among devotees, with Pattnaik urging respect for the sacred traditions of the Rath Yatra.

ISKCON organised the Rath Yatra in South Africa and shared photos and videos on social media. This wasn't the first time they've done it on a different date, and it sparked criticism. Similar events in Chelmsford, London, triggered widespread criticism online last week. In November 2024, a comparable event in Houston, USA, also faced significant opposition.

## Crimes on rise in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar due to Bangladeshi infiltrators; authorities ready for major crackdown

**Bhubaneswar,(DMC):** With growing alarm over criminal activity associated with illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators, the twin cities of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar are seeing increased vigil by law enforcement and administrative authorities.

It is reported that the majority of the infiltrators, especially those staying in slum areas, are involved in a host of illegal activities, such as drug trafficking and organized crime. From local reports, multiple bars and unauthorized settlements are increasingly being operated or patronized by Bangladeshi nationals who have intruded into



the state illegally. Their presence in such crowded zones has agitated public security and city administration issues seriously. Taking note of the problem, the Urban Development Department, along with the Excise Department, has come up with an elaborate action plan to identify, track, and

drive out such infiltrators. A massive identification campaign has already started, with the objective of identifying people residing in the urban slums illegally. At the same time, measures are being undertaken to raze homes of people who are engaged in criminal activities.

Housing and Urban Development minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra, assured that efforts are on to ensure that zones are free from infiltrators in both cities in order to increase safety and law and order. He also added that stringent measures will be taken in association with the Excise Department, especially

with regard to the sanction of new bars. Compliance with strict regulations will be demanded prior to issuing any new bar license," he said, citing a tightening of regulations over premises that may turn into hotspots for illicit activities.

The authorities reaffirmed their resolve to bringing back normalcy to vulnerable enclaves of the twin cities and ensuring the rogue elements are tackled forcefully. This synergy is likely to double as a deterrent and cleansing force to maintain the urban character of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack.

## Work on Bhubaneswar Ring Road project to begin within a month: Minister Prithviraj Harichandan

**Bhubaneswar, (DMC):** In a significant development aimed at easing urban traffic congestion in the state capital, Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Prithviraj Harichandan on Saturday announced that construction work on the much-awaited Bhubaneswar Ring Road will begin within a month. The project, considered vital for improving connectivity and reducing traffic bottlenecks, has been in the pipeline for years and is now moving into the execution phase.

Providing detailed updates, the Minister stated that the land acquisition process is nearing completion and will be fully wrapped up within the next month. Once that is achieved, physical construction work on the ring road will begin in full swing.

The project is expected to be a game-changer for Bhubaneswar's growing traffic challenges. Harichandan further added that by December this year, both left and right carriageways of the ring road will be completed, ensuring smoother vehicular movement around the city. The initial focus of the project



includes the stretch from Jaydev Vihar to Nandankanan-a corridor known for heavy traffic congestion. To improve traffic flow and minimize delays, all traffic signals along this route will be removed, and advanced traffic management technology will be introduced.

The government plans to implement intelligent traffic systems (ITS) and smart mobility solutions to streamline movement, reduce commuting time, and enhance road safety. In addition to the ring road, the government is set to lay the foundation stones for several other key infrastructure projects in and around Bhubaneswar. These include flyovers, road widening projects, and urban

bypasses, all designed to decongest the city and ensure better connectivity between different zones. "Several large-scale urban mobility projects are in the pipeline, and our aim is to complete all of them within the next two and a half to three years," the Minister said.

He emphasized that the government is committed to transforming Bhubaneswar into a modern, traffic-resilient city that supports the needs of its growing population. With the ring road project finally set to take off, the city is poised for a major infrastructural boost that could redefine commuting experiences and support Bhubaneswar's emergence as a leading smart city in India.

## Two Cyber Fraudsters Arrested In Separate Incidents In Bhubaneswar

**Bhubaneswar,(DMC):** The Bhubaneswar police have cracked down on two separate cybercrime cases, arresting two individuals who allegedly cheated people out of lakhs of rupees. In the first case, Pramod Kumar Mohanty was arrested for promising to pay 7% more interest per month on investments. The accused had set up a fake company called Vaishnav Enterprises and cheated a complainant out of Rs 12 lakh. The police have seized Rs 8,39,900 from two accounts



linked to the accused and have frozen the amount. Several items, including mobile phones, a cheque book, debit card, PAN card, and rubber stamp,

were also seized from the accused. According to DCP Jagmohan Meena, the police are investigating to arrest more accused involved in this case. In another incident, Anil Kumar Das was arrested for cheating people out of lakhs of rupees by promising to secure government jobs. Two complaints had been filed against him at Maitri Vihar police station and Mancheswar police station, alleging cheating of Rs 5 lakh and Rs 1.5 lakh, respectively. The police are taking further action in both cases.

## Anti-Terror Diplomacy: Odisha MP Baijant Panda-Led Delegation Reaches Bahrain

**Bhubaneswar,(DMC):** The all-party delegation led by BJP MP from Odisha Baijant Panda reached its first destination, Bahrain, on Saturday. The delegation is on a four-nation visit, which includes Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Algeria, to counter global misinformation and highlight India's zero-tolerance policy on terrorism.

BJP MPs Nishikant Dubey, Phangnon Konyak and Satnam Singh Sandhu, AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi MP, BJP, chairman of Democratic Progressive Azad Party Ghulam Nabi Azad; and former Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla are part of



this delegation. Earlier speaking to ANI, Baijant said: "Today our group is embarking on this trip to West Asia...the biggest message is the unity that India has shown to the world and continues to show. We are very clear about taking the message that, after having won on the battlefield, it is important to ask the world to stay focused on terrorism.

We suffer from a special kind of terrorism that is state-sponsored. Another group led by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor has also left New Delhi. This delegation will travel to the USA, Panama, Guyana, Brazil, and Colombia as part of India's global outreach to expose Pakistan-backed terror.

## Odisha to launch Hydrogen buses soon: MoU signed, trial run to begin with 3 buses in Bhubaneswar

**Bhubaneswar, (DMC):** In a major step toward green and sustainable public transport, the Odisha government is all set to introduce hydrogen-powered buses in Odisha. The initiative, which aligns with the national vision of promoting clean energy, has taken a significant leap with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the state government and a leading clean energy company.

According to official sources, the initial rollout will take place in Bhubaneswar, where the first fleet of three hydrogen buses will begin operations on a trial basis. These buses will serve as a pilot project to assess the feasibility, efficiency, and public reception of hydrogen-fueled transport in the state's capital city of



Bhubaneswar. To support this eco-friendly initiative, a dedicated depot will be established specifically for the maintenance and operation of hydrogen buses.

This depot will be equipped with all necessary infrastructure, including refueling stations and maintenance facilities tailored for hydrogen-powered vehicles. Housing and Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra on Saturday informed

that already MoU has already been signed. Three buses will ply in Bhubaneswar in the first phase, and a special depot will be built. Later, it will be extended to other parts of the state.

A senior transport department official stated that the project aims not only to reduce the carbon footprint but also to pave the way for the future of public transportation in Odisha. Depending on the outcome of the

trial phase, the government will evaluate and finalize plans to expand the hydrogen bus service to other major cities and towns across the state. The introduction of hydrogen buses is expected to revolutionize urban mobility in Odisha by offering a cleaner, quieter, and more energy-efficient alternative to conventional diesel and petrol buses.

It will also contribute significantly to the state's environmental goals and demonstrate Odisha's commitment to adopting cutting-edge green technology. As preparations for the trial run near completion, the people of Bhubaneswar await the arrival of these futuristic buses that could redefine the way Odisha travels.

**Bhubaneswar, (DMC):** Minister of Steel and Mines, Commerce, and Transport Bibhuti Bhusan Jena inaugurated the relocated Jaydev Vihar branch of HDFC Bank in Bhubaneswar, marking a significant upgrade to its premises. The event was attended by Satyabadi MLA Om Prakash Mishra and former MLA Priyadarshi Mishra.

Speaking at the ceremony, Minister Jena praised HDFC Bank's efforts in providing quality digital banking services through its extensive network of 257 branches, 407 ATMs, and 102 Cash Deposit Machines (CDMs) in Odisha. He lauded the bank's social initiatives, particularly its skill development centre, and urged further expansion into rural areas to enhance financial inclusion. The minister also



advocated for promoting electric vehicles to support greener energy initiatives. In a key handover ceremony, he presented vehicle keys to customers who secured commercial vehicle, car, and two-wheeler loans, highlighting the bank's role in empowering

customers. Bank officials, including Arjunanda Bagn, Animesh Biswal, Debendra Jena, Pramathes Patnaik, and Suraj Chhetri, were present, reinforcing HDFC Bank's commitment to strengthening its presence and services across Odisha.



## PSS observed Anti-Terrorism Day



**Paradip, (DMC):** Paradip Sakshyarata Samity (PSS) observed National Anti-Terrorism Day on May 21, 2025, at its office premises. The event aimed to raise awareness among members of various women organization and Self-Help Groups (SHGs). Mr. Muralidhar

Pradhan, a retired Judge and Legal Advisor for Paradip Port Authority (PPA), graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Among others, PSS members Mrs. Preeti Arati Parija, Mrs. Rashmi Acharya, Mrs. Niharika Nayak, Ms. Madhumita Sahoo, and Mrs. Mamata Sahoo were present as

the guests of honour. The event was presided over by Mr. Rama Chandra Pradhan, Secretary of PSS. All the guests spoke about the history and characteristics of terrorism and its detrimental effects on a country's all-round development.

They also discussed the causes of terrorism and the preventative measures that can be taken to foster a safe and fear-free environment for the nation and its citizens. The speakers emphasized raising awareness among the participants. At the end of the program, Mr. Ashok Mohapatra, Project Coordinator of PSS, delivered the vote of thanks to the guests and participants.

## The meeting held for Devasnan Purnima and Alarnath Darshan



**Puri, (DMC):** This year's Devasnan Purnima will be held on June 11. From the very next day, the darshan of the Lord will begin at brahmagiri alarnath peeth. A preparatory meeting was held at Sadbhavana auditorium this morning to ensure peaceful completion of the snanyatra and darshan of Alarnath.

District Collector Siddharth Shankar Swain, who presided over the meeting, had earlier directed various departments to ensure smooth conduct of Sanan yatra, Alarnath darshan and Rath Yatra through a series of meetings. Based on its findings all the departments suggested to expedite their work. The District Collector directed to work responsibly so

that devotees and visitors have a good darshan of the Lord and get other basic facilities. Detailed discussions were held on health and sanitation, drinking water supply, power supply, transport system, repair and improvement of roads, parking lots, maintaining peace and order, information and broadcasting system, deployment of volunteers for cultural programmes, fire fighting and water spraying system, etc.

SP Vineet Agarwal attended the meeting and discussed the disciplined darshan of the devotees, traffic arrangements, maintaining peace and order etc. Among others, Sri Mandir Security Administrator Hemanta

Kumar Padhi, ADM Administration Sarat Chandra Behera, ADM Revenue Dr. Sarat Chandra Mohapatra, ADM Protocol Nilamadhab Bhoi, Zilla Parishad Chief Development and Executive Officer Priyaranjan Prusty, niti Administrator Jitendra Kumar Sahu, Development Administrator Debabrata Sahu, Deputy Collector Raj Kishore Jena.

Municipal Executive Officer Abhimanyu Behera, Municipal Executive Officer Abhimanyu Behera. Deputy Collector Priyadarshini Mallik, officials of various departments at the district level participated in the discussion. The servitors were requested to complete the niti as per schedule.

## Farewell meeting held for retired PPA official



**Paradip, (DMC) :** Akshay Kumar Behera, who was working as a Senior Personal Secretary at Paradip Port Authority (PPA), has retired from his service recently. On this occasion, the residents of JC colony in the Port

city of Paradip were felicitated to Shri Behera. Joining as the chief guest in the farewell meeting Dr. Durga Prasad Sethy, Deputy Chief Medical Officer of PPA Hospital praised Mr. Behera for his dedicated service and

punctuality. He said that he was loved everyone after serving at the Port for 33 years. Among others Paradip Port Trustee Sunil Das, Dr. Runu Singh, Dr. Badal Singh, trade union leader Gunanidhi Choudhury, Retired Berthing Master Golekh Chandra Pradhan, senior cricket coach George Paul Robinson, senior Port employee Dhuna Chandra Tarai, Eng. Tanmay Kumar Das, Eng. Ramakant Nayak, Niranjan Rath, Gitanjali Swain were present and felicitated and wished Shri Behera a long and peaceful life. A large number of port employees participated in the said event.

## A Shocking Brokering Scandal Unfolds ! Farmers not yet harvested the paddy, but the paddy already been sold in the name of the concerned farmer

**Bargarh, (DMC):** In the vibrant heart of Bargarh district, Odisha, a brewing controversy is taking centre stage! The market yards, known locally as Bhatahandi, are at the centre of a scandal that could shake the very foundations of local agriculture. Farmers in the bustling Satalama Mandi are reeling from shocking allegations that paddy has been sold under their names-without them even harvesting a single grain! Picture this: the local farmers, already uneasy as they gaze at the uncut stalks in their fields, learned that 1,486 quintals of paddy were reported sold from 26 farmers'

accounts by May 24. Yet, a staggering 20 of those farmers haven't even gathered their crops! A group of about 35 farmers took matters into their own hands, rallying together to file a complaint with the district administration about a trader reportedly luring them with low-quality paddy from neighbouring Chhattisgarh, all while selling it in their names. Frustrated yet determined, these farmers reached out to Bargarh's Collector-only to discover the office was closed! Undeterred, they quickly informed Additional District

Magistrate



Madhuchhanda Sahu over the phone, urging a thorough investigation into the shocking circumstances surrounding the paddy sales. In a promising twist, ADM Smt. Sahu reassured the farmers that a dedicated squad team would soon dive into this eyebrow-raising mystery. If the

## Dengapudi Village on Scarcity of Water



**Paralakhemundi, (DMC):** Due to heat wave at Gajapati district, most areas are facing acute scarcity water supply. At Dengapuchi village of Mohana block of Gajapati district similar situation found. Rather villagers are going to long 2 kms to collect water from a hilly area canal water. Though there are 2 tubewells but not upto Mark your get quality water instead of contaminated one from one tubewell, where another can't meet all families. While interacted to BDO Rajib Das he said very soon that tubewell will be repaired.

## Veteran Defence Personnel achieves Award

**Jajpur, (DMC):** Notable Environmentalist, Ex Army Khirod Jena a native of Kalasri village, Badachana block, jajpur district has received Veteran Achiever Award from General Upendra Dwivedi, PVSM, VSM, Chief of Army staff at Army Headquarter, New Delhi.

This prestigious Award confer to an Ex service man by Army Authority considering his contributions and dedications to nation building. Post retired from Indian Army in 2005 S. J. Jena starts various plantation drives in different areas, roads, waste lands and bald hill in the region over 30 thousands fruit bearing trees till to date have been planted by him. He raises the trees out of his monthly pensions by curtailing his family maintenance. He always emphasise to plant



fruit bearing trees under his plantations program for dual benefits firstly to save the planted from global warming and produce fruits for human beings, birds and animals. He also known as Mango man in the district as thousand numbers of Mango plant, he plants, maximum trees are providing mangoes to the local, Citizens said. Telling to Duman Mail over Phone S. J. Jena said this initiative will remain continue till the end of my life. I love environment, I Love Plantation He added.

## Forester shot dead by poachers

**Dhenkanal (DMC):** Forester Prahallad, working in the Hindol forest area under the Dhenkanal forest division, was shot dead while he was going to catch the poacher. According to information, the forest department received information about the presence of poachers near Rajmohan Pur, Hindol police station late last night and surrounded the poachers with Forester Prahallad and his staff to catch them. Suddenly, the poachers opened fire, hitting Prahallad.

Prahallad was admitted to Angul Medical in a critical condition, where the doctor declared him dead. After receiving the information, the department officials reached the spot and Dhenkanal police reached the spot and started an investigation. The deceased Prahallad Pradhan served the forest department with distinction for 16 years, earning the admiration and respect of his colleagues, superior officers and the local people. He was recently awarded the State Forestry Award, 2025 as the best forest Guard. The Chief Minister expressed grief over the incident and announced a compensation of Rs. 30 lakhs for the family of the deceased Prahallad Pradhan.

From Page- 1

## PM calls for...

also lead to development of the neighbouring cities as tourist places," PM Modi said. The theme of the meeting was 'Viksit Rajya for Viksit Bharat@2047'. The meeting provided a platform for the Centre and States and UTs to deliberate on measures to advance the vision of Viksit Bharat@2047 and build consensus on how States can be the building blocks for making India a developed nation. Measures for promoting entrepreneurship, enhancing skilling, and creating sustainable employment opportunities across the country were also deliberated in the meeting.

## CM Unveils...

engine' governance model and expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister, who has visited the state five times in the last 11 months-reflecting his commitment to Odisha's development. He further announced that the state will unveil its Vision 2036 and Vision 2047 document on June 12, the first anniversary of his government. This comprehensive and inclusive roadmap, crafted through citizen participation and AI-based analysis of over 3.2 lakh public suggestions, sets out the long-term economic and social goals for the state. The Vision aims to elevate Odisha to a \$500 billion economy by 2036, coinciding with the state's centenary, and to a \$1.5 trillion economy by the time India celebrates 100 years of independence in 2047. Majhi said the government has already begun work on boosting agricultural productivity by ensuring irrigation for all cultivable land, and is placing strategic emphasis on rapid urbanisation. Odisha currently has an urbanisation rate of 17 percent, and the goal is to raise this to 40 percent by 2036 and 60 percent by 2047. A metropolitan region of 7,000 square kilometres is planned around Bhubaneswar, Khurda, Jatni, Cuttack, Paradip, and Puri, with similar integrated development plans for other growth centres.

He reiterated the state's focus on improving infrastructure with strong support from the Centre. This includes recent approvals for ₹73,000 crore in railway projects and ₹4,600 crore in National Highways, with an additional ₹17,500 crore worth of proposals in the pipeline. Odisha also plans to harness its extensive coastline by developing port-based special economic zones that integrate with global value chains to drive industrial expansion and employment. Majhi said Odisha is actively attracting investment in textiles, garments, food processing, and emerging industries. The state's globally recognised skilling ecosystem under the 'Skilled in Odisha' initiative is contributing to the development of a future-ready workforce, especially for ITes and global capability centres. On the social development front, Majhi highlighted schemes such as 'Subhadra', which targets women between the ages of 18 and 59, and noted increased allocations for education and health as part of the state's strategy to empower future generations. He said the goal is to ensure that Odisha's people are healthy, educated, and skilled, contributing meaningfully to the state's transformation. Highlighting some key achievements over the past 11 months, the Chief Minister mentioned the declaration of Hirkud in western Odisha as a Special Tourism Zone. He also unveiled plans to develop the Buddhist tourism circuit and implement an integrated master plan for iconic tourist destinations in a phased manner. Majhi concluded by saying that Odisha's future lies in becoming a prosperous, proud, and self-reliant state-'Samruddha Odisha'-that stands out within a 'Viksit Bharat', driven by inclusive development, infrastructure expansion, global connectivity, and citizen empowerment.

## Odisha Plus 2...

examination results were published on May 2 this year. The pass rate was 94.93 percent. The pass rate of girls was higher than that of boys. The pass rate of boys was 94 percent while the pass rate of girls was 96 percent.

Eligibility: Applicants must have passed the High School Certificate (HSC) examination from the Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha or its equivalent boards. Procedure: Applicants shall apply online by registering themselves on the SAMS portal ([www.samsodisha.govt.in](http://www.samsodisha.govt.in)). The applicants are advised to read the Common Prospectus (CP) carefully filling the online Common Application Form (CAF). Applicants must retain the print-out of application form and payment receipt after successful submission of the CAF for future reference. The Common Application Form fee must be paid through online mode. All relevant documents are to be verified at the selected Higher Secondary School at the time of admission only. Application fee for general category is Rs 200, for ST & SC category is Rs 100.

Important Dates: Starting date of application form: May 24 Ending date of application: June 30 The first merit list will be released on: July 7 Admission will be held from: July 8 to July 14 Classes will start from: July 24

## New Covid variants...

this variant against symptomatic and severe disease." In India, the predominant variant is JN.1, accounting for 53 per cent of tested samples, while BA.2 follows with 26 per cent, and other Omicron sublineages make up 20 per cent. Doctors have advised people not to panic over the rise of Covid-19 cases linked to the JN.1 variant. According to them, the strain is not severe and most patients have only reported mild symptoms. Indian Medical Association Junior Doctors Network (IMA JDN) national spokesperson Dr Dhruv Chauhan said that people need not panic about the JN.1 variant, which is a descendant of the Omicron BA.2.86. "This is not a lethal variant and it's always better to take precautions like maintaining hand hygiene, wearing masks where necessary such as in hospitals or crowded places and following respiratory hygiene. It is also important to get your symptoms checked by a qualified doctor," said Dr Chauhan. "The public should remember that panic and chaos can cause more health issues than the disease itself," he added.

## Three arrested in attack on contractor's brother

**Keonjhar, (DMC):** Keonjhar police have arrested three persons in the fatal attack on a contractor working on a bridge in Baria police station area of Kendujhar district. They are Biprabhanu Sahu, Chhalu Munda, Dilip Munda, all age about 22 to 24 years of Badadumuria village under Baria police station. It was revealed that on the 21st, while a bridge work was going on, contractor Sachidanand Khilar's brother Shivanand Khilar was supervising the work in the presence of the Junior Engineer and SDO of the Rural Development Department. The accused arrived at about 9 pm and demanded money. When Shivanand refused, they attacked him and the mason and laborer working there. Shivanand suffered a severe bleeding head injury in the attack and was admitted to the hospital. Following the complaint at Baria police station, the police registered a case and arrested the accused. The accused were arrested after receiving complaint and investigation, said IIC Baria police station Ranju Hasin Kulu. The District Contractors Association submitted a demand letter to the SP regarding this incident and demanded security and rigorous action yesterday.

## International Bio-diversity Day Observed at Mahendragiri

**Paralakhemundi, (DMC):** At epic Mahendragiri hills of Gajapati district, International Bio-diversity Day observed. DFO KNagaraju, ACF Shine Shree Das & RO Piyush Patnaik graced as guests. Speakers sought cooperation on restoration of flora & fauna of Mahendragiri & bio-diversity which has an importance resource for both human beings & animals. Besides that restoration of eco-tourism which enhances as best tourism of the district shared by the guests. Cleanliness drive also sensitized to keep the sanctity of historical & mythological monuments. On this occasion on cleanliness drive at Kunti, Bhim, Judhistir, Arjun temples done, where teaching staff of BR Ambedkar college & Gram Vikash School of Koinpur teaching staff with local EDC members. Staff of Ramgiri Forest Range coordinated the program.



## District-Level Natural Disaster Committee Meeting Prepared for Upcoming Emergencies

**Bargarh, (DMC):** A District Level Natural Disaster Committee meeting took place at the District Collector's Conference Hall, focusing on the preparations for potential emergencies such as floods and cyclones anticipated during the upcoming rainy season.

The goal is to ensure zero fatalities. Collector Shri Aditya Goyal chaired the meeting with the participation of Shri Ashwini Sarangi, MLA Bargarh, Shri Nihar Ranjan Mahananda, MLA, Attabira, Smt. Barsha Singh Bariha, MLA, Padampur and key district officials. As officials gear up to effectively manage these potential disasters, they were encouraged to set up temporary shelters in flood-prone areas, undertake thorough cleaning of



drains, and facilitate access to clean drinking water. Hospitals are being advised to stock essential supplies, while Health Centers will ensure the availability of snake bite injections. The meeting highlighted the need to identify flood-prone regions proactively and to secure adequate provisions of essential items for these areas. Plans to safeguard livestock during disasters were

also discussed, alongside strategies for the efficient management of emergency control rooms. Additional District Magistrate Shri Mohapatra provided insights into the district's current preparedness status and outlined the next steps to address possible natural disasters. The focus remains on being ready and resilient as we look ahead to the rainy season.



## "20,000 Indians Killed in Terrorist Attacks": India Blasts Pakistan at UN

**New Delhi, (H.S) :** India on Saturday slammed Pakistan over its "disinformation" on the Indus Waters Treaty, which was suspended after a deadly terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam last month. India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish, said the 65-year-old treaty will remain in abeyance until Pakistan, a "global epicentre of terror", ends its support for cross-border terrorism. His response came after the Pakistani representative raked up the agreement issue at the UN, saying "water is life and not a weapon of war".

India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty, which was signed in 1960, on April 23, a day after the Pahalgam attack left 26 people dead. New Delhi's action came after it found "cross-border linkages" to the dastardly terror attack. "India has always acted in a responsible manner as an upper riparian state," Mr Harish said as he highlighted four points that "exposed" Pakistan. "First, India entered into the Indus Water Treaty 65 years ago in good faith. The preamble of that treaty describes how it was concluded with spirit and friendship. Throughout the six and a half decades, Pakistan has violated the spirit of that



treaty by inflicting three wars and thousands of terror attacks on India," he said. Mr Harish said that over 20,000 Indians have been killed in terrorist attacks in the last four decades. India has shown "extraordinary patience and magnanimity" throughout this period, he said.

"Pakistan state-sponsored cross-border terrorism in India seeks to hold hostage the lives of civilians, religious harmony, and economic prosperity," he said. "Second, in these 65 years, far-reaching fundamental changes have taken place, not only in terms of escalating security concerns through cross-border

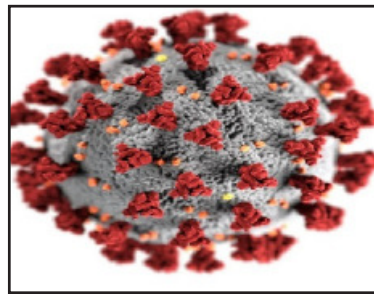
terror attacks but also growing requirements for producing clean energy, climate change, and demographic change," the Indian Ambassador said. "Technology for dam infrastructure has transformed to ensure safety and efficiency of operations and water use. Some of the old dams are facing serious safety concerns. However, Pakistan has continued to block consistently any changes to this infrastructure and any modifications of the provisions which is permissible under the treaty," he said. Mr Harish said that in 2012, terrorists even attacked the Tulbul navigation project in Jammu and Kashmir. "These

cynical acts continue to endanger the safety of our projects and the lives of civilians," he said. "Third, India has formally asked Pakistan to discuss modifications on several occasions in the past two years. However, Pakistan continues to reject these, and Pakistan's obstructionist approach continues to prevent the exercise of full utilisation of the legitimate rights by India," he stated.

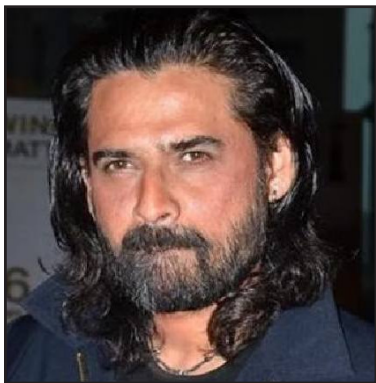
"Four, it is against this backdrop that India has finally announced that the treaty will be in abeyance until Pakistan, which is a global epicentre of terror, credibly and irrevocably ends its support for cross-border terrorism," Mr Harish added. "It is clear that it is Pakistan which remains in violation of the Indus Waters Treaty," he said. Tensions between India and Pakistan have increased following the Pahalgam attack. India, after finding cross-border links to the attack, launched "Operation Sindoor" on May 7 and struck terror camps in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Pakistan then launched a massive missile and drone attack, but the threats were thwarted. In retaliation, Indian forces struck airfields in Pakistan. A ceasefire on May 10 ended the hostilities.

## First COVID patient reported in NCR: Woman tests positive in Noida

**Noida, (H.S) :** A 55-year-old woman from the National Capital Region has tested positive for COVID-19, marking the first case in Uttar Pradesh's Noida amid the recent surge in cases in India, as per the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) of Gautam Buddha Nagar. According to the CMO, Narendra Kumar, the woman from Sector 110 in Noida has been placed under home isolation, with her husband and maid, who are part of the household, testing negative for the virus. He further added that the woman had travelled by train a few days back. Earlier, AIIMS Rishikesh had reported three COVID cases, adding to the recent surge in cases across the country. Speaking with ANI, Rishikesh AIIMS Director Meenu Singh informed that one of the three patients has already been discharged. "Three COVID patients have been reported in the AIIMS... One has been discharged... Another patient is one of our residents. She has been kept in isolation. Another patient is from Gujarat who came here for the Badrinath Yatra," Dr Meenu Singh said. Dr Singh also mentioned that this variant of COVID is not very harmful, but people should be cautious. "The state has kept us on alert. We have implemented COVID-appropriate behaviour in our institute... This variant is not very harmful, but if someone has any comorbidities... then they should get themselves checked," she said. Meanwhile, in view of the recent surge in COVID-19 cases in various parts of the country, the Delhi government has issued an advisory directing all hospitals to ensure preparedness for the availability of beds, oxygen, medicines, and vaccines. However, according to the experts, the situation is under control. Dr Suranjit Chatterjee, Senior Consultant in Internal Medicine at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, said on Friday, "At the moment, the situation is under control. There are, at most, sporadic cases, which are also rare. Even the present cases are being managed very easily." "They are not being hospitalised. This is what we were expecting: that when COVID happened, it would remain a seasonal flu which could be treated very easily. The situation is not one of panic..." he further said.



## Actor Mukul Dev Passes Away



**Mumbai, (H.S) :** Actor Mukul Dev, who is known for his work in films like 'Son of Sardaar', 'R... Rajkumar', 'Jai Ho' and others, has passed away at the age of 54. The actor passed away on Friday night. And his friends reached his house on Saturday as they got to know about his demise. The cause of the actor's death could not be ascertained at the time of filing of this report. Further details are awaited including a statement from his friends and family.

Actress Deepshikha Nagpal, who was his close friend, confirmed the news on social media as she shared an Instagram Story and posted a throwback picture saying, "RIP" The actor, who was last seen in the Hindi film 'Anth The End', was the brother of actor Rahul Dev. Mukul Dev was born in New Delhi into a Punjabi family with roots in a village near Jalandhar. His father Hari Dev, an assistant commissioner of police, and was the one who introduced him to Afghan culture. His father could speak Pashto and Persian. An early exposure to the world of entertainment for the actor was when in class 8 he got his first pay cheque when he impersonated Michael Jackson for a dance show organized by Doordarshan.

The actor was also a trained pilot from the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Uran Akademi. He made his foray in the world of acting with the television serial 'Mumkin' in which he played the role of Vijay Pandey in 1996. He also acted in Doordarshan's 'Ek Se Badh Kar Ek', a comedy Bollywood countdown show. He was also the host of 'Fear Factor India' season 1. He started his journey in films with 'Dastak', in which he essayed the role of ACP Rohit Malhotra. The film also marked the debut of the former Miss Universe Sushmita Sen.

## Court Issues Non-Bailable Warrant

### Against Rahul Gandhi in Defamation Case

**Ranchi, (H.S) :** The MP-MLA Special Court in Chaibasa, Jharkhand, has issued a non-bailable warrant against senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in connection with a 2018 defamation case. The court has directed Rahul Gandhi to appear in person on June 26. The case stems from alleged derogatory remarks made by Rahul Gandhi during a Congress party event in 2018, in which he is accused of making disparaging comments about the then-BJP National President, Amit Shah. According to the complaint filed by Pratap Katiyar, a resident of Chaibasa, Mr Gandhi had remarked that "no murderer can become the National President in Congress. Congressmen cannot accept a murderer as the National President, this is possible only in the BJP." The complainant viewed this as a defamatory statement directed at Amit Shah and lodged a complaint on July 9, 2018. In April 2022, the Chaibasa court had initially issued a bailable warrant against Rahul Gandhi after no response was received.

## Yunus to stay on as Bangladesh interim head, quells resignation

**DHAKA, (H.S) :** Muhammad Yunus will remain as the head of Bangladesh's interim government, an adviser in his cabinet said on Saturday, two days after a key ally said he had mulled resignation. "He (Yunus) didn't say he will leave. He said that while we face many obstacles in carrying out the work and responsibilities assigned to us, we are overcoming them," Planning Adviser Wahiduddin Mahmud told reporters after an unscheduled meeting of the advisory council. "He (Yunus) is definitely staying," Mahmud said. He said none of the advisers were going anywhere as "the responsibility entrusted to us is a significant one; we cannot abandon this duty". The chief adviser's decision to stay in office came two days after he told student-led National Citizen Party (NCP) leaders that he was mulling resignation as he felt "the situation is such that he cannot work", citing difficulties in working amid the failure of political parties to find common ground for change. Yunus reportedly expressed an identical desire to quit in a cabinet meeting earlier on Thursday,



where his colleagues persuaded him not to relinquish. As many as 19 advisers, effectively ministers, joined the abruptly called closed-door meeting, which Yunus decided to convene following a scheduled meeting of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) at the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area in Dhaka. The chief adviser's press wing later issued a "statement from the advisory council", saying the two-hour long meeting included detailed discussions on "three primary responsibilities entrusted

to the interim government - elections, reforms, and justice". "The Council discussed how unreasonable demands, deliberately provocative and jurisdictionally overreaching statements, and disruptive programmes have been continuously obstructing the normal functioning environment and creating confusion and suspicion among the public," it said. The statement said despite all obstacles, the interim government continued to fulfil its responsibilities by putting national interests above group interests. "However, if -- under the instigation of defeated forces or as part of a foreign conspiracy -- the performance of these responsibilities becomes impossible, the government will present all reasons to the public and then take the necessary steps with the people," the council said. It said the interim government upheld the "public expectations of the July Uprising" but "if the government's autonomy, reform efforts, justice process, fair election plan, and normal operations are obstructed to the point of making its duties unmanageable, it will, with the people, take the necessary steps".

## Two top JJMP Naxalites carrying bounties neutralised

**Ranchi, (H.S) :** In a significant victory for security forces in Jharkhand, two Naxal leaders from the Jharkhand Jan Mukti Parishad (JJMP) group, including its chief Pappu Lohra and zonal commander Prabhat Ganju, were neutralised by Jharkhand Police in Latehar district on Saturday. The encounter, which took place during a search operation, resulted in the death of both leaders, who were carrying bounties of Rs 10 lakh and Rs 5 lakh, respectively. Police also recovered arms and ammunition from the site. Amol Vinukant Homkar, IG Operations of Jharkhand Police, confirmed the operation's success, calling it a "big day" in the region's ongoing battle against Naxalism. Homkar said, "It's a big day for all the security forces working in Jharkhand to eliminate Naxalism.

## 2 Army Majors, Extramarital Affair & Court's "Burden of Fidelity"

**New Delhi, (H.S) :** Upholding the right to privacy in an alleged extramarital affair case involving two Army officers, a Delhi court has rejected a request seeking CCTV footage from a hotel. The petition was filed by a Major in the Indian Army, who alleged that his wife was having an affair with another officer, also a Major. The court noted that the alleged couple had the right to privacy at the hotel, and it shielded their data and booking details from any third party, reported Livelaw. Civil Judge Vaibhav Pratap Singh observed that hotels must protect the confidentiality of their guests. "The right to privacy and to be left alone in a hotel would extend to the common areas as against a third party who was not present there and has no other legally justifiable entitlement to seek the data of the guest. Same would hold good for the booking details," said the Judge. The petition also raised concern over the wife and her alleged lover's right to be heard, he said, noting that they were not named in the lawsuit despite being central to the case. The Judge said it was questionable if the hotel could be compelled to release the footage without making the alleged couple parties to the lawsuit. "The release of such private information without affording them an opportunity to defend their privacy rights would be a violation of their right to natural justice and even the fundamental right to privacy and could lead to reputational harm," the court observed. It also asserted that courts are not investigative bodies for private disputes or a channel for collecting evidence in internal proceedings. The Judge said the complainant must avail remedies under the Army Act, 1950 and the extant rules, noting that the court cannot be used to bypass or supplement the internal mechanisms.

## BCCI's strict family restriction policy under scanner

**New Delhi, (H.S) :** Cheteshwar Pujara urged BCCI officials to use a balanced approach when it came to family restrictions for players during long tours. A new chapter in Indian cricket kickstarted on Saturday as the BCCI named Shubman Gill as the new Test captain ahead of the five-match Test series in England. Meanwhile, Rishabh Pant was announced as the vice-captain. The decision comes after Rohit Sharma's Test retirement, which left the Test captaincy slot vacant. Meanwhile, even Virat Kohli announced his retirement from Tests recently.

Speaking to Firstpost, a day before the announcement, veteran batter Cheteshwar Pujara had a message for BCCI and the Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee. The batter urged BCCI officials to use a balanced approach when it came to family restrictions for players during long tours. "I would say that families should be traveling. They should be with the players, the window. I mean, there are times where the families are there throughout the series. You as a player, you know, professionally, you want to be attending your practice sessions. So there has to be a window," he said. "Normally what most of the teams do is they have a window of two or three weeks in a long tour. So if you are going away from home for 40 days, there are three weeks where families can travel. So that's the best way to balance it out, because there are times where coaching staff or the management feels that if the families are traveling, then players are not focused enough, which may not be the case."

"But just to balance it out, I think if you have a proper window where families can travel and at the same time, if you are going there early for preparation, then players are just focusing on the preparation part. And then when it starts you have to three weeks window where families can travel," he added. The Test series in England begins on June 20, with the fifth and final fixture scheduled to begin on July 31, and Day 5 is set for August 4.

## Govt school students in Punjab to learn Telugu during week-long 'Bharatiya Bhasha Summer Camp'

**CHANDIGARH, (H.S) :** In a bid to help students acquire basic conversational skills in an Indian language of their choice, other than mother tongue, the students from classes VI to X in government schools of Punjab will be learning basics Telugu language during a week-long 'Bharatiya Bhasha Summer Camp', as per a direction issued by the Department of School Education and Literacy in Union Ministry of Education. As per the instructions issued by State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) to all the district educational officers, the summer camp will be held in all government schools across the state from May 26 to June 5 in which students from Classes VI to X will participate and Telugu language will be taught.

"The main objective is to encourage students to learn one more Indian language of their choice, to promote multilingualism in a joyful and engaging



manner, to help students experience the linguistic and cultural unity of Indian languages and to enable students to acquire basic conversational skills in an Indian language of their choice other than mother tongue," reads the letter issued on May 23. These Telugu classes will be conducted after the half-holiday on working school days and from 8 am to 11 am during the summer vacation

from May 26 to June 5. The schools have been allowed have multiple batches depending on number of students who are interested and the availability of teachers. While schools which have less than 75 students can hold this camp as a single group and others can form three groups with up to 100 students in total. The basics will include greeting, expressions, alphabets,

numbers, songs and conversations, names of local heroes, freedom fighters, armed forces, fruits, cuisines, vegetables and cultural appreciation in Telugu.

The language teachers of English, Hindi and Punjabi will be leading the students groups as being in-charge of the project. "The teachers can use YouTube links reference," read the letter. While the learning materials for both print and digital could be sourced from institutions like CIIL Mysore, NCERT, Central Hindi Directorate, and Sanskrit Universities, among others. The Democratic Teachers Front (DTF) criticized the move saying that over 3,800 students in Class XII and 1,571 students in Class X did not pass in Punjabi as their first language. Now, the department has issued orders to teachers to teach the Telugu language to students during summer camps. This will not work, said Vijay Pal of the association.



## Over 10,000 Properties Damaged Floodwaters in Australia

**Sydney, (H.S):** Emergency service authority of Australia's state of New South Wales (NSW) said on Saturday that early estimates suggest more than 10,000 properties have been damaged in floodwaters in the state's eastern regions. The State Emergency Service (SES) Chief Superintendent Paul McQueen told reporters on Saturday morning that crews would be "out in force" to start the damage assessment process."

I reiterate this is still a dangerous situation where significant impacts to infrastructure and properties are likely to have occurred," he said. Unfortunately, it is not possible to let people return to their homes until water further subsides and we're sure they can access their homes and communities safely." The NSW Police said in a statement on Friday evening that rescue officers found a body inside a burnt-out vehicle at a property on the flood-hit Mid North Coast. It marks the fifth death in



the widespread flooding crisis that has hit the Mid North Coast and surrounding regions following five consecutive days of torrential rainfall, Xinhua news agency reported.

Earlier on May 23, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and NSW Premier Chris Minns toured the regions north of Sydney that have been inundated by widespread flooding following five consecutive days of torrential rainfall. As of Friday afternoon, more than 50,000 people remained cut off by

flooding, and emergency services were continuing to conduct rescue operations by boat and helicopter. As of Friday afternoon, emergency services had conducted 736 flood rescue operations in total.

The severe weather system that brought the torrential rainfall moved south on Friday and, according to the Bureau of Meteorology (BoM), could move out of NSW by midnight. Despite the easing conditions, authorities have warned that river levels could continue to rise. As around 50,000 residents

across the NSW Mid North Coast and Hunter regions are urged to prepare to evacuate, experts are warning that entering floodwaters poses one of the most significant threats to life. "Four-wheel drives may provide a false sense of security when attempting to cross floodwater, but research shows that 75 per cent of all floodwater-related fatalities in the past 15 years are associated with these vehicles," Natural Hazards Research Australia CEO Andrew Gissing said in a statement.

He cited research showing that 84 per cent of motorists ignore road closure signs, and that young people, particularly men under the age of 29, make up the majority of flood-related deaths. Research conducted after the devastating 2022 floods in northern NSW and southern Queensland revealed that nearly two-thirds of floodwater fatalities occur within 20 km of people's homes, underscoring the dangers residents face in familiar surroundings.

## In UAE, Indian Delegation Conveys Message of Harmony, Tolerance & Peaceful Coexistence

**Abu Dhabi, (H.S):** The high-level all-party delegation from India led by Shiv Sena MP Shrikant Eknath Shinde on Friday paid obeisance at the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, BAPS Hindu Temple and Guru Nanak Darbar Gurudwara in Abu Dhabi conveying a strong message of harmony, tolerance and peaceful coexistence - the values shared and cherished by India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Earlier in the day, the delegation held a meeting with Nikolay Mladenov, Director General of Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy of the UAE, discussing enhancing cooperation between India and the UAE in fighting terrorism as well as radicalisation under the global outreach campaign of Operation Sindoor. "The All-party delegation led by Shrikant Eknath Shinde met Nikolay Mladenov, Director General of Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy. They exchanged views on furthering cooperation between India-UAE in counter-terrorism and combating radicalism," the Indian

Embassy in UAE posted on X. The delegation on Thursday interacted with the members of the Indian Community in Abu Dhabi, conveying India's national consensus and collective resolve against terrorism. It also held productive discussions with Jamal Mohammed Obaid Al Kaabi, Director General, National Media Office of UAE about the role of media to counter terrorism and extremism. The UAE has assured India that both countries will tackle terrorism together as the strong bilateral relationship extends beyond trade and culture, also encompassing security and strategic issues.

UAE's Minister of Tolerance and Co-Existence Sheikh Nahyan Mubarak Al Nahyan, Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi - Chairman of the Defence, Interior and Foreign Affairs Committee of Federal National Council - besides several other senior Emirati parliamentarians expressed full solidarity with India as the high-level all-party delegation from India called on them in Abu Dhabi. As the delegation

highlighted the perpetration of cross-border terrorism and efforts to cause social disharmony in India by Pakistan, Nahyan Mubarak Al Nahyan conveyed his deep condolences on the April 22 Pahalgam terrorist attacks and said, "India and UAE will tackle terrorism together. The UAE will always stand by India."

The delegation then held substantive discussions with Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi, Chairman of the Defence, Interior and Foreign Affairs Committee of Federal National Council, underscoring the precise, measured, and non-escalatory nature of Operation Sindoor against the barbaric terrorist attack on the tourists in Kashmir on April 22. According to the Embassy of India in Abu Dhabi, during the meeting, Nuaimi stressed, "India-UAE relationship is beyond trade and culture, and encompasses security and strategic issues. Terrorism is against the whole of humanity and the international community must act now."

## Holy Buddha Relics From India Enshrined At Ancient Buddhist Temple



**Hanoi, (H.S):** The Holy Buddha Relics sent from India were enshrined at an ancient Buddhist temple Phuc Son pagoda in Bac Giang Province of Vietnam, on Friday. The relics were received with deep reverence and warmth by the local people, province officials, and monks. "Thousands of people in Bac Giang gathered in a solemn procession to escort the sacred Holy Sarnath Relics of the Buddha to Phuc Son Pagoda,

Vietnam - an expression of deep reverence for the compassionate father, Shakyamuni Buddha," the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) posted on X. Responding to a formal request from the Vietnamese government after receiving a recommendation from the Committee for Ethnic and Religious Affairs, the Government of India has decided to extend the enshrinement of sacred relics of the Buddha in Vietnam beyond May 21, Vietnamese local

media reported on Friday. Reports highlighted that the relics, which were supposed to return to India on Friday, will now remain in Vietnam until June 2 as a result of a direct appeal by the Vietnamese Prime Minister Ph?m Minh Chinh to his Indian counterpart Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasising the deep cultural and religious significance they hold for the Vietnamese Buddhists.

On Wednesday, the sacred relics of Lord Buddha were enshrined at the famous Buddhist temple of Bai Dinh Pagoda in Ninh Binh province of Vietnam. A large number of devotees, including provincial leaders, welcomed the relics as monks from India and Vietnam chanted traditional prayers. "Beautiful moments at the exposition of the Holy Sarnath Relics of the Buddha at Bai Dinh Pagoda, Vietnam. From the elderly to young children, everyone eagerly gathered to pay their respects and witness the Sacred relics of the Buddha

with their own eyes. Equally moving was the presence of dedicated volunteers, service teams, security personnel, and food providers-always ready to assist, ensuring a smooth and respectful experience for all devotees," the IBC stated. Thousands of people had also paid their respects at the exposition of the relics in Tam Chuc Pagoda.

The holy relics were brought from India on May 2 by an Indian delegation led by Union Minister of Parliamentary and Minority Affairs Kiren Rijiju which also included Andhra Pradesh Minister Kandula Durgesh and senior monks and officials. The holy relics, brought to Vietnam as part of the UN Day of Vesak celebrations were earlier displayed at Thanh Tam Pagoda in Ho Chi Minh City, then in Ba Den Mountain in Tay Ninh province, Quan Su Pagoda in Hanoi, Tam Chuc Pagoda in Ha Nam, and Bai Dinh Pagoda in Ninh Binh province of Vietnam.

**Washington, (H.S):** Harvard University has sued the administration of US President Donald Trump for a second time, one day after the Homeland Security Department said it would block the prestigious university from enrolling international students. "The revocation continues a series of government actions to retaliate against Harvard for our refusal to surrender our academic independence and to submit to the federal government's illegal assertion of control over our curriculum, our faculty, and our student body,"

Harvard University President Alan Garber wrote in a letter to members of the Harvard community on Friday. "We condemn this unlawful and unwarranted action. It imperils the futures of thousands of students and scholars across Harvard and serves as a warning to countless others at colleges and universities throughout the country who have come to America to pursue their education



and fulfil their dreams," Garber said. The Harvard president said the university has just filed a complaint, and a motion for a temporary restraining order will follow. "As we pursue legal remedies, we will do everything in our power to support our students and scholars," he added.

US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem announced the decision on Thursday, reports Xinhua news agency. "Let this serve as a warning to all universities and academic institutions across the country," Noem said in a statement. "Enrolling international students is a

privilege - not a right - and that privilege has been revoked due to Harvard's repeated failure to comply with federal law." The secretary noted that in addition to barring enrollment of future international students, "existing foreign students must transfer or lose their legal status."

"On April 11, Trump administration officials sent a letter to Harvard, demanding that the university make "meaningful governance reform and restructuring." "The administration's main demands include eliminating what it describes as antisemitism on campus and dismantling diversity

initiatives that favour certain minority groups. On April 14, Harvard University rejected the Trump administration's demands to make sweeping changes to its governance, hiring and admissions practices. Just a few hours later, the Trump administration announced a freeze on 2.2 billion US dollars in multi-year grants and 60 million in multi-year contract value to the university.

On April 16, Noem demanded that Harvard University share information about the foreign student visa holders' illegal and violent activities by April 30, or risk losing its authorisation to enrol international students. On April 21, Harvard University said that it has filed a federal lawsuit against the Trump administration's funding freeze, calling the action "unlawful and beyond the government's authority". As of the fall 2023 semester, international students made up over 27 per cent of Harvard's student body, according to university data.

## Russia, Ukraine Conduct Large-Scale POW Swap, Each 390 People



medical assistance, reports Xinhua news agency, quoting the ministry. "The large-scale exchange initiated by the Russian side is planned to continue in the coming days," according to the ministry. Ukraine and Russia

reached a deal on the largest swap of their captives during a meeting in Turkey's Istanbul on May 16. Following their direct negotiations in Istanbul last week, Russia and Ukraine agreed to exchange 1,000 prisoners each,

marking the largest prisoner swap since the start of the conflict in 2022. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky also announced that 390 Ukrainians returned home from captivity during the first stage of a prisoner exchange with Russia under the "1,000 for 1,000 formula". "On Saturday and Sunday, we expect the exchange to continue," Zelensky wrote on social media platform X. The Ukrainian President also emphasised that Ukraine will continue diplomatic efforts to return all its citizens who are still held in captivity.

## 'Pahalgam Attack Was Done To Create Fear Psychosis, Destroy Tourism & Create Religious Discord': EAM Jaishankar

**Berlin, (H.S):** Reiterating India's zero-tolerance for terrorism, India's External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar has said that the Pahalgam terror attack was meant to create fear psychosis in the minds of people, destroy tourism economy flourishing in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir as well as create a religious discord between communities living in the country. EAM Jaishankar made the remarks while speaking at the DGAP's Centre for Geopolitics, Geo-economics and technology.

He also added that no country in the world has approves of terrorism but rather condemned it. The EAM said that Germany also condemned the Pahalgam terror attack and said that India only targeted terrorists headquarters and training centres emanating from its neighbouring country Pakistan and the latter has used terrorism as a state-sponsored policy to pressurise India. Germany recognises India's right to defend itself against terrorism, EAM Jaishankar

said. India has zero tolerance for terrorism and will never give in to nuclear blackmail, he added on Friday after briefing Germany's top leadership on the new approach to combating cross-border terror backed by Pakistan. EAM Jaishankar signalled there will be no room for third-party mediation in India's dealings with Pakistan while addressing a news conference with his German counterpart, Johann Wadephul in Berlin.

He shared his remarks on how India and Germany can upgrade their ties as the two countries mark 25 years of their strategic partnership. He offered suggestions on collaboration in several areas to take the ties ahead. He said, "To be here early in the tenure of this government, so that we really lose no time in forging a pathway towards taking after 25 years to look at the next 25 years and see where we can take our relationship." Listing down the challenges which the modern world has brought forth, such as the chips war, climate change, poverty, damage done by



the Covid pandemic, among others. The EAM expressed confidence in the India-Germany ties to face them. He said, "The global picture is very challenging... for that I would argue that the partnership between India and Germany, and India and the European Union, of which Germany is a crucial and invaluable member, has acquired an importance and a salience much more than it has had before." Sharing his engagements in Germany, the EAM noted that the time is ripe to think about the next 25 years and how we can fully realise the potential of India-

Germany ties. Sharing his thoughts on what can be done to upgrade the relationship, EAM listed down areas of collaboration. The first area he highlighted was "A good start would be defence and security. We've had sort of an off and on relationship here. There have been times decades ago when there were actually active defence ties between us. Then for whatever reason, there's a certain conservatism about taking it forward. But I have seen that in the last few years, once again, there is a realisation in both countries that there is something that we have to offer to each other.

And the defence and security of both countries would be very much stronger through our cooperation. And we see this reflected. We see this reflected in the visits of German ships to the Indo-Pacific and to Indian ports. We see it reflected in enhanced export licensing practices, in discussions whether there can be further technology and equipment collaboration between our countries."

The second area he brought to attention was talent and mobility to meet demand and demographics. He highlighted that India's demographic curve is in the right place to fashion a global workforce. The third area was technology and digital AI, and the fourth area being sustainability and green growth. He expressed optimism for trade ties to grow between the two countries and a Free Trade Agreement with the EU would help in that regard. He also shared the snippets from the event in a post on X. "A good interaction @dgapev this evening. Spoke about India and Germany coming

closer to promote global stability, security and prosperity. Discussed new opportunities in the bilateral relationship, as well as with the European Union. Preparing for a stronger partnership in a multipolar world." Earlier on Friday morning, EAM Jaishankar also conveyed to Chancellor Friedrich Merz India's appreciation for Germany's solidarity at the time when the country was responding to the Pahalgam attack."

India has zero tolerance for terrorism. India will never give in to nuclear blackmail. And India will deal with Pakistan purely bilaterally," EAM Jaishankar said. "There should be no confusion in any quarter in that regard." Wadephul said Germany was "appalled by the brutal terrorist attack" at Pahalgam last month and had "condemned this attack on civilians in the strongest terms". He added: "Germany will support any fight against terrorism. Terrorism must never have a place anywhere in the world and this is why we will support everyone who has to

fight terrorism." EAM Jaishankar said he spoke to Wadephul on May 7, the day Operation Sindoor was launched to target terrorist infrastructure on Pakistani soil, and said India values Germany's understanding that "every nation has a right to defend itself against terrorism". Defence and security was a key part of the talks between the two Foreign Ministers, and EAM Jaishankar emphasised Germany's importance as an important partner.

Wadephul said the two countries share the joint goal of maintaining the rules-based world order. "India has a very special importance as a strong actor in security policy in a strategically important region," Wadephul said. EAM Jaishankar, who is on a three-nation tour of Europe that has already taken him to the Netherlands and Denmark, met members of the German Bundestag or Parliament on Thursday and discussed "India's firm commitment of combating terrorism in all forms and manifestations".



## RBI Announces Record 2.69 Lakh Crore Dividend Bonanza For Modi Govt

**Mumbai, (H.S):** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday approved its highest-ever dividend of a staggering Rs 2.69 lakh crore to the PM Narendra Modi-led Central government for the financial year 2024-25.The dividend payout is a robust 27.4 per cent increase over the corresponding figure of Rs 2.1 lakh crore for the previous year.

The record dividend will help to keep the fiscal deficit in check while enabling the Finance Ministry to continue with its expenditure on big-ticket infrastructure projects to spur growth and social welfare schemes to uplift the poor in 2025-26.The RBI has also increased its contingency risk buffer (CRB) to 7.5 per cent from 6.5 per cent earlier at the meeting of its Central Board held on Friday. The CRB helps cover potential hits like bad loans, falling asset values, or sudden economic shocks. Economists had expected the RBI's dividend to the government



to surpass a record Rs 2.5 lakh this year as the central bank earnings, through the sale of dollars to prop up the rupee as it sharply depreciated during 2024-25, are reported to have shot up.

In September 2024, foreign exchange reserves peaked to \$704 billion and the RBI is estimated to have sold over \$125 billion since then, according to estimates by Nomura and DBS Bank.The previous record dividend transferred to the government stands at Rs 2.1 lakh crore during 2024-25. This was a record jump

from the Rs 87,416 crore transferred to the government in 2023-24 for the profit made in 2022-23.Among the RBI's earnings, forex transactions are the most significant in light of the central bank's measures to lower rupee volatility

by strong dollar purchases earlier in fiscal 2025 and difference in the current versus historical exchange rate. Added to this are the interest income on government securities and earnings from funds extended to banks in the midst of previous

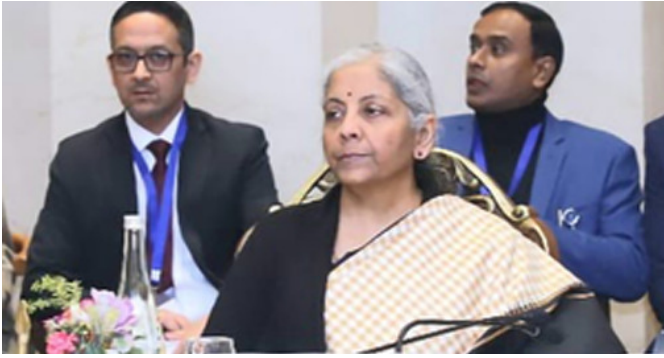
tight liquidity.Earnings on forex transactions were substantial with gross dollar sales tracking at \$371.6 billion in fiscal 2025 till February compared to \$153 billion in fiscal 2024, according to IDFC First bank's Chief Economist Gaura Sengupta.The higher dividend creates fiscal space of 0.1 per cent to 0.2 per cent of GDP, estimates Sengupta. With support from the higher-than-budgeted RBI surplus and savings on a few expenditure heads, the Central government is in a fairly strong position to counter the growth slowdown risks and any potential emergency spending requirements.

Apart from helping to lower the fiscal deficit, the RBI dividend will be a significant infusion to core liquidity in the banking system during the current financial year. This will help to keep interest rates low and allow banks to extend more loans to corporates and consumers to accelerate economic growth and create more jobs.

## GST Council's next meeting likely to discuss rate rationalisation, compensation cess

**New Delhi, (H.S):** With a focus on simplifying the indirect tax regime and addressing anomalies in the existing Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate structure, the GST Council is likely to take up rate rationalisation and the future of compensation cess in its next meeting.The meeting in New Delhi is anticipated to be convened soon, with states also pushing for clarity on their revenue outlook ahead of the next fiscal planning cycle.

According to a report by NDTV Profit, citing sources, the issue of compensation cess - a levy initially introduced to offset revenue losses of states post-GST rollout - is also on the table, especially as its continuation beyond 2026 becomes a point of debate.Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in March said that GST rates will be reduced further as the process of rationalising tax slabs is nearing completion. The revenue neutral rate (RNR), which was 15.8 per cent when GST was introduced in



July 2017, has now come down to 11.4 per cent in 2023 and will decrease further.FM Sitharaman said that the work on simplifying GST slabs is almost finished and the GST Council, which is led by Finance Minister and includes state finance ministers, is expected to take a final decision soon.

The Group of Minister (GoM) was set up in September 2021 to suggest changes in GST rates and slabs. This committee consists of finance ministers from six states and has been working on making the tax system more efficient. The rationalisation

process includes reducing the number of tax slabs, streamlining rates, and addressing key concerns raised by different industries.The Union Minister further emphasised that a final review is underway before presenting the proposal at the next GST Council meeting.

The gross GST collections for April stood at Rs 2.36 lakh crore, marking a 12.6 per cent increase over the gross collection of Rs 2.10 lakh crore in April 2024. The record GST collection in April showcases the resilience of the Indian economy and the effectiveness of cooperative federalism.

## Govt rolls out SPICED scheme to boost spice exports

**Kochi, (H.S):** The Spices Board has launched the 'Sustainability in Spice Sector through Progressive, Innovative and Collaborative Interventions for Export Development (SPICED)' scheme for the fiscal year 2025-26 under which financial assistance is offered across the value chain to farmers and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) to enhance the production, quality and export of spices.The scheme is aimed at increasing the productivity of small and large cardamom, improving the quality of post-harvest processes, and encouraging the production and export of value-added, GI-tagged, and organic spices. It also helps in enabling compliance with global food safety and phytosanitary standards and boosting the capacity

of stakeholders across the value chain.Online applications for the SPICED scheme will open on May 26. Spice exporters can apply under the scheme's export development and promotion components until June 30, while farmers and FPOs can submit applications under the development components in other categories until September 30.The scheme offers financial assistance for replanting and rejuvenation of cardamom plantations, development of water resources, micro-irrigation, promotion of organic farming, and expansion of good agricultural practices (GAP). In addition, it supports the installation of improved post-harvest infrastructure, such as modern dryers, slicers, dehullers, and grading machines to ensure superior product

quality.The scheme also provides financial assistance to farmers and FPOS to procure essential post-harvest machines such as spice polishers, turmeric boilers, mint distillation units, and threshing machines.Besides, the scheme helps in marketing efforts by facilitating the participation of stakeholders in international trade fairs, buyer-seller meets, and other market linkage programs. It gives high priority to supporting first-time exporters and small businesses, enabling them to showcase Indian spices in global markets.India is the world's largest producer and exporter of spices. During FY24, the country exported spices worth US\$ 4.46 billion. In FY25 (until December 2024), India exported spices worth Rs 29,016 crore (US\$ 3.36 billion).The

production of different spices has been growing rapidly over the last few years. The production of spices in FY24 was estimated at 12 million metric tonnes, whereas production in FY23 stood at 11.14 million tonnes compared to 11.12 million tonnes in FY22. During FY23, the export of spices from India stood at US\$ 3.73 billion from US\$ 3.46 billion in FY22.India's export of organic food products have also registered a robust 35 per cent increase to \$665.96 million (around Rs 5,700 crore) during the financial year ending on March 31, 2025 compared to the corresponding figure of \$494.80 million in 2023-24, according to the latest data released by the government.

## Stock Markets Rally Nearly 1 Pc Amid Strong Domestic Macroeconomic Indicators

**Mumbai, (H.S):** Indian stock markets ended the week on a strong note, with key benchmark indices closing higher on Friday, supported by gains in IT, FMCG, banking and financial stocks. The Sensex jumped 769.09 points, or 0.95 per cent, to close at 81,721.08.

During the day, the index moved between an intra-day high of 81,905.17 and a low of 80,897.00.Similarly, the Nifty rose by 243.45 points, or 0.99 per cent, to settle at 24,853.15."The index has moved higher after finding support at the 21-day EMA. Broadly speaking, the Nifty appears to be consolidating

within the range of 24,700-25,000," Rupak De of LKP Securities said.The short-term trend remains positive, with momentum likely to strengthen above 25,000, he added.

The domestic market has recouped nearly half of the week's losses, supported by gains in FMCG and IT stocks. Optimism around a potentially record-high dividend from the RBI is also boosting hopes for fiscal consolidation, said experts.In the broader markets, both the Nifty Midcap100 and Nifty Smallcap100 posted gains. The midcap index rose by 0.64 per cent, while the smallcap index was

up by 0.80 per cent - reflecting positive sentiment across the board. On the Sensex, only one stock - Sun Pharma - closed in the red. Sun Pharma declined by 2.14 per cent. Sun Pharma's Q4 results showed a decline in net profit.

The remaining stocks ended the session with gains. Leading the rally were shares of Eternal, Power Grid, ITC, Bajaj Finserv, and Nestle India, which rose in the range of 3.6 per cent to 1.83 per cent. On the sectoral front, Nifty FMCG and Nifty Private Bank led the gains, rising by 1.63 per cent and 1.08 per cent, respectively.Other sectors such as IT, financial services, metal, PSU

bank, oil and gas, and realty also closed in the green, with gains of up to 0.95 per cent.Meanwhile, Nifty Pharma and Healthcare were the only two sectors that ended in the red. Nifty Pharma slipped by 0.41 per cent, while the Healthcare index saw a marginal decline of just 0.01 per cent.

According to analysts, market sentiment was buoyed by optimism over US-India trade negotiations. "Investor attention is further revolving around US-India trade talks and strong domestic macroeconomic indicators," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Ltd.

## Shri Amit Shah inaugurates Falcon Agrifriz's state-of-the-art frozen potato products manufacturing facility in Mehsana, Gujarat

**Gujarat, (H.S):** In a landmark moment for India's food processing industry, Falcon Agrifriz Foods Private Limited inaugurated its state-of-the-art, fully automated frozen potato products manufacturing facility in Mehsana, Gujarat. The plant was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Government of India, Shri Amit Shah, in the presence of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Bhupendra Patel; Hon'ble Minister of Industries, Government of Gujarat, Shri Balvantsinh Rajput; Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha, Shri Mayankbhai Nayak; Member of Parliament, Mehsana, Shri Haribhai Patel; and Chairman of Falcon Group, Shri Tara Ranjan Patnaik.

This state-of-the-art facility marks a significant milestone under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Falcon Group and the Government of Gujarat. The group has invested approximately .1,050 crore in the state, aiming to transform Gujarat into a global hub for frozen potato-based products. For over four decades, the Falcon Group has championed growth rooted in quality, trust, and innovation. From animal nutrition and marine exports to real estate, mining, mineral



exports, trading, healthtech, and strategic holdings, Falcon's diversified portfolio is driven by a common purpose: to build enduring value.Agrifriz extends this legacy into the realm of frozen foods with a mission to place India at the forefront of global convenience food exports.

With the frozen food segment booming worldwide and India's agricultural strengths gaining global recognition, Falcon has set its sights on making India a leader in processed potato exports. The company's journey from farm to fork is powered by deep-rooted quality controls. A dedicated seed programme ensures consistent, high-quality produce. Seeds cultivated in the northern states—Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand—Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Leh Ladakh, are

grown under expert supervision and then transported to Gujarat for commercial farming via Falcon's robust contract farming network of more than 4000 farmers. Harvested potatoes are quickly moved to advanced cold storage units, ensuring year-round availability and freshness.

Spread across 25 acres, the Mehsana facility houses India's only and largest French Fries production line—spanning 350 metres and capable of producing 15 metric tons per hour.The facility also houses a potato specialty line with a 3.5 metric tonne per hour capacity. Built in under two years, it is among India's most advanced, green, and 100% automated food processing plants. Speaking at the inauguration, Shri Tara Ranjan Patnaik, Chairman of Falcon

Group, said: "Gujarat has always held a special place in India's agricultural landscape, and for Falcon, it was a natural choice. The state's abundant potato production, resilient farming community, and pro-business environment made it the perfect home for our flagship facility. This plant represents more than manufacturing; it embodies our philosophy of future-forward, responsible growth. We aim to produce efficiently, sustainably, and with the highest global standards. Looking ahead, our ambition is to make Falcon a global leader in food processing by expanding into new markets, driving innovation, and staying true to our values."

Parthajeet Patnaik, Vice-Chairman of Falcon Group, called the inauguration a defining step forward, noting"Falcon's journey has always been about transforming potential into impact—across sectors, regions, and generations. This facility marks a bold step in our commitment to building globally competitive, India-led enterprises. We're harnessing the strength of our farmers, the power of technology, and the vision of a new India to shape the future of food processing. It's not just about scaling operations—it's about creating a legacy of leadership, rooted in responsibility and driven by

purpose." Echoing the company's forward-looking mission, Manish Tibrewal, Director & CEO of Falcon Agrifriz, added, "This facility marks more than an investment in infrastructure—it signals a decisive leap toward India's food processing leadership. What drives us is not just production, but a deeper purpose: nation-building from the soil up. Our dedicated seed programme, backed by skilled agronomists, ensures end-to-end traceability and consistent quality from the very source. With world-class automation and a farmer-first approach, we're reimagining what India can deliver to the world.

This is just the beginning of a journey that puts India at the heart of the global food map." Falcon Agrifriz is already making its presence felt on global platforms, showcasing its brands—including Just Crave, Bon Vegato, Frizeto, and Just Fries—at exhibitions like Gulfood, AAHAR, and SIAL. These brands are not just about products; they represent the company's commitment to creating irresistible food experiences driven by taste, trust, and technology. With this new plant, Falcon reinforces its pledge to sustainable progress and India's potential to lead the global frozen food revolution—one French fry at a time.

## 16.33 lakh new workers enrolled for benefits under ESI scheme in March



**New Delhi, (H.S):** The provisional payroll data of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) shows that 16.33 lakh new employees have been added during March this year.As many as 31,514 new establishments have been brought under the social security ambit of the ESI Scheme in the month of March, thus ensuring social security to more workers, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Labour and Employment.Through the data, it is noticeable that out of the total 16.33 lakh employees added during the month, 7.96 lakh employees amounting to around 49 per cent of the total registrations belong to the age group of upto 25 years.

According to the ministry, the gender-wise analysis of the payroll data indicates that the net enrolment of female members has been 3.61 lakh in March.Besides, a total of 100 transgender employees have also got registered under ESI Scheme, which attests the commitment of ESIC to deliver its benefits to every section of the society. The payroll data is provisional since the data generation is a continuous exercise.Meanwhile, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) added 14.58 lakh net members in the month of March, and increase of 1.15 per cent in net payroll additions compared to March 2024.

EPFO enrolled around 7.54 lakh new subscribers in March 2025, representing a 2.03 per cent increase over February and 0.98 per cent (year-over-year) growth compared to the previous year in March 2024.A noticeable aspect of the data is the dominance of the 18-25 age group, as 4.45 lakh new subscribers were added in the 18-25 age group, constituting a significant 58.94 per cent of the total new subscribers added in March 2025.According to the ministry, approximately 13.23 lakh members, who had exited earlier, rejoined EPFO in March.





## Triptii Reunites with Sandeep Reddy Lead Opposite Prabhas

After the success of Animal, Sandeep Reddy Vanga is now working with Prabhas on their upcoming film Spirit. Earlier, Deepika Padukone was set to play the female lead. However, recent rumours suggested she was dropped due to 'unprofessional demands'. Now, the makers have officially announced Triptii Dimri as part of the film.

On Saturday, Sandeep Reddy Vanga took to X (formerly Twitter) to announce that Triptii Dimri will be the female lead in Spirit. He wrote, "The female lead for my film is now official :-)." Triptii also shared the post on Instagram, writing, "Still sinking in. ... ?? So grateful to be trusted with this journey Thank you @sandeepreddy.vanga ..honoured to be a part of your vision." Fans expressed their excitement about Triptii joining the cast. One fan wrote, "Welcome to RebelWood." Another commented, "This is huge." A third remarked, "Deepika out, Triptii in!!! Vanga trusts her too much." Another user simply said, "I'm screaming." Earlier, Deepika Padukone was expected to star opposite Prabhas in the film. However, a source told Bollywood Hungama, "Sandeep Reddy Vanga got the shock of his life when Deepika Padukone refused to shoot for more than six hours a day for Spirit.

That's not all-the actress, via her agency, also began to demand amendments to the contract. Their main contention was simple: if the shoot extended beyond 100 days, Deepika would need to be paid extra for every single day beyond the agreed schedule." Spirit marks the first-ever on-screen collaboration between Prabhas and Triptii Dimri, and her second collaboration with director Sandeep Reddy Vanga, producer Bhushan Kumar, and Pranay Reddy Vanga, following the success of Animal. Backed by T-Series and Bhadrakali Pictures,

Spirit will feature Prabhas in the role of a fierce and intense police officer. The film is currently in pre-production and is set to go on floors in 2025. For months, rumours have circulated that Deepika Padukone was set to play the female lead. However, reports suggest that the collaboration may have hit a dead end. Allegedly, the actress had requested a capped 8-hour workday (with six hours for shoot), a fee of 20 crore, profit-sharing, and had concerns over delivering dialogues in Telugu - terms that reportedly made negotiations complicated.

Neither Vanga nor Padukone have confirmed these claims, leaving the situation open to interpretation. It's also unclear whether Triptii has stepped in as a replacement or if she plays an entirely different character. Dimri, who rose to stardom with Qala (2022) and Animal, has emerged as a fan-favourite in recent years, especially for roles that balance vulnerability with quiet intensity. While Spirit still remains largely a mystery, Dimri's casting marks the second official step toward bringing the Prabhas-led project to life. Fans can only hope that more details will follow soon - but for now, the hype is officially back on. As per reports, the film is slated for a 2027 release.

## Mukul Dev Death: Manoj, Sonu & Others Pay Respects

Actor Mukul Dev passed away on Friday, May 23, in Delhi. He was 54. The news of his untimely demise has deeply saddened the film fraternity and fans alike. Tributes have been pouring in from all corners of the industry, as colleagues and admirers remember him for his talent, versatility and the warmth he brought to every role.

Manoj Bajpayee paid homage to Mukul Dev by sharing a note on Instagram. He wrote, "It is impossible to put into words what I am feeling. Mukul was a brother in spirit, an artist whose warmth and passion were unmatched. Gone too soon, too young. Praying for strength and healing for his family and everyone grieving this loss. Miss you meri jaan (my love)...until we meet again. Om Shanti." Actress Dia Mirza commented, "Can't believe this (broken heart emoji)." Manoj Bajpayee shared screen space with Mukul Dev in the 1996 film Dastak. The movie, directed by Mahesh Bhatt, also featured Sushmita Sen and Sharad Kapoor in key roles. Sonu Sood bid goodbye to Mukul Dev by writing, "RIP Mukul bhai. You were a gem. Will always miss you. Stay strong, Rahul Dev (Mukul Dev's brother) bhai." Arshad Warsi offered a poignant tribute to Mukul Dev on Instagram. He wrote, "Heartbroken to hear about Mukul Dev. I was really fond of him. He was a friend, colleague, a wonderful person with a



beautiful soul. May his soul rest in peace." Actor Neil Nitin Mukesh expressed his sorrow at Mukul Dev's demise. He penned an elaborate note on X. It read, "Really upset with the sad news of dear Mukul leaving us so soon. A powerhouse performer and a lovely person. My deepest condolences to Rahul Dev, Mugdha Godse (Mukul Dev's sister-in-law) and the entire family. God be with you all during these tough times. Om Shanti."

Here's what actor Tusshar Kapoor wrote, "RIP Mukul, you were a lovely co-star to work with and human being too, my deepest condolences to Rahul Dev and the entire family." Tusshar Kapoor and Mukul Dev have worked together in the 2012 film, Chaar Din Ki Chandni. Film veteran Vinu Dara Singh uploaded a throwback video on X featuring Mukul Dev. His side note read, "Rest in peace, my brother Mukul Dev! The time spent with you will always be cherished and Son Of Sardaar 2

will be your swansong where you will spread joy and happiness to the viewers and make them fall laughing!" Vinu Dara Singh's emotional write-up hinted at Mukul Dev's upcoming project, Son Of Sardaar 2. The film, directed by Vijay Kumar Arora, will premiere on July 25. Actress Dipshikha Nagppal, a long-time friend of Mukul Dev, also remembered the actor. She dropped an old video with Mukul on Instagram. Her caption read, "I can't believe you are gone, Muks. What do I say??? With a heavy heart, I can say may his soul rest in peace. What a beautiful soul, amazing actor and a wonderful friend. You will be missed. I will miss your voice notes. May god give strength to his family."

Mukul Dev was last seen in the 2022 film Anth The End. He kicked off his acting career with the television series Mumkin (1996). Dastak, released in 1996, marked Mukul's Bollywood debut.

## Metro in Dino first look: Aditya, Sara, Ali battle their emotional upheavals



The team of Metro In Dino has shared a brief video and revealed the first look from the film, as well as the teaser of the first song, Zamaana Lage. Taking to YouTube on Saturday, T-Series posted the over one-minute-long video, which gave a glimpse inside the lives of the characters played by Anupam Kher, Pankaj Tripathi, Konkona Sen Sharma, Aditya Roy Kapur, Sara Ali Khan, Fatima Sana Shaikh, Ali Fazal, Neena Gupta and Saswata Chatterjee.

The video began with the words--the city has changed, and so have the stories. The video showed Sara Ali Khan and Aditya as they stood next to each other at the train station. While Aditya's character is seen enjoying the mountains, Sara's character enjoys her city life. Ali Fazal's character, a singer, finds his love in Fatima Sana. Pankaj's character, in the Anurag Basu-directed film, is in awe of Konkona. In the video, Ali, Aditya and Sara are seen

struggling with their emotions as they get upset, cry and yell, respectively. Metro In Dino will introduce the audience to a world of modern love and relationships. Zamaana Lage, which will be out on May 28, witnesses the collaboration between composer Pritam and Anurag. It has been sung by Arijit Singh and Shashwat Singh. The music of Metro In Dino has been composed by Pritam.

Backed by producer Bhushan Kumar, the film weaves together a colourful, melody-soaked narrative of stories that reintroduces us to life in the metropolitan cities of India. The film is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, Anurag, and Taani Basu. Metro In Dino will hit the theatres on July 4. After Life in a Metro and Ludo, Metro In Dino is the final chapter of director Anurag Basu's trilogy of hyperlinked cinema.

## Shubman Named Test Captain & Pant to Serve as Vice-Captain

**Mumbai, (HS):** Right-handed batter Shubman Gill has been appointed as India's 37th Test captain as chief selector Ajit Agarkar announced the 18-member squad on Saturday for the crucial five-match tour of England, starting on June 20. Wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant has been named as the vice-captain. The Agarkar-led selection committee, along with BCCI Secretary Devajit Saikia as the meeting convener, picked the squad in a meeting at the BCCI HQ in Mumbai, before announcing it in a formal press conference addressed by him and Shiv Sunder Das.

"We discussed every option that's there, over the last year or so, we've looked at Shubman at various times. Taken a lot of feedback from the dressing room. Very young, but there's been improvement." "We're hopeful he's the guy. He's a terrific player, our best wishes to him. You don't pick captains for one tour or two tours. We've seen some progress over the last year or two with him. No doubt it's going to be as tough as it gets," said Agarkar on Gill's elevation as captain. Gill has played as an opener and number three batter for India in Tests, and he now takes up the leadership role after Rohit Sharma announced his retirement from the format earlier this month. In 32 Tests, Gill has scored 1893 runs at an average of 35.1, with five centuries and seven fifties against his name. Gill's previous leadership experiences in the Indian team have been overseeing 4-1 T20I series win in Zimbabwe last year and being the white-ball vice-captain, including when the side



won the 2025 Champions Trophy in Dubai. In first-class cricket, Gill has been the captain just five times - with his record reading a win, two defeats and as many draws. Gill, 25, is currently leading Gujarat Titans, who are on top of IPL 2025 points table, and are set to feature in the playoffs. His GT teammates and coaching staff members have lauded Gill for his proactiveness, calmness and tactical nous. In the squad, Karun Nair returns to the Test team after seven years, while Arshdeep Singh and B Sai Sudharsan get their maiden Test call-ups. There's no place for veteran pacer Mohammed Shami, who Agarkar said is not fully fit to handle the rigours of playing Test cricket. "He's had a little bit of a setback over the past week, got some MRIs done. Wasn't going to be able to play five Tests. Don't think his workload is where he needs to be. Medical guys told

he'll be ruled out. We were hoping he'll play some part, but if he's not fit, we'd rather pick guys fit and available rather than waiting," he said.

Agarkar also said Gill and head coach Gautam Gambhir will take a call on batting make-up after reaching England. "They might take a call on opener once they get there. But once they get there, they'll have a think about that." Agarkar also revealed Bumrah won't play all five Tests in England, adding that the fast bowling spearhead is more important to the side in his primary role instead of taking over the leadership mantle. "Don't think he'll be available for all five Tests. Whether it's four or three, we'll see based on how the series goes and his workload is. Even if he's fit for 3-4 Tests, he'll be an asset for us. Just happy he's part of the squad. He's more important to us a player." "Once you're managing people, there's a lot that

takes out of you. We've had a chat with him, he's okay with it. He knows where his body's at. KL not really, he's captained a while back, he's a quality player and hope he has a big series. With Booms, it was more about his workload management." India's all-important Test series against England runs from June 20 to August 4, with Headingley, Edgbaston, Lord's, Old Trafford and The Oval being the venues. India are aiming to win a Test series in England for the first time since 2007.

India's squad for England Tests: Shubman Gill (c), Rishabh Pant (vc & wk), Yashasvi Jaiswal, KL Rahul, B Sai Sudharsan, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Karun Nair, Nitish Kumar Reddy, Ravindra Jadeja, Dhruv Jurel (wk), Washington Sundar, Shardul Thakur, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Prasidh Krishna, Akash Deep, Arshdeep Singh and Kuldeep Yadav.

## Patidar, Cummins over 'IPL Code of Conduct' Breach



respective teams' slow over-rate during their Indian Premier League match. While Cummins was fined Rs 12 lakh as it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct, Patidar was docked Rs 24 lakh as a member of the playing XI of the second-time offender RCB. "As it was his team's second offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over-rate offences, Patidar was fined Rs 24 lakhs," said the IPL in a statement. Once they were asked to chase an imposing 232, which the SRH set after Kishan made a stunning unbeaten 94 off 48 balls, RCB required some calculated assault on the target. They mounted it through Phil Salt (62, 32b, 4xx, 5x6), Virat Kohli (43, 25b, 7x4, 1x6) and Jitesh Sharma (24, 15b), but could only amass 189 before getting bundled out, and it was RCB's first defeat away from home this season.

## BCCI breaks silence on Virat Kohli's Test retirement

**New Delhi, (HS) :** Several fans and experts had blamed BCCI for the early Test retirement of superstar Virat Kohli. Several of them are of the opinion that despite being super fit and fine, Kohli was forced to announce his retirement from the longest format of the game so soon because of the indecisiveness of BCCI. Speculations were rife in the cricketing circle that Kohli was promised to return as the captain of the Indian Test team in the upcoming Test series against England. However, BCCI didn't keep its words forcing Kohli to announce his retirement so soon. In response, BCCI broke its silence over the matter recently. India chief selector Ajit Agarkar revealed that Kohli had conveyed his decision to retire from Test cricket back in early April, weeks before making it public in May. The confirmation came during the squad announcement for India's five-Test series in England, where Agarkar addressed the recent retirement calls made by both Kohli and Rohit Sharma. Agarkar clarified that the decision to step away from the longest format was entirely Kohli's, and neither the selectors nor the board influenced it.



## KIBG: Odisha Women, Kerala Men Emerge Supreme in Beach Soccer

**Diu, (HS) :** Odisha Women picked up their first gold of the competition after a tough fight from Gujarat while Kerala men were too good for Goa in the beach soccer competitions of the Khelo India Beach Games (KIBG) 2025. Played under lights side by side at the beautiful Ghoghla Beach in Diu in front of hundreds of loud spectators, both the matches in the men's and women's categories proved to be worthy

of being finals. However, the contests on Friday evening kicked off in a contrasting manner.

Odisha women looked to run away with two early goals against Gujarat women who appeared to have the support of local spectators, the large part of the crowd which also was dancing to the Garba and Bollywood tunes in the company of Pearls - dolphins - mascots for the Games. Kerala and Goa, on the



other hand, were slogging it out in the men's final. It was competitive, to say the least. Kerala looked a slightly better team in initial exchanges but as the match wore on, they grandly stamped their authority. After the first period ended at 2-1 in their favour, Kerala upped the ante in the next and in the blink of an eye ran away to a 10-3 lead to put it beyond their Goan rivals. Kerala went on to win the contest

12-4 to clinch the gold. Muhseer T. and Rohith Yesudas scored four and three goals each, respectively. On the other arena, just when Odisha women looked on their way to a comfortable win, Gujarat, against all expectations, staged an extraordinary comeback. In the third and final period, with Gujarat trailing 3-0, Shaikh Naaz breathed a lot of life into the match by scoring a brace in less than a

minute and making it 3-2. Bhumisha Dravid then had a great chance to make it 3-3 in the dying moments of the match but to the disappointment of the large part of the crowd, she couldn't finish it. In the end, Odisha were still leading 3-2, and thus they sealed the gold medal. They had put together the squad under coach Gitanjali Khuntia only a couple of weeks before the Khelo India Beach Games 2025. Captain