

RATH YATRA: Chariot pulling suspended amid protracted delay

Chariot pulling to resume on Saturday at 9.0 am | Pulling of Nandighosa chariot faced inordinate delay



Puri (DMC) : As a sea of devotees gathered at the pilgrim town of Puri to witness Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath and siblings, pulling of chariots carrying the deities encountered unexpected disruption on Friday. While Taladhwa chariot of Lord Balabhadra first started rolling on the Grand Road at around 4.10 pm, Darpadalan of Devi Subhadra was next to follow. However, the pulling of Nandighosa chariot of Lord Jagannath faced inordinate delay. The chariot finally began rolling at around 7.45 pm.

As per sources, the chariot of Lord Jagannath was pulled for a short distance before the pulling was halted. Following this, chariot-pulling activities were suspended for the day. Chief Administrator of the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) said that the chariot pulling will resume on Saturday at 9.30am. On the other hand, the two other chariots also faced roadblocks. Taladhwa chariot of Lord Balabhadra was halted at Balagandi Chhak.

Continued P-4

Sea of devotees throng Puri

Puri (DMC) : Lakhs of devotees from across the country and abroad thronged the seaside pilgrim town of Puri in Odisha to witness the annual Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath and his two siblings on Friday. The devotees burst into ecstasy as many of them pulled forward the three majestic chariots from the 12th-century Jagannath temple in Puri towards Gundicha temple, around 3 km away, amid devotion and fervour.

The 'yatra' started around 4.10 pm after Puri Shankaracharya Swami Nischalanada Saraswati visited the chariots of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra with his disciples

and the Puri's titular king completed the 'Chhera Pahanra' (chariot sweeping) ritual. Amid sounds of gongs, cymbals and conches and 'Hari Bol' chants reverberating the cloudy sky, the three divine chariots carrying the sibling deities rolled on the Grand Road for their nine-day sojourn to Gundicha Temple. Devotees, security personnel and servitors pulled the chariots with devotion after completion of all rituals. The sibling deities ascended their respective chariots after the completion of the 'Pahandi' ritual. Jai Jagannath' chants, sounds of gongs, conches and cymbals reverberated through

Continued P-4



Divine rain showers blessings

As chants of Jai Jagannath echoed through the sacred streets of Puri, a gentle rain graced the skies, turning the Rath Yatra into a divine spectacle. Devotees gathered in overwhelming numbers to witness the Pahandi Bijje ritual, during which Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra, and Mahaprabhu Jagannath were ceremonially escorted from the sanctum sanctorum to their majestic chariots. This year, the divine moment was marked by a symbolic offering from nature itself - light showers during the procession, which many devotees interpreted as

Continued P-4

CM, Union Ministers witness Rath Yatra



Puri (DMC) : Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Deputy CMs KV Singh Deo, Pravati Parida, Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan and BJP

MP Sambit Patra, among others, arrived in pilgrim town of Puri on Friday morning to participate in the annual Rath Yatra. Upon his arrival, the CM was received by Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja.

Continued P-4

President, PM greet people

President of India Droupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Odisha Governor Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati, Chief Minister Mohan Majhi and other senior leaders extended their heartfelt greetings to millions of devotees across India and abroad. Taking to X (formerly Twitter), President Murmu wrote, "On the occasion of the sacred Rath Yatra, I extend my heartfelt greetings to the devotees of Lord Jagannath residing in India and abroad. By witnessing Lord Balabhadra, Lord Jagannath, Goddess Subhadra, and Chakraraj Sudarshan on the chariots, millions of devotees experience divine bliss. The human-like divine play of the deities is the specialty of the Rath Yatra. On this auspicious occasion, my prayer to the Lord is that peace, friendship, and harmony prevail throughout the world. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also took to his X handle and greeted the citizens on the occasion of Rath Yatra and shared a video. Odisha Governor Dr. Hari Babu Kambhampati also extended his wishes to the people on Rath Yatra. Similarly, Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Majhi took to X and wrote, "Heartfelt greetings and best wishes to all on the sacred occasion of the Rath Yatra. I pray for the development of the state and the welfare and progress of all." Leader of Opposition, Naveen Patnaik, also greeted people on the sacred occasion of Rath Yatra.

Very big trade deal coming up with India: Trump

New Delhi (HS) : US President Donald Trump said America is going to have a "very big" trade deal with India, hinting at significant progress in the negotiation process of a long-awaited bilateral trade agreement between the two countries. "We're having some great deals. We have one coming up, maybe with India, a very big one, where we're going to open up India," Trump said during an event at the White House promoting passage of the GOP's tax and spending cuts legislation on Thursday.

"In the China deal, we're starting to open up China. Things that never really could have happened, and the relationship with every country has been

very good," Trump said. The president, however, did not elaborate on the details of the deal signed with China. He said that every country wanted to make a deal and have a part of it, and his administration officials were working overtime, making deals with countries. "You remember a few months ago, the press was saying, 'Do you really have anybody of any interest?' Well, we just signed with China yesterday, right? We just signed with China. We have everybody. We're not going to make deals with everybody. Some we're just going to send them a letter and say thank you very much. You're going to pay 25 per cent, 35 per cent, 45 per cent.

Evacuated over 4,400 nationals from Iran, Israel so far: MEA

New Delhi (HS) : India has evacuated more than 4,400 Indian nationals from Iran and Israel so far in 19 special flights under Operation Sindhu launched on June 18 to bring home its citizens amid the ongoing conflict between the two countries, according to the Ministry of External Affairs. A fresh batch of 173 Indians evacuated from Iran reached Delhi late Thursday night in a flight from Armenian capital Yerevan, the

MEA said in a post on X. At his weekly media briefing a day before, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, in response to queries on Operation Sindhu, said New Delhi was assessing the situation on the ground and a decision on the future course of action would be taken based on it. Over 3,400 Indian nationals have been evacuated so far in 14 flights from Iran since the start of Operation Sindhu,

according to data shared by him during the briefing. Jaiswal later shared updated evacuee figures in the post on X after the arrival of the flight from Yerevan. "A special evacuation flight from Yerevan, Armenia landed in New Delhi at 22:30 hrs on 26th June, bringing home 173 Indian nationals from Iran," he wrote. "As part of #OperationSindhu, a total of 4415 Indian nationals (3597 from Iran and 818 from Israel) have been

evacuated so far using 19 special evacuation flights including 3 IAF aircraft. 14 OCI card-holders, 9 Nepali nationals, 4 Sri Lankan nationals and 1 Iranian spouse of an Indian national were also evacuated from Iran," he added. On June 24, India said while it remained "deeply concerned about the prospects for overall and sustained regional security and stability", it welcomed reports of a ceasefire between Iran and Israel.

HISTORIC DAY

A déjà vu moment for Indian space odyssey

New Delhi (HS) : Call it providence or pure coincidence but June 25 seems to be a day of destiny as regards India from even before it achieved independence. Many spectacular events have unfolded on this very day over the years. On June 25, 1932, India became the sixth team to be granted Test cricket status when it played its first match at Lord's on that historic day. Close to midnight of June 25, 1975, the

then President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed proclaimed National Emergency citing 'internal disturbance'. It was to mark a watershed event as India's political landscape underwent a dramatic transformation and gave a new democratic dimension.

On June 25, 1983, India rewrote cricketing history by emerging as world champions, when Kapil's Devils upset all calculations and put an end to the



hat-trick quest of West Indies by winning the ODI World Cup in a stunning manner. Now 42 years to the day, June 25, 2025, to be precise, an Indian with the tricolour on his shoulders has put the country's name in a league of extraordinary achievers. A distinguished IAF pilot and astronaut, Lucknow's 39-year-old Shubhanshu Shukla scripted history by embarking on a space odyssey along with three others

on Wednesday as part of an ISRO-NASA supported commercial spaceflight by Axiom Space that blasted off for a 14-day sojourn to the International Space Station (ISS) from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. Incidentally, Shukla is one of four astronauts picked for ISRO's historic Gaganyaan mission, which marks India's inaugural human space flight endeavour. The lift-off at 12.01

pm on Wednesday (after several eleventh hour heart-breaking postponements) took the clock back by 41 years when Hyderabad's very own Rakesh Sharma became India's first man in space. He spent eight days in orbit as part of the then Soviet Union's Salyut-7 space station in 1984. A day after the take-off, Shukla went a notch higher than Sharma when he achieved the

Continued P-4

Impressive Strides

WHO data shows India has taken impressive strides in countering tuberculosis since 2015. The number of reported cases has dropped by 17 per cent and deaths have come down by more than 20 per cent. Even so, the country accounts for more than a fourth of the world's TB burden and nearly 30 per cent of the deaths caused by the disease. India does not appear to be on course to meet its target of eliminating the disease by the end of this year. That's why the government's initiative to use cutting-edge technology, including AI, in its anti-TB programme is a step in the right direction. TB can be tough to detect. The traditional sputum test has major limitations, including inadequate sensitivity, poor performance in some sections of patients, especially children and people living with HIV, and inability to detect antimicrobial resistance. In 2023, the WHO recognised diagnosis as the weakest link in TB care. While the landscape of research has expanded, doctors in large parts of the Global South, including India, continue to rely on the sputum test. The anti-TB programme's plan to widen the diagnostic net by using other samples - such as blood, saliva, or stool - is in line with the WHO's new guideline to «invest in novel diagnostic techniques». So is the use of genetic material to detect the bacteria. The new initiative seems to have accounted for the longstanding weakness of the Indian healthcare system - the shortage of facilities and trained professionals in rural areas. The use of AI to read microscopy slides and X-rays could be a breakthrough. Until recently, the standard medication course took six to nine months to complete, and treatment for drug-resistant tuberculosis could take up to two years with much lower chances of cure. In the past five years, new drugs have helped reduce the length of therapy. Even then, the regimen is taxing on patients and their caregivers. The defaulting patients then run the risk of contracting the more virulent multidrug-resistant version of the disease and spreading it. A simple test can now measure compliance with the drug regimen - when a patient's saliva is put on the strip, it can tell whether they have taken the medicine in the last 24 hours.

The government would, however, be doing injustice to its initiative by relying solely on technology. State-of-the-art diagnostics should be accompanied by initiatives to improve the nutrition of patients and their access to medicines.

28th June

National Tapioca Day



We're bubbling with excitement to tell you about National Tapioca Day on June 28 when you can explore this less popular - though no less delicious - carb. Made from the cassava plant, tapioca is versatile, though tapioca pudding is the most popular American dish made with this ingredient, including savory dinner dishes. Tapioca pudding combines tapioca pearls with liquid to form a delicious, creamy mix. For many, tapioca is a love/hate relationship. Perhaps once as a child, you plunged your spoon into it, expecting the smooth vanilla pudding you're used to. Instead, you got a mouthful of squishiness. Such an experience could leave you traumatized and wary of the dessert for years to come. If this rings true for you, then National Tapioca Day is your time to be brave and give it another try. If you're in the camp that has been a fan of tapioca from day one, then you'll have no problem celebrating. Maybe you're even a connoisseur, and can already tell falooda from taho. Either way, June 28 will bring ample opportunity to either expand your palette and try something new, or spend time savoring a long-time favorite.

Everyone knows about our most widely observed holidays, but how many of your friends have June 28 circled on their calendars? Help spread the news about this quirky holiday by snapping a photo of your cup of tapioca and putting it on your preferred social media platform with the hashtag #NationalTapiocaDay day. Whether it's taken from an online resource, your grandmother's secret recipe, or you're up for experimenting with your own style of tapioca pudding, try making your own. The fun here is seeing the process, and understanding how those little pearls form such a creamy dessert. You could even use it as a science experience with your kids, who get a treat at the end.

Even if you love tapioca pudding, it's doubtful you've tried tapioca in all its forms. Some of the most common variations include bubble tea - a drink typical in Thailand - flatbreads, and even tapioca crackers, which are typical in Indonesia. While we typically don't associate desserts with health foods, tapioca is packed with vitamins and minerals that do wonders for the body. Want increased circulation? Dig into some tapioca. Need an extra dose of Vitamin K for strong bone growth? Have a bowl of tapioca pudding! Now of course the sugar and cream added to tapioca doesn't share these same benefits, but you can at least take heart knowing those little pearls are doing your body good.

If you like experimenting in the kitchen, there's no shortage of recipes to try when it comes to using tapioca. There's always the old fashioned tapioca your grandparents enjoyed, but recently variations have been catching on. How about making it with coconut milk and bits of mango? Or, for a true culinary challenge, try baking it as a tapioca creme brulee. On National Tapioca Day, you can have it however you want. Tapioca pudding was a staple dessert all over the world in the mid 20th century, but as other forms of pudding emerged, notably instant chocolate and vanilla pudding, many believe tapioca lost a bit of its appeal. However, on June 28, you can be a part of bringing back this nostalgic dish.



Suresh Chandra Sarangi

In his book, *The New world Order*, Ram Madhav, the RSS-BJP ideologue, analyses the shifting power dynamics in the world, and a new, but not enduring world order emerging. Humanity is at crossroads with developments like war, weaponization, arm race, conflicts, break of alliances, creation of new alliances etc. The most disturbing is the passive onlooker UN, failing to checkmate or de-escalate through dialogue and diplomacy. That is a very sorry state of affairs, impeding the global perspectives on climate action, peaceful co-existence and better international understanding. Thus, peace become a causality and war becomes a reality and the defeating sounds of the war drums puts the world in a cauldron of anxiety.

The old world order is fading, and the new world order is based on the edge of chaos. There are sweeping changes, it's rise and fall of great powers. The liberal, multipolar world, has struck off globalisation, and endeared conflicts, violence, destruction of immense magnitude. The emerging new order appears to be short lived. Unless the global community takes a constructive stand at the earliest, multilateralism would be given a good bye. The interesting transformation in a new global economic order is more pungent, more authoritarian and divisive. The liberation day musings of Trump strikes at the very root of globalisation. What next is the new

The New World Order

question and the tattering global economy is panicked and the loss to humanity is insurmountable. If, someone wants to write a history of the future, he will find it more difficult and complicated. As 21st century tries to unfold, America and more so President Trump is engaged in rewriting history. Because of its economic clout, its military power and presence across continents and nations and last not the least, because of its influence over the world bodies, it tries to exert dominance over the global order. Being an unenviable super power, America, with its reserve currency status is able to dictate and shape the future policies for the globe. Take for example the Paris accord which has been thrown twice by Trump and the achievements and the policy priorities to checkmate climate change, the greatest existential crisis the world confronts today is in disarm and the baby has been thrown along with the bath water as a result of America president's sheer apathy. The shape and trajectory of the world order seems to have been superimposed by USA. In the aftermath of the Cold War and breakdown of the erstwhile USSR, American hegemonism became distinct in a unipolar world. This American exceptionalism, more so in Trump's rule has become more distinct. The appearance of China as a superpower is more challenging for America. But it is a force to be reckoned with and this emerging fact can not be denied by America. This means that there is an economic downturn in USA, with more than 30 trillions of debt and hence, the uneasiness in America's hegemony.

It is very clear from above that the world is in a flux. Adhocism is the order of the day. Priorities have changed. Perspectives are at cross roads. Global tension in the Middle East is a definite geopolitical shift. The children of Gaza are without food and die in hunger and out of destitution, after losing their parents in the war and



losing lives in the dangerous shelling of missiles and bombs. The overall situation in the firmament of international politics is one of crises, conflicts, and wars. Two wars are going on the face of Earth. The loss of lives, property and heritage is colossal. Taiwan may be the next flashpoint. G7 members are trying to break their relationship with China. Trump's trade offensive is reshaping global financial order amidst uncertainties. World trade is a causality. Tariffs are the new economic weapons that disturbs the balance of power. Investment is tepid after the start of trade war. There appears to be a different type of economic fragmentation. Trump wants to make America great again. China, a result of the tariff offensive, losing markets, seeking to reduce its vulnerabilities and contemplating the decoupling of the Chinese economy from America, in particular and west in general. China today is a creation of America for four decades and now America feels threatened in the world politics and economy due to emergence of China, a totalitarian regime, with economic clout, military hardware, technology and new power alliances, that bears the impression of the digital age and are hence, they rise in the world faster, stronger, very much serious in creating their own space. The rule based global order, up till now was dominated by the US.

International law is now powerless against the powerful nations, international institutions, of late, gradually losing their relevance. The veto power of the security council is creating havoc in reducing conflict. The institutions like world bank, IMF, UNO needs a reform and that to giving enough power to them to have a lasting impact on the erring countries. The UN appears to be in an irreversible decline. India and Pakistan's simmering discontent because of Pakistan's policy of promoting terrorism, is an iron piece in the soul of Kashmir. The Sino Indian border skirmishes speak of protracted conflicts. The geo-political implications of the Iran-Israel war is far reaching. America's jump into the bandwagon to ensure non proliferation of nuclear weapons in Iran was devastating. The mediation by UN and a temporary truce by both Iran and Israel breathes fresh air. But may not be productive as both the nations have violated the ceasefire conditions within 24 hours of declaring ceasefire. Appears an uneasy truce. The Russia Ukraine war is more than two years and no solutions seems to be emerging. Russia's increased militarisation, China's falling growth, America's tariff offensive are all new spot in the global arena that may metastasize and create profound loss to world economy, politics and world peace at large. One important phenomenon in new

world order is the reemergence of global south and its clout in global economy. The Rise of both India and China as economic superpower is redefining the power politics. Rebalancing global geo-politics and global economy is of utmost priority. The deficit trust has to be narrowed down. The simmering clash between the west led by America and Russia, China and most importantly the Islamic world calls for truce and rebalancing the priorities, in order to release subdued globalisation in world interest. Otherwise, the dark war clouds are still at large. The structure of new world order can not be put to an end, without discussing the role of India. India has to adopt a pragmatic and realistic role and should discard its moralistic posture. India, because of its new found status in world economy, technology and politics has to recalibrate its approach through de escalation, dialogue and diplomacy. India's policy of pursuing strategic autonomy, with a tinge of non alignment may be an answer to a trouble ridden world. Notwithstanding holding the traditional values, a significant departure with more of political realism may help find solutions for the world. The birth of a new international order seems more urgent now than ever before.

America had Marshall plan, Monroe doctrine and many other public policies that has enlightened the world and supported the poor and downtrodden. Most important issues that grip the world now are climate crisis, energy crisis, poverty, pandemic, restoration of war torn society, controlling inflation and finally, say no to war and extending an olive branch for peace. Let us establish what Windel wilke said about «one world». The sanatana India's philosophy of «Vasundhaiva kutumbakam» should be the professed policy for the leaders of the world in conceptualising what Aldous Huxley stated «A brave new world».

The writer is a former General Manager, Bank of India

Jagannath : «Lord of the Universe»

Dr. Ram Prasad Ray

Jagannath meaning «Lord of the Universe», is a deity worshipped by Hindus and Buddhists, mainly in the Indian states of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Assam, Manipur and Tripura and by Hindus in Bangladesh. Jagannath is considered a form of Vishnu or his avatar Krishna by the Hindus. Jagannath is worshipped as part of a triad on the «Ratnavedi» along with his brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra. The icon of Jagannath is a carved and decorated wooden stump with large round eyes and with stumps as hands, with the conspicuous absence of legs. The worship procedures, practices, sacraments and rituals of Jagannath do not conform with those of classical Hinduism. It is made of wood, which is an exception to common Hindu iconographic deities of metal or stone. The origin and evolution of Jagannath worship, as well as iconography, is unclear and has been subject to intense academic debate.

Jagannath lacks a clear vedic reference and is also not a member of the traditional Dashavatara concept or the classical Hindu pantheon, though in certain Oriya literary creations, Jagannath has been treated as the Ninth avatar, by substituting Buddha. Jagannath considered as a form of the



Hindu God Vishnu, is non-sectarian and has not been associated with any particular denomination of Hinduism in entirety, though there are several common aspects with Vaishnavism, Saivism, Shaktism, Smartism, as well as with Buddhism and Jainism. The oldest and most famous Jagannath deity is established in Puri. The temple of Jagannath in Puri is regarded as one of the Char Dham in India. The most famous festival related to Jagannath is the Rathayatra, where Jagannath, along with the other two associated deities, comes out of the Garbhagriha of the chief temple. They are transported to the Gundicha Temple located at a distance of nearly 3 kilometres in three massive wooden chariots drawn by devotees. Coinciding with the Rathayatra festival at Puri, similar processions are organized at Jagannath temples throughout the world.

A significant ritual associated with the Rathayatra is the “Chhera Pahara,”

when the king symbolically sweeps the path of the Rath. This symbolizes that right from the king to the commoner, everyone is responsible for maintaining cleanliness around the place where the yatra is organized. This practice is followed even today and the present king Raja Gajapati Divyasingh Dev also follows the tradition. Rathayatra, Rathotsav, is a common annual festival celebrated in all temples, all across India and the world. It is a festival to unite people from all walks of life to come together to pull the Rath. A truly peoples' festival. Lord Jagannath true to His name not only moves the cosmos, but moves the people to celebrate His Rathayatra, not just in Puri but also in other parts of the world. The juggernaut is indeed rolling all over Jagat, the world.

Camp Assistant, Central Red Cross Blood Centre, Cuttack

Ratha Yatra

Dr. Umesh Chandra Patra

Ratha Yatra, the grand and colorful festival of chariots, is held on Asadha Sukla Dwitiya the second day of bright fortnight of Asadha (June-July) every year. Millions of devotees from different parts of the country and abroad witnessed the spectacle of world famous Car festival of Lord Jagannath at Puri. This festival is also known as 'Gundicha Yatra' and 'Ghosha Yatra'. As per the prevailing tradition, Gundicha was the Rani (queen) of Raja Indradyumna, the legendary builder of the first temple. She had initiated this grand festival. Hence, this festival is also known after her name. On this day, the three deities are taken out from the main Temple, placed in three gorgeously decorated chariots and start their journey to Sri Gundicha Temple. The chariots are dragged by thousands of devotees from the Lion's gate of the Jagannath temple to Sri Gundicha Temple which is located at a distance of 3 kilometers. The 3 kilometers Grand Road, known as 'Bada Danda', between Jagannath Temple and Sri Gundicha temple, looked like a sea of humanity as the devotees pumped to have a glimpse of the deities on the chariots.

At Gundicha Temple the deities remain for 7 days and perform their return journey on the 9th day which is known as 'Bahuda Yatra'. The three chariots reach back the main temple in the evening. On the next day, the three deities are attired in costumes of glittering gold ornaments and are worshipped by millions of devotees. This is known as the 'Suna Vesh'. Next day morning, the three deities go back to their original place of the temple. Their arrival into the sanctum sanctorum marks the end of the

Car festival. Akshay Tritiya festival marks the beginning of the famous Car Festival of Lord Jagannath. Akshay Tritiya festival is observed on the third day of the bright half of the lunar month of 'Baisakha' of the traditional Hindu calendar. On this auspicious day the carpenters start building the chariots of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra. This day also commences the famous Chandana Yatra. Snana festival is observed on the full-moon day of the month of Jyestha (May-June). This is the bathing festival of the deities. On this day, the three deities move in colorful processions to the Snana Mandapa (Bathing pandal) where the deities are bathed with 108 pitchers of water drawn from a well near the Northern Gate. At the end of Snana Yatra day, the deities are supposed to fall ill (fever) and do not return to their pedestal. They stay away from the public view for a period of 15 days. This period is known as 'Anabhasara' or 'Anasara' in local language. After this period, people get the first glimpse of their deities on the day before Rath Yatra, on this day the deities are re-painted and brought to the main platform for the devotees to see and pay homage which is called 'Nava Yauvana Darshan'. This is also known as 'Netrotsava'. Next day, the Rathayatra Festival is observed.

More than a religious festival, the Rathayatra is an eternal celebration of the divine values of love and compassion, of equality and fraternity. The general public is allowed to pull the chariots irrespective of caste, creed, sect, and religion and gender distinctions. This liberty indicates that the deity is equal for every person on earth and grants equal opportunity to all.

Prof. Hepatology Deptt. S.C.B. Medical College, Cuttack

Rath Yatra rolls through city streets amid devotee frenzy

Bhubaneswar (DMC): The Temple City of Bhubaneswar celebrated the annual nine-day Rath Yatra with great pomp and devotion starting on Friday. Thousands of devotees took part in chariot pulling at different places. Altogether 58 large and small chariots rolled, including that of ISKCON in Nayapalli, KISS campus, RCM campus, VSS Nagar, Vani Vihar, Rental Colony, Jagamara, Kolathia, Siripur, Baramunda, Old Town, and other localities where Jagannath temples are located.

Organisers at Iskcon temple in Nayapalli, that hosts one of the major Rath Yatras in the city, said nearly two lakh devotees attended this year. While Pahandi ritual took place at around 10.30 am, pulling of the chariots started at around 3 pm after completion of Chhera Pahanra at around 2 pm, they informed. "Around 3 to 4 lakh devotees thronged the Rath Yatra celebrations and participated in chariot pulling on Friday. The



government authorities, including police, BMC, fire personnel, health department, and other line departments, provided all support for the smooth conduct of the festival," said they said. To ensure smooth conduct of the festival, the Commissionerate Police has made elaborate security and traffic arrangements across the city.

"Over 17 platoons of police force deployed across key chariot procession points. We coordinated with temple committees to ensure the rituals go smoothly, while also maintaining law and order," said a senior police officer. Barricades have been put up in areas expecting

heavy footfall. Traffic diversions and no-parking zones have been notified near major chariot routes. Quick Response Teams (QRTs), anti-sabotage squads, and CCTV surveillance have also been put in place, police said. BMC has taken up sanitation, drinking water supply, and temporary toilet arrangements. "We want the devotees to have a comfortable and safe darshan experience. Special focus is on cleanliness and hygiene, considering the monsoon," said mayor Sulochana Das. The chariots were pulled amidst colourful processions accompanied by troupes of various folk dance,



music, and sankirtan performers. For many residents, the local Rath Yatra is a cherished spiritual tradition. "I have been pulling the chariot in our locality for over 15 years. It's not just a festival, but an important community gathering," said Soumya Mohanty, a resident of VSS Nagar.

At several temples, the chariot of goddess Subhadra pulled exclusively by women devotees. Volunteers were engaged for crowd management and smooth conduct of the festival across the city. Cultural programmes, bhajan sessions,

and community feasts and prasad distribution were also organised by local committees to add to the festive spirit. Bhubaneswar DCP Jagmohan Meena said Rath Yatra celebrated at 58 places in the city this year with Iskcon and Shrivani Kshetra at KISS being two major locations.

Around 17 platoons of police force and 100 officers were deployed in the city for smooth conduct of the festival, he said. The Commissionerate Police had also issued a traffic advisory, restricting movement of heavy vehicles on Nayapalli, fire station, CRP square, Unit VIII and a few other stretches from 3 pm onwards.

TPCODL ensures safe, seamless power supply

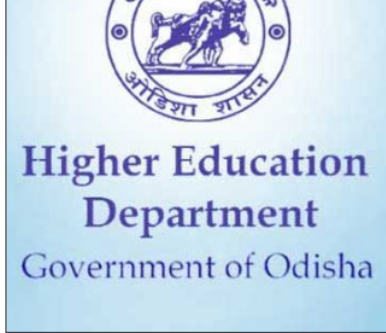
Bhubaneswar (DMC): The TP Central Odisha Distribution Limited (TPCODL), a joint venture of Tata Power and the Government of Odisha, has undertaken extensive safety and infrastructure preparedness measures to ensure a safe and uninterrupted power supply during Rath Yatra 2025 in Puri. With more than 800 personnel deployed round-the-clock, TPCODL has undertaken a robust safety drive for Rath Yatra 2025. The initiative includes leakage current testing, insulation painting on iron poles, DT fencing to ensure public safety. Fire extinguishers have been strategically installed at strategic locations. The network augmentation for feeders, power & distribution transformers has also been carried out along with preventive & predictive maintenance to ensure reliable power supply through the auspicious occasion.

Relay protection settings have been thoroughly tested & calibrated to avoid spurious interruptions. To enhance public awareness and ensure safety during Rath Yatra 2025, TPCODL has rolled out a series of initiatives across Puri. These include the distribution of 1 lakh safety leaflets, continuous public announcements throughout the town and the display of safety posters and banners at prominent locations. "In addition, Nukad Nataks at the Pali Shree Mela have been planned to engage the public through street theatre. Temporary barricading and covering of exposed cables along the Grand Road have also been implemented to safeguard devotees during peak hours. TPCODL has also deployed four Mobile Health Dispensaries (MHDs), three in Puri and one mobile unit for emergencies across its operational area. Each MHD is equipped with consultation rooms, examination beds and a dispensary counter, staffed by qualified doctors, nurses and pharmacists. TPCODL remains committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of devotees, offering seamless power supply and healthcare support during this grand spiritual celebration.

Evaluation Discrepancies

Odisha suspends BEd, BHed, MEd admissions

Bhubaneswar, (DMC): The Higher Education Department of the Odisha Government has temporarily suspended all admission activities for the 2-year B.Ed. (Arts/ Science), B.H.Ed. and M.Ed. programs for the academic year 2025-26.



The decision comes after several grievances were received regarding discrepancies in entrance test scores under the Student Academic Management System (SAMS). In response, the State Selection Board (SSB) has been directed to constitute subject-wise expert committees to reverify the answer keys

used in the evaluations. Officials emphasised that the move aims to uphold transparency and fairness in the admission process. Until the re-verification is completed, all associated admission activities remain on hold.

A revised schedule for admissions will be announced on the official SAMS portal (<https://te.samsodisha.gov.in>) and through major newspapers. Both students and institutions have been urged to follow updates strictly via official channels to avoid misinformation. The directive, issued by order of the Governor, reinforces the government's commitment to maintaining academic integrity during the admissions process.

Another low pressure taking shape, Heavy rain for 5 more days in Odisha

Bhubaneswar, (DMC): Heavy to very heavy rain together with thunderstorm activity is likely to batter many parts of Odisha from till July 3. Odisha food The India Meteorological Department (IMD) said that the low pressure area over north Odisha and adjoining Gangetic West Bengal has become less marked. A fresh upper-air cyclonic circulation is likely to develop over north Bay of Bengal and adjoining coastal Bangladesh & West Bengal around June 29.

Under its influence, another low-pressure area is likely to form over the same region during subsequent 24 hours. Under its influence, the intensity of rainfall is likely to increase from June 30. During the next 24 hours, heavy rain is likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Sambalpur, and Mayurbhanj, the weather agency said, while issuing a yellow warning for these districts



Similarly, thunderstorm with lightning and gusty surface wind speed reaching 30-40 kmph may occur at one or two places of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, and Gajapati.

On June 28-29, heavy rain is likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Sundargarh, and Keonjhar where a yellow warning was issued. Thunderstorm with lightning with gusty surface wind speed reaching 30-40 kmph, heavy rainfall may occur at one or two places over the districts of

Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati. On June 29-30, yellow warning of heavy rain very was issued for Balasore, Bhadrak, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, and Sundargarh districts.

On June 30-July 1, the IMD issued an orange warning of heavy to very heavy rain for the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Jajpur. Similarly, yellow warning was issued for the districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Angul, Deogarh, Sambalpur, Sundargarh. On July 1-2, orange warning of heavy to very heavy rain was issued for the districts of Nayagarh, Kandahamal, Kalahandi. Yellow warning of heavy rain has been issued for the districts of Koraput, Nabarangpur, Bolangir, Sonapur, Boudh, Cuttack, Khurda, Gajapati, Ganjam, Nuapada, Rayagada, and Puri.

CM to hold grievance hearing this Monday



Bhubaneswar, (DMC): Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will hold a public grievance hearing at erstwhile Government Primary School near Capital Nursery in Unit-2 area of Ashok Nagar in Bhubaneswar, starting 10.30 am on Monday. "People can register their grievances for this hearing starting at noon on Friday", a notification issued by the General Administration and Public Grievance Department said. It further stated that the online registration through Janasunani portal (<https://janasunani.odisha.gov.in/>) or the Janasunani mobile application will remain open till 1,000 people have registered.

They are required to bring their registration acknowledgment receipt, personal identification document, and grievance letter to the designated venue at the specified time to present their complaints to the Chief Minister," it added.

Urban governance for Viksit Odisha stressed

Bhubaneswar (DMC): A two-day orientation programme for district-level Master Trainers on key urban initiatives held recently at SUDA Conference Hall in Bhubaneswar. The event was formally inaugurated by Usha Padhee, Principal Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department.

Delivering the keynote address, Padhee underscored the need for a transformative approach to urban governance. "To achieve Viksit Odisha @2036 and contribute to the national vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, we must move beyond conventional thinking," she said. A progressive,

planning-driven, and innovation-oriented mindset is essential. Our urban systems must be rooted in innovation, inclusivity, and future-readiness," she said. Padhee urged participants to actively engage with key urban missions such as the Mukhyamantri Sahari Bikash Yojana (MSBY), Shahajog and Ankur.

Urban programmes should not be seen merely as government schemes, but as commitments to improve the daily lives of citizens. Responsive and proactive implementation is the key," she added. The orientation programme featured thematic sessions by senior officials, including Arindam Dakua, Director,

Municipal Administration; Gangadhar Naik, Special Secretary; Satrugna Kar, Additional Secretary; Sikha Biswal, Financial Advisor; Saroj Kumar Das, Joint Secretary; Bilas Behera, Engineer-in-Chief; and Gurucharan Das, Managing Director, WATCO.

The sessions covered core focus areas such as Housing for All, Liveable Cities, Urban Sanitation, Water Supply Systems, Urban Planning, Good Governance, and E-Governance. Welcoming the participants, Rabindra Kumar Sahu, Additional Secretary and Project Director, SUDA, outlined the programme's objectives.

INSULTING FAITH

'Campa Cola' faces pilgrim fury over billboard

Bhubaneswar (DMC): Just a day before the revered Rath Yatra, controversy erupted in Bhubaneswar and Puri as Campa Cola advertisements placed near the Jagannath temple and Capital City drew sharp condemnation from temple servants and devotees.

The photo of the hoarding, strategically mounted above a shop close to the temple premises-surfaced on social media, sparking public outrage and triggering the hashtag #BoycottCampa across platforms. Calling the display a violation of religious sanctity, senior servant Ganeshwar Mahasuar stated, "Using Lord Jagannath's image or placing commercial branding in such sacred proximity is not just inappropriate-it deeply insults the faith of millions." Mahasuar



demanding immediate removal of the advertisement, warning that inaction could prompt strict action from the temple administration. He also urged brands to respect spiritual sentiments, especially during critical festivals like Rath Yatra, which draws lakhs of pilgrims to Puri annually. The timing of the incident-coinciding with the

spiritual fervour around Rath Yatra-has intensified the backlash. Several cultural and religious organisations have echoed concerns, warning advertisers against trivialising heritage sites for commercial visibility. While Reliance-backed Campa Cola has yet to release a statement, critics continue to mount pressure on the brand,

calling the move a "blatant marketing gimmick." As Rath Yatra festivities gear up, all eyes remain on how authorities, business owners, and the brand itself respond to this emotionally charged controversy." Using the image of Lord Jagannath or associating commercial products like Campa Cola or any other brand with the sanctity of the temple is completely unacceptable.

This is not just a mistake but an insult to the sentiments of millions of Jagannath devotees around the world. We request that the concerned authorities and business establishments remove such hoardings immediately. If not, the temple administration will take strict action against those responsible," Mahasuar said on Thursday. He further added,

"Such acts hurt the faith of devotees. Whoever is behind this display is acting irresponsibly and with disregard for religious sentiment. Through you, I appeal to all not to repeat such mistakes in the future." The controversy has sparked widespread public outrage, with many demanding that the sanctity of religious sites be preserved and kept free from commercial exploitation.

It is worth noting that Campa Cola, the once-iconic Indian soft drink brand recently revived by Reliance Industries, has been facing massive backlash online over hurting the religious sentiments of devotees of Lord Jagannath. Many users on the social media platform X have accused the company of hurting religious sentiments to promote its product.

Govt hikes cessation benefit for ad-hoc employees



Bhubaneswar, (DMC): 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. "Additionally, it has been decided that this one-time gratuity amount will increase by 10% every two years. No approval from the Finance Department will be required for this increase, and departments can independently implement the hike every two years," it added.

Jindal Nagar's Rath Yatra Witnesses Grand Community Participation

Angul, (DMC): The Rath Yatra festival at Devboomi, Jindal Nagar, was celebrated with deep devotion, meticulously adhering to the traditional rituals of the Puri Jagannath Rath Yatra. The grand event drew thousands of devotees from far and wide.

The majestic chariots- Taladhwa, Darpadalan and Nandighosh, representing Mahaprabhu Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra, and Mahaprabhu Jagannath respectively- embarked on their sacred annual journey from the Jagannath Temple in Devboomi to the Gundicha Temple within the township.

Mr. Naveen Jindal, Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) representing the Kurukshetra Constituency for the third term and Chairman of Jindal Steel & Power, along with his wife Smt. Shallu Jindal, Chairperson of the Jindal Foundation, and his mother Smt. Savitri Jindal, MLA from Hisar and Chairperson

Emeritus of the O.P. Jindal Group, actively participated as prime servitors in this divine celebration. As part of the ceremonial proceedings, Mr. Naveen Jindal took part in the 'Pahandi Vidhi' and performed Chherapanhara, the ritualistic sweeping of the path for the Lord's chariots. Expressing his devotion and gratitude on this auspicious occasion, Mr. Naveen Jindal said, "I offer my prayers to the Almighty for bestowing His divine blessings upon us all.

This is a festival where everyone is equal- there is no distinction between the wealthy and the poor. We come together to pull the chariots and receive the blessings of the Lord of the Universe, Lord Shree Jagannath. On behalf of the Jindal family, I wish everyone a joyous and blessed Rath Yatra." Responding to Media, Sri Jindal mentioned about the on-going hot cooked meals and Chilled Drinking water services by Jindal Foundation to



the devotees at Puri which will continue up to Sunabesa. "We are fortunate to serve the devotees at Jagannath Dham Puri consecutively for 11 Years" said Sri Jindal. All rituals, including Netra Lagi, Nava Jauban Darshan, Mangal Aarati, Tadap Lagi,

Pahandi, and more, were performed strictly in accordance with Vedic traditions. With deep reverence for Mahaprabhu Jagannath Sri Chaturdhamurti, the Jindal family participated in the early morning rituals under the guidance of the Chief Priest,

Sri Srikanthji. A key highlight of the festival was the enthusiastic participation of girls and women, who performed the Pahandi and exclusively pulled the chariot of Mahadevi Subhadra with great devotion and enthusiasm. Mr. Pankaj Malhan, Location Head - Angul, Mr. Damodar Mittal, Executive Director, along with their families, other officials, employees, and thousands from the community, actively took part in the procession and chariot pulling, adding grandeur and collective spirit to the celebration.

To ensure maximum outreach, the Rath Yatra was live-streamed on YouTube, allowing thousands of devotees to witness the divine procession virtually. The celebrations will continue in Jindal Nagar Township until 8th July, culminating with Niladri Bije, when the Chaturdhamurti Mahaprabhu returns to the Ratna Singhashan in the Jagannath Temple at Devboomi.

Rath Yatra Celebrated in Lokeswarapur



Khordha, (DMC): Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Lokeswarapur near Khordha. This Rath Yatra, which was first started by two small children, Pradeep Kumar Muduli & Sai Abinash Das. After all the rituals of Mahaprabhu were completed

in the presence of a large number of devotees, the Rath Yatra started. The devotees pulled the chariot for a distance of three kilometers. Bhajans, kirtans, pallas, dasakthiya etc. will be performed for nine days.

Bahuda Yatra will be held on July-5. Seeing the large gathering of devotees, police were deployed to maintain law & order situation. With the co-operation of Rath Yatra organizing committee members Ambika Prasad Das, Ramesh Muduli, Kalia, Sina, Kuna, Prafulla among others it ended with peacefully.

International Day Against Drug Abuse & Illicit Trafficking held in Jajpur



Jajpur, (DMC): Under the Banner of Break the Cycle, Stop Organised Crime, The District Administration Jajpur in collaboration with the district Social Security & Excise Department jointly celebrates this year International Anti-Drug and Illicit Trafficking Day here in Goutam Buddha Sanskriti Bhawan, Jajpur Town on Thursday. District Collector cum Magistrate Smt. P. Anwesha Reddy attained the day as the chief guest and said drug abuse is harmful to our individual, family, society and the nation too.

Alcohol and intoxicants such as Zarda, Gutkha, Khaini, Opium, Ganja, Brown Sugar are very dangerous and harmful to the addicts. Youth mass should avoid from these habits. She advised. Among others Dr. Ramesh Mallick the DPHO, Excise Superintendent Sri Dibyakishore Tandel, DIPRO Sri Kamini Ranjan Patnaik, Additional District Education Officer Smt. Surma Mohapatra, District Social Security Officer Sri Rabindra Nath Behera were joined the day as guest of honours respectively. Students from different areas in the district, intellectuals, Social Youths, Journalists were also participated the awareness event.

Shocking Corruption Scandal Rocks Barpali NAC! Millions Allegedly Embezzled in Development Projects!



Bargarh, (DMC): A storm is brewing in Barpali NAC as explosive allegations of embezzlement worth crores of rupees have surfaced, casting a dark shadow over supposed development initiatives! Tremendous sums allocated for vital city improvements- road repairs, kindergarten constructions, and drainage systems- are now under scrutiny.

While full bills flood in, reports indicate that only a fraction of the promised work has been completed. In a stunning twist, some projects are being billed not once, but twice! Under the previous administration, Barpali NAC received a whopping 40 crore

rupees intended for the region's development in Bargarh district. However, whispers of massive corruption suggest that a significant chunk of these funds earmarked for crucial road renovations has gone missing! Local councillors are crying foul, claiming a web of deceit interwoven with engineering contractors, as nameplates appear for projects that never saw the light of day.

Furious residents also raise alarms about contractors landing jobs without legitimate tender processes. A jaw-dropping example of this rampant corruption emerges with the duplicative construction of a drain at the famed "Subal Sahu Children's Garden," along with

After Warning from BJD, Permission Granted to Purchase Paddy Completely

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD, (DMC): There is dissatisfaction among the farmers due to the mismanagement in procurement of Rabi crop paddy in Nuapada District. Thousands of bags of paddy are lying in different mandis in the district. If all the paddy are not lifted from the mandis by 30th June, an intensify agitation will be launched, said Biju Janata Dal & PACS Presidents in a Press conference held at Nuapada on Thursday. Press conference was held under the Chairmanship of BJD State Secretary & PACS

Association President Rajesh Nigam where MLA Representative Jay Dholakia, BJD District President Abani Ranjan Joshi, Dharambandha PACS President Dilip Nirmalkar, Parkod PACS President Prem Lal Nayak, DCCB Director Manoj Sahu, Yuvraj Jagat, Romendra Chandrakar, all the presidents of different PACS along with Nilkamal Chandrakar, Dhaniram Sahu were present. In the afternoon, BJD leaders and PACS presidents met ADM Subash Chandra Roito and CSO Pradyumna Routray. They

gheraoed the CSO office and raised slogans against the state government and district administration. They demanded to lift all the paddy lying in different mandis. As per the CSO office, in this rabi season 12500 farmers in Nuapada District have registered their name to sell their paddy. Procurement Committee has set a target of procuring 7,11,000 quintals paddy. Till date 6, 72,000 quintals paddy have been purchased from 11,600 farmers. After the warning from BJD, permission has been granted to buy paddy completely.

Rath Yatra at Sri Baladev Jew Pitha, Sidhal

Jagatsinghpur, (DMC): The grand Chariot Festival at Sri Baladev Jew Pitha, Sidhal under Jagatsinghpur Block ended peacefully to- day evening. The most attractive part of Chariot Festival was Chera Pahara by Collector, Jagatsinghpur as "Thakur Raja" J. Sonal as per tradition.

Sri Baladev Jew Pitha known as prominent Tourist Spot of Jagatsinghpur district and all Govt. Officials were present there to celebrate Chariot Festival. In spite of adverse weather thousand of devotees from different part of district and out side present



there. As per tradition all the rituals ended in time and devotees pulled the single Chariot to "Mausi Maa" mandir with enthusiasm.

Repair of village road demanded



absence of water. While many vehicles are coming and going, the drain connecting the eastern end of Pokharigaon to Brahman Sahithu Laghi Nayak Sahi or Shoth Muha has been filled up after a few months and has broken in many places. The

drain is blocked by garbage and sand and mud from Thakurani to Shoth Muha. Despite telling the Sarpanch of Pokharigaon about this many times, no action has been taken. Pokharigaon villagers and young social workers have warned that if the government does not pay attention to this and take action soon, the villagers of Pokharigaon will take to the highway in the coming days.

Lions Club Rayagada Sponsored Lions Club Rayagada Aparajita

RAYAGADA, (DMC): It was Installed on Thursday at Hotel Lotus PARADISE by District 322c4 Governor Ln. Saraswati Patra as chief guest of this occasion and 1st V.D.G elect Ln. Ashwin Kumar dash guest of honour cum Induction officer. LIONS CLUB Rayagada president Ln.T. Rajani Kumari patra presided the meeting and handed over the collar and power to charter president G.Rama Krishna. President addresses the house and secretary Ln. Avanti addressed the house.

Vice President 1 Ln. Rajhita korada coordinated entire programme. Lions Club Rayagada Aparajita felicitated Walkers Fraternity, LIONS Fraternity, Media Fraternity, Arjun sabar who is renowned for teaching Taekwondo and kick boxing. Appreciation certificate given to the tiny tots (B.kanishk, P.vrinda, k.Ruthvik) who recognised Bharat world book of records for simultaneous roller skating (1 hour 25 minutes 25 seconds) to encourage them. one more tiny tot Devans Kishore Rath who is recognised for rotating the sticks one form of martial arts skill is awarded with appreciation certificate. This programme was completed successfully.



From Page- 1

Sea of devotees...

the air at the Singhadwar of the Puri temple as Lord Sudarshan was first escorted to Darpadalan, the chariot of Devi Subhadra. Following Lord Sudarshan, Lord Balabhadra was taken to his Taladhwa chariot. Goddess Subhadra, the sister of Lord Jagannath and Lord Balabhadra, was brought to her Darpadalan chariot in a special 'dhadipahandi' procession by servitors. Finally, Lord Jagannath was taken to his chariot in a ceremonial procession amid the sounds of gongs. In the 'Pahandi' ritual, deities are brought from the temple to the chariots. Descending from the 'Ratna Sinhasana', the bejewelled throne, the three deities were taken out of the temple down the 22 steps known as 'Baisi Pahacha' through the SinghaDwar. Several rituals like 'Mangla Arati' and 'Mailam' were held before the presiding deities set out from the sanctum sanctorum of the temple.

Lakhs of devotees have converged in Puri for the annual festival. While most of the devotees were from Odisha and the neighbouring states, many from abroad also joined in what is considered one of the largest religious processions globally, officials said.

RATH YATRA: Chariot...

Similarly, Devi Subhadra's chariot stopped near the Town Police Station at Marichikot. Speaking to reporters, Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan said all the rituals were performed at the stipulated time this year without any problem and the chariot pulling was also started as per schedule around 4 pm. However, it took a lot of time to take forward the chariot of Lord Balabhadra and there was a delay. Moreover, the number of devotees who thronged the Grand Road for the car festival was unexpectedly much higher compared to previous years, he said.

CM, Union...

DGP Y B Khurania, Director (Intelligence) R P Koche & his Private Secretary Manoj Sahoo. BJP's Odisha Prabhari Vijaypal Singh Tomar accompanied him. On the occasion, Governor Hari Babu Kamtham Pati and the CM also unveiled the special Rath Yatra edition of Utkal Prasanga, published by the Information and Public Relations Department, at the Lion's Gate.

A moment for...

distinction of being the first Indian astronaut to have travelled to ISS. Along with three other astronauts, he reached the ISS when the Dragon spacecraft, named Grace, docked with the orbital laboratory at 4:01 pm (IST) on Thursday over the North Atlantic Ocean, marking the climax of a 28 hours flight. Incidentally, Axiom 4 mission heralds the return to space not just for India, but Poland and Hungary as well.

Divine rain...

a celestial Pushpanjali or offering of flowers by the heavens. The cool breeze and sacred drizzle only heightened the spiritual atmosphere, making the experience unforgettable for the lakhs of devotees present.

Indian Oil Paradip Refinery Celebrates Rath Yatra

Paradip, (DMC): Indian Oil Paradip Refinery Township was filled with excitement and devotion as residents and visitors celebrated Rath Yatra, marking the annual journey of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra.

The air was filled with chants of hymns, the beat of drums, and the fragrance of flowers, creating an atmosphere of spirituality and merriment. The event was meticulously planned. The chariot procession started from Paradip Refinery temple, attracting thousands who gathered along the streets. Following a traditional route through significant landmarks,



the procession shared the divine blessings of Lord Jagannath with all devotees.



Press conference of BJD & PACS Presidents for Paddy Procurement in Nuapada

Green Paradip Trust and working journalists distributed pure curd water, soft drinks & saplings to Rath Yatra devotees

Paradip, (DMC): The Rath Yatra festival in Paradip was celebrated with great enthusiasm on Friday. On this occasion, to quench the thirst of the visiting devotees, members of Green Paradip Trust and working journalists of Paradip distributed pure cold curd water, soft drinks, ORS pouches and saplings at the water distribution center near the Mausai Maa temple. The center was inaugurated by Paradip Municipal Chairperson Basant Biswal as the chief guest.

On this occasion, Shri Biswal and Executive Officer Abhishek Panda were among the guests who distributed curd water and saplings along with the members of the trust to the public. The program was organized by Green Paradip Trust President Rakesh Patnaik, while Trust Coordinator



Sudhansu Nayak, Advisor of the trust Journalist Shukdev Jena and Sasank Shekhar Acharya, members Vivekananda Rout, Alok Mohapatra, Prashant Swain, Deepak Das, Santosh Bharati, Ajit Das, Prashant Rout, Sumant Swain, Sudarshan Biswal. Meanwhile, Municipality chairman Shri Biswal highly appreciated the organization's noble idea of distributing saplings and pure drinking water during the cholera and diarrhea epidemic.

Parliamentary Panel to Grill Boeing, Air India Executives on Ahmedabad Crash



New Delhi, (HS) : The Parliamentary Committee on Transport has summoned Boeing executives, Air India representatives, the Civil Aviation Secretary, and DGCA officials for a discussion on air safety issues related to the tragic Boeing Dreamliner crash within seconds of take-off from the Ahmedabad airport. The meeting is likely to be held in the first week of July. According to sources, "multiple shortcomings" in the aviation sector, with the maintenance of aircraft, are now a matter of huge concern. The committee will also address frequent helicopter accidents that have taken place recently on the Char Dham pilgrim route. Discussion will include the role of the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), aircraft maintenance schedules, and the mental fitness of pilots, sources said. The committee's report will likely be tabled in the next session of Parliament. Before this meeting, the committee is scheduled to hold a consultation in Gangtok to review air and road connectivity to the northeastern states, with the focus on developing tourism. The committee members are expected to travel by an Air India flight to get a first-hand assessment of the airline and its operations. The DGCA had ordered the immediate removal of three senior Air India officials, including a divisional vice president, from all responsibilities related to flight crew scheduling and rostering as part of the first punitive action after the Boeing crash. It has also asked the Tata Group-owned airline to initiate internal disciplinary proceedings against the three officials without further delay. Failure to do so would result in severe action, including the possibility of the airline losing its operating licence. Meanwhile, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has begun analysing the black box data recovered from the crash site of Air India Flight AI171. "The black boxes were brought from Ahmedabad to Delhi by IAF aircraft with full security on 24 June 2025. The front black box arrived at the AAIB lab in Delhi with the Director General (DG) of AAIB at 1400 hrs on 24 June 2025," according to an official statement on Thursday.

"On the evening of 24 June 2025, the team led by the DG of AAIB, along with technical members from AAIB and the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), began the data extraction process. The Crash Protection Module (CPM) from the front black box was safely retrieved, and on 25 June 2025, the memory module was successfully accessed and its data downloaded at the AAIB lab," the statement said.

"So-Called Court of Arbitration on Indus Waters Treaty Illegal, Void": India



New Delhi, (HS) : India has, in a strongly-worded statement, rejected a "supplemental award" by an "illegal" Court of Arbitration set up supposedly over the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty. Calling the self-appointed panel unlawful and in "brazen violation" of the treaty itself, India's foreign ministry unequivocally trashed its claims and "concerns". In a five-point statement, India's Ministry of External Affairs said, "Today, the illegal Court of Arbitration, purportedly constituted under the Indus Waters Treaty 1960, albeit in brazen violation of it, has issued what it characterizes as a 'supplemental award' on its competence concerning the Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects in the Indian Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir." Making it clear that New Delhi never considered this self-appointed, so-called 'arbiter' to have any locus standi in any of India's matters, the foreign ministry stated that "India has never recognised the existence in law of this so-called Court of Arbitration, and India's position has all along been that the constitution of this so-called arbitral body is in itself a serious breach of the Indus Waters Treaty."

"Consequently, any proceedings before this forum and any award or decision taken by it are also for that reason illegal and per se void," it added. Blaming Pakistan squarely for the Indus Waters Treaty being put in "abeyance" after terrorist attacks in India, the foreign

ministry reiterated that "Following the Pahalgam terrorist attack, India has in exercise of its rights as a sovereign nation under international law, placed the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance, until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism. Until such time that the Treaty is in abeyance, India is no longer bound to perform any of its obligations under the Treaty." Calling out the "so-called Court of Arbitration" for acting at the behest of Pakistan and highlighting that the self-appointed panel has "no existence in the eyes of the law", India said, "No Court of Arbitration, much less this illegally constituted arbitral body which has no existence in the eye of law, has the jurisdiction to examine the legality of India's actions in exercise of its rights as

a sovereign," adding that "India, therefore, categorically rejects this so-called supplemental award as it has rejected all prior pronouncements of this body." Labeling Pakistan as the global epicenter for terrorism, India underscored that "This latest charade at Pakistan's behest is yet another desperate attempt by it to escape accountability for its role as the global epicenter of terrorism. Pakistan's resort to this fabricated arbitration mechanism is consistent with its decades-long pattern of deception and manipulation of international forums." India has made it amply clear that the Indus Waters Treaty shall continue to remain in abeyance till Pakistan does not eradicate every shred of terror infrastructure and financing, as well as eliminate every single terrorist on its soil. New Delhi

has also sent a clear message to Pakistan and the global community that any terror activity or terrorist attack in India with links found directly or indirectly to Pakistan will be considered an escalation which merits a military response by India "anywhere in Pakistan". The Indus Waters Treaty being kept in abeyance was one of the first diplomatically-punitive measures taken by India against Pakistan after the Pahalgam terror attack was traced to have Pakistani-links. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that "blood and water cannot flow together." India has also repeatedly told Pakistan that "terror and talks cannot happen at the same time" either, leaving Islamabad and Rawalpindi (Pak Army headquarters) with no option but to put an end to its policy of "cross-border terror" in order to get its share of water as per the agreement.

Under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, India had, as a gesture of goodwill, graciously agreed to share the waters from the Indus river and its five tributaries - Baes, Sutlej, Ravi, Chenab, and Jhelum - on a mutually agreeable basis. According to the pact, the waters of the three 'western rivers' - Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab are to be released for Pakistan as per agreeable terms, while the entire volume of water from the three 'eastern rivers' - Baes, Sutlej, and Ravi - are for India. There are detailed terms and conditions which allows for building of dams, sharing of data annually, and multiple other factors.

In Big Win For Trump, US SC Curbs Judges' Powers to Block His Orders



New Delhi, (HS) : The US Supreme Court handed President Donald Trump a major victory on Friday by curbing the power of lone federal judges to block executive actions. In a 6-3 ruling stemming from Trump's bid to end birthright citizenship, the court said nationwide injunctions issued by district court judges "likely exceed the equitable authority that Congress has granted to federal courts." The top court did not immediately rule on the constitutionality of Trump's executive order seeking to end automatic citizenship for children born on American soil. But the broader decision on the scope of judicial rulings will remove a big roadblock to Trump's often highly controversial orders and reaffirm the White House's power.

"Federal courts do not exercise general oversight of the Executive Branch; they resolve cases and controversies consistent with the authority Congress has given them," said Justice Amy Coney Barrett, author of the opinion. "When a court concludes that the Executive Branch has acted unlawfully, the answer is not for the court to exceed its power, too," Barrett said in an opinion joined by the other five conservative justices on the court. The three liberal justices dissented. The ruling has far-reaching ramifications for the ability of the judiciary to rein in Trump or future American presidents. The case was ostensibly about Trump's executive order signed on his first day in office ending birthright citizenship. But it

actually focused on whether a single federal district court judge has the right to issue a nationwide block to a presidential decree with a universal injunction while the matter is being challenged in the courts. Trump's birthright citizenship order has been deemed unconstitutional by courts in Maryland, Massachusetts and Washington state, leading the president to make an emergency appeal to the Supreme Court in an effort to get the top court to strike down the use of nationwide injunctions. The issue has become a rallying cry for Trump and his Republican allies, who accuse the judiciary of stymieing his agenda against the will of voters. Trump's executive order on birthright citizenship is just one of a number of his agenda items that have been blocked by judges around the country - both Democratic and Republican appointees - since he took office in January. During oral arguments in the case before the Supreme Court in May, both conservative and liberal justices had expressed concerns about the increasing use of nationwide injunctions by district courts in recent years.

'Nuclear Weapon': Justice Samuel Alito, an arch-conservative, said nationwide injunctions pose a "practical problem" because there are hundreds of district court judges and every one of them is "convinced" they know best. Solicitor General John Sauer compared nationwide injunctions to a "nuclear weapon," saying they "disrupt the Constitution's careful balancing of the separation of powers." The Trump administration had asked the Supreme Court to restrict the application of a district court's injunction solely to the parties who brought the case and the district where the judge presides. Past presidents have also complained about national injunctions shackling their agenda, but such orders have sharply risen under Trump, who has seen more in two months than Democrat Joe Biden did during his first three years in office.

Trump's executive order on birthright citizenship decrees that children born to parents in the United States illegally or on temporary visas would not automatically become citizens. The three lower courts ruled that to be a violation of the 14th Amendment, which states: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States."

Live-in relationships go against middle-class norms, harm women more: Allahabad HC

LUCKNOW, (HS) : Observing that live-in relationships disproportionately harm women in the event of a breakup, as men can easily move on and settle down after marriage while women struggle to find a life partner, the Allahabad High Court remarked that such arrangements go against the settled norms of middle-class Indian society. The single-judge bench, comprising Justice Siddharth, expressed displeasure at the rising number of such cases reaching the courts. "The concept of live-in-relationship goes against the interest of the women since a man can marry even after live-in-relationship (with) a woman or number of women but it is difficult for the women to find a life partner after a breakup," Justice



Siddharth noted. The court further said, "This Court finds that after live-in-relationship has been legalised by the Apex Court, the Court had fed up such cases. These cases are coming to the Court because the concept of live-in-relationship is against the settled law in the Indian Middle-Class Society." These remarks came while the court was hearing the bail plea of an accused named Shane Alam, who had been booked under various provisions of the Bharatiya

Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. He was accused of engaging in a physical relationship with the prosecutrix on the false assurance of marriage and later reneging on his commitment. Advocate Madhu Yadav, appearing for the informant, argued that the actions of the accused had ruined her entire life, claiming that no one would now be willing to marry her. Taking note of the argument, the court observed that while the idea of live-in relationships had attracted the younger generation, its consequences were evident in cases like the one before it. However, the bench granted bail to the accused on 24 June this year, considering his continued incarceration since 25 February.

New Delhi's Hauz Khas Temple Celebrates 47th Car Festival with Grandeur

New Delhi, (HS) : 47th Rath Yatra Festival was celebrated at the Jagannath Temple in Hauz Khas Village of New Delhi amidst massive fanfare and spiritual fervour. The entire temple compound was elegantly decorated with colourful curtains, papers and lights befitting to the grand occasion. Commencing from the wee hours of the day all the religious rituals have been performed before the Deities in a solemn atmosphere. At around 1.15 p.m. in the afternoon the Four Deities were taken in Dhadi Pahandi procession to the colourfully decked up chariot stationed at the Grand Road in front of the temple. The entire atmosphere got reverberated with the recitals of hymns, roaring of slogans like Haribol and Jai Jagannath, sounding of Huluhuli, blowing of conch and playing of musical instruments such as Ghanta, Kartala, Mardala, Jhanja and Mrudanga by the devotees. Unusual interest, unexpected enthusiasm and



unprecedented excitements were witnessed among the 1 lakh strong Odia and non Odia devotees gathered here alongwith their family and relatives from Delhi and National Capital region to take part in the August Ceremony.

The Temple Management Committee Neelachala Seva Sangha under the stewardship of Secretary Ravindra Nath Pradhan did elaborate arrangements to maintain discipline and decorum during the occasion.

The entire arrangements of the Rath Yatra were well managed and smoothly conducted by the able and active Organising team of Sree Neelachala Seva Sangha, which include President Bighneshwar Rout, Secretary Ravindra Nath Pradhan, Dr Ashok Choudhury, Abhaya Pradhan, Ashok Pradhan (A), Khirod Patra, Gajendra Samanta, Abhiram Sutar, Ashok Pradhan (B), Jitendra Mohapatra, Ajay Pradhan, Pankaj Mohanty, Nishidha Kumar Das, Rankanidhi Sahoo, Bijay Sahoo, Dillip Kumar Swain, Amulya Ojha, Sukanta Sahu, Manager of the Temple Rashmiranjan Behera, Assistant Managers Sashikanta Sahoo and Sanjiv Jena and Priests Sanatan Padhi, Debabrata Mishra, Jagabandhu Dash, Premananda Satpathy, Santosh Panda and Prashant Dash.

Punjab Police arrest two in major crackdown on online child sexual abuse

CHANDIGARH, (HS): In a significant crackdown on online child exploitation, the Cybercrime Division of Punjab Police has arrested two individuals and identified 33 suspects involved in viewing, transmitting, and distributing Child Sexual Exploitative and Abusive Material (CSEAM) across various online platforms. Director General of Police (DGP), Punjab, Gaurav Yadav, said on Friday that the operation codenamed CSEAM-4 was carried out on Thursday and spanned 40 locations across 18 districts and three Commissionerates. The action followed cyber tip-offs from the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The two individuals arrested have been identified as Akash Babu, a resident of Rajasthani Colony in Khanna, and Harpreet Singh, a resident of village Burmajra in Morinda, Rupnagar.

Raipur Jagannath Temple Celebrates Car Festival with Massive Fanfare

Raipur, (HS) : The Annual Car Festival was celebrated by the largest Jagannath Temple of Chhattisgarh at Gayatri Nagar in Raipur with pomp, splendour and massive fanfare. The Mega Ceremony hosted by Shree Jagannath temple Seva Samiti witnessed the congregation of more than a lakh Odia and Non Odia Devotees from Raipur and adjoining areas. In the morning religious rituals were performed before the Deities in the Temple amidst spiritual fervour. Special Havan was organised here to invoke the blessings of the God. After the conclusion of Havan at around 11.45 p.m. the Pahandi Bije of God Sudarshan, Lord Balabhadra, Debi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath were conducted by servitors to the three aesthetically and elegantly decorated Chariots parked in the Grand Road in front of the Temple. The entire atmosphere got reverberated with the recitals of hymns, roaring of slogans like Haribol and Jai Jagannath, sounding of



Huluhuli, blowing of conch and playing of musical instruments such as Ghanta, Kartala, Mardala, Jhanja and Mrudanga by the devotees. Unusual interest, unexpected enthusiasms and unprecedented excitements were visible

among the Organisers and participants of the Grand Celebration. The Temple management Committee under the active supervision of its Founder President and Local MLA Purandar Mishra had made proper arrangements to control the

EU Envoy Hopes Restoration of Democratic Order in Bangladesh

Dhaka, (H.S): Michael Miller, the European Union's Ambassador to Bangladesh, on Thursday expressed hope that Bangladesh will soon witness the restoration of democratic order through a free, fair, and credible national election. The EU Ambassador made the remarks during his meeting with Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Standing Committee member Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury at the party chairperson's office in Dhaka.

The meeting was also attended by the BNP Organising Secretary Shama Obaed, local media reported. Addressing reporters after the meeting, Khosru said, like other international partners, the EU is awaiting the formation of an elected government to determine the future course of action. "The first thing that was discussed was the election. The election is being held in February, so everyone is relieved and satisfied, and they hope that we will move towards elections soon and the country will return to democratic order. Because they feel comfortable working with an elected government, we have had detailed discussions about



these," Bangladeshi media outlet UNB quoted the BNP leader as saying. Khosru added that during the meeting, the problems and rights of workers in Bangladesh were discussed. He also said that the EU seeks to cooperate with the future Parliament of Bangladesh to ensure that activities can be carried out independently, effectively, and with accountability."

They are thinking about new ways of funding. They want to cooperate with the next government economically and be a development partner of Bangladesh. This is a good sign," Khosru further added. Last week, United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk expressed grave concern over recent legislative amendments made under the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government in Bangladesh that allowed the ban of political parties, organisations, and their related activities.

Addressing the 59th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva, the UN human rights chief urged the interim government to make meaningful advances on reforms to create the environment for free and inclusive elections. "I am concerned about recent changes to legislation to allow the banning of political parties and organisations and all

related activities. This unduly restricts the freedoms of association, expression, and assembly. I urge meaningful advances on reforms to create the environment for free and inclusive elections," said Turk. Previously, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) presented a fact-finding report on Bangladesh that included suggestions in certain specific domains, such as accountability and justice, police and security, civic space, political system, and economic governance.

According to the report, the UN noted that prohibiting political parties would hinder a genuine transition to multiparty democracy and would essentially disenfranchise a significant portion of the Bangladeshi electorate. Human Rights Watch, a US-based advocacy group, also severely criticised the Yunus regime for attempting to suppress the rights of supporters of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the Awami League party. The recent legislative initiatives by the interim government risk undermining fundamental freedoms, the rights body emphasised in a statement. "On

May 12, the interim government ordered a 'temporary' ban on the Awami League using newly introduced powers under a draconian amendment to the Anti-Terrorism Act. The ban includes, among other actions, meetings, publications, and online speech supporting the party," said HRW. "The ban on the Awami League will apply until party leaders have faced trial for abuses committed during their 15-year rule, a process that could last years, thus effectively proscribing the party."

The interim government has prohibited all activities, including any kind of publication, media, online and social media, any kind of campaign, procession, meeting, gathering, conference, etc. by the Bangladesh Awami League, curtailing supporters' freedom of speech and association," it further added. Earlier, the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres too had called for inclusive elections in Bangladesh, urging the interim government under Yunus "to continue to make every effort" to be inclusive, taking into account the voices of women and youth as well as those of minority and indigenous communities.

Japan Hangs Serial Killer In First-Ever Execution Since 2022

Tokyo, (H.S): Japan on Friday executed a man convicted of the 2017 serial killing of nine people in Kanagawa Prefecture. The 34-year-old accused Shiraishi Takahiro, dubbed Japan's "Twitter killer," was hanged at the Tokyo Detention House. This was the first execution carried out in Japan since July 2022, and the first under Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's administration, according to media reports. Addressing a press conference on Friday morning, Japan's Justice Minister Keisuke Suzuki stated that he carefully considered the matter before approving the execution order for the death row inmate convicted of killing nine people. "This case, driven by selfish motives such as sexual and financial gratification, resulted in the deaths of nine individuals over two months - a deeply serious incident that has caused shock and anxiety across society."

I understand it is an especially heartbreaking case for both the victims and their families," the Justice Minister told reporters. "The death sentence was finalised following a thorough trial process. After careful and deliberate consideration of all factors, I issued the execution order," Suzuki added. Local media reported that the accused, Shiraishi, was taken into custody in 2017 after the remains of one man and eight women were discovered at his apartment in Zama City, Kanagawa Prefecture, south of Tokyo.

In 2020 Tokyo District Court's Tachikawa branch sentenced Shiraishi to death, calling his acts a "malicious crime in criminal history" for murdering, dismembering, and storing the bodies of the nine people in his apartment. The ruling was later finalised in 2021. According to the court ruling, Shiraishi was found guilty of killing a man and eight women between the ages of 15 and 26 in his apartment after targeting them for expressing suicidal thoughts on social media platforms. The court mentioned that the nine victims did not consent to be killed, and dismissed the defense's claim that Shiraishi was possibly mentally incompetent when the crimes were committed.

NATO's Defence Spending Increase Won't Significantly Affect Russia's Security: Lavrov



Moscow, (H.S): The goal to increase the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) military spending will not significantly impact Russia's security, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Thursday. "I don't think it will be significant in any way," Lavrov told a press conference, commenting on the impact of NATO member states' goal to increase defence expenditure to five per cent of gross domestic product by 2035. Leaders of

NATO member states concluded a two-day summit on Wednesday with a brief joint declaration committing to raise their defence spending to five per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually by 2035. The five-paragraph statement issued on Wednesday following the high-level summit in The Hague outlined that the new spending target will be split between two key categories: 3.5 per cent for core defence and 1.5 per cent

for related areas, including critical infrastructure, networks, and defence industrial capabilities. The plan will undergo a review in 2029, taking into account the strategic environment and revised capability targets, the document added. US President Donald Trump hailed the agreement at a press conference after the summit, asserting that Washington had long carried more than its fair share of the alliance's defence burden.

However, he singled out Spain, criticising Madrid as the only country refusing to meet its full commitment, Xinhua news agency reported. Trump said the United States is negotiating a trade deal with Spain and warned that Madrid could be made to "pay twice as much" through trade measures. Spain has agreed with NATO to limit its military spending to 2.1 per cent of GDP, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced on Sunday, ahead of the NATO summit.

South Korea: Lee Nominates New Chief of Constitutional Court

Seoul, (H.S): South Korean President Lee Jae Myung on Thursday nominated a former Supreme Court justice as the new chief of the Constitutional Court, the presidential office said. Former Supreme Court Justice Kim Sang-hwan was picked to replace then acting court chief Moon Hyung-bae, who retired in April. Lee also tapped Oh Young-joon, the presiding judge of the Seoul High Court, to join the court's nine-member bench, presidential chief of staff Kang Hoon-sik told reporters.

The nominations mark the new government's first step toward restoring the Constitutional Court," Kang said. They aim to end the attempts that had reached a dangerous level to undermine the court, and to further enhance public trust and the independence of its rulings. "The top court was in the spotlight as it upheld the impeachment of former President Yoon Suk Yeol in April over his failed martial law bid in December, with some judges facing threats from Yoon's supporters ahead of the ruling."



In addition, Lee nominated Lim Kwang-hyun, a lawmaker from the ruling Democratic Party, as commissioner of the National Tax Service. Lim formerly served as Commissioner of the Seoul Regional Tax Service and was elected to the National Assembly last year through a proportional representation seat slot. If appointed, Lim would become the first sitting lawmaker to lead the National Tax Service, Yonhap news agency reported. All such nominees must undergo parliamentary confirmation hearings before they can be formally appointed by the

President, but they do not need parliamentary approval to take their posts. Earlier on June 23, Lee Jae Myung named five-term lawmaker Ahn Gyu-back as Defence Minister, the first time in 64 years that a civilian has been nominated for the post. Lee's pick of Ahn is seen as carrying out his election pledge to reform the military, a key promise from his presidential campaign to rebuild a nation fractured by the brief imposition of martial law in December last year under his predecessor, the ousted President Yoon Suk Yeol. The military has come under scrutiny

since Yoon deployed troops to the National Assembly when he declared martial law on December 3, allegedly to block lawmakers attempting to stop his brief imposition of martial law decree. Yoon was removed from office in April over the martial law debacle. Ahn is a veteran politician with the Democratic Party who has mostly served on the defence subcommittee of the National Assembly. If confirmed, he will be the first civilian Defence Minister since 1961, when former President Park Chung-hee seized power through a military coup."

As the first civilian Defence Minister in 64 years, Ahn is expected to lead and oversee the transformation of the military that was mobilised during the martial law period," Kang said in a press briefing. Lee also tapped former Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyun as South Korea's top diplomat, as he announced his picks for 11 Cabinet positions, including ministers for the environment, science and labour, in the latest nominations since he assumed office June 4.

UN Charter is Not A-La-Carte Menu: Guterres

United Nations: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called out the selective application of the UN Charter, saying it is not an a-la-carte menu. "Today, we see assaults on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter like never before: the threat or use of force against sovereign nations;

the violation of international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law; the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure; the weaponization of food and water; the erosion of human rights," he told a UN General Assembly

event on Thursday to mark the 80th anniversary of the signing of the UN Charter. "On and on, we see an all-too-familiar pattern: follow when the charter suits, ignore when it does not," he said. "The Charter of the United Nations is not optional. It is not an a-la-carte menu. It is the

bedrock of international relations. We cannot and must not normalize violations of its most basic principles." The UN Charter is a declaration of hope - and the foundation of international cooperation for a better world," said Guterres. "The charter has given us the tools to change

destinies, save lives, and deliver hope to the most desperate corners of the world. And we can draw a direct line from the creation of the United Nations and the prevention of a third world war," he added. Upholding the purposes and principles of the UN Charter is a never-ending

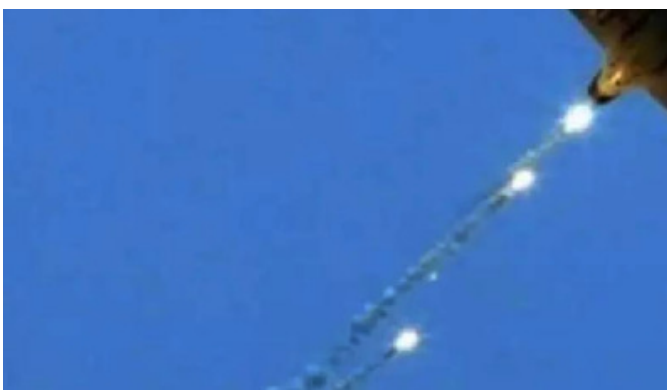
mission, said Guterres, stressing the need more than ever to respect and re-commit to international law - in words and deeds, Xinhua news agency reported. "On this anniversary, I urge all member states to live up to the spirit and letter of the charter, to the responsibilities it

demand, and to the future it summons us to build - for peace, for justice, for progress, for we the peoples," he said. The UN Charter, the foundational treaty of the world body, was adopted on June 25, 1945, at the San Francisco Conference and was signed by delegates the following day.

Iran's Three Key Nuclear Sites Significantly Damaged in 12-Day Operation: IDF

Tel Aviv, (H.S): The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on Friday announced that its 12-day military operation against Iran resulted in significant damage to three of the country's main nuclear facilities, Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan, dealing a major blow to the Iranian regime's nuclear infrastructure. The IDF asserted that Israel launched 'Operation Rising Lion' on June 13 intending to damage the Iranian nuclear and missile projects following the identification of progress in the three programmes whose ultimate goal was to "destroy the State of Israel".

According to the Israeli military, to thwart the future of the program, 11 senior nuclear scientists who were central knowledge centres in the Iranian weapons group were eliminated, and the inactive nuclear reactor at Arak was also attacked to prevent its future use. "The key building blocks of the missile manufacturing industry were attacked. More than 35 sites were attacked, 200 launchers and 50 per cent of all the Iranian regime's launchers were completely



destroyed. In total, more than 1,500 components, 15 enemy aircraft, more than 90 targets 80 surface-to-air missile launchers and 6 airfields were attacked. Hundreds of Iranian military forces were eliminated, dozens of commanders were attacked and more than 30 senior members of the Iranian regime's security apparatus were thwarted," read a statement issued by the IDF. The IDF noted that throughout the operation it created increasing achievement and complete freedom of aerial action in the heart of Iran and fully met the objectives defined for the operation. "Throughout the entire

operation, high-quality and accurate intelligence, along with operational, technological and aerial capabilities, were evident. And alongside the entire offensive effort, the defence systems operated day and night," the IDF stated. Furthermore, the Israeli military mentioned that creating air superiority in Iranian skies, "the Israeli Air Force carried out 1,500 sorties and about 600 refuellings were made en route to Iran." "In the entire operation, 1,400 strikes were carried out by the fighter formation and 500 by the UAV formation, and the furthest of them was carried out at Mashhad airport, about 2,400

km from Israel, by a fighter jet. In addition, hundreds of interceptions of anti-aircraft missiles and drones were carried out. In total, 99 per cent of the drones launched from Iran were intercepted," said the IDF. The Israeli military noted that during the 12-day operation, the Home Front Command, rescue and recovery forces operated in more than 170 locations across the country.

Earlier on Tuesday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed that Israel has accepted a ceasefire proposal with Iran, marking the end of 12 days of intense hostilities between the two regional rivals. In an official statement released by the Prime Minister's Office, Netanyahu declared that Israel had met all strategic goals of its military campaign, dubbed Operation Rising Lion, and even exceeded expectations. "Israel had achieved all the objectives of Operation Rising Lion, and even far beyond that. Israel has removed a dual immediate existential threat - both in the nuclear domain and in the ballistic missile domain," the statement read.

Agreement Signed on Establishing Special Tribunal For 'Crime of Aggression' Against Ukraine

Paris, (H.S): Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Alain Berset signed an agreement on the establishment of a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, including the Statute of the Special Tribunal in the Strasbourg city of France."

Together with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Alain Berset, we signed the agreement on the establishment of the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine. Today's agreement and this tribunal give us a real chance to ensure justice for the crime of aggression," Zelensky posted on X on Thursday. "We must send a clear message: aggression leads to punishment. And we must do this together - as all of Europe. The Hague is waiting for those responsible. There must be accountability. We are grateful to the Council of Europe for taking the lead in this process. Justice will certainly be restored," the post added. Ursula von der Leyen,



President of the European Commission, also took to social media, welcoming the agreement. "I warmly welcome the agreement signed between President Zelensky and the Council of Europe to establish the Special Tribunal for the crime of aggression."

The aggressors will need to face the judges. And justice will prevail," the European Union chief said in a post on X. The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. The organisation's Committee of Ministers, composed of representatives of its 46 member states, on Wednesday authorised Secretary General Berset to sign the agreement. "Ukraine and the Council of Europe have signed an

agreement to establish the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine. This historic signature reminds us that international law must apply to all - with no exceptions, and with no double standards."

This is a tribunal to judge between victims and aggressors, between impunity and accountability, because without accountability, there can be no lasting peace for Ukraine and Europe as a whole," said Secretary General Berset. The establishment of the Special Tribunal was requested by the Ukrainian authorities on May 13, and endorsed by the annual meeting of the Council of Europe foreign ministers in Luxembourg the following day.

Resilient Economy: Total Brand Value of Top 100 Indian Firms Hits \$236.5 Billion

New Delhi, (H.S): Showcasing resilient economy amid robust policies, the collective brand value of the top 100 Indian companies reached \$236.5 billion in 2025 to date, according to a new report. The 'Brand Finance India 100 2025' ranking results remain stable, reflecting a year of steady gains for major Indian brands across sectors.

Tata Group has once again secured its position as India's most valuable brand ranked by becoming the first Indian brand to cross the \$30 billion threshold. Its brand value is up 10 per cent to \$31.6 billion. As the second most valuable Indian brand, Infosys (brand value up 15 per cent to \$16.3 billion) continues to lead in the IT Services sector.HDFC Group (brand value up 37 per cent to \$14.2 billion) is third in the rankings. It has cemented its role as a financial services titan, post-merger with HDFC Ltd.At the fourth place, LIC (brand value up 35 per cent



to \$13.6 billion) also demonstrated commendable growth, followed by HCLTech (brand value up 17 per cent to \$8.9 billion), at the eighth position, up one rank from 2024."Larsen & Toubro Group (brand value up 3 per cent to \$7.4 billion) held firm with increased thrust on high-tech manufacturing along with diversification into renewables and semiconductors as the ninth most valuable Indian brand ranked," the report mentioned.Rounding off the top 10, Mahindra Group (brand value up 9 per cent to \$7.2 billion) sustained strong momentum with tech and engineering innovation.

Adani Group emerged as the fastest-growing Indian brand ranked this year, with its brand value up by 82 per cent. The group's growth is attributed to aggressive and integrated infrastructure focus, surge in green energy ambitions, and increased brand equity across key stakeholders, said the report.India's sustainability leadership also gains recognition. Tata Group holds the highest Sustainability Perceptions Value (SPV) among Indian brands ranked, standing at \$4.3 billion while Infosys has the highest positive sustainability gap value at \$115 million.

India's GDP Projected to Grow at 6.2 Pc in FY26 with Inflation Around 4 Pc

Mumbai, (H.S): India's GDP is projected to grow at 6.2 per cent in FY26, with CPI inflation around an average 4.0 per cent, a report showed on Friday, adding that it does not expect any further rate cuts from the RBI "unless downside risks to growth materialise".

The Current Account Deficit or CAD (as per cent of GDP) is projected at 1.0 per cent in FY25 and 0.9 per cent in FY26, while the fiscal deficit is estimated at 4.4 per cent, according to a CareEdge Ratings report."The 10-year G-Sec yield is expected to range between 6.0 per cent-6.2 per cent by the end of FY26, and the USD-INR exchange rate is projected to trade between 85 and 87 by the end of FY26," the report mentioned.In the recent MPC, RBI signalled prioritising



growth amid easing inflation concerns. In a significant liquidity measure, the RBI also announced a phased 100 bps CRR cut starting September, which is expected to inject approximately Rs 2.5 lakh crore of durable liquidity into the system by December 2025.For FY26, the RBI retained its GDP growth forecast at 6.5 per cent, while lowering the CPI inflation

projection to 3.7 per cent from 4.0 per cent. Meanwhile, crude oil prices surged sharply in June amid heightened Middle East tensions, touching around \$79 per barrel - the highest since January 2025 - before easing by 14 per cent as tensions subsided. CareEdge Ratings expects Brent to average \$65-70 per barrel in FY26, assuming no further escalation in tensions. These

SEBI Imposes 25 Lakh Penalty on BSE For Breach of Norms

Mumbai, (H.S): The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Wednesday imposed a penalty of Rs 25 lakh on BSE Ltd for violation of norms related to dissemination of price-sensitive information by corporates, weak supervision of broker trades, and laxity in taking action.The punitive action follows an inspection of the stock exchange carried out between February 2021 and September 2022, after which a show cause notice was issued.

The SEBI investigation revealed that BSE's system architecture allowed its paid clients and internal listing compliance monitoring (LCM) team to access corporate announcements before these were made public through its website.The capital markets regulator observed that the data dissemination process lacked safeguards to ensure simultaneous and equal access to all stakeholders, which is critical to maintaining market integrity and preventing unfair information advantage.It concluded after its probe that the BSE failed to comply with the regulation that mandates stock exchanges to



ensure fair and transparent access to all users.It also noted that the BSE did not establish a really simple syndication (RSS) feed, which could have mitigated the risk of unequal access to corporate disclosures.The SEBI also flagged serious shortcomings in BSE's monitoring of client code modifications, which are permitted only in case of genuine errors. The exchange failed to initiate disciplinary action against brokers with frequent modifications and did not adequately monitor 'error accounts', raising concerns over the possibility of misuse and lack of due diligence in trades between unrelated institutional clients.The exchange was found to be merely taking confirmation from brokers with respect to trades transferred to the error account being subsequently liquidated. Inspection of all brokers for error account review was not being done every year, and even when

it was done, the BSE was relying on confirmations provided by brokers themselves.The SEBI order points out that, being a first-level regulator, the "BSE must have internal controls on how to manage and handle such corporate announcements so as to ensure compliance with its obligations". It said all persons should have unrestricted, transparent and fair access to information."

The availability of information about listed companies with employees of LCM of the BSE and its paid subscribers before it is available to general investors through its website of the BSE has clearly impaired the concept of impartiality, transparency and fairness of information dissemination from the first-level regulator BSE," the order states."This case involves multiple acts of omissions, laxity and negligence with a certain amount of lethargic approach, which cannot be allowed to be exonerated if the first level regulator having paramount duties of regulation and oversight shows such approach of lax regulation leaving visible scope for misuse of its systems," the order added.

India's Sugar Output To Rise 15 Pc At 35 Million Tonnes on Favourable Monsoon: Crisil

New Delhi, (H.S): India's gross sugar production is likely to rise 15 per cent in sugar season 2026 to about 35 million tonnes, aided by above average monsoon, boosting cane acreage and yields in key sugar producing states such as Maharashtra and Karnataka, a Crisil report showed on Friday.The growth is expected to ease tightness in domestic supply and has the potential to boost ethanol diversion and revive exports with appropriate policy support.In fiscal 2026, with improved supplies and potentially higher diversion of sugar for blending ethanol with gasoline, the operating margin of sugar mills is likely to recover to about 9-9.5 per cent. This should support credit profiles of sugar

players, which saw some pressure last fiscal. Over the past two seasons, while the fair and remunerative (FRP) price of sugarcane has risen 11 per cent, ethanol prices have largely remained unchanged.In sugar season 2026, diversion for ethanol is expected to rise to 4 million tonnes (from 3.5 million tonnes in sugar season 2025), supported by high sugar output and the government's 20 per cent blending target (19 per cent average achieved so far), as it offers faster cash-flow churn, the report mentioned.Meanwhile, domestic sugar prices have held steady at Rs 35-38 per kg this season. With output expected to rise, sugar prices are likely to remain range-bound.Exports, at 1

million tonnes in sugar season 2025, can comfortably continue at similar levels in 2026 with high sugar output and opening inventory of 2 months of consumption."Sugar inventory levels at the end of fiscal 2026 are expected to remain at levels similar to last year, limiting the rise in working capital debt despite higher distillery operations," said Poonam Upadhyay, Director, Crisil Ratings. For the upcoming season, key watchpoints for the sector include temporal and spatial distribution of monsoon, its impact on cane yield, timely ethanol price revisions and clarity on export policy amid global sugar price movements, according to the report.

India Flags Off First Consignment of Rose-Scented Litchi from Pathankot to Qatar

New Delhi, (PIB): In a significant boost to India's horticultural exports, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, in collaboration with the Department of Horticulture, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of Punjab, facilitated the flag-off of the first consignment of 1 metric tonne of rose-scented litchi from Pathankot, Punjab to Doha, Qatar on 23rd June 2025.

In addition, 0.5 metric tonne of litchi was also exported to Dubai, UAE from Pathankot, marking a twin export achievement and reinforcing India's potential in global fresh fruit markets.This milestone initiative underscores the excellence of India's horticultural produce and highlights the country's growing agri-export capabilities. It offers immense



opportunities for farming communities by providing international market access for their fresh and high-value produce.The initiative was facilitated by APEDA in association with the Department of Horticulture, Government of Punjab, Lulu Group, and progressive farmer, Shri Prabhat Singh from Sujampur, who supplied the high-quality produce.According to the National Horticulture Board, Punjab's litchi production for FY 2023-24 stood at 71,490 metric

tonnes, contributing 12.39% to India's total litchi output. During the same period, India exported 639.53 metric tonnes of litchi. The area under cultivation was 4,327 hectares with an average yield of 16,523 kg/ha.The flagged-off consignment, comprising a reefer pallet of premium Pathankot litchis, represents a major step forward for the region's growers. The success of farmers like Shri Prabhat Singh underscores the potential of Pathankot-which benefits from favourable agro-

JSW plans 4,000 crore debt sale to fund Akzo Nobel acquisition deal

New Delhi, (H.S): Indian conglomerate JSW Group is in talks with global lenders to raise about 40 billion rupees (\$468 million) to partly fund its purchase of Akzo Nobel NV's local business, according to people familiar with the matter.

Foreign banks including Barclays Plc, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group Inc. and Standard Chartered Bank Plc will arrange the debt, which is expected to be denominated in rupees, said the people, who asked not to be identified because the information is confidential. JSW Group has also reached out to international private credit funds including Ares Management Corp, Cerberus Capital Management and Farallon Capital Management though nothing has



been finalized yet, said the people. Morgan Stanley, a bank on the acquisition, will also be involved in the borrowing, two of the people said.

JSW Group agreed to buy up to 75% of Akzo Nobel NV's Indian business in a deal valued at about \$1.6 billion, including debt, as the Indian conglomerate seeks to expand its presence in areas such as paints. A rupee bond deal would be a boon for supply in India's booming local debt market, which year to date

QCOs Benefit MSMEs By Enhancing Product Quality, Consumer Satisfaction: Piyush Goyal

New Delhi, (H.S) : The Quality Control Orders (QCOs) have benefitted the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) by enhancing their products quality and global competitiveness, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has said.

The QCO is a critical step in restricting the import of sub-standard products and ensuring consumer safety, while also enhancing the competitiveness of Indian industry.In a post on X social media platform, Goyal said he held a stakeholder consultation meeting with the MSME sector to discuss the implementation of QCOs. "Appreciated their feedback on making the standard setting process more collaborative, inclusive and easier to comply with. MSMEs acknowledged how the QCOs have benefitted their sector by



enhancing product quality and consumer satisfaction," said the Commerce Minister.Aligned with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Zero Defect, Zero Effect', MSMEs also reiterated the importance of a 'quality mindset' to boost domestic capabilities and elevate the country's global competitiveness, according to the

minister.In line with the vision of PM Modi to establish a strong quality framework across industries, DPIIT has been actively notifying QCOs to enhance manufacturing standards and bolster the global reputation of 'Made in India' products.These efforts are complemented by the development of testing infrastructure, product manuals,

and accreditation of testing laboratories. Through initiatives like these, the government is striving to create a world-class, self-reliant manufacturing ecosystem under the vision of "Atmanirbhar Bharat."

QCOs reflect a strategic push to raise product standards in India, enabling Indian manufacturers to thrive in both domestic and international markets.Earlier this month, the Quality Council of India (QCI), the national custodian of accreditation in the country, launched a revamped portal of the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL), aimed at streamlining the accreditation process and enhancing digital accessibility, particularly for laboratories and MSMEs.

RBI's New Project Finance Directions To Cushion Banks Against Risk

Mumbai, (H.S): The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) final directions on project financing will help strengthen the guardrails against risk in project financing and harmonise the relevant and extant regulations across regulated entities, according to a Crisil report released on Thursday.The final directions, released on June 19, come into effect from October 1.Crisil Ratings Director Subha Sri Narayanan said: "Compared with the draft of May 2024, the final directions improve the ease in doing business for lenders.

The provisioning requirements are significantly lower, not only in the case of under-construction projects but also for operational projects." Additionally, the guidelines are applicable only on a prospective basis. As a result, the impact on credit costs would be well below what was envisaged earlier. The removal of the proposed six-month limit on the moratorium period after the date of commencement of commercial operations (DCCO) will also



benefit lenders, allowing them to continue to structure loans in line with the expected cash flows of projects.Further, there are some changes, compared with the extant regulations, which will bolster the overall risk management of project financing, according to the Crisil report.

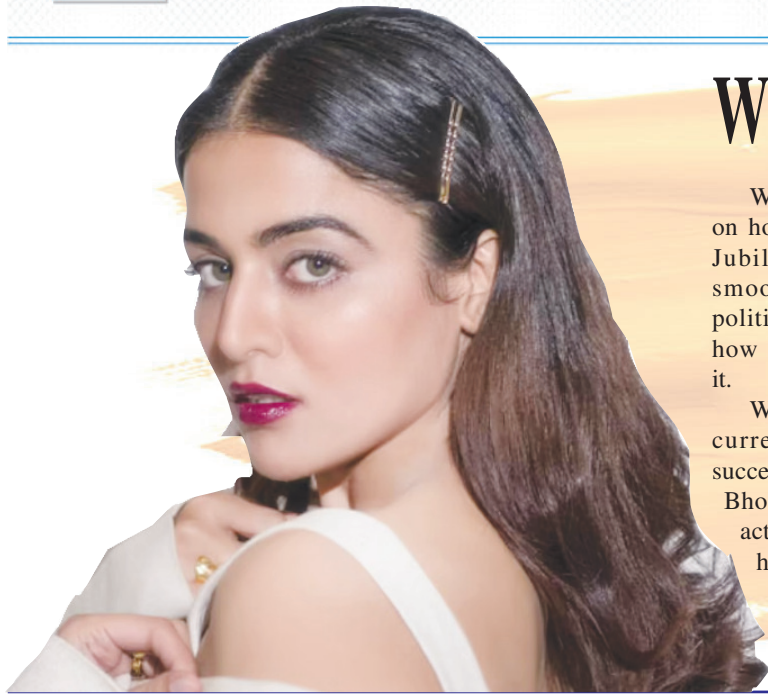
The introduction of limits on the number of lenders and the individual exposure size for projects financed by a consortium would ensure each lender has a higher stake and

hence is more proactive in due diligence, credit appraisal and risk underwriting during the loan tenure. Further, it will enable more efficient decision-making given the lower number of stakeholders and greater alignment of interests.

The new direction brings in a higher base level standard asset provisioning for under-construction projects set at 1 per cent and a slightly higher 1.25 per cent for under-construction CRE exposures (that compares

with the extant 0.4 per cent to 1.0 per cent), with step-ups linked to DCCO deferment period.This higher base level provisioning will bring in a differentiation between provisioning for under-construction and operational projects to address the inherently higher risk in the former. It also now guides lenders to step up their provisioning cushion aligned to the number of quarters for which the DCCO has been extended, in case the risk characteristics of a funded project change, the report states.

More stringent conditions on permitted cumulative DCCO deferment to maintain 'Standard' asset classification reduced to up to 3 years for infrastructure projects, irrespective of reason. For non-infrastructure projects, this has been retained at two years.This could pose a challenge for lenders in cases of long-drawn litigation, but allows earlier recognition of stress and adoption of necessary steps to address the same, albeit with higher provisioning, the report added.



Wamiqa: Things did not easy for after Jubilee, I faced many rejections

Wamiqa Gabbi opens up on how her breakthrough in Jubilee didn't result in a smoother journey, facing politics of the industry and how she navigated through it.

Wamiqa Gabbi is currently enjoying the success of her recent release Bhool Chuk Maaf, and the actor insists it has come to her after a long wait. Her breakthrough role came in the 2023 web series Jubilee, but she

admits that things didn't get as smooth for her post it as one would expect it to be. Wamiqa Gabbi asserts that the show's success helped build her confidence, «but I did go through a lot of challenges even after that». She shares, «I was getting a few offers, but then I was getting rejected too. It's not like things became easy for me after Jubilee, it was nothing like that. It took me a lot of time to do get out of all the rejections and

understand why it was happening.» The actor adds, «That's when you get introduced to the other things happening in the industry, the other kind of politics. You understand that there are not one or two reasons [behind the rejections]. There are layers of things that are happening. You have to break all of them in order to make yourself visible to everybody. Then you're just waiting for a good opportunity to prove

yourself again.»

Being an outsider also plays a part in how it affects an artiste mentally, as Wamiqa says, «As an outsider, my next film is so much dependent on what I did in my last one. You know that you might or might not get a second chance. So, your energy is put into just doing your best in whatever that you're doing right now. And you are just waiting for another chance to just prove it again. It's a tough

journey.»

But Wamiqa chooses to focus on the positives: «It is about what you absorb from life, how do you take your challenges, and what is it that you are learning from your experiences. Are the negatives really bothering you or are you thankful about the positive impact that it's had. I kind of looked at both of it, and slowly I can feel that it has changed me for good. The whole point is to do what you're supposed to do and be nice.» she ends.

Movie Release

Maa movie review: Kajol's forgets to bring horror in this drama



«Main yahaan baithkar chamatkar ka intezaar nahi kar sakti,» declares Kajol's character towards the climax, as her daughter is abducted by a supernatural force. Fair enough, because frankly, neither can we. We've already spent two hours waiting for any sign of horror in this horror-mythological film. If something doesn't start spooking us soon, we might just call the monster ourselves.

Maa, directed by Vishal Furia of Chhorii fame, kicks off with a girl child's sacrifice in Chandrapur, and then we are immediately transported 40 years later. Ambika (Kajol) is leading a happy life with her husband Shubhankar (Indranil Sengupta) and daughter Shweta (Kherin Sharma). For some reason, they don't want to visit Chandrapur, Shubhankar's ancestral village. But his father's death forces him to go and visit, and he dies. Ambika and Shweta, grieving, give it a visit after three

months on the insistence of Joydev (Ronit Roy) as they plan on selling off their ancestral house. But Ambika isn't ready for what's waiting. The film pins its ambitions on the story of Goddess Kali and Raktabija, an epic premise no doubt. One drop of the demon's blood, which fell to the Earth, creates a monster that terrorises the village for decades. Sounds great on paper. But the film takes ages to set the mood in the first half. You are neither scared nor sucked into this world. The second half sets things into motion, for a buildup to a climax that should have felt more pacy. And more impactful. There's social commentary buried somewhere in the ritualistic blood, VFX smoke and characters speaking Bengali deliberately in such a heavy accent as though their life depended upon it-coupled with a feminist undertone. It barely lands. The intent is in place though: the idea of a desperate mother becoming

Maa in the climax is executed well, and is frankly the only part where you are hooked. Now if only the entire film had such elevation points.

Now, let's talk about the main attraction- the supernatural entity. It gets a ton of screentime, but unfortunately, Maa's makers mistake screentime for scariness. The creature is supposed to send shivers down your spine; instead, it looks like it escaped from a mid-budget TV serial and got stuck in a CGI filter. Kajol's act as Ambika feels one dimensional- it's the quintessential Kajol you have seen in umpteen films, and her character at no point progresses from being ordinary to awe-inducing. Ronit Roy gets a chance to experiment here, and he fares better. The chemistry between Kajol and her on-screen daughter Kherin isn't as endearing or emotional as it should have been. Also, there was absolutely no scope to add a song in the climax, so it feels a bit out of place.

To sum it up, Maa has all the right ingredients, from maternal rage to a haunted village. But the makers throw all of it into a cauldron and forget to turn the heat up. It wants to say something powerful about a mother pulling out all stops for her children, but sadly the beating heart is buried underneath the conventional storyline.

Maa movie review: Director: Vishal Furia, Cast: Kajol, Ronit Roy, Indranil Sengupta, and Kherin Sharma, Star Rating: 5

Kannappa Review: A Devotional Drama with a Stirring Climax, Uneven Narrative

The much-anticipated mythological drama Kannappa, inspired by the legend of the Sri Kalahasti temple, has finally hit theatres. Starring Manchu Vishnu in the lead, the film attempts to blend spirituality, transformation, and cinematic grandeur - with mixed results.

Kannappa follows the journey of Thinnadu, a tribal youth and staunch atheist. Raised away from religious customs, his worldview is challenged after falling in love with a village girl (played by Preity Mukhundan). As Thinnadu battles inner turmoil and societal expectations, he embarks on a transformative spiritual path, eventually becoming a devoted follower of Lord Shiva. The soul of Kannappa lies in its emotionally charged final 40 minutes, where the film finally finds its spiritual footing. The climax delivers a powerful emotional punch that is likely to resonate with a wide audience. Prabhas plays Rudra, a mentor-like figure, bringing quiet strength and charisma to his limited screen time. Mohanlal appears in a striking cameo as Kiraata, while Mohan Babu and Sarath Kumar lend credibility to their respective roles as Mahadeva Sastry and Kannappa's father. Akshay



Kumar and Kajal Aggarwal, as Lord Shiva and Parvati, are visually well-cast. However, the film falters in its first half, which feels stretched and lacks narrative momentum. The writing is shallow in places, with weak dialogues and a lack of emotional depth. Songs, while visually appealing, often feel out of place in a devotional setting. Preity Mukhundan fits her role well, and Manchu Vishnu, despite a few rough edges, shows sincerity in both his performance and production duties. His son plays young Thinnadu, though the dubbing (with a noticeable English accent) is a glaring issue. The film's VFX, particularly in the climax, is commendable and enhances the mythological elements. Shot against the scenic backdrops of New Zealand, the

natural visuals offer a refreshing alternative to set-heavy productions. The production values are decent and suit the devotional tone of the film.

Kannappa is a film of two halves: the first half disappoints, but the second half redeems it to an extent with spiritual weight and emotional payoff. The star power of Prabhas, Mohanlal, and Mohan Babu adds some shine, but inconsistent writing holds the film back. Worth a watch for its message and performances, but best approached with tempered expectations.

Released in five languages - Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, and Hindi - Kannappa promises to deliver a visually spectacular, emotionally resonant cinematic experience rooted in devotion and mythology.

ICC introduces new rules stop clock in World Test Championship

Dubai, (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 as the ban on the use of saliva remains in force. The website said fielding teams may deliberately apply saliva on the ball to force a ball-change but the current document available on playing conditions for men's Test cricket does not mention any such change. 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. In such scenarios, the umpire at the bowler's end will disallow all runs to the batting side, return any not out batter to his original end, signal a no-ball or a wide-ball if applicable, make a short-run signal, award five penalty runs to the fielding side and "request their captain to identify which of the two batters will be on strike for the next delivery".

Neeraj Sponsors Rs 2K Fan's VVIP Trip to Javelin Classic



New Delhi, (HS) : In a heartwarming gesture that has won hearts online, Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra surprised a fan seeking Rs 2000 to attend his upcoming javelin event by sponsoring the fan's entire trip to Bengaluru. The Neeraj Chopra Classic 2025, originally postponed due to India-Pakistan tensions, is now scheduled for July 5 at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium. The story began when an X (formerly Twitter) user named Ranjith posted a message saying, «If anyone sponsors me Ts2000, I can go to watch this from Coimbatore,» along with a video promoting the event. To everyone's surprise. This act of generosity ahead of one of the most anticipated javelin meets has elevated Chopra not only as a sports icon but also a people's champion. The Neeraj Chopra Classic, awarded 'A' category status by World Athletics, is being co-organised by Chopra, JSW Sports, the Athletics Federation of India, and World Athletics. The event will witness global stars such as Anderson Peters (Grenada), Thomas Röhler (Germany), Julius Yego (Kenya), Curtis Thompson (USA), Genki Dean (Japan), Ramesh Pathirage (Sri Lanka), and Luiz Mauricio da Silva (Brazil).

New Delhi, (HS) : Cristiano Ronaldo signed a new two-year contract extension with Saudi Pro League club Al Nassr, following weeks of speculation over his future. After the official confirmation, the club also posted a teaser video with Ronaldo walking along a beachfront and stating, «Al Nassr forever» Ronaldo is already 40-years-old now and his Saudi Arabia adventure hasn't exactly

Bumrah Face question ahead of Edgbaston Test

New Delhi, (HS) : Will Jasprit Bumrah play in the second Test at Edgbaston? That is the biggest question facing the Indian team management as it looks to draw parity against England after losing the series opener from a commanding position at Leeds.

In his media interaction post the five-wicket loss on day five, head coach Gautam Gambhir made it clear that there will be no change in the workload of injury-prone pace spearhead Bumrah, who is slated to play three out of five Tests in the English summer. With the first Test ending on June 24 and the next beginning on July 2, there is enough time for Bumrah to recover but only he knows best about his body. Bumrah, the only bowler who consistently posed a challenge for the English batters, took a five-wicket haul in the first innings and delivered an overall 44.4 overs in the match.

A pace attack without Bumrah makes the opposition's task significantly easier and increases the Indian team's headache, over deciding which of the two remaining Tests its trump card could be a part of. The management, thus, would have had a much easier decision to make had Shubman Gill and Co gone to Birmingham 1-0 up. «That is a tough call indeed for the team management. He should ideally play when the series is alive but the management knows best on how to manage his workload,» former India chief selector MSK Prasad



told. ABCCI source added: «Bumrah has close to a week's gap between first and second Test. So the decision rests with chief selector Ajit Agarkar, Gautam Gambhir and Shubman Gill. They might assess him a day before the Test, and take a final call.» There is only a three-day gap between second and third Test, scheduled at Lord's from July 10-14, and therefore, Bumrah is certain to not feature in both the games. «We won't change the plans,» said Gambhir on Tuesday when asked whether the team management will push Bumrah to play four Tests.

Captain says Do-Or-Die Games Against China In FIH Pro League

Berlin, (HS) : In a do-or-die double-header, the Indian women's hockey team will face Asian rivals China and hope to end their losing streak in the FIH Hockey Pro League (Women) 2024-25 in Berlin on June 28 and 29. The Salima Tete-led squad will take inspiration from their male compatriots, who managed to end their campaign in the Pro League last week with a spirited win against Belgium. This helped them finish in the eighth position on the points table, only ahead of Ireland. While China is currently placed in the fourth position in the Pro League points table, India is placed last - in the ninth position with England ahead by a point in eighth place. Both teams have yet to play two



matches in the league. «It is a very crucial double-header for us over the weekend. But we will draw inspiration from the Indian men's team, who finished with an inspiring win against Belgium,» expressed the captain Salima Tete.

She further emphasised that, «This Pro League outing has been a learning experience with several grey areas that we need to work on as a team. We will be introspecting on this performance when we go back home, but for now our focus is on doing well against China.» India will take confidence from their last outing against China, where they beat them 3-0 in the pool stage and 1-0 in a closely fought final to win the Asian Champions Trophy in Bihar in November 2024.

Cristiano Ronaldo's new Al Nassr contract



gone according to plan. Al Nassr has also missed out on AFC Champions Elite qualification for this season and the Portugal international had also hinted at an exit. But now it looks like he will end his career with Al Nassr. According to a report by The Sun, Ronaldo has also received a signing-on fee of 287 crores approximately, which will increase to 446 crores approximately, if he

remains in the second year of his contract. According to The Sun report, he will also be earning 2092 crores (approximately) each year in wages, which is 5.72 crores per day. Ronaldo will earn 57.81 crores approximately, which could go up to over half of 100 crores if he triggers his bonuses of 46.99 crores (for winning the Golden Boot) and 93.98 crores approximately if Al Nassr win the title.