


Rath Yatra Ready to Roll

Timeline of Rituals

6.00 am: MangalaAlati
6.10 am: Mailam
6.30 am: TadapaLagi
6.30 am: Roshahoma
7.00 am: Abakasha
7.10 am: Surya Puja
7.30 am: Dwarapala Puja
7.30 am: BeshasSesha
8 am to 9 am: GopalaBallabha and SakalaDhupa (KhacudiBhoga)
9.00 am: RathPratistha
9.15 am: Mangalarpana
9.30 am: Pahandi begins
12.30 pm: Pahandi ends
12.30 pm to 1 pm: Sri Madanmohan, Sri Ram, Sri Krishna Bije
1.30 pm to 2 pm: Chitalagi
1.30 pm to 2.30 pm: Beshas Sesa
2.30 pm to 3.30 pm: Chhera Pahana
4.00 pm: Charamalaphita, installation of Ghoda, Sarathi
4.00 pm: Chariot pulling

Thousands witness Nabajouban Darshan
Puri (DMC) : Thousands of devotees thronged Odisha's pilgrim town of Puri on Thursday to witness NabajoubanDarshan of the sibling deities at Shree Continued P-4

Special Ama Busto Puri
Bhubaneswar (DMC) : To facilitate seamless travel for devotees during the annual Rath Yatra in Puri, the Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) on Thursday announced special 'Ama Bus' service to the pilgrim town in Odisha.





Puri (DMC) : With just a day left for the annual RathYatra in Odisha'sPuri, devotees from across the country and abroad have started arriving at the pilgrim town to witness the grand event. Devotees as well as servitors of the 12th century shrine and officials are gearing up car festival to witness the divine journey of Lord Balabhadra, Lord Jagannath and Devi Subhadra on three giant chariots. Ahead of the mega festival, the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has announced the full schedule of rituals for the RathYatra to be held on June 27. As per the schedule, the rituals will begin early in the morning on Friday and continue throughout the day, culminating with the pulling of the grand chariots in the afternoon. Lakhs of devotees from across the country and abroad are expected to participate in the sacred event. As elaborate arrangements have been made for the car festival on Friday, the pilgrim town has been heavily fortified with approximately 10,000 security personnel, including Central Armed Police Forces, deployed for the annual RathYatra of Lord Jagannath, set for June 27. Over 275 AI-powered CCTV cameras have been installed across the town for surveillance, monitored 24/7 from a newly established Integrated Command and Control Room. The enhanced security measures also include National Security Guard snipers on rooftops along the BadaDanda, anti-drone technology, police drones, anti-sabotage teams, bomb squads, and dog squads with Marine Police, Coast Guard, and Indian Navy securing the seafront. Over 15 lakh devotees are expected to visit the town from across India and abroad to participate in the annual sojourn of Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra, and Lord Jagannath, which transcends caste and religion. A real-time chatbot has been launched to assist visitors with parking availability, route maps, and directions to vacant parking spaces. The traffic regulations will come into effect from Thursday.

Odisha inks pacts for port projects worth Rs 18,654 cr



Bhubaneswar (DMC) : In a significant step to further strength maritime infrastructure, the Odisha government signed Concession Agreements for the expansion of Gopalpur Port and for setting up a captive jetty at Jatadhari river mouth in Jagatsinghpur district. Chief Minister Mohan CharanMajhi, who was present during the signing ceremony at LokSevaBhawan, said the projects will play a key role in transforming Odisha into a major hub for maritime trade. An investment of Rs 2,100 crore will be made by JSW Utkal Steel Limited to build a 52 million metric tonne (MMT) capacity captive jetty at Jatadhari. Similarly, an amount of Rs 16,554 crore will be invested for the expansion and upgradation of Gopalpur Port by Gopalpur Ports Limited.The two projects are expected Continued P-4





ଶ୍ରୀ ନରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ମୋଦୀ
ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ

ଶ୍ରୀ ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାଝୀ
ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

DSPL-149

“ବିଶ୍ୱ ଭ୍ରାତୃତ୍ୱ ଓ ସର୍ବ ଧର୍ମ ସମନ୍ୱୟର ପ୍ରତୀକ ପବିତ୍ର ଘୋଷ ଯାତ୍ରା ଅବସରରେ ସୁସ୍ଥ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଓ ବିକଶିତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ପାଇଁ ମହାପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କ ନିକଟରେ ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା”

ରଥଯାତ୍ରା-୨୦୨୪


ଜନସାଧାରଣଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ମାର୍ଗଦର୍ଶିକା

- ବୟୋବୃଦ୍ଧ/ ଭିନ୍ନକ୍ଷମ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଓ ପିଲାମାନଙ୍କୁ ଏକୂଟିଆ ଭିତ ଭିତରକୁ ଛାଡ଼ନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ
- ବିଶୁଦ୍ଧ ପାଣି ପିଅନ୍ତୁ ଏବଂ ଖାଇବା ପୂର୍ବରୁ ହାତ ଭଲଭାବେ ଧୁଅନ୍ତୁ
- ଖୋଲା ବିକ୍ରି ହେଉଥିବା ଖାଦ୍ୟ, କୃତ୍ରିମ ରଙ୍ଗ ଦିଆ ଖାଦ୍ୟ, ବାସି ଓ ଦୁର୍ଗନ୍ଧ ଖାଦ୍ୟ, ମାଛି ବସୁଥିବା ଖାଦ୍ୟ କିମ୍ବା ପଚାସକ୍ୱା ଫଳ ଓ ପନିପରିବା ଖାଆନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ
- ଅଂଶୁଘାତରୁ ରକ୍ଷା ପାଇବାକୁ ମୁଣ୍ଡରେ ଧଳା ଟୋପି କିମ୍ବା ଓଦା କପଡା ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତୁ ଏବଂ ଓ.ଆର୍.ଏସ୍ ପିଅନ୍ତୁ
- ସମୁଦ୍ର ସ୍ନାନ ସମୟରେ ଦୁର୍ଘଟଣା ଏଡାଇବା ପାଇଁ ସତର୍କ ରୁହନ୍ତୁ
- ରାତ୍ରି ରହଣି କରୁଥିଲେ ମଣ୍ଡାରି/ ମଣ୍ଡାନିବାସର ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତୁ
- ଅସୁସ୍ଥ ଅନୁଭବ କଲେ ନିକଟସ୍ଥ ଆଶୁ ଚିକିତ୍ସା କେନ୍ଦ୍ରରେ ଚିକିତ୍ସିତ ହୁଅନ୍ତୁ


ସର୍ବି, କୃର, କାଶ କିମ୍ବା ଫୁ ଭଳି ଲକ୍ଷଣ ଥିବା ବ୍ୟକ୍ତି ଜନଗହଳି ସ୍ଥାନକୁ ଯାଆନ୍ତୁ ନାହିଁ

ଜରୁରୀ ଫୋନ୍ ନମ୍ବର :
ପୁରୀ ହସ୍ପିଟାଲ କଣ୍ଟ୍ରୋଲ ରୁମ୍ : ୦୬୭୫୭-୨୨୨୧୭୫
ରାଜ୍ୟ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟସେବା ହେଲ୍ପ ଲାଇନ୍ : ୧୦୪, ଆୟୁଲାନୁ : ୧୦୮

ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର




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MESSAGE OF HON'BLE GOVERNOR ON THE OCCASION OF RATHA YATRA


On the occasion of world famous Ratha Yatra-2025, I extend my heartfelt wishes to the devotees of Lord Jagannath across the globe.

The path to the elevation of humanity lies in embracing the consciousness and timeless philosophy of Shri Jagannath. May this divine spirit greatly contribute to fostering peace, amity, love and brotherhood in society.



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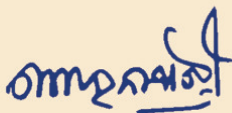
(Hari Babu Kambhampati)



ପବିତ୍ର ରଥଯାତ୍ରା ଅବସରରେ ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା

ମହାପ୍ରଭୁ ଶ୍ରୀଜଗନ୍ନାଥଙ୍କ ପବିତ୍ର ରଥଯାତ୍ରା ଅବସରରେ ରାଜ୍ୟର ସମସ୍ତ ଭାଇଭଉଣୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ମୋର ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଜଣାଉଛି । ରଥଯାତ୍ରା ଆମ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଅସୀମ ଭକ୍ତି ଓ ଭାବାବେଗର ଉତ୍ସବ । ମହାପ୍ରଭୁଙ୍କ ଆଶୀର୍ବାଦରେ ରାଜ୍ୟର ବିକାଶ ସହିତ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ଜୀବନ ସୁଖ, ଶାନ୍ତି ଓ ସମୃଦ୍ଧିରେ ଭରିଉଛି, ଏହା ହିଁ ମୋର କାମନା ।

ଜୟ ଜଗନ୍ନାଥ ...



(ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାଝୀ)
ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା

Board Results

Data on 2024 Class XII board exams, released by the Ministry of Education, tell a story of quiet persistence: For the first time in a decade, more girls - 28.14 lakh - cleared the board exams in the science stream than in humanities - 27.24 lakh. These figures mark a powerful shift in academic and social dynamics. As an analysis of numbers from 25 school boards between 2010 and 2023 by this newspaper in September 2024 showed, only 38.2 per cent of students clearing science in 2010 were girls. By 2023, that number had climbed to 45.5 per cent, setting the stage for the 2024 breakthrough. The reversal of the long-standing gender tilt toward humanities is an affirmation that science - once seen as a male preserve - is being actively pursued by female students across the country. In a country aspiring to be a global leader in the knowledge economy, this is welcome news: Drawing on the scientific potential of half its population is not just desirable, it is essential. State-level results underscore the national picture. In Tamil Nadu, girls achieved a formidable 96.35 per cent science pass rate in 2024; in Jharkhand, Bihar and Odisha, girls outperformed boys. This reshaping of ambition and possibility has been facilitated by growing parental encouragement and good-faith policy interventions such as the Vigyan Jyoti scholarship schemes for girls from disadvantaged backgrounds, and the CBSE's Udaan initiative, that helps underprivileged girls prepare for engineering and medical entrance exams through mentoring and financial aid. What happens when more girls enter higher education in STEM? According to the All India Survey on Higher Education 2021-22, women now make up 52.1 per cent of all students in science disciplines across undergraduate, postgraduate, MPhil, and PhD levels. At the undergraduate level, they constitute a little over 51 per cent of the total enrolment. In medicine, women are at par with men; in engineering and technology - fields where they have traditionally been a sliver - their representation has risen considerably. These numbers point to a future workforce that is likely to be more diverse, representative, and arguably, more innovative.

The promise of these numbers, however, will continue to come up against the shadow of unequal realities unless it is met with deeper investment in infrastructure, mentorship networks, employment opportunities and safe spaces to learn and to linger in. Girls from rural areas and low-income households still face immense barriers that cap their ambitions: Lack of resources; unavailability of laboratories and equipment; a private study space, or simply, the right to stay in school. If this moment is to make room for long-term change, it must ensure that STEM dreams that have gotten off the block are not stalled midway.

27th June

Rath Yatra



Rath Yatra is celebrated on the second day of the two-week-long Ashadha month of the Hindu calendar and this year, it takes place on June 27. The festival usually falls between June and July. Millions of devotees from all over India congregate in the pilgrim city of Puri, Odisha, to participate in the chariot journey of Lord Jagannath. Rath Yatra is one of the most important festivals of the Hindu religion and is believed to be in practice since time immemorial. The day starts with the Mangalaparna ritual, followed by the journey of massive wooden chariots for approx. three kilometers to reach Shree Gundicha Temple.

The Jagannath Rath Yatra is one of the important festivals of Hinduism. Every year, a majestic procession carrying the likenesses of Lord Krishna, Balam, and Subhadra is pulled by the devotees to reach the Jagannath temple. The Yatra honors the journey of Lord Jagannath, the supreme God of the Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism). As per Hindu beliefs, Lord Jagannath is considered to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. It is annually observed in the Jagannath Temple of Puri, a city in the Odisha state of India. The holy month of Ashadha is marked by the worship of the elder siblings of Lord Jagannath. Numerous hill tribes of Odisha partake in the execution of the festival, as Lord Jagannath is himself believed to be a tribal deity.

The preparation for the festival begins at least a month before. The wood of the Neem tree is used to build three massive chariots that carry the likenesses. As many as 1,400 workers trained in ancient carpentry build the chariot from scratch. The three chariots are built without any measuring tape, nails, or glue - only wooden pegs and old-school joints. Lord Jagannath's chariot is about 44 feet tall, with wheels doused in red and yellow color. Whereas the other two chariots are 43 and 42 feet tall to signify the ascension of the younger siblings from the lord. The word Jagannath is derived from the letters 'Jagat' and 'Nath,' which translates to the Lord of the Universe. The festival symbolizes the guiding principles of Hinduism, namely Saivism, Shaktism, and Vaishnavism.

King Anantavarman Chodaganga issues the command to build Lord Jagannath's temple in his province. Claudius Buchanan introduces his writings on India's religions to the world and launches the word 'Juggernaut,' which is inspired by Lord Jagannath. The British government hands over the charge of the Jagannath temples to the Hindu community after decades of colonization. Shri Jagannath Temple Act is enacted to recognize the independent status and self-management of the temple.

Political Dairy



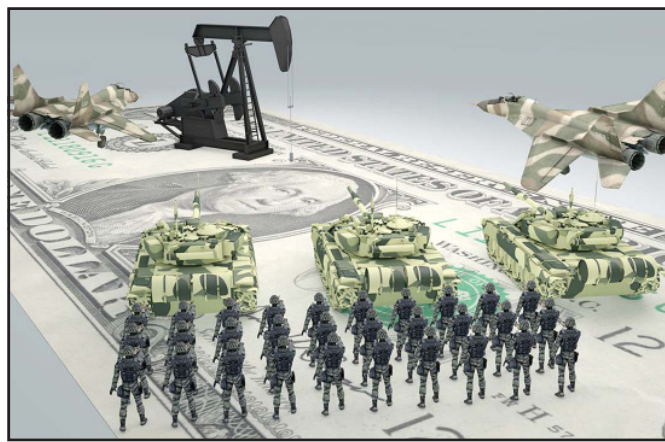
Tejeswar Patnaik

Throughout history, nations have waged countless wars that reshaped borders, alliances, and economies - often at a heavy price. The First and Second World Wars remain the biggest examples of global conflict. The First World War (1914-18) drew in major powers, pitting the Allies - including Russia, the United States, and other nations - against the Central Powers led by Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey. What began as a struggle for imperial dominance claimed roughly 8.5 million soldiers' lives and caused another 1.3 million civilian deaths.

Then came the Second World War (1939-45), a global catastrophe that left between 70 and 85 million dead, including roughly 55 million civilians. Genocide, indiscriminate bombings, and brutal atrocities made it one of the deadliest conflicts in human history. The economic impacts of both World Wars were equally severe and long

lasting, reshaping global trade and politics for decades. Even after 1945, wars between nations have erupted. In the last eight decades, the wars in Middle East, Asia, Europe, and elsewhere, have left deep scars. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), "the loss of human lives is the most adverse effect" of war. Yet that is only part of the story. The economic toll of war - rising commodity prices, crippling inflation, disruption of global supply chains, declining industrial and agricultural output, and the loss of human capital - often lingers long after the guns fall silent. The displacement of millions of people and the exodus of refugees across borders deepen the crisis. The ongoing Russia-Ukraine war is a stark example. Its economic reverberations have been felt globally, impacting energy and food supply chains. Both nations have suffered substantially due to declining economic growth, while the cost of the Gaza conflict has been estimated at roughly \$4 billion. This apart thousands of civilians died the war. Meanwhile, global analysts warn that the biggest economic threat posed by the Israel-Iran war could come from surging oil prices, deepening the Middle East's existing economic crisis marked by rising unemployment, intensifying inflation, escalating debts, and food shortages.

A recent study by Research Hub revealed that global conflicts and violence cost the world an estimated \$14.96 trillion in 2020 alone. In its war with Russia,



Ukraine now spends roughly 34% of its GDP on its military effort. Israel increased its defence budget from 4.4% of its GDP in 2022 to 8.8% in 2024. The United States allocates approximately 3.4% of its GDP - roughly \$997 billion - for its defence needs, while Russia spends roughly 7.1% of its economic output, a higher percentage than even Ukraine. Closer to home, India announced an allocation of Rs 6.81 trillion for defence in its Union Budget for 2025-26, representing roughly 1.9% of its total GDP. Yet many defence experts recommend that New Delhi raise its defence expenditure closer to 3% of GDP, given the rising threats posed by both China and Pakistan. The long term impacts of war run deeper than annual defence allocations. According to SIPRI, the cost of the United States' invasion of Iraq in 2003 to overthrow Saddam Hussein came to roughly \$2.2 trillion. Yet its indirect consequences were even more profound: rising poverty, deepening economic inequality, and the dismantling of

infrastructure and institutions across a war torn Middle East. Even in the post-World War II era, when Allied and Axis nations were grappling with economic recovery, the United States surged ahead. Its defence industry grew into a powerhouse, and its military-industrial complex (MIC) became a catalyst for advances in aerospace, electronics, and telecommunications. The Cold War further fueled this trend, with arms race, research and development yielding breakthroughs that shaped the global economic and technological landscape. Throughout this period, access to vital resources like oil and gas acted as a catalyst for tensions - especially in the Middle East. The United States' hegemonic interests often compounded these tensions, as nations that refused to accept its dominance became flashpoints for conflict. Meanwhile, ethical and moral norms were too often sacrificed, and provisions of the United Nations Charter were violated. Such events raise serious

questions about the role and relevance of international institutions in preserving peace.

Today, the nature of warfare has evolved. The world is no longer grappling only with military conflicts. Cyber attacks can cripple nations and disrupt global supply chains, making modern warfare as unpredictable and highly expensive. The economic cost of war goes far beyond direct military expenditures - it impacts global trade, investment, and the very resilience of nations. Closer to home, the recent 87 hour conflict between India and Pakistan last month came with a heavy price. According to estimates, it costs both nations roughly \$1 billion per hour - about \$20 billion per day - highlighting how quickly tensions can inflict damage upon economies. Today, India finds itself at a critical juncture. The global security landscape is more complex and contested than ever, with challenges ranging from managing tensions with global powers like the United States and China, to addressing persistent threats closer to its borders. Yet, within these challenges also lie opportunities.

With a focus on long term economic growth, a robust defence posture, and a strategic, forward looking approach to diplomacy, India has the potential to carve out a pivotal role in an increasingly turbulent world. The path ahead does not seem to be easy, but with vision and resolve, India can rise to the moment - as a beacon of resilience, stability, and peace.

Sri Patnaik is a writer

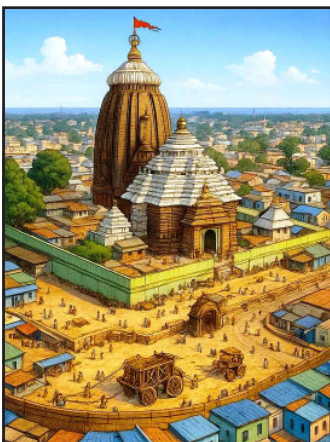
Whose Dham is it Anyway ?

Saurabh Thukral & Damini Patnaik

AheNilaSaila, prabala matta barana / moduradasa, tumane dakarana...

These lines from the poem of a renowned Odia poet of the 17th Century, Bhakta Salabega, which roughly translates as O Blue Mountain, mighty furious tusker / I am your distant servant, please don't abandon me, are not mere verse but a spiritual testament to Lord Shree Jagannath which goes beyond the class, creed, and religion.

The 12th-century temple, built primarily by King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva of the Eastern Ganga dynasty, is a major pilgrimage site and one of the Char Dham, embodying a unique synthesis of tribal, Vaishnavite, Tantric and Buddhist rituals and architecture. The religious traditions have been upheld for millennia by the temple's custodians, including the Gajapati Maharajas. While followers of the Jagannath tradition have replicated temples worldwide, the newly built temple of Shree Jagannath at Digha, West Bengal, has sparked a heated cultural and legal debate concerning the appropriation of the cultural, historical, and spiritual identity of Shree Jagannath Dham at Puri, Odisha. This controversy underscores the special status bestowed upon Shree Jagannath Dham at Puri by ancient scriptures like the Skanda and Padma Puranas, where Puri is identified as Purshottamma Kshetra and Neelanchal Dhama. Some news report suggests that Shree Jagannath Temple Association (SJTA), the shebait of Shree Jagannath Dham, Puri, Odisha, is considering trademark registration to fortify their rights on sacred terms linked to the temple, including "Shree Jagannath Dham," "Srimandir," and "Mahaprasad," for protecting the identity of the original shrine, which a few publishers have obliviously reported as "Patenting". Protecting a temple's identity, particularly its name, by trademark registration is debatable and borderline controversial, because a trademark by its nature is used in trade for commercial exploitation. It is



pertinent to understand that the activities of a temple go beyond religiosity, entering the realm of commerce. Temples often engage commercially inter alia in prasad & sweets, books & stationery, lodging & guesthouses, educational, spiritual, & cultural events, and charitable hospitals & blood banks, under their name, logo, and such other brand identifiers, falling well within the ambit of trademarks. More importantly, religious & spiritual activities, which make the crux of any temple, such as conducting rituals, offering blessings, and organising worship, are categorically classified under Class 45 of the International Classification of goods and services (Nice Classification) in accordance with Section 7 of the Trade Marks Act, 1999 ("TM Act") read with Rule 20 of the Trade Marks Rules, 2017 ("TM Rules"). However, temple and deity names, just as Shree Jagannath Dham, may attract provisions of refusal under Section 9(1)(a) of the TM Act, as generic and commonly referred religious names, including "Ram", "Shiva", and even "Jagannath", may be considered to lack distinctive character, registered of which is not allowed under said provision. But, owing to the sheer popularity of Shree Jagannath Dham, Puri, its name has attained a secondary meaning and acquired distinctiveness sufficiently to bypass the provision of refusal under this Section. Renowned temples such as Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, and Shree Siddhivinayak have registered their names and other identifiers to safeguard their identity under the Indian trademark regime.

While the SJTA may consider



trademark registration for the concerned terms, they may approach the courts in the meantime to seek relief against passing off, including an injunction. In the case of Purshottamdas Parbhudas Patel vs Bai Dahi (AIR 1940 BOMBAY 205), the Bombay High Court called for necessary precaution of preventing deception to the intending pilgrims. The scope of necessary precaution will certainly be adjusted in the globalised and digitised society, which in this judgement was limited to a stone slab indicating the year of establishment and reference of the new temple, as the conflict too was limited to one village. This judgement also highlighted the importance of pre-emptive measures without any legal injury at the instance of the initiation of the Suit. The SJTA should also seek the status of a "well-known trademark", as the reputation of Shree Jagannath Dham is evident and needs no proof in all practicality. Section 2(zg) of the TM Act explains a well-known trademark as a mark that has become known to a substantial segment of the public that consumes its goods or services so much so that the goodwill and reputation of that mark extends beyond the original goods or services for which it is adopted and used. It is critical to note that the TM Act does not require a trademark to be registered for conferring the status of "well-known" to that trademark. Further, section 11(9)(ii) of the TM Act specifically refrains the Registrar of Trademarks from imposing the registration of a trademark as a prerequisite condition for the determination of well-known

trademarks. A trademark can be determined as well-known by the Trademark Registry under the sections 11(6) to 11(9) of the TM Act read with the rule 124 of the TM Rules or by a court of competent jurisdiction under Section 11(8) of the TM Act, though the procedure set forth in the Rule 124 shall be mandatory for inclusion of the same in the list of well-known trademark (Tata Sia Airlines Limited V. Union of India, 2023:DHC:3659).

An unconventional yet critical approach to protect the interests of Shree Jagannath Dham, Puri, Odisha is to press and enforce the personality rights of Shree Jagannath who is consecrated at the Dham with his siblings, Balbhadra, and Subhadra. The Juristic personality of Hindu idols is a well-recognised legal principle which has developed and fully established under Indian jurisprudence through the judgements of High Courts and the Supreme Court of India, most recently in the Ram Janmabhoomi Case (M Siddiq (D) thr LRs v. Mahant Suresh Das & Ors, 2019 INSC 1231). Further, the Shree Jagannath Temple Act, 1955 of the State of Odisha, leaves no iota of doubt about the statutory persona of these deities. Therefore, Shree Jagannath and his siblings, Balabhadra & Subhadra, through their consecrated form and established worship, hold rights and duties in the eyes of the law, solidifying their persona beyond mere religious reverence. As far as personality rights are concerned, the popularity and recognition of Shree Jagannath are humongous. Millions of devotees globally, transcending geographical and linguistic barriers, visit and pray to his unique and distinctive aniconic form at Shree Jagannath Dham, Puri, Odisha, which is not only a landmark temple but also his residence. Further, the annual Rath Yatra of Shree Jagannath draws huge crowds to get a glimpse of his public appearance. And lastly, the influence and brand power of Shree Jagannath shape the culture, cuisine, and economy of the entire State of Odisha. It is evident that Shree Jagannath is no less than a celebrity and is entitled to personality rights to protect his identity, including his unique and distinctive attributes and

characteristics. In recent legal developments in India, popular media and sports personalities fortified and enforced their personality rights against unauthorised commercial exploitation. In fact, in a recent case of Neela Film Productions Private Limited V. Taara kmehta ka ooltah chashmah.com & Ors., the High Court of Delhi remarked upon the personality rights of fictional characters of a popular TV serial in the order dated August 14, 2024. The decision of SJTA to safeguard Jagannath Dham through legal means would reflect a legitimate effort to protect cultural and spiritual heritage from misappropriation. In times where religious identities are increasingly commodified, such steps are not merely bureaucratic but are necessary assertions of historical and cultural integrity. An attempt to rebrand a coastal town of West Bengal with a name so deeply rooted in Odisha's spiritual landscape is not just tone-deaf; it is territorially insensitive. The nomenclature and other identifiers of Shree Jagannath are deeply rooted in Hindu tradition and should remain exclusive to Puri.

The undeniable vacuum in the law to safeguard the cultural and spiritual heritage of iconic temples needs immediate attention from the lawmakers of this nation to address the cultural appropriation and devaluation of the historically rich heritage of those temples. While legal mechanisms like trademarks may seem incongruous with matters of faith, they have become essential tools in these circumstances to ensure that symbols of collective memory are not diluted for regional rebranding. Let worship of Jagannath Mahaprabhu flourish across lands and people. Let temples be built and festivals be celebrated but let the sacred identity of Jagannath Dham remain inviolably tied to Puri, as it has been over centuries. Any deviation from this continuity is not inclusion, it is erasure.

Jai Jagannath!

(Views are personal. Thukral is an Advocate and a Patent agent. He is currently pursuing an LLM from South Asian University. Patnaik is an Innovation Fellow at the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell and a Patent Agent.)

Odisha to install new weather radars



Bhubaneswar (DMC): The Odisha government has announced plans to install advanced weather radars at three locations to enhance real-time monitoring of weather conditions, informed Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari on Thursday.

This decision was made during a state-level Natural Disaster Committee meeting held on Wednesday evening, chaired by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi. The Minister stated that given Odisha's vulnerability to natural disasters such as cyclones, there is a pressing need

for modern equipment and skilled personnel to strengthen the state's disaster preparedness. "To improve the accuracy of weather forecasts, two Doppler radars will be installed in Sambalpur and Balasore. Additionally, a modern radar system will be set up in Bhubaneswar," Pujari said.

He also noted that 24-hour emergency control rooms have been made operational across all districts to monitor weather developments continuously. "These control rooms serve as our nerve centers during emergencies, enabling quick decision-making and timely dissemination of

warnings to the public," he added. Addressing the high incidence of lightning-related fatalities in the state, Pujari highlighted the government's initiative to plant palm trees in collaboration with the Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department. "Palm trees act as natural lightning conductors and help reduce casualties," he explained.

To further bolster disaster resilience, the state is developing infrastructure that can withstand floods and cyclones. Currently, Odisha has 909 multi-purpose cyclone and flood shelters across 25 of its 30 districts, providing

temporary refuge to affected communities during emergencies. Chief Minister Majhi emphasized the importance of robust disaster preparedness and coordination among departments. "Natural disasters are inevitable, especially during the monsoon season from June to October. However, their impact can be significantly reduced with strong planning and cooperation," he said.

He reiterated the government's commitment to protecting human and livestock lives and expressed gratitude to officials and stakeholders for effectively managing a cyclone and flood earlier in 2024. The Chief Minister also announced that unseasonal rains and heatwaves have been officially recognized as state-specific disasters. Farmers affected by these events are eligible for compensation under the state's relief code. He noted that one person died due to sunstroke this year.

BMC unveils WhatsApp-based tax payment system



Bhubaneswar (DMC): The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has announced the launch of a WhatsApp-based system to facilitate tax payments with an aim to simplify access to essential services for residents of the city. The announcement was made at the 32nd General Council meeting of the BMC held on Wednesday. The digital mode would enable citizens to pay holding taxes and obtain trade certificates directly through WhatsApp.

This move is likely to reduce long queues at municipal offices and ease administrative burdens. During the meeting, the civic body announced a series of citizen-centric decisions aimed at easing public service access and improving urban infrastructure. This digital platform will be available in both Odia and English, ensuring ease of use for a wide demographic. Mayor Sulochana Das said many people are unable to pay their holding taxes due to

time constraints or other factors. Since everyone has a mobile phone these days, this new initiative will enable them to pay taxes and obtain trade certificates through WhatsApp. Another important announcement made during the meeting was that the long-awaited Saheed Nagar haat is set to be allotted shortly.

The BMC stated that construction and setup work is nearly complete, and arrangements are on for providing shed infrastructure to support small traders and vendors and protect their stalls and goods. The

BMC also approved a plan to conduct a citywide dog census. This apart, it was stated that several advertising agencies have failed to clear their dues. Notices have been served to these agencies, and if payments are not made within the stipulated time, legal action will be initiated against them.

In view of monsoon rains, the council discussed desilting of major drains and installation of slabs over open drains in various parts of the city to reduce waterlogging and improve pedestrian safety.

D-brothers, 8 aides acquitted in Dipu-Om murder case

Cuttack (DMC): Dreaded 'Dhalasamanta brothers' and eight others were acquitted by a court in Odisha's Cuttack in the sensational Dipu and Om murder case of 2013. The court of the District and Sessions Judge of Cuttack, acquitted all the accused persons, including Sushant and Sushil Dhalasamanta, known as 'D-brothers', due to lack of evidence. Deepak Mallick alias Dipu and Om Prakash Swain alias Om, former friends of Sushant and Sushil Dhalasamanta, were brutally killed on November 12, 2013. As per case record, the two were murdered at a farmhouse near Ansupa lake in Athagarh, their bodies were taken to West Singhbhum district in Jharkhand and set ablaze. The remnants were buried to destroy evidence. Police arrested the gangster brothers in 2016. Despite investigations and court proceedings spanning over a decade, the prosecution failed to present evidence proving their involvement in the murder case. With the acquittal in the murder case, the two remain convicted in an illegal arms possession case. Earlier in 2023, the gangster brothers and one of their aides Arif Khan were acquitted by Cuttack district and sessions Judge Court in murder case of wholesale trader of Cuttack Malgodown, Sheikh Farooq. Farooq was shot dead at his shop in Malgodown on November 12, 2014, for extortion. It was alleged that D-brothers had hired contract killers to eliminate Farooq after the trader refused to pay extortion money of Rs 30 lakh

Vigilance nabs Kandarpur RI & Amin

Bhubaneswar (DMC): The Odisha Vigilance sleuths on Thursday apprehended Revenue Inspector (RI) Manoj Kumar Behera and Amin Bichitrnanda Satpathy of Kandarpur Revenue Circle in Odisha's Cuttack district while allegedly accepting Rs 12,000 as bribe. According to a Vigilance release, they had allegedly demanded illegal gratification from a shop owner near the revenue office at Kandarpur to furnish favourable report in a mutation case for conversion of agricultural land to homestead land and issue an ROR(Patta). The entire bribe money was recovered and seized



from their possession. Currently, simultaneous searches are underway at 3 places linked to Behera and 2 to Satpathy to ascertain whether they have accumulated assets disproportionate to their known sources of income. A case has been registered under Section 7 of PC (Amendment) Act, 2018 and further investigation is underway, it added.

DGP reviews Rath Yatra security preparations



Bhubaneswar (DMC): The Odisha Police is making thorough preparations to ensure a smooth and secure Rath Yatra celebration.

Director General of Police, Yogesh Bahadur Khurania, inspected the Integrated Command and Control Centre and instructed senior police officers to take necessary steps to guarantee the safety of devotees. The police department is working diligently to make the

Bhubaneswar (DMC): In view of the upcoming world-renowned Rath Yatra festival in Puri, the East Coast Railway (ECOR) has made unprecedented arrangements to facilitate smooth and comfortable travel for millions of devotees.

A record 365 Special Trains will be operated during the Rath Yatra 2025 period, covering almost every corner of Odisha and key parts of West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh,

sacred Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath a success, prioritizing the security and well-being of all pilgrims. With meticulous planning and robust security measures in place, the Odisha Police is committed to ensuring a seamless and enjoyable experience for all devotees.

The Odisha Police took to its X handle to share an update about the DGP's visit to the Integrated Command and Control Centre, highlighting preparations for the Rath Yatra.

Whatsapp Chatbot for smooth navigation

Bhubaneswar (DMC): The Odisha Police has introduced a WhatsApp ChatBot to assist visitors navigating through Puri. This innovative solution aims to provide real-time traffic updates, ensuring effortless navigation for devotees. ADG Traffic Dayal Gangawar intimated that WhatsApp ChatBot will use real time live location of visitors and provide route to nearest parking places.

The Odisha Police urges all visitors, including those with two-wheelers, four-wheelers, and buses, to utilize the WhatsApp ChatBot for convenient navigation and cooperate with on-field traffic personnel for smooth traffic flow. This initiative is part of the police department's broader efforts to leverage technology



for enhanced traffic management during the Rath Yatra. By using the WhatsApp ChatBot, devotees can have a hassle-free experience during the festival.

The Odisha Police's adoption of AI-powered technology, including drones and CCTV cameras, aims to ensure public safety and efficient crowd management. This initiative is part of the police department's broader efforts to leverage technology for enhanced traffic management during the Rath Yatra.

Angul, Gunupur, Rayagada, Paradeep, Bhadrak, Kendujhar, Daspalla, Khurda Road, Sambalpur, Talcher, Cuttack, Brahmapur, Dhenkanal, Barbil, Palasa & Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), Gondia (Maharashtra) and Santragachhi (Kolkata) among others.

To support the massive pilgrim movement, dedicated Pilgrim Waiting Areas and Mela Sheds have been set up in Puri, with a combined capacity of around 25,000 persons.

365 special trains



and Maharashtra. These Special Trains will connect various districts and regions including Rourkela, Biramitrapur, Bangiriposi, Junagarh Road, Badampahar, Boudh, Jagadalpur (Chhattisgarh), Baleswar,

Capital Medical College to be functional by July 31: Minister

Bhubaneswar (DMC): The upcoming PGIMER Medical College within the Capital Hospital campus is set to become operational by July 31, according to Health Minister Mukesh Mahaling's latest inspection. During a review meeting on-site, the minister assessed the ongoing infrastructure work and emphasized the government's vision to make it the largest postgraduate medical college in Odisha. In his statement, the Health Minister confirmed that 24

students will graduate in the first batch. Key facilities - including boys' and girls' hostels, the administrative block, and lecture theatres - are expected to be fully ready by the end of July. Highlighting broader plans, the minister said the State Capital Hospital will undergo re-development as part of efforts to strengthen healthcare delivery. The current academic year offers 78 PhD seats, and the first batch of PGIMER medical graduates is expected to help alleviate the

shortage of specialist doctors across various departments. Following directives from Chief Minister, the state is placing renewed focus on both UG and PG medical education, aiming to transform the Capital Medical College into the state's leading centre for medical education and training. The review was attended by PGIMER Director Dr. Sujata Mishra and senior officials from the Health Department, who jointly evaluated the progress and preparedness of the institution.

NEW FEATHER

AIIMS-BBS ranked 2nd best emerging medical college in India

Bhubaneswar (DMC): AIIMS Bhubaneswar continues its remarkable journey of excellence, having been ranked the 12th top medical college in India in the prestigious India Today-MDRA Best Medical Colleges Survey 2025. The institute also secured the 2nd position among the Top 10 Emerging Medical Colleges in the country.

The survey, conducted by leading media house India Today in association with Marketing & Development Research Associates (MDRA), evaluated institutions across five key parameters: Intake Quality and Governance, Academic Excellence, Infrastructure and Living Experience, Personality and Leadership Development, and Placement and Career Progression. Celebrating the achievement, Dr. Ashutosh Biswas, Executive Director,



AIIMS Bhubaneswar, remarked, "This recognition is a reflection of our relentless pursuit of excellence. AIIMS Bhubaneswar has grown to symbolize trust, innovation, and integrity in healthcare and medical education. Our continued rise in national rankings demonstrates our holistic approach toward grooming future medical leaders while ensuring the best patient

outcomes." From its 25th rank in 2021 to 12th in 2025, AIIMS Bhubaneswar's ascension showcases a story of dedication, teamwork, and visionary leadership. The institution stands tall among premier medical colleges, with AIIMS New Delhi securing the 1st position. A special felicitation programme was held on campus to mark the occasion,

graced by senior faculty and administrative leaders including DEAN (Examination) Dr. Soubhagya Kumar Jena, Medical Superintendent Dr. Dillip Kumar Parida, DDA Lt. Col. Abhijit Sarkar, Registrar Dr. Sudipta Kumar Singh, Dr. Gourav Chhabra, Dr. Pankaj Kumar, Dr. Debapriya Bandyopadhyay, Dr. Sipra Rout, and Dr. Mangani Mangalavalli.

Heavy rainfall warning in Odisha

Bhubaneswar (DMC): Even as lakhs of devotees gear up to throng Puri for the annual Rath Yatra on Friday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued 'Orange' and 'Yellow' warnings for heavy to very heavy rainfall and thunderstorms with lightning across several districts of Odisha over the next 24 hours. According to the IMD's midday bulletin, gusty surface winds reaching speeds of 30-40 kmph, accompanied by thunderstorms and lightning, are very likely at one or two places in multiple regions, including Puri, where the Rath Yatra will take place amid tight security and elaborate preparations. The IMD has issued a Yellow Warning for heavy rain and thunderstorms in the districts of Bargarh, Nuapada, Angul, Dhenkanal, Deogarh, Mayurbhanj, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi and Kandhamal within the next 24 hours.

Additionally, similar weather conditions are expected in the coastal and interior districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, and Gajapati during this period. For June 27, the IMD has again flagged a Yellow Warning for heavy rain and thunderstorms in parts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, and Jharsuguda.

Thunderstorm activity, along with gusty winds, is also very likely over coastal districts including Puri, raising concerns about potential

disruptions during the festivities. Looking ahead, the weather department has warned of continued heavy rainfall across Odisha from June 29 to July 3.

H&UD dept issues advisory to ULBs



Bhubaneswar With the India Meteorological Department predicting heavy to very heavy rainfall across several regions of Odisha, the Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) Department has issued a high alert to all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) across the state. Principal Secretary of H&UD, Usha Padhee, has directed ULBs to remain vigilant and take immediate precautionary measures. She has instructed officials to deploy dewatering pumps in waterlogging-prone areas and ensure round-the-clock control rooms are fully operational. Emphasizing the need for preparedness, Padhee called for the formation of rapid

response teams to handle emergency situations swiftly and minimize disruptions. "All urban local bodies must prioritize swift action and public safety," she said, adding that the department is committed to working in close coordination with ULBs to maintain smooth urban operations during adverse weather. Key instructions also include coordination with the Electricity Department, ensuring the availability of emergency manpower, and keeping all critical equipment ready for deployment. The department has assured continuous monitoring of the situation and urged citizens to stay alert and follow the advisories issued by their respective local authorities.

Paradip Port Authority Honors Stellar Athletes & Artists



Paradip: Paradip Port Authority (PPA) celebrated the remarkable achievements of its athletes and artists on Wednesday evening at Jayadev Sadan. Shri P. L. Haranadh, Chairman, PPA, presided over an inspiring felicitation ceremony, presenting cash awards to 88 outstanding individuals who excelled in the All India Major Port Competitions held in 2024-25. Chairman Haranadh lauded the awardees for their dedication, skill, and perseverance,

highlighting them as shining examples for the community. In his address, he emphasized the crucial role of active sports and cultural bodies in attracting and nurturing talent. "If the councils are strong, energetic, and vibrant," he stated, "they will definitely be able to attract many people to participate." He further articulated PPA's commitment to fostering talent beyond its direct employees, explaining, "Now, what we are trying to do is we are trying to attract any talent,

whether they may be the wards of the employees, or contractual employees, or in and around people who are interested. That's why we are supporting them. A lot of trainees have been included in each and every sport activity." It is to be noted that Gopabandhu Kreedha Sansad (GKS) has conducted Major Port Cultural & Football Meet, Sahani cup, Inter dept and corporate cricket, Paradip Half Marathon, Inter school cricket, children's athletic, Summer coaching camp during last calendar year.

The ceremony commenced with a welcome address by Dr. D.P. Sethy, Working President of Gopabandhu Kreedha Sansad. D.N.Sondhi, President, GKS, delivered the vote of thanks. The evening's proceedings were expertly compered by Ranjan Rashmi Beura, Secretary, GKS in association with Rabi Dash, Sports Consultant.

Akanksha Ladies Club Installs Tube Well at PDF Colony, Thelkoloi



Sambalpur (DMC): As part of its ongoing peripheral development activities, Akanksha Ladies Club, JSW BPSL, Sambalpur Works, has taken a significant step by installing a tube well at PDF Colony, Thelkoloi to improve access to clean drinking water and promote better hygiene. The tube

well was inaugurated on 23rd June 2025 by Mrs. Neelam Singh, President of Akanksha Ladies Club, in the presence of Mrs. Abanti Nayak, Sarpanch of Thelkoloi, along with members of the Club and local villagers. This initiative reflects the Club's continued commitment to enhancing health and hygiene in

the surrounding communities of the plant. Access to clean and safe drinking water is a fundamental necessity, and the installation of the tube well is expected to greatly benefit the residents of PDF Colony by addressing their daily water needs and enhancing overall hygiene standards.

The Akanksha Ladies Club under the leadership of Mrs. Neelam Singh has consistently worked towards uplifting the health infrastructure in the peripheral areas of the plant. Through various projects such as Mass Marriage, sanitation drives, health camps, and water accessibility programs, the Club continues to demonstrate its dedication to sustainable community development.

Bank of Maharashtra Opens its 58th Branch of Bhubaneswar Zone, Odisha

Bhubaneswar, (DMC): Bank of Maharashtra, one of premiere public sector bank has opened a new branch at Chatrapur, Ganjam. Now Bank of Maharashtra has 5 branches in Ganjam District & 58 branches in the state of Odisha. The bank also announced its plans to further strengthen its presence and customer reach in Bhubaneswar Zone. The new branch was inaugurated by Sri Dibya Jyoti Parida, Collector and Dist. Magistrate (Ganjam) in presence of Dr. Shibashish Baral Sub Collector, Chatrapur, Sri Sambit Sangramjeet Sahoo, BDO, Chatrapur, Zonal Manager Sri Dilip Kumar Raulo and Branch Manager Sri Jibitesh Parida. Commenting on the recent branch expansion in Bhubaneswar, Sri Dilip Kumar Raulo, Zonal Manager, Bank of Maharashtra Bhubaneswar Zone has said "we are happy to inaugurate one more branch in Ganjam District, a rapidly growing and strategically important in the State of Odisha. This would be a step ahead to support our commitment to provide banking services to customers through a fast-expanding network of branches and other channels. This will facilitate smooth and timely delivery of customer service, improve credit delivery and reduced turnaround time for Retail, Agri and MSME sectors in the area will further enhance customer satisfaction.

Bank of Baroda inaugurates 62 nd Branch in Bhubaneswar Region

Bhubaneswar (DMC): Bank of Baroda's Bhubaneswar region marked a historic milestone with the inauguration of its 62nd branch at Gania. The ceremony was graced by esteemed General Manager & Zonal Head of Bhubaneswar Zone, Smt. Swapna Bandopadhyaya, who performed the ribbon-cutting.

The event was attended by key dignitaries including Shri VMNS Saibabu, Deputy General Manager & CA, Bhubaneswar Zone, Shri Satya Ranjan Mahapatra, Deputy General & Regional Head, Bhubaneswar Region and Shri Rajeev Kumar Sinha, Asst. General Manager &



Deputy Regional Head. The gathering also included Bank Manager Shri Raj Rai Tudu, other bank executives, staff members and large number of people from locality. The opening of this new branch aims to increase the bank's footprints as well as to enhance its customer base in the state of Odisha.

District Level Task Force Committee Meeting for Dengue, Malaria Control & Prevention Held

Khordha, (DMC): A meeting on dengue & malaria disease control & prevention was held under the chairmanship of Collector Chanchala Rana at the conference hall of the collectorate. The meeting was attended by Chief District Medical & Public Health Officer Dr. Sanjaya Chandra Ray, Zilla Parishad Additional Chief Development & Executive Officer, Ms. Kasturi Bala Jena.

Collector, Mr. Rana emphasized on creating widespread public awareness through mosquito breeding, cleaning of drains, mosquito fumigation. Since the months of July, August & September are mosquito-prone, every officer was directed to continue cleaning



work in the offices & areas under their jurisdiction to observe Dry Day on every Friday. The panchayats in which dengue & malaria samples have been found to be more the report of the panchayats will be submitted to the Collector & the Forest & Agriculture Department, all the PHC & CHC will prepare a plan & submit it to the CDM & PHO,

Khordha. Zilla Parishad in rural areas & the Municipality & NAC in urban areas will take special care in schools, market, temples etc. to control dengue & malaria & work for zero casualty (zero deaths). In rural areas, ASHA workers will go door to door to create awareness & make people aware of the symptoms of malaria & dengue diseases & will also



International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking-2025

Awareness Programs Held to Curb Ganja Cultivation in Rayagada District



Rayagada, (DMC): In a bid to curb the menace of ganja cultivation, the Chandrapur, Padmapur, and Gudari Police Stations in Rayagada district recently conducted awareness programs in three villages. The programs were held, Village Bijapur under Chandrapur Police Station. Liktipadar GP premises under Padmapur Police Station Village Bandili under Gudari Police Station. The awareness meetings were attended by line departments and Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) members, who were sensitized about the importance of zero cultivation of ganja in the area.

The meetings aimed to promote community-led initiatives to prevent ganja cultivation and encourage residents to take an active role in keeping their areas ganja-free. The campaign, dubbed "Aim Zero," seeks to create a collective effort to eradicate ganja cultivation in the district. By working together, the authorities and local communities can create a safer and healthier environment for everyone.

Accountant in Vigilance trap

Jagatsinghpur, (DMC): Accountant of Kujang Block Education Office Surya kanta Swain trapped by Vigilance while taking bribe of ₹5000 from a Teacher for House Building Loan. Sources said that Surya Kanta Sahoo joined as Data entry Operator at Kujang BEO Office and due to shortage of staff he is working as accountant. In order to sanction a House Building Loan he demanded ₹5000 to a Teacher. To-day while receiving the bribe amount he was trapped by Vigilance. Now vigilance search continuing at his home at Alasudha under Jagatsinghpur block and at Kujang BEO Office. Surya Kanta Swain is the son of a retired Primery School Head Master named Sarat Swain.

Awareness Program on Drug Abuse & Illicit Trafficking Organised in Khariar Road



Nuapada/Khariar Road, (DMC): As per the plan of action and calendar of activities, the District Legal Services Authority Nuapada with the collaboration of NAC Khariar Road organized an awareness program on "International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking" at KGN Sarai Khariar Road in Nuapada District on Thursday.

An awareness rally was also taken out from KGN Sarai and move in the wards. The program was attended by Secretary District Legal Services Authority Nabanita Dash, Executive Officer Kamalasa Rathia, IIC Jonk Police Station Pradeep Kumar Dharua, Legal Aid Advocate Anup Sharma, Advocate Trilok Soni, Neha Daga, Excise officials Nuapada, PLVs of DLSA

BJP Bargarh district celebrated Black Wednesday



Bargarh (DMC): The BJP Bargarh district convened at the district office to commemorate Black Wednesday under the guidance of District President Dr. Arupnand Sahu. This day serves as a solemn reminder of the anniversary of former Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency across India on June 25, 1975. For many, this period represents a pivotal juncture that tested the tenets of our Constitution and the democratic ethos of our nation. Consequently, the BJP marks this occasion as Black

Wednesday. The nationwide event was honoured by the presence of respected senior leaders, including Ravi Narayan Dash, Ashok Panda, Kush Kumar, Gunaru Padhan, Subrata Hota, and Avnikant Panda. Together, they expressed a shared concern

the ill effects associated with drug abuse. Highlighted the issue of drug abuse. PLV Krishna Kumar Dewangan also briefed the disadvantages of use of drugs in society in general and families in particular.

regarding the implications of the emergency era. Special acknowledgement was extended to Prafulla Suna and the wife of Brajkishore Suna, whose extraordinary courage in opposing the injustices of that time and enduring imprisonment for their convictions is an inspiring testament to our collective commitment to democratic values. The gathering concluded with a thoughtful vote of thanks from senior leader Akur Malik, reinforcing our dedication to the principles of justice and freedom that are foundational to our society.

From Page- 1

Thousands witness...

witnessed at the 12th century shrine since morning as Lord Balabhadra, Lord Jagannath and Devi Subhadra reappeared to give darshan in youthful form after remaining in quarantine for a fortnight in AnasaraGhara (Sick Chamber). NabajoubanBesha is held to celebrate the rejuvenation of Lord Jagannath's body. Daitas wash the body of the Lord and repaint it except for the eyes.

In this ceremony, the eyes of the idols are painted by their respective priests and puja restarts at the shrine. As per mythology, the deities have recuperated after falling sick due to taking excessive baths during 'SnanaPurnima' on June 11. On this day, which is also called NetraUtshab, ParamanikDarshan of the deities was held between 8 am and 9 am while general public darshan was allowed from 9 am to 10.30 am after which the doors of the 12th-century shrine were shut for rituals. While 3,000 tickets have been allocated for special darshan, arrangements have been made for ParamanikDarshan ticket holders to enter the Shree Jagannath Temple through DakshinaSwara (South Gate), sources said.

Odisha inks pacts...

to create 8,450 direct and indirect jobs. The captive jetty at Jatadhari, located under Erasama tehsil in Jagatsinghpur, will be developed by JSW Utkal Steel Limited. The initial investment of Rs 2,100 crore is expected to generate around 3,450 employment opportunities.

Similarly, Gopalpur Ports Limited (Adani Ports) will expand and modernise Gopalpur Port, increasing its cargo handling capacity to 50 MMT. The development will create around 5,000 jobs. The Chief Minister said the state government is prioritising the development of port infrastructure to boost sea trade. "Odisha will work in partnership with private companies to enhance its maritime economy," he said. The Chief Minister also announced that the government is planning to establish two new ports at Inchudi and Bahuda. Additionally, development plans for Subarnarekha and Astaranga ports are underway.

Majhi expressed confidence that globally reputed companies like Adani Ports and JSW Steel will usher in a new era of port-led growth in Odisha. Odisha food

Adani Group to serve 4 million meals

Bhubaneswar, (DMC): Adani Group will be offering seva during Rath Yatra from June 26 to July 8. A company release said nearly 4 million meals and drinks will be distributed free of cost during the festival, when lakhs of pilgrims from across the country and abroad throng Puri to participate in chariot pulling ritual of the sibling deities of Shree Jagannath Temple as they embark on their nine -day annual sojourn. "For the Adani Group, corporate social responsibility has always extended beyond infrastructure, education and healthcare. Increasingly, it includes direct and active participation in India's spiritual and cultural life - not as sponsor, but as sevak. In keeping with Chairman Gautam Adani's deeply held belief that "Seva Hi Sadhana Hai" (Service is Worship), the Adani Group is undertaking a comprehensive seva effort to support both pilgrims and frontline officials during the Rath Yatra from June 26 to July 8," it said.

Govt hikes cessation benefit for ad-hoc employees

Bhubaneswar, (DMC): Ahead of Rath Yatra, the Odisha government on Thursday announced a hike in the cessation benefit for its employees appointed on ad hoc basis. Previously, these employees were entitled to a one-time payment of Rs 1.5 lakh upon cessation of service. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has approved a proposal to increase this amount to Rs 2.5 lakh, a CMO release said. It further stated that they will receive a one-time cessation benefit of Rs 2.5 lakh upon termination of service. The ad-hoc employees will be entitled to this benefit if they are regularised but have not completed five years of service. Those who have served more than five years in a regular position will receive a minimum gratuity of Rs 2.5 lakh upon retirement.

Meeting to organize an orderly & successful Ratha Yatra



Puri, (DMC): Important meetings were held throughout the day today regarding the Ratha Yatra of The Lord. A meeting was held at Niladri Bhakta Niwas in the afternoon regarding the smooth pulling of chariots. The meeting was chaired by the Chief Administrator. The meeting was attended by the District Collector, Superintendent of Police along with district and Temple officials, staff, badagrahis, rath nirman sevaks as well as other departments. The Chief Administrator of the Temple held a detailed discussion with the director team and other stakeholders and sought everyone's cooperation.

Similarly, in the afternoon, important discussions were held with the Badagrahis and senior servitors of The Temple at the Sri Mandir office. There was a detailed discussion on all aspects of rath yatra related to rath yatra, from policy, pahandi, rathana to the convenience of the devotees. In particular, they agreed to cooperate for disciplined pahandi, especially in coordination. The chief administrator requested everyone to cooperate in carrying out the work by becoming a fast in the service of the Lord.

Man lost life in Wild bear attack

Keonjhar, (DMC): A 55-year-old man died in a bear attack on a reserved forest adjoining Kolipasi village under Ghatgaon police station in Keonjhar district has created an atmosphere of fear in the area. The deceased has been identified as Nunu Nayak and native of Kolipasi village. After receiving information Ghatgaon range staff and police reached the spot and started an investigation. Police recovered the dead body and sent a Ghatagaon medical for autopsy. Rupees Ten lakh will be given as compensation. Ten thousand rupees are being given for the initial stage to perform last rite" said local forest guard Pujarini Bala.

Sources said that today at around 6 am, Nunu had gone to the nearby Ghatgaon reserved forest to collect leaves and branches like other days. At this time, three wild bears suddenly came out of the forest and attacked him unexpectedly, villagers said. The bear bit him and made him bleed. Hearing his screams, some other people who had gone to the forest ran near him. The bear bit his face and body and made him bleed. Seeing the old man's death, the people informed the forest department officials. Later, on receiving information, the Ghatgaon forest department and police department officials reached the spot and recovered the dead body and started an investigation. Forest officials said that since elephants and wild animals are moving in the forest, they have been warning people not to go to the forest, especially in the morning and evening, through miking. Despite that many going in to forest and facing such type of consequences, sources said.

'It wonderful ride': Shubhanshu Shukla in first message from space

BENGALURU, (HS) : It was a proud moment not just for Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla (call sign Shooks) but for the entire country as the first Indian piloted the Dragon spacecraft and docked ahead of the planned schedule into the International Space Station as a part of the Axiom-4 mission.

Shortly after the docking, Shukla thanked Peggy Whitson, former NASA astronaut and director of the human spaceflight mission. "Thank you Peggy. I am number [Astronaut Number] 634, that's a privilege (laughs). But, to be fair, it is a privilege to be among the few who have got a chance to see the earth from a vantage point that I have been able to see now," he said. Describing his experience on the spacecraft, Shukla did not hide his excitement when he said, "It has been a wonderful ride. It has been great. I was looking forward to come to space. It is something to look forward to." He went on to say that the crew at the International Space station made him feel at home. "But the minute I entered the International Space Station... this crew (points at the Expedition-73 crew already aboard the ISS) made me feel so welcome. You literally opened the doors to your house for us. It was fantastic. I feel even better," he said. "Whatever expectations I had before coming here were surpassed by the view, of course - that's a big part of it - but you guys as well. So, thank you so much," he added. He also expressed confidence that the



coming days at the space station would be even more "amazing."

"This was fantastic. This was wonderful and I am very confident that the next 14 days are going to be amazing doing - as you said - advancing science and research and working together. Thank you so much," the indian astronaut said. The docking mission was commanded by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) crew and they were accompanied by Roscosmos-Russian Space Agency team from the ISS. The commercial space mission (Axiom-4) and the soft docking happened into the ISS at 4.01pm. The docking process was completed at 4.15 pm with the hard module. "Grace is Happy to on Harmony," Whitson said after the docking was completed. The ISS was hovering over the North Atlantic at the time of the docking. Communication and coordination between the Mission Control Huston ground station, ISS and

Dragon Spacecraft were constantly maintained to ensure that there was an unhindered docking. The view points from the ISS was constantly maintained to ensure the docking process happens smoothly. The ISS team guiding Shukla and Peggy said directed Dragon, "Manual and repulsive retreat and breakout are not permitted."

It reached 20 minutes away from the ISS at 3.57 pm IST. Zenith module of the ISS- Harmony Module was seen from Dragon at 3.58 pm IST, where the Dragon docked. A few minutes after the docking a trouble shooter alert was sounded on the communication systems. The astronauts sought for at least five minutes before starting the hatch open procedures to continue their entry into the ISS to undertake the designed experiments and a 14-day stay at the ISS. While this is Peggy's second visit to the ISS, it is the first for Shukla and mission specialist astronauts- Stawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski from Poland and Tibor Kapu from Hungary.

Shubhanshu Shukla Makes History, Becomes First Indian To Enter ISS

New Delhi, (HS) : Air Force pilot Shubhanshu Shukla wrote a historic new chapter in the country's space exploration story Thursday after becoming the first Indian to float into the International Space Station.

Live visuals from the ISS showed Shukla, and the other three astronauts on the Crew Dragon capsule, being helped through the vestibule connecting the spacecraft and the ISS. Each had big grins on their face and were welcomed with bear hugs by the seven astronauts already on the ISS.

The four then lined up for a photo op drinking liquids from a foil packet. The capsule that carried the astronauts - part of Axiom-4, a private mission - docked this evening, completing a 28-hour flight from Florida's Kennedy Space Centre to a point 424km over the northern Atlantic Ocean. Docking is the procedure by which a spacecraft connects to the space station. But before that docking can even begin the spacecraft must first rendezvous with the space station, meaning they must both be in the same orbital plane and be positioned close to each other. What follows is a series of complicated manoeuvres, including precise positioning by matching positional (location) and velocity vectors (speed and direction) to confirm a safe and secure physical connection between the spacecraft and space station to allow exchange of astronauts and cargo. And then, at 4.01 pm (India time), Mission Control confirmed a 'soft capture', i.e., a connection allowing the spacecraft, named Grace after it reached orbit, and the station some room to move to absorb kinetic energy generated during initial contact. Minutes later a 'hard capture', i.e., a more robust connection, was confirmed and, at 4.15 pm (India time) NASA said the docking sequence had been completed. "We are honored to be here... thank you," Mission Commander Peggy Whitson told the International Space Station in a live stream of the docking.

Mr Shukla and the other three astronauts in the Dragon capsule - the US' Peggy Whitson, Slawoz Wisniewski of Poland and Hungarian Tibor Kapu - will not immediately join the other seven on the ISS. It will take some time for the connection to the station to stabilise and for the system to ensure there is no break in the seal or any issue with the link that could compromise astronauts' safety. The hatch separating the ISS and the Dragon capsule will open at 6.10 pm (India time). Axiom-4's journey began at 12.01 pm Wednesday when SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket blasted off from Launch Complex 39A, the same site, in fact, that launched Neil Armstrong and the Apollo 11 mission. The launch had been delayed six times and hovered on the edge of a seventh after a software glitch prevented upload of weather data. However, that was resolved with minutes to go and, a little past 12.01 pm (India time), the Falcon 9 rocket's powerful Merlin engines roared into life. Shukla and his fellow astronauts have a busy 14 days ahead of them.

In Air India Crash Probe Breakthrough, Data Downloaded From 'Black Boxes'



New Delhi, (HS) : Information from the black boxes recovered from the June 12 Air India plane crash has been successfully downloaded and is being analysed, the government said Thursday afternoon. The black boxes - a flight data recorder, or FDR, and a cockpit voice recorder, or CVR - were damaged in the crash and there were questions over the recovery of usable data. Last week sources told

the government may send the FDR and CVR to the United States for forensic extraction of data. However, in a big breakthrough, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau has succeeded in safely extracting the Crash Protection Module, or CPM, and the memory module, and downloaded the data.

The government said both boxes - one found on the rooftop of the hostel into which the plane crashed and the other from the debris - were securely transported to the AAIB lab in Delhi on Tuesday. The first black box reached the lab at 2pm. The second at 5.15pm. The data extraction began the same day and was completed by Wednesday. CVR data is expected to shed light on cockpit conversations, crew responses, and ambient sounds, while the FDR contains parameters like altitude, airspeed, flight control inputs, and engine performance.

"Analysis of CVR and FDR data underway. These efforts aim to reconstruct sequence of events leading to the accident and identify contributing factors to enhance aviation safety," the government said. This means we are now a (giant) step closer to understanding why AI 171, Air India's Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, crashed 36 seconds after take-off, killing 241 people on the plane and 34 on the ground.

Terrorist Killed in Joint Operation by Army

Jammu, (HS) : The Indian Army and the Jammu and Kashmir Police, in a joint operation, killed a terrorist in an encounter in Basantgarh in the Udhampur district of the Union Territory. Codenamed Operation Bihali, the White Knight Corps of the Army said the terrorist has been "neutralized" but the operation is still underway. The Army said the operation started after specific intelligence was received by the security forces, and it was launched earlier today. The security in Jammu and Kashmir has been increased ahead of the Amarnath yatra, and 180 companies of the Central police forces have been deployed. The 38-day-long yatra to 3,880-meter-high holy cave shrine of Amarnath in south Kashmir Himalayas is scheduled to start from the twin routes -- the traditional 48-km Pahalgam route in the Anantnag district and the 14-km shorter but steeper Baltal route in the Ganderbal district -- on July 3.

On May 22, a soldier was killed in action during an encounter with terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar. Four terrorists were trapped in the area, and the encounter happened a week after six terrorists were eliminated in an operation in south Kashmir. Anti-terror operations have been ramped up in the region after the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, in which 26 people were killed. Some of the terrorists involved in the attack were

Pakistani, and India responded by launching Operation Sindoor, attacking nine terror bases in the country, including the headquarters of the Lashkar-e-Taiba in Muridke and the Jaish-e-Mohammed in Bahawalpur. Pakistan attempted, and largely failed, to target military and civilian installations in India using drones and missiles on three successive days.

New Delhi, (HS) : Congress Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi has expressed deep sadness over the loss of lives and property due to heavy rainfall in several districts of Himachal Pradesh disaster. In a post on Facebook on Thursday, Gandhi mentioned that many people are still missing, and he extended his condolences to the affected families. The Congress leader also appealed to party workers to provide all possible assistance in the relief and rescue efforts. "The news of loss of lives and property due to heavy rainfall in several districts of Himachal Pradesh is extremely saddening. Many people are still missing. I express my deep condolences to the affected families and hope for the safe return of those who are missing. The administration and relief teams are working with full dedication. I appeal to Congress workers to extend all possible help in the relief and rescue efforts. We

New Delhi, (HS) : India has called for a merit-based approach to visa applications for its citizens, as the United States rolls out stricter screening measures, particularly for students and exchange visitors. "We remain engaged with the US side on all mobility issues and consular issues to ensure that the legitimate interests of Indian nationals are safeguarded," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. Responding to queries on recent US visa guidelines, Jaiswal said that immigration and visa matters fall under the sovereign domain of individual countries.

However, he added, "It is our belief that all visa applications of Indian nationals should be treated on the basis of merit." The US Embassy in India recently announced new security protocols for applicants under the F, M, and J non-immigrant visa categories. Applicants are now required to disclose all social media usernames used over the past five years in their DS-160 application form. Failing to do so, the Embassy warned, could result in immediate visa denial and potential ineligibility for future applications.

DRI Seizes 1,115 Tonnes Of Pakistani Goods Smuggled Into India

New Delhi, (HS) : The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has seized 39 containers carrying 1,115 metric tonnes of Pakistani-origin goods, valued at nearly Rs 9 crore, that were being illegally imported into India by sea via Dubai, officials said on Thursday. In two separate cases, these consignments were seized at Nhava Sheva port. The consignments were falsely declared as UAE-origin, masking their Pakistani



"Omitting social media information could lead to visa denial and ineligibility for future visas," the US Embassy had stated in a post on X. It also advised students and exchange visitors to set their social media profiles to "public" to assist in identity verification and admissibility checks. These new rules come amid a broader tightening of the US visa regime, which has already impacted many Indian students. Reports have emerged of SEVIS (Student and

Exchange Visitor Information System) record glitches, heightened scrutiny of student records, including online activity, and stricter checks at ports of entry. Responding to a query on US travel advisories, the spokesperson said countries update advisories based on internal assessments. The U.S. revised its advisory for India on June 16 but confirmed no change in the risk level, which remains at Level 2-unchanged for several years. "We have been informed

RG Kar rape-murder: victim's parents' plea to visit crime spot

KOLKATA, (HS) : The Calcutta High Court on Thursday said that the trial court (ACJM Sealdah) would take a call on a plea by the parents of the victim woman doctor raped and murdered inside the RG Kar Hospital premises while on duty, seeking permission to visit the crime spot and the areas around it. The parents, through their counsel Phiroze Edulji, had first on Tuesday submitted to the bench of Justice Tirthankar Ghosh of the Calcutta High Court that they wanted to visit the area, but didn't intend to visit the seminar hall, where their daughter's body was found on August 9, 2024.

In his argument, Edulji had said that since the central forces were in charge of guarding the RG Kar Hospital, they were seeking permission from the High Court to visit the crime spot and the areas around it. Justice Ghosh on Thursday asked the victim's parents to approach ACJM Sealdah court. The High Court also ordered that the lower court should take a decision on the matter within 48 hours. The state, however, raised questions about the legitimacy of the case. Senior Advocate Kalyan Banerjee, representing the West Bengal government, argued that the victim's family had earlier requested the court for a more detailed investigation. It has not been disposed of yet. He also claimed that this new application was an attempt to attract media attention.

Justice Ghosh said that if the state wanted, it could join the case pending in the lower court as a party and give its statement. However, the investigating agency CBI said that they had no objection if the victim's family wanted to visit the crime spot and the areas around it.

Himachal Pradesh Disaster: Rahul expresses condolences to affected families



must face this disaster together," Gandhi said.

A National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team was deployed in Kullu on Thursday following a cloudburst in the Sainj Valley. NDRF Inspector Deepak Bisht stated that three people had been missing due to the cloudburst and that the teams have been carrying out rescue operations. "Our NDRF team has arrived

here. We received information that three people are missing, and now we are assisting. Whatever happens in the area afterwards, we will find out based on the information we get," Bisht told. Anmol, a local resident, stated that four houses had been washed away due to the cloudburst, adding that water pressure in Kullu had increased significantly and the one megawatt National Hydroelectric Power project had also shut down. "There is a waterfall above the last house. Behind it, a cloud burst happened. Soon, three men and four houses were washed away along with the cloud. The water pressure then increased significantly. This one-megawatt project is now completely shut down and submerged. This NHPC project is fully shut down and closed," Anmol told. A cloudburst struck near Jeeva Nalla in the Sainj sub-tehsil of Kullu district in Himachal Pradesh on Wednesday afternoon, triggering sudden

flooding in the region and sweeping away four houses. According to a situation report issued by the HP State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC), Shimla, at 5:10 PM on Wednesday, two to three people were feared missing after being swept into the Jeeva Nallah.

The incident occurred at approximately 1:41 PM on June 25, downstream of Jiwa Trench Weir in Majhan Nallah, located in the Sainj Valley. The District Emergency Operation Centre (DEOC), Kullu, confirmed the event and reported a potential sharp rise in the water level of the Sainj River due to increased inflow caused by the cloudburst. According to a press release by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), isolated heavy rainfall is likely over Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Uttar Pradesh from June 25 to July 1.

official statement. Following the Pahalgam terror attacks, the Indian government had imposed a comprehensive ban, effective from May 2, 2025, on the direct or indirect import or transit of goods originating in or exported from Pakistan. However, despite the stringent ban on Pakistan imports into India, some importers attempt to bypass the government policy by misdeclaring the origin of goods and by manipulating the related shipping documents. Investigations revealed that the goods were initially transported from Pakistan to Dubai on one set of containers and vessels, and subsequently transferred to another set of containers and vessels bound for India. Further examination of the goods and analysis of documents gathered during investigations conducted so far uncovered cargo movement trails from Karachi port in Pakistan, and transshipments at Jabel Ali port in Dubai - en route to Indian ports.

Money transfers with Pakistani entities were also traced, raising serious concerns about illicit financial flows. The entire modus operandi was orchestrated through a complex web of transactions involving Pakistani and UAE nationals, aimed at obscuring the true origin of the goods, namely Pakistan. In the context of "Operation Sindoor" and the prevailing heightened security environment, the DRI intensified its vigil, through augmented intelligence gathering and data analytics, for targeting of consignments emanating from Pakistan.

Six Killed in China Floods



Guiyang, (H.S): Six people have died due to severe flooding in Rongjiang County, southwest China's Guizhou Province, according to local flood control authorities. Since Tuesday, the county has been hit by a severe flood not seen in 50 years, with water levels in several rivers rising rapidly.

The peak flow reached 11,360 cubic metres per second. The flood has inundated many low-lying areas and caused significant damage to infrastructure in several townships, resulting in blocked roads, disrupted

communications, and stranded residents. Currently, the water level in the county seat has fallen below the warning level. Efforts are focused on dredging, draining water, preventing epidemics, disinfecting affected areas, initiating post-disaster recovery, and searching for trapped individuals, Xinhua news agency reported.

Earlier on June 25, China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) allocated 100 million yuan (about \$13.95 million) to assist disaster relief efforts in southwest China's Guizhou Province. Guizhou has

been affected by a severe flooding disaster, and the national commission for disaster prevention, reduction and relief launched a Level-IV emergency response on Tuesday. The fund will be used to restore vital infrastructure and public services in Guizhou, such as roads, flood control systems, hospitals and schools, the NDRC said. An additional 100 million yuan has been earmarked for the provinces of Guangdong and Hunan, located in south and central China, respectively, to restore normal production and living order as soon as possible, the NDRC added.

China has a four-tier emergency response system for flood control, with Level I being the most severe. Continuous heavy rainfall and upstream inflows have triggered severe flooding in two counties of Guizhou Province in southwest China, prompting mass evacuations. As of now, more than 48,900 residents were temporarily evacuated in Rongjiang County and 32,000 in Congjiang County.

CIA Says Iran's Nuclear Program 'Severely Damaged' By US Strikes

Washington, (H.S): CIA Director John Ratcliffe has asserted that the agency had gathered "a body of credible evidence" suggesting that Iran's nuclear infrastructure suffered extensive damage in recent US airstrikes, reinforcing the White House's narrative that Tehran's atomic ambitions have been drastically curtailed. Ratcliffe, without divulging specifics, issued a statement on Wednesday (local time), stating that the intelligence came from "a historically reliable source/method" and indicated that "several key Iranian nuclear facilities were destroyed and would have to be rebuilt over the course of years."

While Ratcliffe did not clarify whether his remarks represented a formal agency assessment or his personal interpretation of the data, the statement underscored the intelligence community's ongoing review of the impact of Saturday's coordinated US strikes on Iran's Natanz, Fordow, and Esfahan sites. The CIA's remarks came as a counterpoint to an



earlier preliminary analysis by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), which suggested that the airstrikes had not completely destroyed crucial components of Iran's nuclear program. According to the DIA, Iran's nuclear capabilities may have been delayed by only a few months, raising questions about the long-term effectiveness of the military operation.

The White House dismissed that view, calling it "wrong" and affirming that US President Donald Trump's assertion - that the strikes had "obliterated" Iran's ability to build a nuclear weapon - remained accurate. Adding further weight to the administration's claims, Director

of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard posted on X that "new intelligence confirms what the US President has stated numerous times: Iran's nuclear facilities have been destroyed." Gabbard claimed that if Iran attempted to rebuild its program, it would have to reconstruct all three targeted facilities from scratch - a process she suggested would take years.

In the midst of the conflicting assessments, President Trump announced that Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth and senior Pentagon officials would address the media at 8:00 a.m. (local time) Thursday to brief the public on the operation's outcome and highlight the contributions of US pilots involved in the high-risk

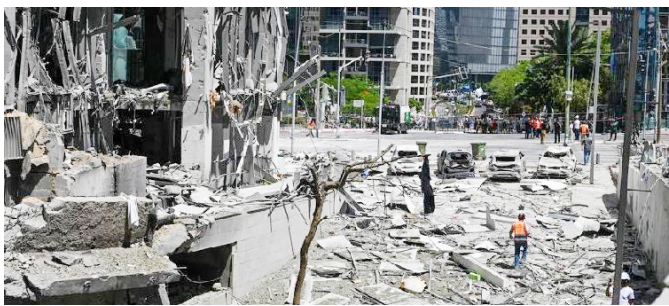
mission. Posting on Truth Social, Trump accused media outlets of undermining the mission's success, stating, "Secretary of Defense (War!) Pete Hegseth, together with Military Representatives, will be holding a Major News Conference tomorrow morning at 8 a.m. EST at The Pentagon, in order to fight for the dignity of our Great American Pilots. These patriots were very upset!"

After 36 hours of dangerously flying through enemy territory, they landed, they knew the success was legendary, and then, two days later, they started reading Fake News by CNN and The Failing New York Times." "They felt terribly! Fortunately for them and, as usual, solely for the purpose of demeaning President Donald J. Trump, the Fake News (Times and CNN) lied and totally misrepresented the Facts, none of which they had (because it was too soon, there were no Facts out there yet!). The News Conference will prove both interesting and irrefutable Enjoy!"

Israel's Mossad Chief; Operations in Iran To Continue

Tel Aviv, (H.S): David Barnea, chief of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency, said the organisation will continue its activities in Iran, according to a video released by Mossad. The video shows Barnea addressing operatives at the agency's operational headquarters on Tuesday, just hours after a ceasefire between Israel and Iran took effect.

We will continue to keep a close eye on all of Iran's projects that we already know in the most in-depth way. We will be there as we have been there until now," he said on Wednesday. He noted that with "accurate intelligence, advanced technologies, and unimaginable operational capabilities, we helped the Air Force disrupt the Iranian nuclear program, establish air superiority over Iran, and reduce the missile threat, thereby ensuring the security of the citizens of Israel." In the video, Barnea also



thanked the US Central Intelligence Agency "for the joint activity." Earlier on Wednesday, the Israel Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC) said that US airstrikes on Iran's Fordow nuclear facility destroyed key infrastructure, rendering the uranium enrichment plant inoperable. In a statement issued by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Office, the IAEC said Sunday's US strikes, coupled with Israeli attacks on other components of Iran's nuclear program, have set back Iran's ability to develop nuclear

weapons by many years. "The achievement can continue indefinitely if Iran does not get access to nuclear material," the statement read. At a cabinet meeting earlier on Wednesday, Netanyahu declared victory in the war against Iran, claiming Israel had removed an immediate existential threat, reports Xinhua news agency. Israel has defended its strikes as necessary to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, an accusation Iran denies. Also on Wednesday, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei

confirmed the attacks had caused substantial damage. "Our nuclear installations have been badly damaged, that's for sure," he said during an interview with Al Jazeera. However, US media, citing a classified intelligence assessment, reported that the damage to Iran's nuclear infrastructure may delay its program by only several months, a finding that contrasts with US President Donald Trump's claim that the facilities were "completely and fully obliterated."

On June 13, Israel launched major airstrikes on different areas in Iran, including nuclear and military sites, killing several senior commanders, nuclear scientists and many civilians. Iran responded by launching several waves of missile and drone attacks on Israel, inflicting casualties and heavy damage. The ceasefire between the two countries was declared on Tuesday.

Mexico City: At least 12 people were killed and nearly 20 others wounded in a brutal overnight attack in the Mexican city of Irapuato, located in the state of Guanajuato, after gunmen opened fire during a festive street celebration honouring St. John the Baptist, local authorities have confirmed. The tragedy unfolded on Wednesday (local time) as residents gathered to dance and drink in a community housing complex.

A video circulating on social media captured moments of joy - a live band playing, people dancing - before panic erupted as gunshots rang out, sending the crowd fleeing in terror. Rodolfo Gomez Cervantes, a local official from Irapuato, addressed a press conference on Wednesday, confirming that the death toll had risen to 12 and that about 20 others were receiving treatment for injuries sustained in the attack. Mexican President



Claudia Sheinbaum condemned the violence and called for swift justice. "It is very unfortunate what happened. An investigation is underway," she said in a statement, as federal and state security forces scrambled to piece together what transpired and identify those responsible. Guanajuato,

a state situated northwest of Mexico City, has become one of Mexico's most violent regions in recent years. Criminal groups have been waging deadly turf wars for control over drug routes, extortion networks, and other illicit enterprises. The state recorded 1,435 homicides in the first five

months of 2025 - more than double the number seen in any other Mexican state, according to local media reports. This latest massacre comes just a day after five people were killed in separate violent incidents across Guanajuato, according to the state attorney general's office.

It also follows a similar attack last month, when gunmen stormed a Catholic Church event in the town of San Bartolo de Berrios, killing seven attendees. Authorities have yet to name suspects or confirm which criminal organisation may be behind the recent violence in Irapuato.

Declare Bishnoi gang as terrorist organisation: Canadian Mayor

New Delhi: Surrey Mayor Brenda Locke has urged the Canadian Federal government to declare the Lawrence Bishnoi gang - and any other groups involved in extortion and violence targeting Canadians of South Asian descent - as terrorist organisations under Canadian law.

According to the Canadian media, Mayor Brenda in her statement said that tagging the Bishnoi gang as a terrorist group would empower the Canadian law enforcement agencies "to fight organised crime networks and protect residents and businesses." Referring to the string of killings and extortions in the last few months allegedly orchestrated by the Bishnoi gang

and his partners in crime, Locke emphasised that these violent acts, extortions, and the ongoing shootings linked to these criminal organisations are not just criminal but amount to "economic terrorism" also.

Notably, this is not for the first time that Canadian authorities are demanding declaring the Lawrence Bishnoi gang as a terrorist organisation. A few days ago, Mayor of Brampton Patrick Brown and Deputy Mayor Harkirat Singh, along with many Councillors wrote a letter to Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and Minister of Public Safety in this regard. Bishnoi, a gangster from Punjab, is currently in Ahmedabad's Sabarmati Central Jail. Notorious for his criminal

gangs and for ordering the killings of his rivals from inside this high-profile jail, Bishnoi has been linked to several crimes including the allegations from the Canadian government of fuelling gang-wars, extortions and other crimes in Canada.

It is worthy to note here that Bishnoi's key aide, Goldy Brar, considered the man behind all the gang operations globally, is also miffed with Bishnoi. As per the media reports, Bishnoi and Goldy Brar have reportedly parted ways but there has been no official confirmation on this. Brar, who became famous for his criminal activities after singer Sidhu Moose Wala's murder allegedly ordered the shooting at Punjabi singer AP Dhillon's house in Canada last year.

NATO Leaders Pledge 'Ironclad Commitment' To Collective Defence, Increase Security Spending

The Hague, (H.S): Reaffirming an "ironclad commitment" to collective defence, the NATO Heads of State and Government on Wednesday agreed to invest five per cent of GDP annually on core defence requirements as well as defence and security-related spending by 2035.

United in the face of profound security threats and challenges, in particular the long-term threat posed by Russia to Euro-Atlantic security and the persistent threat of terrorism, Allies commit to invest 5% of GDP annually on core defence requirements as well as defence and security-related spending by 2035 to ensure our individual and collective obligations, in accordance with Article 3 of the Washington Treaty," read The



Hague Summit Declaration issued after the two-day NATO Summit. At the Summit, NATO allies took several decisions to make the 32-member alliance stronger, fairer and "more lethal." "We, the Heads of State and Government of the North

Atlantic Alliance, have gathered in The Hague to reaffirm our commitment to NATO, the strongest Alliance in history, and to the transatlantic bond. We reaffirm our ironclad commitment to collective defence as enshrined

in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty - that an attack on one is an attack on all. We remain united and steadfast in our resolve to protect our one billion citizens, defend the Alliance, and safeguard our freedom and democracy," the Joint Statement mentioned.

The allies also signed a number of new multinational projects and expanding existing ones. Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom committed to the joint acquisition, storage, transportation and management of stockpiles of defence critical raw materials, including through recycling existing products."

SCO Members Must Condemn Evil Pahalgam Attack Unequivocally: Defence Minister Singh in China

China, (DMC): Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has called on the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) members to unequivocally condemn the evil and dastardly Pahalgam terror attack in India's Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and said that any act of terrorism is "criminal and unjustifiable."

During his address at the SCO Defence Ministers' meeting in China's Qingdao, Defence Minister Singh recalled the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 tourists were killed by 'The Resistance Front', an offshoot of the Pakistan-based UN-designated terror group, Lashkar-e-Taiba. Defence Minister Singh said the pattern of the attack mirrored previous strikes by LeT in India. "In exercising its right to defend against terrorism and pre-empt as well as deter further cross-border terrorist attacks, India on May 7, 2025, successfully launched 'Operation Sindoor' to

dismantle cross-border terrorist infrastructure," he said. "We reiterate the need to hold the perpetrators, organisers, financiers and sponsors of reprehensible acts of terrorism, including cross-border terrorism, accountable and bring them to justice. Any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivation, whenever, wherever and by whomsoever committed," he said.

SCO members must condemn this evil unequivocally," the Defence Minister added. He also called for united and decisive action against terrorism and the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) in the possession of non-State actors and terrorist groups. He underlined that peace and prosperity cannot co-exist with terror and highlighted radicalisation, extremism and a growing trust deficit as the foremost challenges facing the region. "I believe that the biggest



challenges that we are facing in our region are related to peace, security and trust deficit. And the root cause of these problems is increasing radicalisation, extremism and terrorism," he said. "Peace and prosperity cannot co-exist with terrorism and proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the hands of non-State actors and terror groups," he said, stressing that only a collective and resolute stand can ensure safety and security for all. Defence Minister Singh said that

it is "imperative that those who sponsor, nurture and utilise terrorism for their narrow and selfish ends must bear the consequences." Defence Minister Singh warned that nations using cross-border terrorism as a tool of State policy must face consequences. "Some countries use cross-border terrorism as an instrument of policy and provide shelter to terrorists. There should be no place for such double standards. SCO should not hesitate to criticise such nations,"

he asserted. Reiterating India's zero tolerance towards terrorism, he said, "India's zero tolerance for terrorism is manifest today through its actions. This includes our right to defend ourselves against terrorism. We have shown that epicentres of terrorism are no longer safe, and we will not hesitate to target them." Highlighting the need for global action to prevent the radicalisation of youth, Defence Minister Singh said the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) has played a key role in coordinating counter-radicalisation efforts.

He added that the joint statement issued during India's chairmanship of the SCO Council of Heads of State on 'Countering Radicalisation leading to Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism' reflects the organisation's shared commitment. Defence Minister Singh urged member states to act against the use of modern

technology by terrorists, particularly the use of drones for smuggling weapons and narcotics." In our interconnected world, traditional borders are no longer the sole barriers against threats. Instead, we face an intricate web of challenges that range from transnational terrorism and cyber-attacks to hybrid warfare," he said. "These threats do not respect national boundaries, and they demand a unified response rooted in transparency, mutual trust, and collaboration."

The Defence Minister underscored the importance of multilateralism, emphasising India's belief in dialogue and cooperation to prevent conflicts. "India believes that reformed multilateralism can help build cooperation to prevent conflict between countries by creating mechanisms for dialogue and collaboration. No country, however large and powerful, can manage alone," he said, invoking

the ancient Indian ethos of 'Sarve Jana Sukhino Bhavantu (May all people be happy)'. He reiterated India's consistent support for peace and stability in Afghanistan. "Our immediate priorities in Afghanistan include providing humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people and contributing to Afghanistan's overall developmental needs."

As Afghanistan's largest regional development partner, India continues to implement capacity-building initiatives for the Afghan people," Defence Minister Singh said. He concluded with a call for greater cooperation among SCO members, stating that India supports "greater cooperation and mutual trust among SCO members. We should collectively aspire to fulfil the aspirations and expectations of our people as well as tackle today's challenges. We must all be in lockstep in our endeavour to strengthen stability and security in our neighbourhood."

India's production of horticultural crops rises 3.7 pc in 2024-25

New Delhi, (H.S): India's production of horticulture crops is estimated to have increased by 3.66 per cent to 367.72 million tonnes (MT) in the 2024-25 crop year (July-June) due to the higher output of fruits and vegetables, according to the second advance estimates released by the Union agriculture ministry. In 2023-24, the horticulture crops production stood at 3,547.44 lakh tonnes. The area under the coverage of horticultural crops increased to 292.67 lakh hectares in 2024-25 from 290.86 lakh hectares in the preceding year.

The data shows that the production of fruits is estimated to have risen 1.36 per cent to 1,145.10 lakh tonnes in 2024-25, while the output of vegetables is projected to have increased 6 per cent to 2,196.74 lakh tonnes. Spice production is estimated at 123.70 lakh tonnes in 2024-25 against 124.84 lakh tonnes in the preceding year. In the vegetable categories, onion output is estimated to have risen to 307.73



lakh tonnes from 242.67 lakh tonnes. Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, said the increase in production has taken place due to efforts of farmers and agricultural scientists as well as initiatives taken by the government. The Indian horticulture sector contributes about 33 per cent to the agriculture Gross Value Added (GVA) making very significant contribution to the Indian economy. Apart from ensuring nutritional security of the nation, it provides alternate rural

employment opportunities, diversification in farm activities, and enhanced income to farmers. India is currently producing about 320.48 million tonnes of horticulture produce which has surpassed the food grain production, that too from much less area (25.66 million Ha. for horticulture against 127.6 M. ha. for food grains). Productivity of horticulture crops is much higher compared to productivity of food grains (12.49 tonnes/ha against 2.23 tonnes/ha.). India has emerged as world leader in the production of a variety of fruits

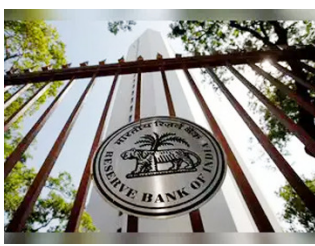
like mango, banana, guava, papaya, chikoo, pomegranate, lime and amla and is the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables. Besides, India has maintained its dominance in the production of spices, coconut and cashew nut. Among the new crops, kiwi, gherkins, kinnow, date palm and oil palm have been successfully introduced for commercial cultivation in the country.

The launch of National Horticulture Mission has spurred the production and productivity of horticultural crops. Productivity of horticulture crops has increased by about 38.5 per cent between 2004-05 and 2021-22 (3rd Advance Estimate). The Ministry of Food Processing Industries has also identified 40 clusters for 10 fruits in 15 states, 97 clusters for 11 vegetables in 25 states under scheme for Operation Greens under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana for better availability of raw material to food processing industries.

Microfinance Sector Needs To Introspect, Avoid Harsh Coercive Recovery Practices: Rajeshwar Rao

New Delhi, (H.S): The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday said that while the microfinance sector has played an important role in financial inclusion, there are some issues which need urgent attention. The sector continues to suffer from a vicious cycle of over-indebtedness, high interest rates and harsh recovery practices, RBI Deputy Governor M. Rajeshwar Rao said in an article in the RBI's June bulletin.

Microfinance has placed itself as a promising avenue for providing formal financial services to the excluded sections of the population." While some moderation in interest rates charged on microfinance loans has been observed in recent quarters, pockets of high interest rates and elevated margins continue to persist," Rao wrote. "Even lenders having access to low-cost funds have been found to be charging margins significantly



higher than the rest of the industry, and which, in several instances, appear to be excessive," he emphasised. The lenders should look beyond the conventional "high-yielding business" tag for the sector and approach it with an empathic and developmental perspective, recognising the socioeconomic role that microfinance plays in empowering vulnerable communities, Rao added.

The frequency of disruptions in the microfinance sector has increased of late. Incidents of high borrower indebtedness, coupled with coercive recovery practices,

sometimes lead to tragic consequences. Rao suggested that it is in the collective interest of all stakeholders that such disruptions are pre-emptively addressed and avoided. In this regard, REs must also enhance their credit appraisal frameworks to prevent over-leveraging of borrowers.

Additionally, they must eschew any coercive or unethical recovery practices, ensuring that financial services are delivered in a manner that is both responsible and sustainable, he highlighted. While the business model may be sound, the organisational structure and the incentive schemes framed to deliver the services may be flawed, resulting in perverse outcomes for customers. "This calls for an introspection around the models," said Rao, adding that we need to be clear about the path that we must take to ensure greater financial inclusion.

Sarbananda Sonowal Inaugurates India's First Maritime NBFC - Sagarmala SMFCL

New Delhi/Paradip (DMC): The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW), Shri Sarbananda Sonowal today inaugurated Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL), India's first Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) in the maritime sector. The Union Minister Shri Sonowal was joined by the Union Minister of State for MoPSW, Shri Shantanu Thakur along with Secretary, MoPSW, TK Ramachandran at the launch. Formerly known as Sagarmala Development Company Limited, SMFCL is now positioned to play a transformative role in India's maritime infrastructure development, in alignment with the Amrit Kaal Vision 2047. SMFCL - a Mini Ratna, Category-I, Central Public Sector Enterprise - has been formally registered as a Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as of June 19, 2025. Speaking on the occasion, the Union Minister, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal said, "The registration of Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited as an NBFC is a major milestone in India's maritime journey. Under the visionary



leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, we are taking decisive steps to strengthen the maritime sector as a key pillar of our economy. SMFCL will bridge crucial financing gaps and offer sector-specific financial solutions, empowering ports, MSMEs, startups, and institutions. It has fulfilled a long-standing demand of the maritime industry in the country. This move is in perfect alignment with the Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047 and our shared goal of making India a leading global maritime power and Viksit Bharat." As a sector-specific NBFC, SMFCL is uniquely poised to bridge financing gaps in

the maritime sector and catalyse economic growth. The corporation will offer tailored financial products-including short, medium, and long-term funding-to a diverse range of stakeholders such as port authorities, shipping companies, MSMEs, startups, and maritime educational institutions. In its expanded mandate, SMFCL will also support strategic sectors like shipbuilding, renewable energy, cruise tourism, and maritime education, further reinforcing India's vision to emerge as a global maritime leader. Speaking on the occasion, the Union Minister of State for MoPSW, Shri Shantanu Thakur said, "With SMFCL now functioning as a dedicated NBFC, we're creating a focused financial ecosystem to accelerate maritime growth. This will unlock opportunities for innovation, investment, and inclusive development across the sector." With this milestone, SMFCL is set to provide a more focused and accessible financial ecosystem for India's maritime growth, enabling projects that contribute to sustainable development, innovation and national logistics efficiency.

Bengaluru, (H.S): Starting from a base of \$30 billion in 2020, India's online commerce sector is expected to get to \$300 billion by the end of the decade in 2030, contributing to a \$1 trillion digital opportunity in the country, according to a report released on Thursday. This demonstrates it is no longer a niche phenomenon catering to a small segment but has firmly established itself as a dominant force within the Indian retail landscape for a significant and growing share of the population, said Bessemer Venture Partners in its report.

India presents a \$1 trillion dollar digital opportunity. The emergence of multiple consumer marketplaces, platforms and new-age brands in the past decade are a testament to the growing aspirations of an emergent India. This makes us exceptionally optimistic about the potential for many more consumer plays to emerge in the coming years," explained Anant Vidur Puri, Partner. A tailwind trifecta of internet penetration, evolving demographics, and policy changes are among the trends that have enabled the rise of new age



consumer companies. Going forward, it is the evolution of commerce marketplaces, content platforms and changing consumer aspirations that will power newer companies to win in the Indian context, the report noted. India's burgeoning online commerce sector has witnessed an extraordinary expansion in recent years.

In addition, the recent rise of quick commerce (q-commerce) has introduced a new dimension to the online retail ecosystem, further revolutionising the way consumers access goods. Platforms such as BigBasket, Blinkit, Swiggy, and Zepto have spearheaded this movement, demonstrating the viability and

consumer appeal of rapid delivery services. This segment is seeing the further trend of verticalised q-commerce emerging, with startups like Snabbit, Swish and Slikk catering to niche needs. Lastly, D2C brands are increasingly catering to an aspirational mass-premium audience - an audience characterized by the demand for newer, better priced, higher quality products."

India is experiencing a content revolution driven by consumers' diverse appetites for entertainment, education, and gaming. Characterised by short attention spans and a multitude of accessible platforms across interests, languages, and budgets,

user engagement is rapid, facilitated by frictionless microtransactions or autopay-led subscriptions," the report mentioned. Platforms are adapting to these shorter attention spans with quick and engaging content. Over the past five years, short-form video platforms in India have witnessed a 3.6X growth in daily active users, competing with mainstream digital platforms.

Moreover, the rise of virtual tipping, UPI autopay and other micro-transactions is expected to reach \$1.5 billion by 2029 and exemplifies the growth of UPI-enabled microtransactions which allows companies to experiment with diverse monetisation models beyond just ads. There is increased spending on organic food, protein, fitness gadgets, preventive healthcare, and wellness services. Health-focused food and beverage (F&B) as a category has expanded from 11 per cent to 16 per cent of F&B spend and is expected to continue to increase as brands have been quick to adapt to this trend, said the report.

Sensex Surges 1,000 Points, Banking And Heavyweight Stock Gain

Mumbai, (H.S): The Indian stock markets closed on a strong note on Thursday, with benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty surging over 1 per cent each, led by gains in banking and heavyweight stocks. The benchmark index reflected strong investor confidence, underpinned by the apparent stability of the Middle East

ceasefire, which has eased concerns over potential supply chain disruptions. The Sensex jumped 1,000.36 points, or 1.21 per cent, to settle at 83,755.87. During the session, the index touched an intra-day high of 83,812.09 and a low of 82,816.26. The Nifty also gained 304.25 points, or 1.21 per cent, to close at 25,549.00. It hit an intra-day high of

25,565.30 and a low of 25,259.90 during the day. "Nifty has given a decisive move above the recent consolidation on the daily chart, indicating growing optimism among traders and investors," Rupak De of LKP Securities said. "Now that the index has broken above the consolidation zone, we continue to

maintain our bullish view going forward," he added. Among the Nifty stocks, Shriram Finance, Tata Steel, Bharti Airtel and Hindalco Industries were the top gainers, rising between 2.48 and 3.69 per cent. On the other hand, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Tech Mahindra, Wipro, SBI, and Hero MotoCorp were the top laggards,

slipping between 0.45 and 1.31 per cent. In the broader markets, the Nifty Midcap100 and Nifty Smallcap100 indices ended lower, falling 0.59 per cent and 0.42 per cent, respectively, indicating some pressure in mid- and small-cap stocks. Banking stocks also witnessed strong buying. The Bank

Nifty index touched an intra-day high of 57,263.45 and closed at 57,206.70, up 1.03 per cent. Among sectoral indices, all major indices except Realty, IT, and Media ended in the green. Nifty Metal was the top performer, gaining 2.31 per cent. This was followed by gains in Nifty Private Bank, Financial Services, and Oil & Gas indices, each rising over 1 per cent.

Vedanta Aluminium Celebrates Pride Month by Expanding LGBTQI+ Hiring with Robust Policies

Bhubaneswar, (DMC): Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest aluminium producer, is redefining inclusivity in manufacturing by actively recruiting and empowering transgender individuals across its operations. As part of the Pride Month celebrations, the company has announced that it will hire 15 transgender employees in 2026, increasing the total strength to 44 across its operations in Jharsuguda, Odisha and Korba, Chhattisgarh.

Vedanta Aluminium has introduced a comprehensive framework of progressive policies to support the assimilation and well-being of transgender employees. These include sensitization workshops to build awareness, financial and leave assistance for gender reaffirmation surgery, statutory benefits like higher education allowances, and access to laser hair removal machines. In a sector where gender diversity has traditionally been limited, this approach represents a significant step toward creating a more inclusive and equitable workforce, where diversity is respected and celebrated. The company's mega aluminium smelters in Jharsuguda and Bharat



Aluminium Company Limited (BALCO) in Korba have also introduced gender-neutral infrastructure and robust benefits, including 30 days of paid leave and INR 2 lakh compensation for gender reaffirmation surgery.

Six employees at BALCO have already availed of this support, and two more have applied for higher education allowances through the company's policies to build fulfilling careers and assume leadership roles within the organization. This commitment goes beyond hiring, focusing on empowering individuals to grow and thrive. These efforts are supported by continuous awareness programs

and a strong focus on nurturing a respectful and supportive workplace. By embedding diversity into its core operations, Vedanta is setting a benchmark for inclusive growth in India's manufacturing sector.

Rajiv Kumar, CEO of Vedanta Aluminium, emphasized the broader significance of these efforts, "The manufacturing sector has historically struggled with gender imbalance, and meaningful progress requires expanding our understanding of diversity to include all gender identities. At Vedanta Aluminium, we believe inclusivity is not just the right thing to do, it is a strategic imperative. A diverse workforce

fosters fresh perspectives, fuels innovation, and strengthens resilience, all of which are vital in today's dynamic industrial landscape. By empowering transgender individuals with supportive policies and equal opportunities, we are not only building a workplace rooted in respect and dignity but also setting a benchmark for inclusive growth within Indian manufacturing."

The impact of the company's inclusive policies is evident in the stories of its employees. Alka, a security supervisor, powerfully captures this spirit. Recalling the benefits of the gender reaffirmation policy, she says, "It used to take us years to plan and execute the gender reassignment surgery but with the support of BALCO's policies, LGBTQ+ employees have got a benefit of 30 days of paid leave and compensation of 2 lakh rupees for the gender reassignment surgery." As part of the ongoing Pride Month celebrations, Vedanta Aluminium is also organizing sensitization workshops in the communities to inspire behavioural change and create a gender-sensitive and inclusive society.

India's FDI Inflows Surge To \$8.8 Billion in April

Mumbai, (DMC): Gross inward foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows into India surged to \$8.8 billion in April this year, higher than \$5.9 billion in March and \$7.2 billion in April 2024, according to the RBI's monthly bulletin released on Wednesday. Manufacturing and business services accounted for nearly half of the gross FDI inflows in this month. India ranked 16th globally in FDI inflows and recorded \$114 billion in greenfield investment in digital economy sectors over the last five years (2020-2024), the highest among all countries in the Global South, the bulletin states.

Foreign portfolio investment (FPI) recorded net inflows of \$1.7 billion in May 2025, driven by the equity segment. Equities gained for the third consecutive month as the India-Pakistan ceasefire, the US-China trade truce, and better-than-expected corporate earnings results in Q4:2024-25 lifted investor sentiment and spurred portfolio rebalancing towards Indian assets. Telecommunication, services, and capital goods emerged as the top recipient sectors. The debt segment, which had experienced

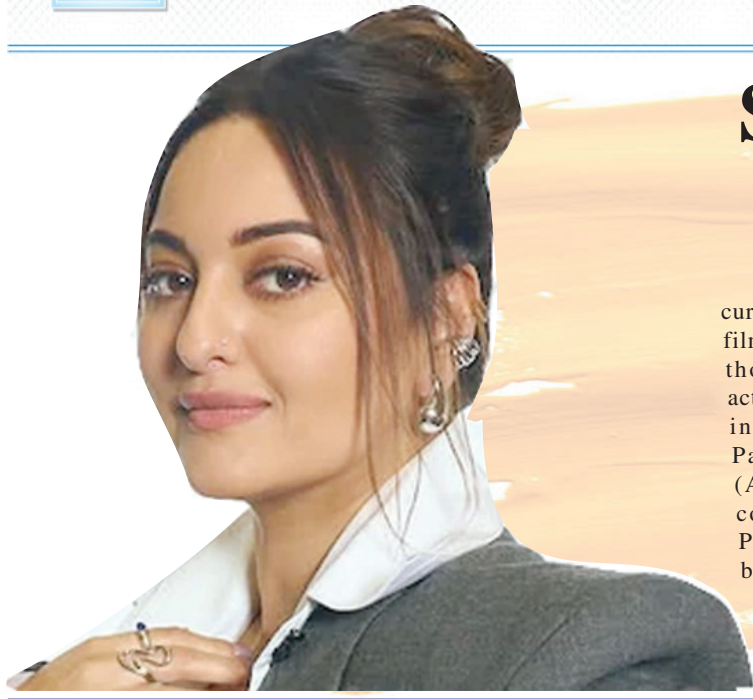


outflows in the previous month, observed a pause in net withdrawals in May, even as the yield differential between Indian and US government bonds remained below 2 per cent for most of the month, according to the bulletin. Non-Resident Indian (NRI) deposits rose to \$165.43 billion during April this year, up from \$164.68 billion in the same month of the previous year.

Foreign Currency Non-Resident Bank (FCNR(B)) deposits rose 9 per cent year-on-year in April 2025, with outstanding balances increasing to \$33.08 billion from \$30.26 billion in April 2024. This marks the sharpest percentage growth among the three deposit schemes, despite its smaller

share in the overall pie. The monthly inflow under FCNR(B) deposits stood at \$483 million in April 2025, compared to a provisional \$272 million in April 2024-26. The build-up in forex reserves also helped to strengthen the rupee and reflects a strong external balance position, which is sufficient to finance more than 11 months of the country's exports."

The Indian rupee (INR) appreciated by 0.4 per cent month-on-month vis-à-vis the US dollar and exhibited low volatility during May 2025. Uncertainty surrounding the US trade and its fiscal policy contributed to a general strengthening of EME currencies vis-à-vis the US dollar," the bulletin added.



Sonakshi on Pakistani Actors Being Banned in India, "I Stand with My Country"

Sonakshi Sinha, who is currently promoting her new film Nikita Roy, shared her thoughts with Pakistani actors being banned in India in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack (April 22). The conversation around Pakistani actors being banned in India has resurfaced after Diljit Dosanjh's *Sardaar Ji 3* landed in trouble for casting Pakistani actor

Hania Aamir. When Sonakshi Sinha what she feels about Pakistani actors being banned in India, the actress replied, "Do they allow Indian actors to work there [in Pakistan]? I mean I stand in solidarity with my country. I'll always stand by the decision they take."

After the Pahalgam attack, the Federation of Western India Cine Employees, an organisation of movie workers, had called for boycotting Pakistani artists,

singers and technicians in the Indian film industry. They had called for a similar ban after the 2019 Pulwama terror attack, which claimed the lives of 40 paramilitary personnel. Following the Pahalgam attack, this organisation renewed its directive. "Despite the ongoing directive, we've been made aware of the recent collaboration with Pakistani actor Fawad Khan for the Hindi film, *Abir* Gulaal. In

light of the recent attack in Pahalgam, FWICE is once again compelled to issue a blanket boycott on all Pakistani artists, singers and technicians participating in any Indian film or entertainment projects. This includes performances or collaborations occurring anywhere in the world," the organisation said in a statement. Following the demand for a ban on Pakistani artists in India, Pakistani actor Fawad Khan's *Abir*

Gulaal's release was stalled in May.

Diljit Dosanjh's *Sardaar Ji 3* had skipped India release to avoid controversy. The film will release in theatres overseas (including Pakistan) on June 27. Speaking of Sonakshi's Nikita Roy, the film marks her brother Kushi S Sinha's directorial debut. The film stars Sonakshi Sinha in the titular role alongside Paresh Rawal, Arjun Rampal and Suhail Nayyar.

ICC's Big Rule, From Stop Clock to DRS Saliva Use

New Delhi, (HS) : The ICC has introduced stop clock in Test cricket to deal with slow over rates while allowing fielding teams to decide which batter should be on strike in case of a 'deliberate' short-run as part of the playing conditions for 2025-27 World Test Championship cycle. The new rules have been implemented from the 2025-2027 World Test Championship which got underway with the first of the two Tests between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in Galle. According to the ICC Test Match Playing Conditions on the governing body's website,



the use of the stop clock - like in limited-overs cricket - has been implemented to eradicate the issue of slow over-rate.

"The fielding side shall be ready to start each over within 60 seconds of the previous over being

completed. An electronic clock will be displayed at the ground that counts up seconds from zero to 60," the ICC said. The fielding side will thus be given two warnings and in case of a third infraction, the batting side will be awarded with five

penalty runs. These warnings will be reset to zero after the completion of 80 overs, the ICC said. Meanwhile, ESPNcricinfo reported that the ICC no longer mandates the umpires to change the ball once they discover saliva on it. The ban on the use of saliva remains in force. The ICC also said in case there are instances of referrals being made by both player and the on-field umpire, the process will be carried out in a chronological order, effectively as per the order of their occurrence. The ICC instructed that in case of a second review of a decision adjudged 'out' by an on-field umpire, the default

decision for the subsequent mode of dismissal will remain 'out'.

In case of a "deliberate short run", the ICC explained, "A deliberate short run is an attempt for batters to appear to run more than one run, while at least one batter deliberately does not make good their ground at one end." "Batters may choose to abort a run, provided the umpire believes that there was no intention by the batter concerned to deceive the umpires or to score the run in which they didn't make their ground."

Bumrah set to skip 2nd Test despite

New Delhi, (HS) : Team India's ace pacer Jasprit Bumrah is likely to be rested for the second Test against England, scheduled to begin on July 2 at Edgbaston, as part of a pre-planned workload management strategy, according to a report from the Indian Express. Bumrah, who returned to red-ball cricket only recently after a prolonged back injury layoff, bowled 24.4 overs in the first innings in Leeds and produced a brilliant five-wicket haul, his 14th in Tests, despite being let down repeatedly by his teammates on the field. India ended up losing the Headingley Test by five wickets, largely due to substandard fielding and misfiring support from the bowling unit. Bumrah's control and threat stood out, especially as the rest of the pace attack, comprising Prasidh Krishna, Mohammed Siraj, and Shardul Thakur, lacked consistency and potency. In total, Bumrah saw three catches dropped off his bowling in the first innings alone, with opener Harry Brook being reprieved three times before eventually falling for 99. Despite the loss, India are set to proceed with caution when it comes to Bumrah's fitness. Head coach Gautam Gambhir had confirmed before the series that Bumrah won't play all five matches and would be rotated. "If we leave out Bumrah and Siraj, there is not much experience in the line-up but we need to back them as they have got talent," Gambhir had said after the defeat in Leeds. "This pace attack comprises of one bowler who has played four Tests, another who has played two, and one who hasn't played a Test."

Odisha, Punjab Enter Hockey India Masters Cup Women Final

Chennai, (HS) : The race for the title at the inaugural Hockey India Masters Cup (Women) reached its final stretch as Hockey Association of Odisha and Hockey Punjab sealed their places in the final after registering impressive wins in their respective semifinal matches here at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Hockey Stadium.

In the first semi-final, Hockey Association of Odisha delivered a commanding performance to defeat Hockey Haryana. Haryana took the early lead through a field goal from Sonika Yadav (11'), but Punjab equalised soon after with Meenakshi (18') converting a penalty corner. In the third quarter, Nishi Shivendra Singh (38') put Haryana back in front with a field goal, only for Punjab to respond once again-Baljit Kaur Marar (44') equalised with a penalty corner strike.

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