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English Daily



Stampede Mars Rath Yatra

Three killed, several injured in stampede near Gundicha temple in Puri in the early hours of Sunday



Puri (DMC) : At least three devotees were killed and over 50 others injured in a stampede near Shree Gundicha Temple at Saradhabali in Odisha's Puri in the early hours of Sunday. The deceased have been identified as Premakanta Mohanty (80), Basanti Sahoo (36) and Prabhati Das (42).

The stampede occurred at around 4.20 pm when a large number of devotees gathered to catch a glimpse of the deities on their respective chariots, which had arrived at Saradhabali from Shree Jagannath Temple on Saturday at around 1:30 pm after the chariot-pulling, left incomplete earlier resumed the



previous morning. According to eyewitnesses, the stampede occurred after two trucks carrying wooden logs tried to enter the already crowded area where palm-log ladders were scattered. There were no adequate police arrangements or officials on-site to manage the swelling number of pilgrims, they alleged.

Puri Collector Siddharth Shankar Swain, however, said that there was a sudden rush of devotees soon after the 'pahada'. "Nine devotees complained of breathlessness and were immediately taken to the hospital. Unfortunately, three of them died, while the rest are currently stable," he said. Law Minister

Prithviraj Harichandan has announced a high-level inquiry in the incident. "The tragedy involving three deaths has deeply saddened us. We will conduct a thorough investigation, and appropriate action will be taken against those whose negligence led to this unfortunate incident," he said.

This is the first time a fatal stampede has occurred outside the Gundicha Temple, locals said. This comes at a time when the BJP-run state government has come in for severe criticism from the Opposition for mismanagement over inordinate delay in pulling the Nandighosha chariot of Lord Jagannath. This apart, around 750 devotees had to be taken to hospital on Friday due to exhaustion and crowd pressure during Rath Yatra. More than 230 devotees were taken to the Infectious Disease Hospital (IDH), while around 520 others were treated at the district headquarters hospital (DHH), officials said. While most were discharged after first aid, one critically ill devotee had to be shifted to the SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. At least 12 patients are in the ICU.

Unforgivable negligence: CM



Bhubaneswar, (DMC) : Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Sunday issued an apology for the tragic stampede near Gundicha Temple in Odisha Puri this morning, which resulted in three deaths and multiple injuries. "I and my government seek forgiveness from all Jagannath devotees. We offer our deepest condolences to the families of the deceased and pray to Mahaprabhu Jagannath to give them strength in this time of grief," the CM said in a statement.

This level of negligence is wholly unacceptable. He described the incident as "unforgivable negligence" and promised a thorough investigation into security lapses. "This level of negligence is wholly unacceptable. An immediate investigation into the safety lapses will be conducted and strict action will be taken against those responsible, with exemplary measures put in place to prevent such tragedies in the future," he posted on X. The CM, however, attribute the incident to chaotic rush of devotees eager to catch a glimpse of the sibling deities on the chariots. "Due to the intense eagerness among devotees to have a glimpse of Mahaprabhu at Saradhabali, an unfortunate incident occurred because of the resulting jostling and chaos," he wrote.

Puri Collector & SP removed

Puri (DMC) : After terming the Saradhabali stampede an 'unforgivable negligence', Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Sunday ordered for transfer of Puri Collector Siddharth Shankar

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Rs 25 lakh exgratia announced

The CM has also announced a financial assistance of Rs 25 lakh each for the next of the kin of the deceased devotees. "Mahaprabhu's Rath Yatra is a matter of pride and honour for the Odia community. No negligence will be tolerated in this regard. Exemplary actions will be taken against all responsible individuals," he said.

Take urgent corrective measures: Naveen



horrific tragedy came from the devotees' relatives, with no government machinery present to manage the surging crowds, highlighting a shocking lapse in duty. The inordinate delay in pulling the Nandighosha chariot on Rath Yatra day was conveniently attributed to "Mahaprabhu's wish", a shocking excuse that masks the administration's complete abdication of responsibility. While I refrain from accusing the government of criminal negligence, their blatant callousness has undeniably contributed to this tragedy. I urge the government to implement urgent corrective measures to ensure the smooth conduct of Adapa Bijje, Bahuda, Suna Beshha, and other key Rath Yatra rituals,"

Mumbai, (HS) : The stampede, occurring just a day after the abysmal failure of crowd management during Rath Yatra that left hundreds injured, has exposed the Mohan Mjahi government's glaring incompetence in ensuring a peaceful festival for devotees, Leader of Opposition Naveen Patanik posted on X on Sunday.

"Eyewitnesses report that the initial response to this

Law Minister admits lapses



Police ran away, alleges husband of deceased

Puri (DMC) : The people in Odisha woke up to the tragic news of the death of three devotees, who had come for a darshan of the deities of Puri Jagannath temple on three chariots, in front of the Gundicha Temple in the wee hours of Sunday. The deceased have been identified as Prabhati Das, Basanti Sahu, and Premakanta Mohanty. According to reports, the mishap occurred at around 4:20 AM when an overwhelming crowd of devotees had gathered for darshan of Lord Jagannath and His

Bhubaneswar, (DMC) : In the wake of the tragic stampede at Saradhabali near Gundicha Temple in Puri, Odisha Law Minister Prithviraj Harichandan on Sunday acknowledged that there was clear negligence in managing the crowd during the Rath Yatra festivities and assured that strict action would be taken against those responsible. The statement comes hours after a stampede claimed the lives of three devotees and left over 50 others injured.

Speaking to the media, the Minister said, "This

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Saswat Mishra appointed Principal Secretary to CMO

Bhubaneswar (DMC) : After an administrative shake-up following the Saradhabali stampede, the Odisha government on Sunday appointed Saswat Mishra, a 1996-batch IAS officer, as

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Gajapati Maharaja expresses grief

In the aftermath of the tragic stampede incident near the Gundicha Temple in the wee hours of Sunday, which reportedly claimed the lives of three devotees and left several others injured, Puri Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb has expressed sorrow and extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

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Railway to resume direct recruitment for train controllers



New Delhi, (HS) : The Ministry of Railways has announced that 60 per cent of vacancies in the train control department will be filled through direct recruitment by the Railway Recruitment Board (RRB),

marking the return of fresh intake into the department after a gap of seven years. According to reforms notified on June 25, the vacancies will now be open to graduate-level candidates, with the remaining 40 per cent to be

filled through Limited Departmental Competitive Examinations (LDCE) or merit-based promotions from among eligible employees.

"How this examination will be conducted and what it will be called are some of the issues yet to be decided by the competent authority," said Dilip Kumar, Executive Director, Information and Publicity, Railway Board. Until 2017, the control department used to receive direct recruits via the Railway Traffic Apprentice Exams held by the RRB. However, the system was

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Bike manufacturers to provide two helmets soon

New Delhi, (HS) : The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) is about to bring about important changes to the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 to ensure greater safety for two-wheeler users. It will now be mandatory for two-wheeler manufacturers to provide not one, but two, helmets at the time of purchase of the vehicle.

All two-wheelers with a top speed exceeding 50 km/hr will also need to be fitted with Anti-Lock Braking Systems (ABS). A draft notification to this effect has already been released on June 25. The changes will be effective



within three months after the final notification of the new amended rules in the official gazette. The draft notification states that the aim is to enhance road safety for both riders and pillion riders. "At the time of purchase of the two-wheeler, three months from the date of commencement of Central Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Rules, 2025, the manufacturer of the two-wheeler shall supply two protective headgears conforming to specifications prescribed by the Bureau of

Continued P-4

MANN KIBAAT

95 cr people now benefiting from social security schemes: PM

New Delhi, (HS) : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said around 95 crore people are benefiting from one social security scheme or the other, while till 2015, government schemes reached less than 25 crore people. In his monthly Mann Ki Baat radio broadcast, Modi cited an International Labour Organisation (ILO) report which stated that more than 64 per cent of India's

population is getting some form of social protection benefit.

"Presently, most of the populace in India is taking advantage of one social protection benefit or the other and recently a very important report of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has come out. It has been mentioned in this report that more than 64% of the population of India is now definitely availing some sort of



social protection benefit or the other," Modi said. This is one of the biggest coverages in the world, he said. "Today, around 95 crore people of the country are getting the benefit of some or the other social security scheme; whereas, till 2015, the government schemes were reaching less than 25 crore people," Modi said. From health to social security, the country is moving ahead with the feeling of

saturation in every field, he said. "This is also a great picture of social justice. These successes have instilled a belief that the coming times will be even better; India will become even stronger at every step," Modi said.

The prime minister also hailed as a "remarkable milestone" the World Health Organisation declaring India Trachoma-free and lauded the efforts of healthcare workers for

the success. Trachoma is a highly contagious bacterial infection, which has been a major cause of preventable blindness worldwide. In his broadcast, Modi also extended his best wishes to all the fortunate devotees going on the various religious yatras. "I also commend those who are engaged in making these Yatras successful and safe

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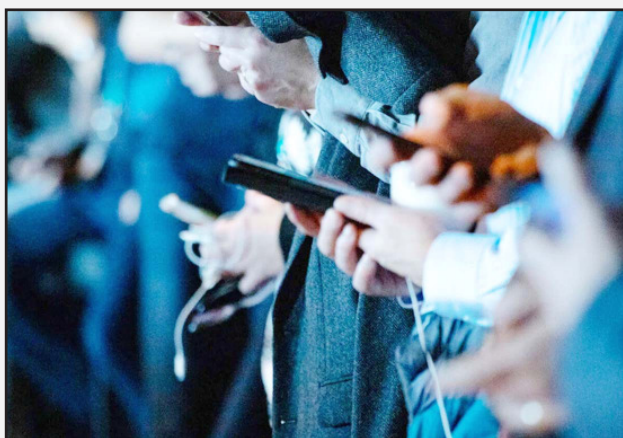
Sensex Highs

This week has ended on a note of economic optimism, with the Sensex closing at 84,059, its highest level since October 1. The rupee has recovered to 85.5 to the US dollar, after having slid to below 86.9 on June 19. Brent crude prices, too, have softened to about \$67 a barrel, after soaring to \$79-plus at the start of the week. And the southwest monsoon has revived, with all-India average rainfall during June 1-27 being 10.3 per cent higher than the historical normal for this period. That's a turnaround from the situation till June 15, when cumulative rainfall was 31 per cent below normal and 30 out of the country's 36 meteorological subdivisions had registered deficits in excess of 15 per cent. That deficiency is now largely confined to Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Marathwada-Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and the Northeast region. To be sure, these optimistic cues are less about genuinely positive expectations of the future than relief over the worst apparently being put behind. The ceasefire between Iran and Israel since October 24 was preceded, only a day before, by the former launching missiles at a US air base in Qatar and threatening to block the Strait of Hormuz - through which a fifth of the world's oil and a third of its liquefied natural gas flow. Those tensions have ebbed, for now. So have the uncertainties from the tariff war that US President Donald Trump unleashed in early April; they have seen some de-escalation with his administration claiming to have signed a truce deal with China. There has been a pause on the implementation of Trump's so-called reciprocal tariffs on other countries, including India, as well. But that three-month deadline ends on July 9. Simply put, there is only a temporary reprieve from the trade policy and geopolitical strains that may come back to haunt the global economy. India must keep the focus on the medium term. That would mean ensuring macroeconomic stability (the best defence against short-term global financial market and commodity price volatility, linked to geopolitical events) and ease-of-doing-business reforms to leverage its strengths (favourable demographics, a large consumer base and a potential alternative for investors looking at a China-plus-one strategy of diversifying their manufacturing and supply chains).

The Indian economy has so far demonstrated relative resilience, recording the highest growth among the world's major countries amid elevated global uncertainty. But India has to do well relative to not just the world, but to the aspirations of its young population and workforce - both current and those entering over the next couple of decades. Navigating short-run geopolitical uncertainty may be easier than meeting challenges and seizing opportunities beyond the immediate term.

30th June

Social Media Day



First, there was the telephone, then the fax machine, and then social media - a revolutionary way of communicating. Since its creation, people have been able to connect with each other like never before. Friends and family can connect at any moment, and marketers have been able to reach consumers in an entirely new fashion. In fact, people use social media for an average of 144 minutes every single day. Because of its impact on society over the years, Social Media Day was born on June 30, and it has continued to grow in popularity ever since.

World Social Media Day was launched by Mashable on June 30, 2010. It was born as a way to recognize social media's impact on global communication and to bring the world together to celebrate it. Everyone uses social media every day; it's how we connect with people all over the world in a simple and fast way. Mashable is known to use social media to connect various cultures, movements, and fandoms, which is why they wanted a day to celebrate it. People use the hashtag, #SMDay every year, and this year is your time to get involved! The first social media platform ever to be launched was Sixdegrees in 1997. Founded by Andrew Weinreich, the website allowed users to list friends and family members and had features such as profiles, bulletin boards, and school affiliations. At its peak, Sixdegrees had over a million users but it was eventually shut down in 2001. The first modern social media platform was Friendster in 2002. The website allowed people to safely make new friends and has over a hundred million users, most of whom are in Asia. LinkedIn, the first business-focused social media platform was launched in 2003. MySpace launched in 2004, the same year as Facebook, but initially, it saw much greater success than Mark Zuckerberg's creation. By 2006 MySpace was the largest social media platform in the world, with users loving the customized profiles that also enabled them to post their music.

YouTube launched its website dedicated to video in 2005 and Twitter followed with its limited characters platform in 2006. As both grew in popularity, so did Facebook, and the most popular social media platforms for the next five years were being established. Instagram launched in 2010 and saw rapid growth, gaining over a million users within the first couple of months. With Instagram challenging their dominance, Facebook purchased the platform for \$1 billion in 2012. Facebook also purchased the encrypted messaging platform WhatsApp for \$16 billion in 2014. One platform that Facebook failed to buy was Snapchat. Snapchat, which became popular due to its disappearing stories feature, was launched in 2011 and reportedly turned down a \$3 billion offer from Facebook in 2013. The most recent addition to the list of social media heavyweights is TikTok. The app was launched in 2016 and has become incredibly popular due to its extensive music and video editing features.

ORANGE ECONOMY: The Supplement for Economic Growth



Raghunath Mahapatra

Though, the term "orange economy" is not a widely accepted academic concept but it's the popular term referring to the "creative economy" in the Latin American and Caribbean region. The term was first introduced in 2013 in an Inter-American Development Bank manual prepared by Felipe Buitrago Restrepo and Ivan Duque Marquez. Being inspired with the ancient Egyptian, Indian, and Native American cultural associations with the colour and concept of orange, they introduced the term 'Orange Economy', which refers to "the group of linked activities through which ideas are transformed into cultural goods and services whose value is determined by intellectual property." Thus, the orange/creative economic universe includes: i) The Cultural Economy and the Creative Industries, which share the Conventional Cultural Industries; and ii) creativity supporting. In other words, it refers to all business rooted in creativity, involving things like art, culture, research, science and technology. That's why in most parts of the world it's also termed as the "Creative Economy". The leaders of the G20 nations have recognized culture and creative industries as drivers of sustainable development and economic resilience, particularly in the wake of the pandemic. United Nations General Assembly also recognized the Creative Economy/

Orange Economy by declaring 2021 as the "International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development, 2021".

Highlighting its economic contribution to the global growth, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) values the global creative economy at over \$2.25 trillion (UNCTAD 2023). According to the UN estimate, the Creative Industries also account for nearly 50 million jobs worldwide out of which about half are women. These industries employ more people in the age group of 15-29 years than any other sector. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) maintains that creative industry, which is a major component of the creative economy, has an important economic multiplier effect where a spending of \$1 creates \$2.5 of wealth for the economy. Creative Industries represent up to 2%-7% of GDP, depending upon the development stages of the economies and are likely to be an important driver of economic growth as governments increase their focus on this sector. UNCTAD's global survey reveals that the varied economic contributions of the creative economy across different countries, ranging from 0.5% to 7.3% of GDP and the economy employs between 0.5% and 12.5% of the total workforce. The report reveals that while the size of creative economy in United States is estimated at \$50.9 billion, on the other hand in Germany these industries contribute around \$100 billion to the national GDP and employ over 1.8 million people. In 2022, the market size of hobbies and creative work in Japan amounted to approximately 7.43 trillion Japanese yen. In addition, the creative economy generates social and cultural capital in the developing block also. In South Africa, the cultural and creative industries contributed 5.6% to the gross domestic product. In Nigeria, the music industry was growing at an annual rate of



13.4%. The Nigerian film industry, known as "Nollywood", employs about one million people and, with over 2,000 films produced per year, was ahead of Hollywood. In Kenya, the entertainment and media sector grew by an average of almost 7% from 2014 to 2018.

Across the world, while creative services exports surged to \$1.4 trillion in 2022, marking a 29% increase since 2017, on the other hand, creative goods exports have registered a 19% increase (\$713 billion) during the same period. It's been found out that the developing countries primarily export creative goods, while developed countries dominate creative services exports. However, developing countries have significantly increased their share from 10% in 2010 to 20% in 2022. The most exported creative services in 2022 were software services (41.3%) and research and development (30.7%), followed by advertising, market research, and architecture (15.5%), audiovisual services (7.9%), information services (4%), and cultural, recreational, and heritage services (0.6%). It's a fact that few countries have a unique history of innovations and creativity that changed the world. India's tryst with creativity and innovation which ranges from the arts to science, from metallurgy to medicine and from astronomy and much more put the country in a unique position in the creative economic sector. Being an economic power house for several centuries, India played a

leadership role in all fields: be it art, culture, music, dance, food, festivals, architecture, or handicrafts. The country has established the fact that there is a close interrelationship between culture and the economy. In that glorious past, our economy was an important factor for our glorious civilization and cultural heritage. The reverse also held true: our cultural content contributed to our strong economy. As the country has taken up the ambitious challenge to become a \$5 trillion economy; fostering a new wave of innovation, especially at the grassroots level is highly essential. Creativity should not only be celebrated but strategically supported to drive economic development. According to government sources (PIB), today, more and more people are turning their ideas and imaginations into livelihoods. The creative industry in our country is now a \$30 billion sector and employs roughly 8% of the country's workforce. In 2019, creative exports of the country stood at \$121 billion, with services such as IT and design contributing the lion's share. The design segment alone accounted for 87.5% of creative goods exports, followed by traditional arts and crafts at around 9%. Some sources also reveal that the media and entertainment sector of the country alone is worth \$28 billion. The Indian content creators already influence more than \$350-\$400 billion in consumer spending. With nearly one billion smart phone users and

around 55.3% of the population having access to the internet (nearly 900 million) India offers a vast market for creative industries. The strong rural penetration of the internet allows content creation in vernacular languages, breaking linguistic barriers for both the audiences and creators. This further increases employment opportunities in creative fields while helping traditional arts and cultural forms in different regions find a global audience and market. At the global level, the orange economy/creative economy is predicted to grow significantly, with some projections estimating a 40% increase by 2030. It's projected that the music revenue in 2030 will be \$131 billion and the market size of fashion may touch \$2 trillion by 2030. It's also projected that the value of the global market for creative goods in 2030 will reach 10% of global GDP (which was previously estimated to be around \$100 trillion USD in 2023). This would mean a potential market size of \$10 trillion or more. The creative economy/orange economy which encompasses cultural and creative sectors would be a potential market size of \$10 trillion by 2030.

Hence, looking ahead, the orange economy holds immense potential for further innovation and growth. By embracing emerging technologies, promoting cultural exchange, and investing in creative talent. Various countries can scale its creative industries by encouraging collaboration among stakeholders and fostering inclusive growth models which will ensure that the orange economy/creative economy continues to be a driving force for economic sustainability and cultural empowerment. However, addressing existing challenges and obstacles requires collective efforts across countries, governments, private sectors, and civil society.

The writer is Former Senior Project Associate HSS Department, IIT Kanpur

Trilochan Sahu

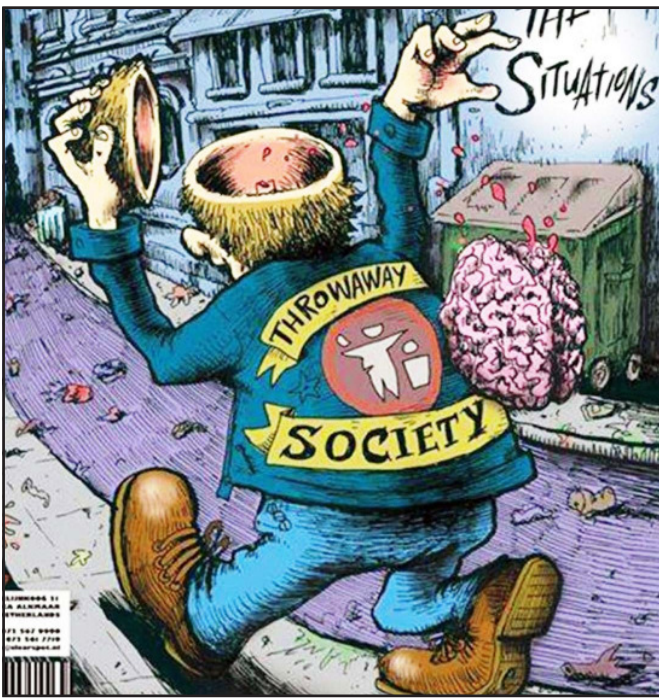
The phenomenon of a "throwaway society" is becoming increasingly vivid in our culture, especially as we navigate the effects of rampant consumerism. Picture this: a lifestyle brimming with the thrill of overconsumption, where dazzling, short-lived items capture our attention, pulling us away from the artistry of repairing or reusing what we already have. As income levels rise and Western influences sweep across India, we're witnessing a remarkable transformation in our consumption. However, this exciting shift comes with a catch - a sharp decline in the lifespan of our goods compared to what we once cherished. This trend poses intriguing societal challenges and raises urgent questions about our environment!

As we plunge deeper into modernity, our relationships are evolving too! Gone are the days when societal norms and family duties dictated our bonds. Today's relationships are a vibrant tapestry of personal choice and emotional connection, where individual happiness takes centre stage, redefining the landscape of love and companionship. The essence of a "throwaway society" is a striking hallmark of modern life, especially within consumer-driven cultures. It captures the spirit of a lifestyle where we eagerly use items once and discard them without a thought, leading to a cascade of waste and pressing

Badal Bhuyan

This is perhaps one question that starts from when we were children, and will continue even after we become aged. Did we create name and fame for ourselves in the world? We are witnessing a new trend where even aged people are not spared; they are advised to continue working so as to fulfil their yet-unfulfilled ambitions. Several websites and counselling centres have sprung up,

Throwaway society...



environmental issues.

Unpacking the Concept: What Is It? A throwaway society thrives on the mass production and consumption of disposable items, often made of plastic, with scant regard for durability or repair!

Real-World Examples: Think of the endless sea of disposable packaging, those single-use plastics like straws and cutlery, and trendy gadgets designed for momentary enjoyment rather than lasting ownership.

What Fuels This Trend? Consumerism, the ease of convenience, and sometimes affordability, along with a lack of awareness about environmental repercussions, are all players in this exciting, yet alarming game!

The Ripple Effect: This prevalent mindset leads to overflowing landfills, depletion of our precious natural resources, pollution, and significant damage to ecosystems.

Societal Impact: Financial Rollercoaster: In our relentless

chase for shiny new products, we often miss the crucial lesson of saving, leaving us vulnerable during uncertain times and spiralling into financial instability. Job Market Challenges: With an obsession for the new, local businesses-like those trusty repair shops-are struggling to survive, which can create harsh realities for marginalised communities, including ragpickers. Additionally, the rampant use of products like antibiotics poses serious health risks, including antibiotic resistance. Future Generations at Risk: This throwaway mentality fosters a disheartening disconnect from long-term environmental consequences, jeopardising the well-being of future generations.

Environmental Ramifications: Accelerated Climate Change: The rapid turnover of consumer goods is turbocharging our carbon footprint, making climate change a more urgent challenge than ever. **Strain on Resources:** With a burgeoning population and heightened consumption, we're putting incredible pressure on our natural resources, resulting in greater plastic pollution and substantial environmental degradation.

Charting a Sustainable Future: Embrace Repair and Reuse: Imagine a world where taxes on repair services and reused goods are minimised, nurturing a

flourishing culture of sustainability! Manufacturer Responsibility: Let's push manufacturers to take ownership of their products, especially electronic waste, fostering a culture of recycling that lessens environmental harm. Innovative Waste Management: Encourage practices like source segregation of solid waste and bolster recycling efforts-this is where meaningful change begins! The government's Swachh Bharat Mission holds the potential to be a game-changer in this arena. Launching dynamic awareness campaigns can galvanise a collective mindset shift that is pivotal in battling climate change and safeguarding our invaluable resources.

Societal Reflection: Young people today may feel disillusioned with the age-old adage that "old is gold." The spark of excitement ignited by the allure of cutting-edge products can often lead to dissatisfaction when new items seem to flood the market continuously. This pivot towards novelty over longevity can spark social challenges, including soaring divorce rates and strains older generations face in our communities.

In conclusion, tackling the complications of India's throwaway culture demands a compassionate and imaginative approach that embraces economic, environmental, and societal dimensions. Together, we can embark on an exhilarating journey toward a sustainable and fulfilling future!

Bargarh, Odisha

Making the child too ambitious is dangerous

to train professionals towards fulfilling their life's ambitions and desires.

Each child is nurtured by the goal of ambition through parents and society - the message is dinned into their heads that they need to become 'something' or 'someone' important and useful. The child has to prove that he has some worth, by bringing in gold medals,

whether it is in sports, music, dancing or debates. There is no respite, for this fire of ambition is lit and stoked even well into adulthood, middle age and now even in old age. The Atmopaniashad says that our internal self is the victim of 'ambition' and we become vulnerable to baser elements like anger, jealousy, greed, frustration and suicidal feelings.

Ambition is a poison that is far more dangerous than any kind of alcohol or drugs, because ambition destroys our whole life and makes us move in a false direction. "Each parent is saying to the child, 'prove that you have some worth'. Just being is not enough, some doing is needed. Whole of society depends on creating ambition in you. Ambition means a conflict;

ambition means that whatsoever you are, you are wrong; you have to be somewhere else." Instead of making the child ambitious about reaching the top, parents and society need to recognise the child's talents, qualities and potential, and nourish these in an atmosphere that encourages individuality.

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PM POSHAN

Odisha to promote healthier dietary habits among children

Bhubaneswar (DMC): In a move that aims at promoting healthier dietary habits among children, the Odisha government has decided to eliminate the use of refined sugar and limit salt usage in meals served under the PM POSHAN scheme. In a recent directive, district education officers (DEOs) have been asked to ensure jaggery is used, if sweetening is necessary."

Refined sugar must not be used in any form in the preparation of meals under the PM POSHAN. Addition of jaggery should also be limited to less than 5 per cent of the total energy content to prevent excess intake of discretionary calories," the advisory stated.The direction

came following the recommendation by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and advisory from the Ministry of Women and Child Development to limit sugar content in packaged foods and beverages, in view of rising health concerns linked to high sugar intake.

The advisory also stipulated that the usage of salt be minimised to encourage healthier eating patterns among children. It has asked for the strict avoidance of foods high in fat, salt, and sugar (HFSS), aligning with the dietary recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the dietary guidelines for Indians.The state government has

also laid down stringent instructions regarding the preparation of food under the PM POSHAN, which includes hot cooked meals, supplementary nutrition items, and Tithi Bhojan meals served to children. "

Sweet recipes should be limited in all such meal categories, and all ingredients used must be safe and compliant with the Food Safety and Standards Regulations (FSSR), 2011 and its subsequent amendments," the advisory said.Besides, for food items served under the Sishu Vatika initiative (whether hot cooked or as supplementary nutrition) the use of preservatives, artificial colours, flavours, and synthetic additives has been strictly

prohibited. The schools have been instructed that these meals must adhere to the FSSR 2020 regulations, and only approved emulsifiers under the same regulations can be used while preparing the food items.The directive has also prohibited sale of energy drinks within 100 metres of school premises in rural areas and 50 metres in urban localities for the growing health risks associated with the consumption of such drinks.

Citing several studies, the government has warned that energy drinks, due to their high caffeine content, can negatively affect the cardiovascular, neurological, psychological, gastrointestinal, metabolic and renal systems of children.

Govt to appoint 'Sishu Sebikas'

Bhubaneswar: The Odisha government has decided to appoint 'Sishu Sebikas' (childcare assistants) in Sishu Vatikas, a CMO release said on Sunday. Under the National Education Policy, Odisha has already operationalised Sishu Vatikas at government-run primary schools across the state to extend pre-school education to children in the 5-6 years age group from the current academic session.

The introduction of Sishu Sebikas is seen as a key step to support teachers in managing younger children more effectively in classrooms. This will allow teachers to focus solely on academic



activities. The number of Sishu Sebikas appointed at each Sishu Vatika will depend on the enrollment of children at these facilities.They will receive salaries equivalent to those of the midday meal cooks,

funded under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, it added.Chief Minister Mohan Majhi expressed confidence that the initiative will significantly enhance the quality of pre-school education in the state.

Odisha woman Sangita wins Mrs. India crown

Bhubaneswar, (DMC): Bhubaneswar woman Sangita Nayak has won the 'Mrs. India Worldwide-2025' competition held in Dubai. Sangita won the 'Mrs. India' crown, beating 74 Indian-origin female contestants from all over the world.

After this success, waves of happiness have spread among her well-wishers and family.This international competition is held in Dubai every year for women of Indian origin only. This was the case this year too. More than 300 women of Indian origin from different countries of the world registered for the competition, but only 74 of them were selected.Ramp walk and other rounds were



held at different times. Top-25, Top-20, Top-15, Top-10 and Top-5 and then Mrs. Sangita secured her place. In

the final held on the 20th, the host declared Mrs. Sangita the winner. After this, Mrs. Sangita cried with joy. At this time, her husband Madhusudan Nayak and sons Amit and Anish were also present. Prakash Thakin, Mrs. Sangita works as an interior designer. In the future, she will be active in the glamour world and will also work for women empowerment.

Mrs. Sangita has a black belt in karate and has also won a national award for it. For this competition, she has learned dance and worked hard.Apart from this, Mrs. Sangita was a karate student at Utkal Karate School, Bhubaneswar. Kate is a student of the university and is doing her Masters in Interior Design. She has also won many

awards in sports since her childhood. She credits her husband and family members for her success. She said that listening to the family members from morning to evening, paying attention to her children's studies, making time for the family, helping her sons in their studies, managing family relatives and overcoming many obstacles every day has made me stronger.

Along with this, she has been working hard for the past one year, which was not easy for her, and today, winning this crown has brought her a lot of happiness. She expressed her gratitude to all the people of Odisha. This achievement is not only for Odisha but also for India.

Odisha Vigilance arrests AEE

Bhubaneswar, (DMC): The Odisha Vigilance on Sunday arrested Susil Kumar Panda, Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE) of Ganjam block, after raids revealed assets, 163% in excess to his known sources of income.

A multi-storey building, two flats and six high-value pots, Rs 2.05 lakh, 126 gram gold and bank and insurance deposits, amounting to Rs 1.11 crore, were detected during searches at seven places, covering properties in Berhampur, Puri, Ganjam, and his office, conducted under the supervision of six DSPs, seven inspectors, and supporting staff on Saturday.Odisha foodA Vigilance release said that the AEE was arrested after he failed to



produce satisfactory documents to prove the source of the accumulated assets.Assets unearthed in the name of Panda and his family members are one-triple storey building over 4620 sqft area at Ram Hari Nagar, Berhampur; one 2-BHK flat over 700 sqft area at Mukteswar apartment, Ankuli, Berhampur; one 1-BHK flat over 600 sqft area at Puri; 6 high value plots at Bhubaneswar, Khurda & Berhampur; Rs 2,05,000 in cash; gold ornaments weighing 126

grams; ank & insurance deposits worth Rs 1,11.97,000; 1 four wheeler (Mahindra KUV) & 2 two wheelers and household articles worth around Rs 10 lakh.Panda entered government service as JE (contractual) at Sanakhemundi block in Ganjam district in 1997.

Then, he worked as JE in different blocks in the district till 2015. In August 2015, he was regularised and posted to Purushottampur block in Ganjam. He was promoted to the rank of Assistant Engineer and posted to Sergarh block in 2022. A year later, Panda was given another promotion as AEE at Ganjam block. His entire service period is in the district of Ganjam, the release added.

SOA Pro-VC Neeta Mohanty awarded fellowship



Bhubaneswar (DMC): Prof. (Dr) Neeta Mohanty, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research Collaboration) of Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) Deemed to be University, has been awarded the prestigious Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow Fellowship.Glasgow's 425-year-old Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, a global community of healthcare professionals committed to improving patient care through education and

innovation, honoured Prof. Mohanty in recognition of her outstanding contribution in the field of dental education, research, innovation and public health.Prof. Mohanty, who served as Dean of SOA's Institute of Dental Sciences (IDS) for more than a decade, exemplified transformative leadership in oral health and dental education.Her academic career, spanning 28 years, was dedicated to shaping future dental professionals with a commitment to impactful research and

institutional governance.Prof. Mohanty has over 100 peer-reviewed publications, including in internationally-acclaimed journals, books and book chapters, granted United States and Indian patents backed by government grants.Director of Cochrane India Affiliate Centre at IDS, Prof. Mohanty is also founder of Orease Oral Care Solutions Private Limited, a start-up focused on innovative solutions in oral care.

In 2018, Prof. Mohanty was conferred fellowship by the Academy of Dentistry International, USA, in recognition of her worthy contributions to the advancement of dentistry worldwide. She is also the recipient of numerous other awards, including the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam National Award, Best Dental Administrator Award and Times Power Woman Award.

Increased amount transferred to accounts of Omfed

Bhubaneswar (DMC): Dairy farmers are happy to get hiked price of Rs. 3/tr. Lakhs of Dairy farmers and Thousand of OMFED Milk Unions thank the state government and the OMFED for this. On the occasion of World Milk Day, the Chief Minister Mr. Mohan Charan Majhi announced to give Rs 3 per liter to the OMFED Dairy farmers, which is being given to the Omfed dairy farmers immediately.

That is, from June 1, 2025 this increased price is being given to the farmers directly in their bank accounts through DBD. Those who have something wrong or not linked to the bank account, they have been instructed to correct the account. Omfed has been paying their bill every 10 days. Omfed is implementing the Chief Minister's announcement in a proper manner and procedure. Out of the Rs 3 per litre being given to Omfed milk farmers, the state government is

giving Rs 2 and Omfed is giving Rs 1. The state government does not want to impose the increased price of milk at Rs 4 per litre on the consumers. So he is giving 2 per litre to farmers from the exchequer.

On the other hand, Omfed has increased the amount by Rs 2, out of which it is spending Rs 1 on farmers and Rs 1 on operational expenses. 3 per litre directly into the bank accounts of farmers. The lakhs of Omfed dairy farmers and thousands of Union are happy and are thankful to the state government, as well as OMFED. The Odisha Dairy Farmers Federation (ODDF) has been misleading information to the dairy farmers. We would like to point out that none of those who attended the meeting at Jagatsinghpur are Omfed dairy farmers or are supplying milk to Omfed. Odisha Dairy Farmers Federation is not even a recognized cooperative

society or organization of Omfed.Omfed is a cooperative society. There are more than 11,000 cooperative societies in the state. Milk is collected from farmers through cooperative societies. They also have district-level and state-level organizations.

For the betterment of the farmers and their economic development, the state government is giving many schemes and incentives or subsidies such as Mukhyamantri Kamdhenu Yojana, Mai Bachhuri Yojona, incentives for fodder grass cultivation, etc. Even thousands of educated unemployed youth are showing interest in it and are planning to make animal husbandry an industry. In such a situation, Omfed has condemned the nefarious attempts to defame the state government and Omfed. Suresh Altia, General Manager (Finance), Omfed, said that the two rupees given by the

state government is being transferred directly to the farmers' account through DBT. From the day the Chief Minister announced, i.e. from Jan 1, 2025 the increased price is being given to the farmers. Regular payments are being made to dairy farmers in three phases from 1st to 10th, 11th to 20th and 21st to 30th of every month.

The amount is being given to the farmers who have given milk within 10 days. However, attempts are being made to mislead the omfed dairy farmers and lure them to give milk to private companies, he alleged. Lakhs of Omfed milk farmers in the state have slammed the state government and Omfed for increasing the price of milk by Rs 3 per litre. On behalf of Omfed, he thanked the state government for paying Rs 2 to OMFED Dairy farmers without imposing the increased amount on the consumers.

7 yellow anacondas born in Nandankanan

Bhubaneswar (DMC): After nearly three years, there has been an addition to the yellow anaconda family at the Nandankanan Zoological Park.

As many as seven yellow anacondas were born on Sunday, to parents who were brought from Chennai's Madras Crocodile

Bank Trust in October 2019.It latest breeding is a significant step in the Nandankanan zoo's reptile breeding programme.

The zoo now has 2 adult males, 2 adult females and 10 young yellow anacondas. One more female is expected to deliver soon at the zoo located on the

outskirts of the state's capital city.The last breeding took place in July 2022. One hatchling saw the light of the day on July 6 and 8 more on July 8, 2022.

Two rare species of yellow anaconda died in Nandankanan zoo on back-to-back days in December 2023.

RPF nabs 6 criminals planning dacoity in trains

Puri, (DMC): The detective wing of Railway Protection Force (RPF) cracked down on a criminal gang at Puri's coaching complex in a significant breakthrough under Operation 'Yatri Suraksha'.The six-member group was apprehended while conspiring to commit dacoity in

night-running trains operating between Puri and Khurda Road section. After a thorough search, the RPF team recovered 23 stolen mobile handsets, Rs 24,450 worth of cash and other incriminating articles. The total value of recovered stuff was estimated at Rs 7,13,450.The

arrested criminals confessed to multiple incidents of mobile phone theft from passengers at railway stations and passenger areas. The accused were also actively planning dacoity in passenger trains.The criminals, along with recovered stolen property, were handed over to

Government Railway Police (GRP), Puri.A case has been registered under relevant sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The operation marks a significant step in ensuring passenger safety and RPF's commitment to secure railway premises and train operations.

PROCEDURAL LAPSES

CMC to plant 1.5 lakh saplings



Cuttack, (DMC):the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) has decided to plant around 1.5 lakh saplings during observation of Van Mahotsav Week during July first week.

As per the decision taken by the civic body in a meeting recently, it will procure around one lakh saplings from the Forest department and the remaining 50,000 comprising different varieties of fruit-bearing trees including mango, guava, banyan and amla, will be given by the Horticulture department. CMC

mayor Subhas Singh said the corporation will also involve school and college students, puja committees and different non-government organisations (NGOs) in the plantation drive. "Apart from parks, school and college premises, and open spaces in the city, the plantation drive will this year also be undertaken on three acre land at Mahanadi's Bhuasuni Patha.

The saplings, after being planted will be taken care of by the Forest department for around three years. Tree guards will also be deployed to take care of the plants. We have also planned to conduct awareness programmes to sensitise residents on environmental pollution and global warming," Singh added.

Cuttack, (DMC):

A controversy has sparked off over the selection of books for libraries in non-government colleges across Odisha, with allegations of favouritism and procedural lapses prompting legal intervention.

The Orissa High Court has directed the secretary of Higher Education department to consider the Kalinga Publishers and Booksellers Association's grievance in accordance with law within 30 days.The single judge bench of Justice BPRoutray also observed that the department may consider halting the supply of the selected books until a final decision is made on the matter.

The directive is expected to temporarily stall the ongoing supply process, and all eyes are now on the Higher Education department's next step.The case has brought to light broader concerns about transparency and fairness in educational procurement practices.

The Kalinga Publishers and Booksellers Association, Cuttack, had challenged the selection process in a writ petition. The association, representing booksellers and publishers across the state, alleged that the designated selection committee responsible for recommending books for college libraries had acted arbitrarily and without due



diligence.According to the petition, out of the hundreds of books approved, nearly 350 titles were exclusively from just five publishers, raising serious concerns of bias and lack of transparency. In their grievance

letter dated June 9, 2025, addressed to the commissioner-cum-secretary of the Higher Education department, the association called for immediate quashing of the approved book list. Association president Joy

Krishna Mohapatra also demanded a formal inquiry into the matter and stringent action against officials allegedly involved in the irregularities.The representation alleged that majority of the 350 books in the booklist comprise only a few publishers who have formed a group in connivance with government officials.

The booklist provided has the name of the book and name of the author but there is no mention of the name of the publishers. The name of the publishers has been intentionally avoided as most of the books belong to these handful of persons the representation alleged.

Observation of 19th National Statistics Day-2025 in Khordha

Khordha, (DMC): The 19th National Statistics Day-2025 was celebrated in the conference hall of collectorate khordha in co-ordination with the District Planning & Monitoring Unit, under the patronage of the Zilla Parishad Chief Development & Executive Officer, Khordha, Jyoti Shankar Sahu.

The 19th National Statistics Day, i.e. the birth anniversary of the eminent statistician, Late-Prof. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis, was celebrated. Every years on 29th June India celebrates National Stastics Day to mark the birth anniversary of Prof. P. Ch. Mahalanobis made groundbreaking contributions such as the development of the Mahalanobis Distance & his instrumental role in Indias Five-Year Plans. This day serves as a



tribute to his work in economic planning, data science & institutional building including the founding of the Indian Statistical Institute & the National Sample Survey.

In the context of the day, a workshop was organized to strengthen statistical calculations in every office at the district level. Prof. Alok Ranjan Behera, Department of Statistics, Utkal

University, was the chief guest & he said that statistics is indispensable for the success of every office & plan & discussed in detail the discovery,

need & how statistics are an integral part of every plan & spoke on the life philosophy of eminent statistician P.C. Mahalanobis. Zilla Parishad Chief Development & Executive Officer, Jyoti Shankar Sahu, said

in his speech, "Statistics have an impact on the implementation of plans & the development process. No work is possible without statistics.

A statistical budget gives 100 percent success to its beneficiaries. Therefore, the Block Statistics Officer working in the Block Offices & the Statistical Officers working in each office, in consultation with the

departmental officers in every work, prepare good quality statistics, so that the development of the district can be accelerated. Similarly, motivational videos of various departments & the determination of the price of goods/materials/ commodities were explained by Sanghamitra Mohanty through PowerPoint.

Deputy Director, Dist. Planning & Monitoring Unit (DPMU) khordha, Shankar Behera delivered the welcome speech & managed all the programs. On this day, the first place was won by the Chilika Block Statistical Officer, the second place was won by the BBSR, Block Statistical Officer & the third place was won by the Begunia Block Statistical Officer were felicitated.

Paradip College NCC cadets & Alumni Association conducts Swachhata Drive at Mausima Temple

Paradip, (DMC): The NCC and NCC Alumni Association of Paradip College successfully conducted their 51st Swachhata Drive at the Ratha area near Mausima Temple on Sunday.

The highlight of the event was the presence of Commander Sushanta Kumar Mohanty, Commanding Officer of 3 Odisha Naval Unit NCC, who praised the dedication of Paradip NCC cadets and Alumni Association for continuing social services. He emphasized the importance of public awareness and national duty. During the drive, the Mausima pond was cleaned of plastic waste and garbage. Alumni President Ambika Prasad Mohapatra appealed to the public to avoid single-use plastic



and use dustbins provided by the municipality. Lt. Cdr. A. C. Mishra, ANO and Advisor, encouraged the team, reaffirming the mission: "Nation First, Swachhata Hi Seva."

Around 40 cadets and 15 alumni members actively participated in the said programme. Notable attendees included Alumni Vice President Bikram Singh Moharana, Asst. Secretary Nilima Priyadarshini,

and members Harapriya Pattanaik, Lipuna Barik, Jitendra Barik, Saroj Swain, Raja Malik, Deepak Karan, P. Madhusmita, Sucharita Rout, Arunima, and cadets Pikun Senapati, Binayak Moharana, Bijaya Ghadei, Sumitra Gedi, Subhalaxmi Biswal, Kanha Biswal, and Rahul. The NCC and alumni team extended thanks to all participants and media for their support in this noble cause.

One held with Ganja in Khariar Road

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD, (DMC): A man arrested for allegedly

trying to sell ganja in the town was produced before the court Nuapada here Sunday. He has been identified by police as Kangalu Gahir (60) of Ward No-13, Dhobipara, Khariar Road.

Kangalu was carrying 825 gms ganja. When he saw a police team patrolling the area, he quickly turned around and tried to flee but police chased and caught him. The ganja was seized from him and he was arrested under the NDPS Act, said IIC Jonk Police Station Pradeep Kumar Dharua.



Dispute escalating in Jagatsinghpur District Truck Owners Association : Owners threats commit suicide for justice

Paradip, (DMC): Dispute increasing day by day in Jagatsinghpur District Truck Owner's Association at here in Paradip. On Sunday, the major truck owners protested the general body meeting of the association and created a tense situation there.

The Paradeep Lock Police and Model Police reached the spot and held discussion with the agitating truck owners and are continuing talks with the association officials for dissolve the issues. According to the allegations, since eighteen years the elections of the association has not been held and the president and other office bearers are sitting in the post illegally. So the truck owners of this association are facing various



problems. Similarly, they use their post for their vested interest by loading their trucks illegally in spite of watching other members interest, which making it difficult for the general truck owner to load a single vehicle. That's why the owners have expressed their dissatisfaction and demanded an election in the association. Earlier, the district administration has been informed about the matters. The

agitators stated that while discussions are going on with the administration level regarding the irregularities and for conducting election, the sudden meeting is showing the illegal intention. So we protest and requested the administration to provide us justice as soon as possible otherwise we will commit suicide in front of the association, threatened the agitators truck owners.

Rethink move to open Angul coal belt for mining: Study

Bhubaneswar (DMC): A new study has urged that declaring the entire coal belt of Angul district for mining use must be reconsidered. Wildlife Institute of India (WII) researchers S Karthy and GV Gopi carried out the study to understand the status of elephants in coal mine landscape using geospatial methods. A snippet of the report 'Status of Management of Elephants in Coal Mine Landscape of Odisha' cautioned that operating inactive coal mines would result in destruction of about 390 sq km of forest Angul forest division.

Employing Maximum Entropy (MaxEnt) approach to determine the suitable elephant landscape in the division, the study found that most of the habitat utilised by the pachyderms in the region fall under the proposed coal blocks. There are already operational coal mines in Angul division which hinder the movement of the elephants. If all the inactive coal mines come into operation, it would lead to destruction of about 390 sq km forest in the protected area," it stated. The report sought construction of adequate overpasses and underpasses in the southern part and stressed the importance of managing habitat outside protected areas and enforcing stringent environmental framework.

Extension of Macha gaon canal bridge at Hatbazar after 150 years

Jagatsinghpur, (DMC): Hatbazar Macha gaon canal bridge extension work started after 150 years. As per Historic data this bridge constructed by British Government just after Naanka Draught in the year 1871.

Odisha History said that British Government started Canal irrigation as remedial measure of severe Draught in 1866. Canal water reached at Jagatsinghpur in 1871 and Hat bazar bridge constructed in the year 1871 by British Government for communication



and water management. Now this Macha gaon canal bridge at Hat bazar is the key point of communication to Cuttack & Puri District. Even after formation of Jagatsinghpur

Young Khordha Artist Makes Small Chariots



Khordha, (DMC): A young artist from Khordha Sai Sambit Pattnaik, has crafted chariots on the occasions of the Ratha Yatra here for Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra & Lord Jagannath. Sai Sambit Pattnaik, a Class-IV student from Lokeswarpur village near Khordha used waste paper & cardboards to craft these chariots. He has worked hard for fifteen days & made this chariot

with his own efforts using paper & cardboard. Since childhood, Sai Sambit Pattnaik, who has deep faith in God, especially Lord Jagannath has built this chariot at home before the Rath Yatra. After worshipping Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra & Lord Jagannath on the chariot, he himself pulled it on the streets, creating a religious atmosphere & a large number of people appreciated it.

As a brilliant student, he has also become a favorite of teachers & friends in school. Since childhood, he has been interested in building various projects with his own knowledge & skills. Sai Sambit has said that he will become an engineer in the future. His elder mother Smita Pattnaik, mother Soudamini Pattnaik & sister Soumya Somlika Pattnaik helped him in building this chariot at home.

Cancer-stricken AWC worker made to stand for two hours in Odisha

Balasore (DMC): An inquiry has been ordered against a cluster supervisor of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in Balasore's Oupada block for reportedly making a cancer-stricken anganwadi worker stand outside for over two hours on Friday.

The incident took place during a cluster meeting at the Nayapatna anganwadi centre in Oupada block when the supervisor, Agani Jena, asked Nikunjbasini Rath, listed with Sikidia anganwadi centre, to leave the meeting after allegedly



humiliating her in front of her colleagues. Rath, currently

battling cancer, was then allegedly forced to stand outside

in the scorching sun for over two hours. She claimed that she was made to stand outside in an act of revenge as she did not gift a washing machine during the wedding of Jena's daughter. The situation came to attention after local residents informed it the Anganwadi Workers' Union.

Union's president, Jambubati Mohanty, rushed to the spot and was shocked to see Rath standing in the heat. She immediately arranged for Rath to be moved to a shaded area. The meeting was reportedly attended by 19 Anganwadi workers and

held under the supervision of Jena. Witnesses claim that Jena verbally abused Rath and ordered her out of the meeting. Child development project officer (CDPO) of Oupada block Jayashree Sit said, "An inquiry will be conducted.

If the allegations are found to be true, action will be taken against the cluster supervisor." When contacted by reporters, Jena stated that she had the authority to decide who could attend the meeting and declined to offer further comments.

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Puri Collector...

Swain and SP Vineet Agrawal. DCP Bishnu Pati and Commandant Ajay Padhi have also been suspended for negligence of duty. According to the CMO release, Khurda collector Chanchal Rana will take charge as the new collector of Puri while Pinak Mishra, currently serving as STF DIG, will replace Agrawal as the new SP. Administrative inquiry has been ordered under the supervision of the Development Commissioner," it said. Swain has been shifted to the General Administration department as OSD.

Railway to resume....

scrapped that year, leaving the posts to be filled solely by internal promotions from feeder cadres like guards, station masters, and train clerks. "However, the examination was discontinued in 2017 after which direct recruitment in the control department was stopped and all posts used to be filled through the feeder cadre, such as guards, station masters and train clerks," a railway official told. He added that a lack of financial incentives made the department unattractive to skilled employees, leading to it being considered a "dumping ground" for medically de-categorised staff. "This is the major reason for the lack of talented workforce in the control department, which is believed to be the brain or nerve centre of the Indian Railways. However, with the new reforms, good candidates will now be posted here directly and it will improve the train operations," a train controller said.

Police ran...

official had thought about arrangements for devotees and how charamala could have reached amongst the crowd. Police were only busy making arrangements for VIPs." Another eye-witness whose relative died said, "We had come with a happy mood from the village to have a darshan of the deities. Nobody thought such an incident would occur. The administration had not taken any concrete measures. There was wood stacked. My relative died in the mishap. My son had tried to save others. There were no police personnel or other officials to help." Another devotee said, "We were moving towards Lord Jagannath's chariot. Suddenly, a huge crowd started rushing towards us. Only public and devotees were extending help and doing everything. There was nobody there."

"We had reached in front of the Gundicha temple at around 3:31 am. At that time, there were around 50,000 devotees. When the pahuda opened, there was sudden chaos. Some police personnel who were there escaped from the spot. Around 200-300 people had fallen during the chaos. We told police officials, but they did not help. The administration did not help us. We had to carry our relatives who were injured on our own. The truck entered, and it triggered the situation. Due to this, my wife Basanti Sahu of Bhubaneswar (Khordha district) died," said the deceased's husband. He further alleged, "We cried for help, ambulance and asked for water. But police personnel did not offer even a single drop. There was massive crowd at the spot when the stampede occurred." Amidst the allegations, Puri SP Vinit Agrawal claimed that there was deployment of police force at the spot. "We will inform after examining all aspects. There was adequate deployment near the chariots and the Gundicha temple," said Agrawal.

95 cr people...

with a spirit of service," he said. He also said that across India, individuals and communities are becoming catalysts of change. Their unwavering commitment to conservation is not only protecting nature but also safeguarding the future for generations to come, he said. The prime minister also informed that people from Vietnam have expressed profound gratitude to India for facilitating the 'darshan' of the relics of "Bhagwan Buddha, a moving reminder of our timeless cultural bond".

Gajapati Maharaja...

Describing the event as "extremely unfortunate and heart-wrenching," the Gajapati Maharaja, who holds a revered position as the ceremonial head of Lord Jagannath's temple rituals, said he was deeply shocked to learn about the loss of lives and injuries sustained by devotees during the chaos at Saradhabali. In a formal statement, the Maharaja conveyed his deepest sympathies to the families of those who lost their lives, praying for the departed souls to attain eternal peace at the lotus feet of Mahaprabhu Jagannath. He also extended emotional support to the injured and all those affected by the tragic incident.

Saswat Mishra...

principal secretary to Chief Minister Mohan Majhi. This post had remained vacant since May 2 when Nikunja Bihari Dhal was relieved from the state government after being posted as the officer on special duty (OSD) in the Parliamentary Affairs Ministry by the Appointments Committee of the Union Cabinet. Mishra is currently serving as Principal Secretary, Finance Department, with additional charge of Chairman, Idco. He will continue to hold these posts along with his new assignment, a notification issued by the General Administration department said.

Law Minister...

is a very unfortunate incident. Mahaprabhu's 'Pahuda' was completed at around 12:30 AM after completion of all rituals on time. Many people were sitting on the road waiting for the darshan to resume. When the 'pahuda' was reopened, the crowd surged, leading to chaos in which three people lost their lives." "Those who were injured are stable now. The Chief Minister has already discussed the mishap at different levels and assured through his social media post that stringent action will be taken against those found guilty," the Minister said.

Bike manufacturers...

Indian Standards (BIS) at the time of purchase of a two-wheeler," the draft notification states. However, this requirement will not apply to individuals who are exempted under Section 129 of the Motor Vehicles Act. This Section allows only Sikhs (with turbans) to ride two-wheelers without helmets. State governments have the authority to put more categories of people on the exemption list.

The draft notification also says that from January 1, 2026, all new L2 category two-wheelers, which include motorcycles and scooters with engine capacity above 50cc or top speeds exceeding 50 km/hr - will need to be fitted with Anti-Lock Braking Systems (ABS). The ABS must comply with Indian Standard IS14664:2010, ensuring better control and reduced chances of skidding, especially during sudden braking. The proposed rules are currently open for public feedback. Common citizens and stakeholders have been given 30 days from the date of publication to send in their suggestions or objections. Inputs can be shared with the ministry by email at comments-morth@gov.in.

Internal Feud in Trinamool Surfaces over Kolkata Law College Rape

Kolkata, (HS) : Internal feud in Trinamool Congress has surfaced over the rape of a law college student in Kolkata, with veteran party Lok Sabha member and senior advocate Kalyan Banerjee almost declaring a rebel against the leadership on the issue. The situation took a more serious turn after fellow Trinamool Congress Lok Sabha member Mahua Moitra issued an X message where she subtly targeted Banerjee. This made Banerjee furious even more, and he reacted vehemently.

The controversies started over a comment by Banerjee soon after the rape incident surfaced and three persons accused in the case, all having links with Trinamool Congress's students' wing Trinamool Chhattr Parishad (TMCP), were arrested. Banerjee then made a comment claiming that it would not be possible for government authorities to protect the victim in such cases, where a friend rapes another friend. Trinamool Congress leadership immediately censured him. On Saturday, the party issued a statement claiming that the remarks by Banerjee in the matter were made in his capacity, and the party had unequivocally disassociated itself from his statements and strongly condemned the same. It also said Banerjee's views did not reflect the position of the party in any manner whatsoever, since the party's stance remained resolute in having



zero tolerance for crimes against women. Reacting to the statement issued on the official X handle of Trinamool Congress, Moitra made a comment subtly targeting Banerjee in the matter. "Misogyny in India cuts across party lines. What differentiates @AITCofficial is that we condemn these disgusting comments no matter who makes them," Moitra said in her reaction to the statement from Trinamool Congress.

The statement from the party censuring him and the subtle jibe from Moitra made Banerjee furious, and he reacted vehemently on the matter. According to him, what he said was a conscious comment since he could not accept a political colleague raping another colleague.

On CCTV, Kolkata Rape Survivor Dragged Inside College by 2 Accused

Kolkata, (HS) : A CCTV footage showing a Kolkata law student being dragged by two accused from the college gate to inside college premises where she was raped earlier this week has surfaced, sources in the Kolkata Police have told. The 24-year-old



woman of the South Calcutta Law College was allegedly raped by two senior students and an alumnus of the institute in the guard's room on June 25. The video clip appears to corroborate the survivor's complaint, in which she said that the prime accused, Manojit Mishra, instructed two others to forcibly take her to the guard room. "The CCTV footage confirms the woman's allegations. It shows the movements of the three accused, the security guard, and the victim. We are currently examining the footage," said a police officer. The police suspect that the law college student was gang-raped as she turned down the marriage proposal of the main accused, said a police officer. Four people - Manojit Mishra, Promit Mukherjee, Zaid Ahmed and the college guard - have been arrested so far. It is alleged that Manojit raped the student, while the other two shot videos to blackmail her later. Manojit Mishra is part of the Trinamool's youth wing, but the party has insisted that this won't protect him from the harshest punishment. The issue brought to fore the different voices emanating from the ruling party in the state. MP Kalyan Banerjee's remark on the case has been flagged as victim-blaming. "If a friend rapes a friend, how can you ensure security? Will there be police in schools? This was done by students to another student. Who will protect her (victim)?"

India rejects Pakistan's allegations over Waziristan attack



New Delhi, (HS) : India has strongly rejected Pakistan's attempt to link it to a deadly suicide bombing in the Waziristan region of Kyber Pakhtunkhwa, calling the accusations baseless and unfounded. The attack, which took place on June 28, claimed the lives of at least 13 security personnel and left 24 others injured. In the aftermath, the Pakistan Army released a statement suggesting Indian involvement in the incident. In a sharp response issued late Saturday, India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) condemned the allegations. "We have seen the official statement by the Pakistan Army attempting to attribute responsibility for the Waziristan attack to India," the MEA said. "We reject this statement with the contempt it deserves." India reiterated that Pakistan must focus on addressing terrorism within its own borders rather than deflecting blame.

Congress Troubleshooter in Karnataka Tomorrow Amid Signs of Dissent



Bengaluru, (HS) : Amid growing talks of a major political churn and public criticism from within its own ranks, the Congress's leadership is set to launch the second round of damage control in Karnataka. Senior leader and Congress General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala will arrive in Bengaluru tomorrow for a two-day visit aimed at addressing concerns within the party.

Mr Surjewala's visit follows a series of meetings earlier this week, where Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his deputy DK Shivakumar met with disgruntled Congress MLAs who had levelled allegations against their own government. While BR Patil had spoken about rampant corruption in the housing department, MLA Raju Kage had raised the issue of a collapsed administration, among others. During his visit, Mr Surjewala is expected to hold one-on-one meetings with a few of these leaders whose recent public statements have embarrassed the party and raised questions about unity within the

Karnataka Congress. Mr Surjewala is also likely to address the growing chatter around a possible leadership change in the state. He may issue a stern message asking Congress leaders to refrain from making public statements on the matter.

Congress MLA HA Iqbal Hussain alluded to a high possibility of a change in the state's top leadership. "This is something that the high command has in mind," Mr Hussain said. "When the time is right, the high command will give an opportunity to DK Shivakumar. It is likely to happen this year. All leaders are talking about a big political churn. I am telling this straight, not beating around the bush, that in two to three months a decision will come," the Congress MLA said. The remarks by the Congress MLAs over alleged corruption in the housing department and the "complete collapse" of the administration have embarrassed the ruling party, with the opposition BJP and Janata Dal (Secular), or JD(S), using the opportunity to accuse the government of corruption.

Rescue operation underway for nine workers swept away in Uttarakhand cloudburst

DEHRADUN, (HS) :Uttarakhand is grappling with the devastating aftermath of a ferocious cloudburst that struck Baligarh on the Barkot-Yamunotri road last night, triggering widespread destruction. The torrential downpour swept away at least 20 labourers from an under-construction hotel site, with rescue teams managing to save 11.

The fate of the remaining nine remains unknown, as search operations continue amidst challenging conditions. The natural calamity has not only caused significant human loss but also severely impacted critical infrastructure. A crucial 10-meter stretch of the Yamunotri Highway has been completely washed away, effectively cutting off connectivity to the revered pilgrimage site. The situation was equally grim in Kotdwar, where heavy rains on Sunday caused the Paniyali stream to overflow. The surging waters washed away the alternative route connecting the Gabbar Singh Army Camp to the main road, completely severing access. Furthermore, land subsidence on the Kotdwar-Najibabad four-lane highway left vehicles stranded and traffic suspended, with efforts underway to clear the debris using excavators. In response to the escalating crisis and severe rain alert, the state government



has taken the unprecedented step of suspending the Char Dham Yatra for the next 24 hours.

Garhwal Division Commissioner Vinay Shankar Pandey confirmed the decision, stating, "The Char Dham Yatra has been suspended for the next 24 hours following a heavy rain alert. As a precautionary measure, I have given instructions to the police and administration officials to stop the pilgrims in Haridwar, Rishikesh, Srinagar, Rudraprayag, Sonprayag, and Vikasnagar."The mountainous districts of Uttarakhand have been experiencing relentless, heavy rainfall since Saturday night. This has led to a sudden rise in the water levels of major rivers. In Rudraprayag and Chamoli districts, the Mandakini and Alaknanda rivers, which flow through the sacred Badrinath and Kedarnath regions, are now flowing above the danger mark,

posing a serious threat to riverside communities. Arpan Yaduvanshi, Commandant of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), told the TNIE, "Police in both districts are appealing to people living on river banks to move to safer locations. SDRF units are continuously monitoring potential high-risk areas and have urged pilgrims and others to refrain from approaching the riverbanks." Adding to the state's woes, Chamoli District Disaster Management Officer Nandkishore Joshi reported significant connectivity disruptions due to rain-induced debris and landslides. "Several highways in Chamoli district are obstructed due to debris and landslides." The highway at Kamed Nandprayag is closed, approximately 4-5 km ahead of Paligad, near Silai Band. Deepak Kathet, SHO of Barkot Police Station

First phase of Census to begin on April 1, 2026 with houselisting operations

NEW DELHI, (HS) : The houselisting operations for the forthcoming Census will begin from April 1, 2026, marking the start of the first phase of the decennial exercise, the Registrar General of India has said. In a letter to chief secretaries of states and Union Territories, Census Commissioner and Registrar General of India Mrityunjay Kumar Narayan said the Houselisting Operations and Housing Census shall begin on April 1, 2026.

Before that the appointment of supervisors, enumerators and work distribution among them shall be done with cooperation from states and district administration, it said.

The Census is a two-phase exercise -- in phase one i.e. Houselisting Operation (HLO), the housing conditions, assets and amenities of each household will be collected. Subsequently, in the second phase i.e. Population Enumeration (PE), the demographic, socio-economic, cultural and other details of every person in each household will be collected which is scheduled for February 1, 2027, according to the letter. In the Census, Caste enumeration will also be done, a government statement had said. For Census activities, over 34 lakh enumerators and supervisors and around 1.3 lakh Census functionaries would be deployed. It is the 16th Census till now and the eighth after independence. The forthcoming Census will be conducted through digital means using mobile applications. Provision of self-enumeration would also be made available to the people. The Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner had prepared around three dozen questions to be asked to the citizens. The survey will ask households about ownership of items like phones, internet, vehicles (bicycle, scooter, motorcycle, car, jeep, van), and appliances (radio, TV, transistor) among others. The citizens will also be asked about cereal consumption, sources of drinking water and lighting, type and access to latrines, wastewater disposal, bathing and kitchen facilities, fuel used for cooking and LPG/PNG connection.

Additional questions include the materials used for the floor, walls and roof of the house, its condition, number of residents, number of rooms, presence of married couples, and whether the household head is a female or belongs to a Scheduled Caste or Tribe.



Jaipur Couple Seen Arguing on CCTV, Found Dead



Jaipur, (HS) : A married couple was found dead at their home in Jaipur's Muhana in a suspected case of death by suicide. The police said they are looking into all angles, including murder. The bodies were found on Friday. When Dharmendra, the husband, did not turn up at the bank where he was a sales manager and his calls went unanswered, a friend sent a family member to the flat. When the friend opened the door, Dharmendra and his wife Suman were found dead on the floor. The police said they checked CCTV footage of the flat's parking area and saw the couple arguing over something. The footage was of Thursday afternoon, a day before the suspected death by suicide.

Suman was seen trying to stop her husband from driving away. After what seemed like an argument, he stopped the car and started talking. She rested her head on his shoulder and held his arms. They came out of the vehicle and walked away, his arm around his wife's shoulder. Another video from the evening of the same day showed the couple entering the apartment together. Suman was seen carrying a bag. This was the last time both were seen alive. "This appears to be a case of death by suicide. If murder is suspected, then we will investigate from that angle as well," police officer Gur Bhupendra said.

Indian woman missing in US after arriving for arranged marriage



New Delhi, (HS) : A 24-year-old Indian woman has gone missing in the United States just days after she arrived there for an arranged marriage, reported. Simran landed in the U.S. on June 20 and was last seen on June 26 in Lindenwood, Camden County. Surveillance footage reportedly showed her looking at her phone and waiting, but she did not appear distressed, officials said. Police note that Simran has no known contacts in the U.S. and speaks limited English. She was carrying an international phone that works only via Wi-Fi, further complicating efforts to trace her.

Shah-Nadda and Kharge to energise party leaders, cadres in Chhattisgarh

RAIPUR, (HS) : July 7 will be a significant day in Chhattisgarh politics as the national presidents of two rival political parties will be in the State to energise their respective leaders and cadres.

The Opposition Congress is organising a mega public rally in the State capital to be addressed by the party chief, Mallikarjun Kharge. He is expected to give a strong message to the party on how to get going aggressively against the ruling regime on issues of public interests. The Opposition has planned a 'Kisan-Jawan-Samvidhan' public meeting to strengthen its voice against BJP's double engine government and gear-up the party leaders and cadres. To make the upcoming rally create an expected impact, the Congress state leadership has asked the office bearers of different organisations and fronts of the party, including the MLAs, elected representatives to ensure the people of their respective areas turn up in good numbers. The party has given responsibility to its leaders to cover all districts of the state and hold discussions with the cadres right up to the grassroots level. "The BJP government in Chhattisgarh has lost the trust of the public and it looks towards Delhi for directions and decisions for governance in the state. Now it's our responsibility to fix the accountability

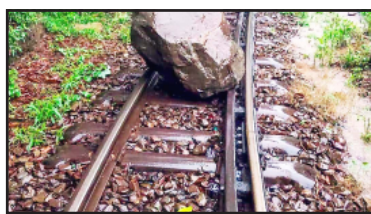


of the government", said Sachin Pilot, state Congress party in-charge. The alleged issues of losing public trust, deteriorating law and order, school education, farmers, misusing agencies, and silencing dissent will be the key focus of the Congress.

Meanwhile, the ruling BJP is preparing in a big way to organise a 3-day leadership training session at Mainpat in Ambikapur from July 7. The structured sessions harmonising the practical strategies with the party ideals will be addressed by the party president JP Nadda on the opening day. The union home minister Amit Shah on the concluding day, will guide the party

Hydroelectric projects shut down, train services on Shimla-Kalka line suspended in heavy rain

CHANDIGARH, (HS) : Four Hydroelectric projects with a combined capacity of more than 1,400 MW have completely shut down in Himachal Pradesh due to high silt levels after the cloudburst on June 25. The cloudburst unleashed floods across remote Sainj valley in Kullu district of the State,



crippling nearly the entire hydropower corridor. The rail services on the Shimla-Kalka rail line, a UNESCO world heritage site were suspended after boulders and trees fell on the tracks following overnight rains. Two National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) projects have borne the brunt of the rains and cloudburst,

which unleashed floods. As per the dam status report of the state emergency operations centre, as of 3 pm today, the 520 MW Parbati Project Phase III (PHEP-III) was incapacitated as the FRL (m) was 1330, while PRL (m) was 1301 as the inflow in the dam was 118.1 cumecs and the slipway out flow as the same.

5.3-Magnitude Earthquake Jolts Pakistan's Punjab

Islamabad, (H.S): An earthquake of magnitude 5.3 struck central Pakistan on Sunday, the German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ) confirmed. The tremors were felt at approximately 3:54 am Indian Standard Time (IST), with the quake's depth recorded at 10 kilometres, indicating a shallow seismic event. According to the GFZ, the epicentre was located around 149 kilometres west of Multan, a major city in Punjab province.

There were no immediate reports of injuries, fatalities, or significant damage to infrastructure. India's National Centre for Seismology (NCS) also recorded the seismic activity, measuring the quake's magnitude slightly lower at 5.2. The NCS noted that the quake occurred at latitude 30.25°N and longitude 69.82°E, at a greater depth of 150 kilometres, which can sometimes reduce the surface impact of such



tremors. The NCS shared the data on its official X handle, posting: "EQ of M: 5.2, On: 29/06/2025 03:54:02 IST, Lat: 30.25 N, Long: 69.82 E, Depth: 150 Km, Location: Pakistan."

Pakistan frequently experiences seismic activity due to its location on the seismically active boundary between the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates. This collision zone makes regions such as Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa particularly vulnerable to earthquakes. Though this latest tremor caused no visible damage or loss of life, authorities

typically urge residents in quake-prone zones to remain alert and follow safety guidelines in the event of aftershocks, according to local media reports. In 2015, a 7.5-magnitude earthquake in Pakistan and Afghanistan resulted in nearly 400 fatalities due to the difficult terrain that complicated relief efforts.

In 2021, Balochistan province, the largest in Pakistan, was hit by a quake that caused at least 20 deaths and injured more than 10 others, with landslides hindering initial rescue operations in the remote mountainous area of Harnai.

Dozens Clash With Police Anti-Government Protests in Serbia

Belgrade, (H.S): Serbian police clashed with more than 140,000 protestors in Belgrade, marking one of the largest demonstrations in recent months against President Aleksandar Vucic's 12-year rule. The protestors, many of them students, flooded the capital, demanding early elections and an end to what they called an increasingly repressive populist regime, reports the BBC.

As protestors chanted, "We want elections," police responded with tear gas and stun grenades, leading to dozens of arrests. Scenes of chaos surfaced on social media as security forces tried to disperse the crowds. They wanted to topple Serbia, and they have failed," Vucic wrote on Instagram, accusing the protestors of attempting to "usurp" the country. Meanwhile, the Higher Court in Belgrade confirmed that five individuals



accused of plotting to overthrow the government were detained on Friday. The police minister condemned the violence and affirmed that those responsible would be held accountable. Despite the unrest, President Vucic has repeatedly rejected calls for snap elections. His ruling Progressive Party-led coalition currently controls 156 of the 250

seats in parliament. The ongoing unrest has visibly shaken Vucic's administration, with university closures further aggravating the political tension. Although his second term runs until 2027, the sustained wave of protests has raised questions about his political future.

Vucic has maintained strong ties with both Russia and the European Union, even as Serbia remains a candidate for EU membership. Notably, Serbia has not joined Western sanctions against Moscow following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Critics continue to accuse Vucic's administration of links to organised crime, corruption, and suppression of dissent - allegations the government denies. The current wave of protests began in December last year, triggered by the collapse of Novi Sad railway station's

roof on November 1, which killed 16 people. The tragedy, widely blamed on corruption and poor infrastructure, led to the resignation of Serbia's former Prime Minister and became a lightning rod for public outrage. As Saturday's protests concluded, organisers played a pre-recorded message urging Serbians to "take freedom into your own hands" and giving the crowd the "green light."

In a statement released on Instagram, protest leaders accused the government of choosing repression over dialogue. "The authorities had all the mechanisms and all the time to meet the demands and prevent an escalation," the organisers said. "Instead, they opted for violence and repression against the people. Any radicalisation of the situation is their responsibility."

AU Launches SEWA To Strengthen Africa's Space-Based Climate Early Warning Systems

Addis Ababa, (H.S): The recently launched Space for Early Warning in Africa (SEWA) initiative by the African Union (AU) Commission aims to enhance the continent's capacity to produce and deliver space-based early warning services for hazardous climate events, according to officials of the pan-African organisation.

SEWA is expected to significantly reduce the loss of lives and property, especially agricultural outputs, due to heavy rains, floods and other extreme climate events, said Moses Vilakati, AU commissioner for agriculture, rural development, blue economy and sustainable environment. "The SEWA project is part of the AU Commission's commitments to strengthening African capacities to utilise data from the new generation of satellites for climate- and weather-related



early warning systems," Vilakati told Xinhua news agency in an interview. Noting that the risk of disasters remains extremely high in Africa, Vilakati said many countries across the continent have in recent years been severely affected by floods, droughts and famine, due to the lack of accurate and reliable early warning services. He said that SEWA is expected to enhance the resilience of AU members to climate risks by improving

access to, and use of, earth observation meteorological data and weather services. "Africa is among the world's most vulnerable regions to climate change, yet it has a low level of access to accurate and reliable climate services," said Vilakati, adding that strengthening weather forecasting and climate information systems is critical for resilience in agriculture, health, energy, water, and disaster risk reduction sectors.

Harsen Nyambe, Director of blue economy and sustainable environment at the AU Commission, said SEWA will deliver real-time services to end users, including weather, water, early warning, and climate information. "The SEWA will help African countries develop information that is fit for purpose, with the design that cascades down from the needs of users," Nyambe said.

He added that SEWA aims to integrate weather, water and climate information into national and regional development frameworks to support sustainable development, especially in poverty reduction, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. According to data from the AU Commission, fewer than 50 per cent of Africans have access to early warning systems, and those that exist are often unreliable. This shortfall has led to significant loss of life and property.

Israeli Military: Killed Senior Hamas Member in Gaza

Jerusalem, (H.S): The Israeli military has said that its forces had killed a senior Hamas commander in an airstrike in Gaza City, identifying him as a key figure in the group's military buildup and in the planning of the October 7 attack on southern Israel.

In a statement on Saturday, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said the strike, carried out on Friday evening in the Sabra neighbourhood, killed Hakhim Muhammad Issa Al-Issa. The operation was conducted in coordination with the Shin Bet domestic security agency. The military described Al-Issa as a founding member of Hamas' military wing and said he played a "significant role in the planning and execution" of the Hamas assault on southern Israel on



October 7, 2023, in which militants killed at least 1,200 people in Israel and took more than 200 hostages back to Gaza. In his most recent role, Al-Issa headed the combat support headquarters of Hamas' military wing, where he allegedly oversaw aerial and naval attacks on Israeli civilians and soldiers. He was also involved in efforts to rebuild Hamas' operational infrastructure during the ongoing conflict, the statement said. Al-Issa had previously led Hamas's training headquarters and served on its

general security council. The military described him as one of the last remaining senior Hamas operatives in the Gaza Strip, reported Xinhua news agency. Hamas has not commented on Israel's claim. Israel resumed its military campaign in Gaza on March 18, ending a two-month ceasefire. The Israeli army bombed the village of Al-Masdar in the central Gaza Strip and east of Jabalia, northern Gaza Strip, on Monday, Xinhua cited the Palestinian official news agency WAFA.

Dhaka, (H.S): The Chittagong Central Jail of Bangladesh is reportedly housing inmates more than three times its capacity, forcing them to live in overcrowded conditions. In an effort to address the situation, an initiative was undertaken by the local authorities to construct a new prison.

However, no land has been allocated despite repeated appeals by the Prisons Department, local media reported on Saturday. Citing prison sources, leading Bangladeshi daily Prothom Alo reported that the jail, which can accommodate 1853 prisoners, detains an average of 6000 prisoners daily. Currently, there are more than three times as many prisoners in the Chittagong Prison. Despite repeated requests, we are not



getting land for a new prison. If there is a new prison, it can be developed as a correctional facility, where there will be arrangements for training prisoners as workers in the fishing and garment industries," the newspaper quoted Mohammad Motaahar Hossain, Director General of the Prisons Department, as saying. Earlier, the Chittagong district administration stated that lands in Jangal Salimpur remain under illegal

occupation, and have yet to be recovered before it can be handed to the prison authorities. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader and the current Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation, Shahadat Hossain, who is imprisoned in the jail in connection with a political case, described the conditions as "inhumane". "There is excessive pressure on prisoners. I have seen that instead of 30-40, as many as 100 people are kept in a limited

area. This is inhumane. The prisoners suffer in various ways due to a lack of adequate space and washrooms. It is necessary to build a new prison in Chittagong to ensure minimum basic rights and healthcare," the BNP leader told the Bangladeshi daily.

In October 2024, a data released by the Department of Prisons revealed that Bangladesh's 68 prisons had a capacity of 42,887 but were housing 53,831 inmates. Jyotirmoy Barua, a human rights activist and senior lawyer at the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, stated that overcrowded prisons constitute a serious violation of human rights. "A person is presumed innocent until proven guilty by law, and it is the state's responsibility to uphold their rights.

As NATO Eyes Indo-Pacific, India Offers Strategic Depth Without Alignment

New Delhi, (H.S): The NATO summit held in The Hague on June 24-25 may be remembered less for its urgent reaffirmations - support for Ukraine, increased defence spending, and condemnation of Iranian strikes - than for a more disciplined, forward-looking pivot: the Indo-Pacific now occupies a central place in NATO's strategic imagination as the Indo-Mediterranean plunges into conflict. This is no small shift. For much of its post-Cold War history, NATO's gaze remained firmly Atlantic.

Even when it extended outward - toward Afghanistan or Libya - it did so from the assumption that security threats radiated outward from Europe. The idea that Asia could shape Euro-Atlantic stability was once considered speculative. That assumption has now collapsed. NATO's engagement with the Indo-Pacific predates the Ukraine war. In the late 2010s and early 2020s, the alliance began quietly deepening ties with democratic Indo-Pacific partners - Japan, Australia, South Korea,

and New Zealand - eventually institutionalising these relationships through the "IP4" format. Yet it was Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and China's subsequent strategic alignment with Moscow that sharpened the view from Brussels. The 2022 NATO Strategic Concept explicitly stated that China's "coercive policies challenge our interests, security, and values." At The Hague, that posture hardened. China was identified not only as a systemic rival but as a "decisive enabler" of Russia's war machine.

Even so, NATO's ambitions remain limited by design. The alliance does not seek to become an Indo-Pacific bloc. It cannot, and should not, replicate its Euro-Atlantic structure in Asia. Instead, it is seeking what might be called "strategic elasticity" - flexible partnerships, practical coordination, and technological interoperability that enhance deterrence without requiring formal alignment. This is where India enters the picture - not as an ally, but as a necessary partner. India remains committed to



strategic autonomy and non-alignment. It is not part of the IP4, nor will it seek NATO membership or treaty-bound commitments. New Delhi has historically resisted bloc politics and retains strong historical ties to Moscow, even as it seeks to diversify its defence posture. But that autonomy should not be mistaken for passivity. In recent years, India has developed a

proactive Indo-Pacific agenda, exemplified by its SAGAR doctrine - Security and Growth for All in the Region - and more recently, the 'Mahasagar' initiative, announced in late 2024. Mahasagar (Sanskrit for "great ocean") signals India's intent to become the principal architect of stability in the Western Indo-Pacific. It combines maritime domain awareness, defence-

industrial cooperation, and blue economy coordination across the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, and the African littoral. Importantly, it also envisions interoperability with like-minded navies and integration of undersea surveillance and cyber capabilities. While not aimed at any single actor, Mahasagar is a clear strategic counterweight to China's Belt and Road naval encirclement of the Indian Ocean.

India's role in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) - alongside the United States, Japan, and Australia - already positions it as a key player in balancing China's influence. Yet the Quad is not a military alliance. It operates through consensus and capacity building. NATO, on the other hand, brings something complementary to India's toolbox: institutional experience, shared standards, and operational maturity across cyber, AI, and undersea deterrence. Where the Quad offers alignment of vision, NATO offers alignment of capability. There are already

examples of what this looks like in practice. In 2024, India conducted joint exercises with the Italian aircraft carrier Nave Cavour, demonstrating high-level interoperability. It has participated in multilateral operations like Sea Dragon alongside the United States, Japan, Australia, and Canada. NATO, for its part, has established pathways for defence tech integration with partners in the region.

At The Hague, it unveiled new initiatives in cyber defence, counter-disinformation, AI, and dual-use industrial cooperation - all areas where India has growing interest and capability. Of course, these engagements will not lead to formal alliance structures. New Delhi will not sign a collective defence pact, nor will it open NATO bases. But this is not what the moment demands. What it demands is pragmatic, modular cooperation - shared exercises, aligned technical standards, and secure communication frameworks that allow both sides to respond jointly to maritime instability, cyber threats, and supply chain vulnerabilities. There

is also a deeper, systemic rationale for engagement. Trade routes through the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait are not abstract concerns for Europe. Nearly 40 per cent of global trade flows through these waters. A limited conflict - say, over Taiwan - would immediately disrupt global supply chains, raise commodity prices, and destabilise energy flows.

Euro-Atlantic security, in other words, is no longer bounded by geography; it is bounded by connectivity. And India, situated at the strategic hinge of East and West, is uniquely positioned to help NATO manage this transition. None of this negates India's long-standing preference for autonomy. In fact, NATO's appeal lies precisely in its ability to work with India without violating that principle. What is emerging is a partnership without alliance - a relationship grounded in complementary interests, not identical identities. Looking ahead, NATO must resist the temptation to replicate its Atlantic formula in the Indo-Pacific.

Tata Steel gets show cause notice over input tax credit of 1,000 cr availed during FY19-23



New Delhi, (H.S): Tata Steel on Sunday said the company has received a show cause-cum-demand (SCN) notice from tax authorities over an "alleged irregular availment of input tax credit" of Rs 1,000 crore between FY19 and FY23. The notice mentions that the steel giant required to show cause before the Additional/ Joint Commissioner of Central GST & Central Excise, Jamshedpur, Jharkhand within 30 days "as to

why the Goods and Service Tax (GST), amounting to Rs 1007,54,83,342 for the period FY2018-19 through FY2022-23 shall not be demanded and recovered from the company", Tata Steel said in a stock exchange filing. The notice, issued by the Office of the Commissioner (Audit), Central Tax, Ranchi, on June 27, said the input tax credit was availed in contravention of the provisions of Section 74(1) of the Central Goods and Services

Tax Act, 2017/State Goods and Services Act, 2017 (CGST/SGST) read with Section 20 Integrated Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017. The company said it has already paid a GST of Rs 514,19,36,211 in the normal course of business."The above GST amount is proposed to be appropriated in the notice and therefore alleged GST exposure is Rs 493,35,47,131 only," the filing said.

The added that it believes that the notice "has no merits and the company shall make its submissions before the appropriate forum within the given timelines". "There is no impact on financial, operational, or other activities of the company, arising from the said SCN," it added. Under GST norms, enterprises are allowed credits in input tax on purchases meant for outputs, which they can claim in the form of deductions in their tax liabilities.

Indian cement sector reaches 39.6 million metric tonnes in May, up 9 pc

New Delhi, (H.S): The Indian cement sector reached 39.6 million metric tonnes (MT) in May, recorded a strong 9 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth in volumes, according to a new report. The positive trend continued in the first two months of FY26, with volumes rising 8 per cent YoY to 78.7 million MT, according to the report by ICRA. For FY2025, cement volumes grew by 6.3 per cent YoY, totalling 453.0 million MT.

ICRA projects a further 6-7 per cent growth in FY2026, with volumes expected to reach 480-485 million MT, driven by sustained demand from the housing and infrastructure sectors. Average cement prices saw an 8 per cent YoY increase in May 2025, reaching Rs 360 per bag, while prices for the first two months of FY2026 were up 7 per cent YoY. ICRA anticipates an 80-150 basis points (bps) improvement in operating



margins for its sample set of cement companies, rising to 16.3-17.0 per cent in FY2026. The rating agency maintains a 'Stable' outlook for the Indian cement sector, reflecting confidence in continued demand and favourable cost conditions.

The sector's resilience underscores its critical role in supporting India's infrastructure and housing development. The combined Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) increased by 0.7 per cent in May compared to the same month last year, according

to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry data. The production of cement, steel, coal, and refinery products recorded positive growth last month. The final growth rate of the Index of Eight Core Industries for February, March and April was observed at 3.4, 4.5 and 1.0 per cent, respectively, said the ministry.

Cement production rose by 9.2 per cent in May. Its cumulative index increased by 7.8 per cent during April to May, 2025-26 over the corresponding period of the previous year.

India's M&A deals touch \$41.5 bn in H1 as PEs, firms eye healthcare, infra

New Delhi, (H.S): India's mergers and acquisitions (M&A) market recorded deals worth \$41.49 billion in the first half of 2025, down nearly 6 per cent from a year ago, as large-ticket transactions remained limited. Despite the dip in value, a 4.6 per cent rise in deal count to 1,577 signals continuing appetite among domestic conglomerates and private equity (PE) funds for mid-sized and smaller assets. Healthcare, infrastructure, and financial services emerged as key drivers, even as overall value

trailed the post-pandemic highs of 2022, when first-half dealmaking had peaked at over \$135 billion, largely due to the HDFC Bank-HDFC mega merger. In infrastructure, Adani Ports & SEZ acquired Abbot Point Port Holdings for \$1.97 billion from its promoter entities, continuing its push into overseas port assets. The group also indicated plans to invest up to \$20 billion annually in India's infrastructure sector, including greenfield projects. Among conglomerates, Hindalco Industries Ltd, the Aditya Birla

Group's metals flagship, acquired US-based AluChem Companies, Inc. for \$125 million. Bajaj Holdings & Investment Ltd. bought out Allianz SE's stake in Bajaj Allianz General Insurance for \$1.2 billion, signalling consolidation in the fast-evolving insurance sector. The acquisition of Akzo Nobel India by JSW Paints, announced last week, was another significant M&A deal this year. PE firms remained active but cautious. While the number of PE-backed transactions held steady, average deal size declined.

India's Auto Sector Powers \$5 Trillion Economy Dream With Record Growth in EVs, Exports, Jobs

New Delhi, (H.S): As India moves closer to achieving its \$5 trillion economy dream, the automobile sector is emerging as a strong pillar of growth by contributing around 7.1 per cent to the country's GDP and nearly 49 per cent to its manufacturing GDP. Additionally, it supports over 3.7 crore jobs and accounts for close to 8 per cent of India's total exports. Clearly, the performance of this sector is closely linked to the overall economic growth of the country.

More than just a commercial industry, the auto sector is now seen as a reflection of India's growing power in global manufacturing and innovation. As of the financial year 2024-25, India is the third-largest automobile market in the world by sales and the fourth-largest in terms of production. The country produced over 31 million vehicles across various segments. This included more than 5 million passenger cars, 1 million commercial vehicles, 1 million three-wheelers, and nearly 24 million two-wheelers. In terms of exports, India shipped around 5.7 million vehicles to markets



like Japan, Mexico, Latin America, and Africa. This rapid growth has been supported by government policies aimed at boosting local manufacturing, reducing imports, promoting clean technologies, and making India a key player in global supply chains.

One of the most important schemes has been the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) for the automobile and auto components sector. With a budget of Rs 25,938 crore, this scheme is focused on promoting electric vehicles (EVs), hydrogen vehicles, autonomous systems, and advanced vehicle technologies. By early 2025, this scheme had attracted investment proposals worth over Rs 67,000

crore. It is expected to generate Rs 2.3 lakh crore in additional sales and create 7.5 lakh direct jobs. However, out of the total \$23 billion approved under PLI schemes across all sectors, only US\$1.7 billion has been disbursed so far, raising concerns about slow implementation.

Another major initiative is the FAME-II scheme (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles), launched with a budget of Rs 11,500 crore. It supports the adoption of electric two-wheelers, three-wheelers, buses, and taxis. Over 1.3 million EVs have already been supported under this scheme. Originally

Power ministry launches task force to develop India energy stack platform

New Delhi, (H.S): The Ministry of Power on Saturday announced the launch of a task force to conceive the India Energy Stack (IES), an initiative aimed at creating a unified, secure, and interoperable digital public infrastructure (DPI) for the energy sector.

The IES will play a vital role in integrating renewable energy, enhancing DISCOM efficiency, and delivering transparent, reliable, and future-ready power services, an official statement quoted Power Minister Manohar Lal Khattar as saying. There is an urgent need for developing robust DPI in the power sector to manage the country's rising demand, ensure grid stability, and empower consumers. What Aadhaar did for identity and UPI achieved for digital payments, the

India Energy Stack will accomplish for the power sector - unlocking seamless, secure, and consumer-centric energy services for every citizen," he added. As India charts its path to becoming a USD 5 trillion economy and advances towards its net-zero commitments, the power sector faces both unprecedented opportunities and complex challenges, the statement said.

Rapid growth in renewable energy, electric vehicles, and consumer participation in energy markets is transforming the sector, but fragmented systems and a lack of seamless digital integration remain key barriers, it pointed out. To address these issues, the ministry is reimagining the sector's digital foundation through the IES - a



DPI that will provide a standardised, secure, and open platform to manage, monitor, and innovate across the electricity value chain. The IES will offer unique IDs for consumers, assets, and transactions; real-time, consent-based data sharing; open APIs (Application Programming Interface) for seamless system integration; and tools for

consumer empowerment, market access, and innovation. Apart from conceiving the IES, the ministry will undertake a 12-month Proof of Concept (PoC) to demonstrate IES through real-world use cases in partnership with selected utilities. This includes piloting the Utility Intelligence Platform (UIP), a modular, analytics-driven application built on IES to support utilities, policymakers and consumers with real-time insights and smarter energy management.

To guide these initiatives, the ministry has constituted a dedicated task force comprising experts from the technology, power sector, and regulatory domains, which will steer the development, pilot implementation and nationwide scale-up of the IES.

Retail Sector Gaining Momentum, Growth Expected to Reach 9-10 Pc Soon: RAI

New Delhi, (H.S): The Indian retail sector, currently valued at \$900 billion, is showing signs of strong recovery and is expected to grow at a faster pace in the coming months, according to the Retailers' Association of India (RAI). The sector, which is currently growing at a rate of 5 per cent, is likely to soon pick up speed and reach a growth rate of 9 to 10 per cent.

RAI's CEO Kumar Rajagopalan said that right after the pandemic, the retail sector had bounced back strongly with a 20 per cent growth rate. "However, in the last one year, the growth slowed down to around 5 per cent. Now, with the markets stabilising, consumers spending more, and the right consumer base



in place, the sector is once again showing signs of faster growth," he added. Meanwhile, as per RAI's 62nd Retail Business Survey, retail sales across India grew by 7 per cent in May 2025 compared to the same month the previous year. This marks a

significant improvement after months of moderate growth ranging between 4 to 5 per cent. Region-wise, southern India led the way with a 9 per cent growth in retail sales in May. Western India followed with 7 per cent, while northern and

eastern regions recorded growth of 6 per cent and 4 per cent, respectively, as per the report. Among the different segments, quick service restaurants (QSR) showed the highest growth at 10 per cent.

Consumer durables and electronics, along with furniture, also performed well with an 8 per cent rise each. Rajagopalan said this increase shows that people are now more willing to spend, especially on non-essential or discretionary items. Looking ahead, the RAI CEO expressed optimism about the upcoming festive season. He said that the improving consumer sentiment could further boost retail sales and bring the sector closer to double-digit growth in the near future.

Govt Extends CBDT Chairman Ravi Agrawal's Tenure By A Year

New Delhi, (H.S): The government has extended the tenure of Ravi Agrawal as the Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) by another year. The CBDT is the apex policymaking body of the Income Tax Department, and its chairman and members are senior Indian Revenue Service officers."

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved re-appointment of Ravi Agrawal, IRS as Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes on contract basis, for a period of one year with effect from July 1, 2025 till June 30, 2026 or until further orders, whichever is earlier," the government order stated. The re-appointment will be on the usual terms and conditions applicable to re-employed Central government officers, in relaxation of the Recruitment Rules. Agarwal, a 1988 batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS)



officer from the income tax cadre, had succeeded Nitin Gupta, 1986 batch IRS officer, in June 2024 as Chairman of the CBDT. He was serving as a member of the CBDT (Administration) from July 2023 before his appointment as chairman.

The CBDT is headed by a chairman and can have six members who are in the rank of special secretary. Meanwhile, CBDT has asked all the principal chief commissioners

of Income Tax to exercise effective supervision over their assessing officers and make sure that questions sent by them to a taxpayer are justified, and that irrelevant queries are completely avoided.

The apex body has directed Income Tax Department officials to ensure due application of mind while issuing notices for scrutiny and assessment of a taxpayer's return, emphasising that all queries should be relevant and

specific. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman earlier this week asked income-tax officials to ensure that tax compliance processes are made simpler, more transparent and taxpayer-friendly. The Finance Minister also directed all principal chief commissioners of income tax to prioritise and accelerate the disposal of disputed tax demands that are currently pending before the faceless appellate authorities, the finance ministry said in a statement.

About 577,000 appeals were pending at the start of the current fiscal year. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) is targeting to address more than 225,000 appeals in FY 2025-26 involving over Rs 10 lakh crore of disputed demand. The Finance Minister highlighted that prompt and time-bound disposal of taxpayer grievances is essential for ensuring responsive governance.

Gold, Silver Prices Fall Sharply This Week; Global Trends, Geopolitical Easing Behind Dip

New Delhi, (H.S): There's good news for gold and silver buyers as prices of both precious metals saw a decline this week, bringing gold back below Rs 96,000 per 10 grams and silver under Rs 1.06 lakh per kilogram. According to the India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA), the price of 24-carat gold is now Rs 95,784 per 10 grams, down from Rs 98,691 a week ago - a sharp drop of Rs 2,907. Similarly, the price of 22-carat gold has come down to Rs 87,738 from Rs 90,404 per 10 grams.

For 18-carat gold, the rate has dropped from Rs 74,018 to Rs 71,838 per 10 grams. Silver prices also dipped during the review period, falling by Rs 1,582 to Rs 1,05,193 per kilogram from the previous Rs 1,06,775. Notably, silver had reached an all-time high of Rs 1,09,550 per kg on June 18. The international market has mirrored this trend, with gold on COMEX falling to \$3,300 per ounce from \$3,400 earlier.



Silver has dropped to \$36 per ounce. Experts attribute the decline in precious metal prices to recent global developments, including the easing of tensions between Israel and Iran, signs of global stability, and weakness in the US dollar. Despite this week's drop, gold and silver have seen a strong rally since the beginning of the year.

Since January 1, the price of 24-carat gold has surged from Rs 76,162 to Rs 95,784 per 10 grams - an increase of Rs 19,622 or 25.76 per cent. Similarly, silver prices have jumped Rs

19,176 or 22.29 per cent, from Rs 86,017 to Rs 1,05,193 per kilogram. Meanwhile, in an earlier report this month, experts said that gold prices are expected to rise sharply as fresh geopolitical tensions in the Middle East increase global uncertainty.

According to the report, experts believe gold could trade in the range of \$3,500 to \$3,700 in the coming weeks. Akshay Chinchalkar of Axis Securities said that as long as spot gold remains above \$3,314, it could move higher towards \$3,770.



Priyanka 'so shook' by Shefali's death, sends condolences to Parag Tyagi, family

Actor Shefali Jariwala's death left everyone in the industry shocked. The actor died at the age of 42 after reportedly suffering a cardiac arrest on Friday night. Mika Singh, Sunidhi Chauhan and other celebrities attended her last rites, held on Saturday in Mumbai. Now, Priyanka Chopra has also offered her condolences to Shefali's family. On Sunday, Priyanka took to Instagram Stories and, sharing

a picture of Shefali, expressed her sorrow over the sudden demise. She wrote, "So shook. She was too young. Sending condolences to Parag and family." For the unversed, Shefali worked with Priyanka, Salman Khan and Akshay Kumar in the movie Mujhse Shaadi Karogi.

Since Shefali's death, several visuals from her final rites at Oshiwara crematorium have surfaced on the internet, showing her mother breaking down and unable to

control her tears, and Shefali's father consoling her while fighting back his own tears as he carried his daughter's mortal remains. A recent video also showed Parag unable to control his emotions as he carried Shefali's ashes to the ocean for asthi visarjan. Recently, Varun Dhawan slammed the media for insensitive coverage of Shefali's death and wrote, "Again, one more passing of a soul being insensitively covered by the media. I just don't understand

why do u have to cover someone's grief. Everyone looks so uncomfortable with this. How is this benefiting anyone? & my request to my friends in the media, this isn't the way someone would want their final journey covered."

On Friday night, 27 June, Shefali was rushed to Bellevue Multispeciality Hospital by her husband, Parag Tyagi, reportedly after suffering a cardiac arrest. However, she was declared dead on arrival, according to

news agency. The Mumbai Police sent her body for post-mortem to ascertain the cause of death. After the autopsy, police officials revealed that the cause of death has been 'reserved'. From Mika Singh, Sunidhi Chauhan to her Bigg Boss 13 co-participants Shehnaaz Gill, Mahira Sharma, Paras Chhabra, Hindustani Bhau, Arti Singh and Rashami Desai - many expressed their shock and also paid their last respects at her funeral on Saturday.

Sitaare Zameen Par box office collection enters 100 cr club



Despite facing competition from new releases like Kajol's Maa and Vishnu Manchu's Kannappa, Aamir Khan's Sitaare Zameen Par witnessed a significant jump in its day 9 box office collection and has now crossed the 100 crore mark, according to Sacnilk. The trade tracking site reported that Aamir's film saw a jump of 92% on its second Saturday, collecting 12.75 crore at the box office, up from 6.65 crore on Friday. The total collection of the film now stands at 108 crore. This week saw two new releases - Kajol's Maa, which earned 6.2 crore on

day 2, and Vishnu Manchu's Kannappa, which collected 7 crore, both less than what Sitaare Zameen Par managed.

Sitaare Zameen Par has grossed approximately 165 crore worldwide, according to Sacnilk, making it the fifth highest-grossing Bollywood movie of the year. It is expected to cross Salman Khan's Sikandar (185 crore gross) in the next couple of days to become the fourth biggest grosser of the year among Hindi films. Helmed by RS Prasanna, the film is a spiritual sequel to Aamir's 2007 hit Taare Zameen Par. The film stars Aamir as a

basketball coach who trains a team of specially-abled children as punishment for a drink-and-drive case. Backed by Aamir Khan Productions, the film also stars Genelia D'Souza in the lead role alongside 10 debutants, including Aroush Datta, Gopi Krishna Varma, Samvit Desai, Vedant Sharma, Ayush Bhansali, Ashish Pendse, Rishi Shahani, Rishabh Jain, Naman Mishra, and Simran Mangeshkar - all of whom are specially-abled.

An excerpt from Hindustan Times' review of Sitaare Zameen Par reads, "The first half is slow and tests your patience. Aamir being angry with his new role, getting to know his special team, then struggling in his marriage with Sunita (Genelia Deshmukh) - there's a lot that eats up screen time and feels like lazy writing. There's the occasional laugh, pretty much what one saw in the trailer. The intermission point too isn't on a high. You settle into your seats after this, ready for a yawn-fest. But this is exactly when Sitaare Zameen Par miraculously finds its groove."

Varun urges media to show compassion final journey of Shefali

Kaanta Laga and Bigg Boss 13 fame Shefali Jariwala died at the age of 42 on Friday night after reportedly suffering a cardiac arrest. Her final rites were performed in Mumbai on Saturday, where friends and family gathered to pay their last respects. Throughout the day, the paparazzi present were criticised for shoving their cameras into the faces of Shefali's family members and friends. Her husband Parag Tyagi even pleaded with the media to leave him alone. Now, Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan has spoken out about the 'insensitive coverage'. Varun took to Instagram on Sunday and urged the paparazzi to be sensitive while covering the death of a celebrity. He wrote, "Again, one more passing of a soul being insensitively covered by the media. I just don't understand why do u have to cover someone's grief. Everyone looks so uncomfortable with this. How is this benefiting anyone?"



& my request to my friends in the media, this isn't the way someone would want their final journey covered."

The paparazzi were seen capturing every moment of Parag and Shefali's relatives and friends who visited the hospital or their residence to offer condolences. A video of Shefali's mother crying inconsolably after learning about her daughter's death surfaced on the internet. Parag was also seen pleading the paparazzi to stop recording him

and to make way for him as he arrived at Cooper Hospital, where Shefali's body was taken for post-mortem. After performing his wife's last rites, actor Parag Tyagi was seen once again requesting the paparazzi with folded hands to remember Shefali in their prayers. He said, "Mazak, drama mat baniyega, main sabse request karta hoon (I request everyone not to turn this into a drama). Please pray for my pari (angel). Please pray for her peace. Please aap bandh kijiye (Please stop this now)."

with him to the peppy and energetic track. Reacting to the video track, a fan commented, "It was only the first time I heard it, and I already got addicted to the song (laughing face emoticon). Anirudh can never go wrong." A second fan wrote, "A 72-year-old man storming the screen with that unmatched energy. It's pure bliss to watch! Superstar isn't just an actor; he is Indian cinema. Can't wait for August 14th."

A comment read, "This guy giving beats in the background finally got what he deserved... great composition." "«This generation should learn a lot from T Rajendran sir and Rajini Sir... At 70's their energy, dedication and consistent hardwork... Really speechless.» read another comment. A fan also said, "«Definition of aura is Rajinikanth. Once a Thalaivar fan always a Thalaivar fan. Huge hope on LOKI's cooking!«"

over the aura of Rajinikanth.

The video started with Anirudh entering the scene to set the record straight about the vibe not matching up to the expectations. He was seen dancing with several other men, as the scene cut to Rajinikanth dancing in scenes from the movie. Both danced to the exact same steps. Director Lokesh Kanagaraj also joined Anirudh at the halfway point and danced along



Rajinikanth's Coolie, directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj, is one of the most anticipated releases of the year. On Wednesday, the makers released the first track from the album, a peppy number called Chikitu. It had music composer Anirudh dancing, mirroring the same moves which Rajinikanth performs in the upcoming film. This special music video set social media abuzz, with many fans reacting to the music and gushing

India's T20 WC 2024 Triumph: A year of glory



New Delhi, (HS) : In Barbados, India ended an 11-year-long ICC Trophy drought, beating South Africa by seven runs to capture the ICC T20 World Cup title for the second time on June 29 last year. This was Rohit Sharma's 2nd ICC T20 WC title and his first ICC title as a captain, after the heartbreak of losing to Australia in the final of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 at home following a ten-match win streak.

India also celebrated the farewell of two giants of Indian

cricket, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, from the T20 format, as they walked away with their heads held high. Indian skipper Rohit Sharma was the star with the bat for India in the tournament. He slammed 257 runs in eight innings, including three fifties, at an average of 36.71 and a strike rate of over 155. He was also the second-highest run scorer in the tournament. On the other hand, in bowling, Indian seamer Arshdeep Singh grabbed the most number of wickets for

India in the T20 World Cup. He took 17 wickets in eight innings at an average of 12.64 and an economy rate of under 8. He was the second-highest wicket-taker in the tournament. India had elected to bat first, but was reduced to 34/3. However, it was another clutch effort from Virat Kohli, who had a relatively dull tournament up to that point, that calmed everyone down. Three boundaries within the first few balls he faced was an ominous sign that Team India's biggest

match-winner in past T20 WCs was going to be at his best. He also had a fine 72-run stand with Axar Patel, who played a counter-attacking 47 in 31 balls, with a four and four sixes. Virat clobbered 76 in 59 balls, with six fours and two sixes. India reached a fighting 176/7 in their 20 overs. The match hung in balance with a partnership of 58 runs between Quinton de Kock and Tristan Stubbs and a 15th over onslaught on Axar by Klaasen, during which he hit 24 runs, left the game in favour of the Proteas, who needed 30 in the final 30 balls.

But in the 16th over, Hardik Pandya removed Klaasen for a well-made 52 in 27 balls, which had two fours and five sixes. From then on, India continued to apply pressure, with the match-sealing moment being Suryakumar Yadav's stunning catch, which saw him go out of the boundary ropes before pulling the delivery back within the ropes and catching it to dismiss a dangerous David Miller in the final over.

Gill, Gambhir Sent Selection for 2nd England Test

London, (HS) : Former Indian cricket team wicket-keeper batter Deep Dasgupta advised the team management to make two changes to the playing XI for the second Test match against England. Dasgupta said that India should include Nitish Kumar Reddy in place of Sai Sudharsan and play Kuldeep Yadav at No. 8. Sudharsan made his debut in the first Test match with scores of 0 and 30 in the two innings. However, Dasgupta believes that Nitish will offer a better option in the second Test match and if Karun Nair is promoted to No. 3 in the batting order, the team management can decide to drop Sudharsan. "In general, you don't want to make too many changes after the first game, but you have also got to think this is a very young side. It's a new captain, newish side. So you have got to get the combination right. Karun Nair has got most of his runs at No. 3. Also, he batted for India A against the England Lions at No. 3," the former India wicketkeeper-batter said on Star Sports.

Batter Dies Due to Heart Attack after Hitting Six



Pune, (HS) : A heartbreaking video has surfaced on social media where a batter died on the pitch due to heart attack right after hitting a six. During a cricket match in Firozpur, Punjab, the batter suddenly collapsed on the field and died. The video showed the batter hitting the ball for a six but as he walked to the middle of the pitch, he went down on his knees and looked in serious discomfort. As soon as he lost

consciousness, the other players tried to attempt CPR but he did not recover and it was discovered that he had died instantly off heart attack. The batter was identified as Harjeet Singh from Firozpur. In a similar incident back in 2024, a 35-year-old cricketer died of cardiac arrest while playing a cricket match at the Garware Stadium in Pune.

The player, by the name of Imran Patel, came out to bat as

an opener and started to complain of chest and arm pain after spending some time on the pitch. He informed the on-field umpires of the issue and was given the permission to leave the field. However, while heading back to the pavilion, Imran collapsed. The entire incident was caught on camera as the match was being live-streamed. As Imran collapsed, other players on the field rushed towards him. He was immediately taken to the hospital. But, upon assessment by the doctors, Imran was pronounced dead.

What was surprising for many is the fact that Imran was in extremely good health. He was physically fit, yet suffered a cardiac arrest. Being an all-rounder, Imran was the kind of a player who had to be active all throughout a match. The reason behind his death, hence, left many stunned.

Babita Wrestling Not Part in Commonwealth Games 2026

New Delhi, (HS) : Former wrestler Babita Phogat participated in the 'Fit India Sundays on Cycle' initiative in New Delhi. She expressed her disappointment over the absence of wrestling in the Commonwealth Games 2026. She highlighted the challenges faced, particularly for women wrestlers, and emphasised the potential

for India to win more medals if wrestling were included. While speaking, Babita Phogat said, "I have been a three-time Commonwealth medalist, and I feel very sad because it was very difficult for us, especially for women's wrestling. We had a chance in 2010, and we have played continuously since then, up until 2018-2022.

India to play against Pakistan in Asia Cup 2025



New Delhi, (HS) : Amidst the ongoing tensions between India and Pakistan after the deadly Pahalgalam terror attack followed by Operation Sindoor and ceasefire violations. These conflicts has put the Asia Cup 2025 in jeopardy. Amidst all these tensions India boycotted Pakistani artists and actors. Reports also said that BCCI might boycott India's matches against Pakistan both in ACC and ICC events. However, as per the new reports, Asia Cup 2025 might go as per plan with India and Pakistan heading face to face. According to the reports posted by several media houses, The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) is planning to host the tournament in September with India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and UAE as the participants. India might likely face against Pakistan in the Asia Cup 2025. It was further stated that promotional activities for the tournament has already begun and UAE is the frontrunner as host.

Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers: India Winning with 4-0 Victory Vs Timor-Leste

Chiang Mai (Thailand), (HS) : The Indian senior women's team continued their emphatic run in the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers with a commanding 4-0 victory against Timor-Leste at the 700th Anniversary Stadium in Chiang Mai on Sunday. Winger Manisha Kalyan (12', 80') scored a brilliant brace, while Anju Tamang (58') and Lynda Kom Serto (86') added their names to the scoresheet in a one-sided contest that saw India dominate from start to finish.

With the win, India now sit atop Group B with six points from two games, ahead of Iraq and Thailand, who are set to face each other later in the day. The top spot in the five-team group remains up for grabs, but India have certainly staked a strong claim with back-to-back dominant displays. Fresh from their record-breaking 13-0 triumph over Mongolia in their opening fixture, India entered the match brimming with confidence.

