



# DUMANI MAIL

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English Daily



## Modi conferred with Ghana's national honour

**New Delhi (H.S):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with "The Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana", the country's national honour, for his "distinguished statesmanship and influential global leadership". Modi received the award on Wednesday from the Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama. "Honoured to be conferred with 'The Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana'," the prime minister said in an X post. In his acceptance speech, Modi said the award was a matter of great pride and honour for him."

I humbly accept the award on behalf of the 140 crore Indians," he said, dedicating it to the aspirations and bright future of the youth of the two countries, the historical ties between Ghana and India, and their rich cultural traditions and diversity." This honour is also a responsibility; to keep working towards stronger India-Ghana friendship. India will always stand with the people of Ghana and continue to contribute as a trusted friend and development partner," he said in an X post. The award was conferred on the prime minister in



recognition of his "distinguished statesmanship and influential global leadership," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a press release. Thanking the people and government of Ghana for the special gesture, the prime minister noted that the "shared democratic values

and traditions of the two countries would continue to nurture the partnership". He said the award "further deepens the friendship between the two countries and places new responsibility on him to embrace and advance bilateral ties." Earlier, Modi held wide-

ranging talks with Mahama, after which India and Ghana elevated their ties to the level of a comprehensive partnership. The Prime Minister was in Ghana on the first leg of his five-nation tour. It was the first prime ministerial visit from India to Ghana in three decades. In his address to the Parliament of Ghana, Modi said a strong India will contribute to a more stable and prosperous world as he pushed for credible and effective reforms in global governance in the wake of changing circumstances. Progress cannot occur without giving a voice to the Global South, he added."

As the world's largest democracy, India is a pillar of strength for the world. A strong India will contribute to a more stable and prosperous world," Prime Minister Modi, who is here on a two-day visit, said. Noting that India is the fastest-growing emerging economy, Modi said that on the foundations of a stable polity and governance, India will soon become the third-largest economy. The Modi underlined that the world order created after World War II is changing fast.

## Jaga Pradhan arrested after surrender

**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** BJP leader Jagannath Pradhan was arrested connection with the brutal attack on Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Additional Commissioner Ratnakar Sahoo. Earlier, police had arrested five persons in this connection.

Sources said Pradhan was arrested after he surrendered at the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) at 10pm. After medical examination at Capital Hospital, he was arrested and forwarded to SDJM court at 10.30pm. Soon after arriving at the DCP office, the two-time MLA



candidate from Bhubaneswar Central said that he was ready to cooperate in the investigation by the police into the assault on senior OAS officer Ratnakar Sahoo at BMC headquarters on Monday. I have come here to

cooperate with the investigation," Pradhan stated, adding, If my arrest can resolve the issue, I am ready to cooperate. Police had tightened security arrangement to avoid any

Continued P-4

## CM inaugurates Shabari Bhawan



**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Thursday inaugurated a new short-stay home, 'Shabari Bhawan', in IRC Village area here. The Chief Minister also announced a grant of Rs two crore for the further upgradation

of the short-stay facility built by Shabari Sanskritika Parishad for the people of Koraput, Rayagada, Nabarangpur and Malkangiri districts. He also declared that all necessary infrastructure and facilities for the development of Shabari

Bhawan will be provided. Speaking on this occasion, the Chief Minister said Shabari Bhawan is not merely for accommodation but will act as a platform for the emergence of tribal youth and leadership.

It will serve as a centre for short-term accommodation, education, employment, and cultural activities for tribal brothers and sisters. Tribal communities visiting this center will feel at home, and their journey toward education, healthcare, employment, and progress will begin here.

Continued P-4

## Govt inks pact with Skymet for WINDS

**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** In a bid to strengthen weather-based agricultural planning and disaster management, the Odisha government on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Skymet Weather Services Pvt Ltd for the implementation of the Weather Information Network Data System (WINDS). The MoU was signed between the Department of



Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment and Skymet in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister K V Singh Deo. The pact aims to enhance weather data accessibility and improve risk

management in agriculture, crop insurance, and disaster preparedness, Singh Deo said. He said the initiative will play a vital role in supporting schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). As per the agreement, Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) will be installed at block level, and Automatic Rain Gauges (ARG) at gram panchayat level across Odisha. These

Continued P-4

### Info on Puri stampede sought from public

**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** With the inquiry into the stampede at Saradhabali near Gundicha temple gathering momentum, the Odisha government on Thursday sought information from the public with regards to the incident that claimed three lives and left over 50 injured on June 29. In a public notice, the Planning and Convergence Department urged individuals to submit any relevant details, including video footage that could aid in conducting a transparent and thorough inquiry into the tragic incident that unfolded early Sunday morning. "The members of the public are urged to

Continued P-4

## HC relief for IAS officer Sethi



**Cuttack (DMC):** The Orissa High Court on Thursday provided interim protection to senior IAS officer Bishnupada Sethi against any

coercive action in the Rs 10-lakh bribery case till the next hearing. The court also ordered interim security for Sethi amid growing legal and political scrutiny. The IAS officer has moved the court for anticipatory bail. The matter has been posted for July 8.

This comes days after the HC dismissed a writ petition filed by him, seeking to quash the ongoing CBI investigation against him related to the bribery case. The officer is under CBI scanner over his alleged links with general manager of the central PSU Bridge and Roof Company (India) Limited, Chanchal Mukherjee, who arrested near

Continued P-4

ADMIN APATHY

## Children brave river water to reach school in Gajapati

**Berhampur (DMC):** In a show of extraordinary grit and determination, ten students from Sanasahi village under Mohana block in Gajapati district undertake a perilous journey each day, wading through the turbulent Gadapur river to attend school at Badasahi.

Their daily 1.5-km trudge across the river is not just a commute, but a testament to the spirit of learning amidst adversity. The arduous journey is not limited to children alone. Residents from more than a dozen villages, including Kumbharpada, Ramsing, Gurimera, Betagonda, Bamudipada, Chidgapanka, Lutipadar, Gurujhuli, Balibandha, Gangudipanka, and Rajakhama, are forced to cross




the same watery expanse for basic needs like healthcare, marketing, and transport. Villagers claim that despite repeated pleas for a bridge, their voices have echoed unheard for years. However, a glimmer of hope has emerged. Transport Minister Bibhuti Bhushan Jena has recently assured the long-awaited construction of a bridge over the Gadapur river, promising respite from the agonising hardship. Until then, the river remains both a path and a peril—a silent witness to the


indomitable courage of Gajapati's children, who are scripting a saga of resilience. Deputy CM tours Balasore Deputy Chief Minister Pravati Parida on Thursday conducted an aerial survey of flood-affected six blocks in Odisha's Balasore district where Subarnarekha river has begun receding after breaching its banks.

I surveyed the flood-affected areas in Bhograi, Baliapal, Jaleswar, Basta, Remuna and Balasore Sadar. A total of 154 villages across these six blocks and 8 wards of Jaleshwar Municipality have been affected. Steps have been taken to relocate people to safe places and provide them food," Parida posted on X.


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ଶ୍ରୀ ନରେନ୍ଦ୍ର ମୋଦୀ  
ପ୍ରଧାନମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ



**ସୁସ୍ଥ ଓଡ଼ିଶା  
ବିକଶିତ ଓଡ଼ିଶା**



ଶ୍ରୀ ମୋହନ ଚରଣ ମାଝୀ  
ମୁଖ୍ୟମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା


### ଭେକ୍କୁର ବାହିତ ରୋଗ ପ୍ରତିରୋଧ ସମ୍ପର୍କରେ କେତେକ ଜାଣିବା କଥା

**ମୌସୁମୀ ବର୍ଷା ଆରମ୍ଭ ହେବା ପରେ ମଶା ବଂଶ ବୃଦ୍ଧି ପାଇବା ଏବଂ ମ୍ୟାଲେରିଆ, ଡେଙ୍ଗୁ ଓ ଜାପାନୀ ଜ୍ୱର ଭଳି ରୋଗ ବ୍ୟାପିବାର ଆଶଙ୍କା ଅଧିକ ଅଛି । ଏଥିରୁ ରକ୍ଷା ପାଇବା ପାଇଁ ନିମ୍ନଲିଖିତ ସାବଧାନତା ଅବଲମ୍ବନ କରନ୍ତୁ ।**

- ଘର ପାଖ ପରିବେଶ ସଫା-ସୁତୁରା ରଖନ୍ତୁ
- ଘର ପାଖରେ ଜମୁଥିବା ପାଣିକୁ ସମ୍ଭାବ୍ୟରେ ଅନ୍ତତଃ ଥରେ ନିଷ୍କାସନ କରିଦିଅନ୍ତୁ
- ଘରେ କିମ୍ବା ଘର ପାଖରେ ଥିବା ଫୁଲ କୁଣ୍ଡ, ପାଣି ଟାଙ୍କି, କୁଲର, ଫ୍ରିଜର ପଛପଟେ ଥିବା ଡିଫ୍ରେଷ୍ଟ ଡ୍ରେନର ଉପର ଆଦିକୁ ସମ୍ଭାବ୍ୟରେ ପାଣି ବାହାର କରି ପରିଷ୍କାର କରନ୍ତୁ
- ଘର ପାଖରେ ଥିବା ଭଙ୍ଗା ଡବା, ବୋତଲ, ପୁରୁଣା/ ଛିଣ୍ଡା ଟାୟାର, କଟା ପଇଡ଼, ନଡ଼ିଆ ଷଡ଼େଇ, କୁଡୁଆ, ବାଉଁଶ ଗଛର କଟା ଯାଇଥିବା ମୂଳ ଅଂଶ ଆଦି ସବୁକୁ ନଷ୍ଟ କରିଦିଅନ୍ତୁ
- ଦିନ ହେଉ ବା ରାତି, ଶୋଇବା ବେଳେ ମଶାରି ନିଶ୍ଚୟ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତୁ, ମଶା ଦାଉରୁ ସୁରକ୍ଷିତ ରହିବା ପାଇଁ ଘରର ଝରକାରେ ସରୁ ଜାଲି ଲଗାନ୍ତୁ
- ଶରୀରକୁ ପୁରା ଘୋଡ଼ାଇଲା ଭଳି ପୋଷାକ ପିନ୍ଧନ୍ତୁ
- ଆବଶ୍ୟକ ସ୍ଥଳେ ମଶା ନିବାରକ ବ୍ୟବହାର କରନ୍ତୁ
- ଜ୍ୱର, କମ୍ପ, ଆଣ୍ଟି-ଗଣ୍ଡି, ଆଖି ଓ ମାଂସପେଶୀରେ ଯନ୍ତ୍ରଣା ହେଲେ ତୁରନ୍ତ ନିକଟସ୍ଥ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟକେନ୍ଦ୍ରରେ ରକ୍ତ ପରୀକ୍ଷା କରି ଚିକିତ୍ସା କରାନ୍ତୁ

**ଉପଯୁକ୍ତ ସଚେତନତା ସହିତ ସମୟୋଚିତ ପଦକ୍ଷେପ ସୁସ୍ଥ ଜୀବନର ମୂଳମନ୍ତ୍ର**

**ରାଜ୍ୟ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟସେବା ହେଲ୍ପ ଲାଇନ୍: ୧୦୪**



ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ ଓ ପରିବାର କଲ୍ୟାଣ ବିଭାଗ, ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର

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# Banking System

The banking system in India is in sound financial health. Banks have over the years built up sufficient capital and liquidity buffers and their asset quality has been improving further. This has been detailed in the RBI's latest Financial Stability Report. Gross NPAs (non-performing assets) have fallen to 2.3 per cent as of March 2025, down from 2.8 per cent the year before. Alongside, the capital position of banks has strengthened — the capital to risk-weighted assets ratio has risen to a high of 17.3 per cent as of March 2025 — and their provision coverage ratio also remains healthy. In the recent past, one area of concern has been the sharp rise in household debt. Household debt was estimated to have surged from 36.6 per cent of GDP in June 2021 to 42.9 per cent as of June 2024. The latest report pegs it at 41.9 per cent in December 2024. In comparison, the ratio averaged around 33 per cent between 2015 and 2019. While the current levels of debt may well be lower when compared to other emerging market economies, it is concerning that households have been taking on more loans for consumption, and not investment purposes. In fact, non-housing retail loans have grown at a faster pace than housing, business and agricultural loans. These loans now account for 54.9 per cent of all household debt and 25.7 per cent of disposable income as of last year as per the report. Within retail credit, unsecured lending, which forms a quarter of retail loans, has seen weakness. As per the central bank, new slippages in this category account for a significant share of slippages in all retail loans, with the private banks appearing to fare worse. Public sector banks are also seeing possible signs of stress building up. Stress is also evident in the microfinance segment — loans 31-180 days past due have risen to 6.2 per cent. These areas warrant closer monitoring. The banking system, however, remains well capitalised. The central bank routinely conducts stress tests to gauge the strength of banks.

In the current uncertain global economic environment, these tests perform a critical function. The tests conducted by the RBI accounted for various adverse scenarios — from "heightened geopolitical risks and escalation of global financial market volatility" to "a synchronised sharp growth slowdown in key global economies". They revealed that even if economic conditions take a turn for the worse, no bank would fall short of the regulatory minimum capital ratios. This is a welcome result.

4th July

# Invisible Day



How many times have you wished to be invisible? Invisible Day offers us a chance to explore that fantasy, but with a twist that's more about inner peace than vanishing acts. It's a day that invites us to step back from our daily grind and find solace in solitude, acknowledging those moments when we all feel a bit unseen or overwhelmed by the demands of a connected world. Celebrating Invisible Day can be a fun and meaningful way to take a break from the everyday visibility of life. Here are some quirky and playful ideas to make the most out of this day: Why not have a bit of fun by writing messages with invisible ink? Lemon juice or baking soda can be your go-to materials for crafting secret notes that only appear when heated. It's a playful nod to the mysteries of invisibility and a great way to send hidden messages to friends or family. Grab those films you've always wanted to watch but have yet to have the time for, and have a solo movie marathon. The idea is to disappear into the world of cinema, enjoying the stories while being 'invisible' to the outside world for a day. Unplug from all digital devices for the day. No social media, no emails, just you and the offline world. This helps mimic the feeling of being invisible online, where so much of our visible lives are on display. Spend the day in nature. Go for a hike, visit a park, or just walk in a forest. The idea is to be alone with your thoughts, away from the hustle and bustle, making yourself 'invisible' in the vastness of nature. Get involved in a creative project like knitting, painting, or any other craft that requires focus and allows for self-expression. It's a therapeutic way to celebrate your own space and make something beautiful while you're off the grid. This special day is celebrated across the United States not just for the playful idea of invisibility but also as a meaningful nod to mental health. It's a call to disconnect from constant digital chatter and reconnect with ourselves. Invisible Day supports taking a break to unwind, reflect, and enjoy our own company away from the pressures of social media and work. The reasons for marking this day are as thoughtful as they are necessary. By stepping out of the social spotlight, we gain the chance to recharge our mental batteries. This can lead to better creativity and productivity once we return to our routine. Invisible Day serves as a reminder that being unseen for a while can give us a new perspective on our lives and the breathing space we often overlook in our busy schedules. The origins of Invisible Day are shrouded in a bit of mystery, with no clear record of its exact beginnings. What is evident is the day's connection to themes of feeling unseen or overwhelmed, aligning closely with mental health awareness. The day offers a chance for individuals to disconnect from their usual routines, emphasizing solitude and mental well-being. The idea is to take a step back from the hyper-connected world and find comfort in being "invisible" for a day, away from the pressures of constant communication and societal expectations. Invisible Day also resonates with the human desire for moments of invisibility, where one can escape the usual demands of daily life. This concept ties back to historical uses of invisible ink, an element that symbolizes secrecy and the unseen, adding a playful layer to the day's observance. Overall, this celebration is deeply rooted in the idea of acknowledging and respecting our mental health and the need for personal space. This theme is increasingly relevant in today's world, making Invisible Day a significant date on the calendar for those seeking a brief respite from their visible, connected lives.

# Global SDG Report 2025: Progress, challenges & the India Perspective

## Political Dairy



Tejeswar Patnaik

The 10th SDG report released by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network in June 2025 has brought encouraging news for India. The report reveals India's improvement in the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index, scoring 67 points, marking a significant jump from the 109th position last year to the 99th this year. The SDG Index evaluates comprehensive progress toward achieving the 17 SDGs adopted by UN member states in 2015, where a score of 100 indicates full achievement.

### India's Performance in World SDG index --

India's entry into the top 100 highlights commendable progress, especially in areas such as poverty reduction, healthcare, and clean energy access. This upward shift is a reflection of ongoing developmental efforts despite global geopolitical tensions. India, despite its vast population and complex development challenges, has outperformed several regional neighbours. It has fared better than Bangladesh (114th) and Pakistan (140th), indicating relatively stronger institutional and infrastructural performance. However, the report also highlights serious concerns. Despite being the fifth-largest economy with stable foreign

exchange reserves, and strong growth, India is grappling with rising income and wealth inequality. This growing disparity threatens to offset the gains made in other development areas. A recent IMF report places India 136th in per capita income, with an average of \$2,880, underlining the urgent need for policy intervention to address inequality and achieve the goal of a Developed India by 2047.

### Global Slowdown in SDG Progress--

Globally, the SDG outlook remains grim. The report by SDSN notes that only 17% of the SDG targets are on track, signalling a significant slowdown. The progress of several countries has been hampered by ongoing conflicts, climate change, and economic inequality. For instance, Wars in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, and other regions have triggered the largest displacement crisis on record, with over 120 million people forcibly displaced, severely undermining progress on SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

Another major barrier to progress is the huge climate finance gap. According to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) estimates, developing nations require \$6 trillion by 2030 to meet their climate commitments. The lack of adequate financial support, especially in the Global South, poses a serious challenge to achieving SDG 13 (Climate Action). The situation has worsened due to the withdrawal of the USA from the Paris Climate Agreement and the World Health Organisation, which has placed it at the bottom (193rd) in the SDG commitment index.

### Overall Performance of nations in the World SDG index --

The report finds that most countries have made tangible progress in three major SDG goals: SDG 9: Improved access



to basic services like mobile broadband and the internet, SDG 7: Better access to electricity under affordable and clean energy, SDG 3: Decline in under-5 and neonatal mortality rates, and improvements in gender equality indicators. Conversely, there has been no improvement in five critical areas namely Obesity, Press freedom, Sustainable nitrogen management, Biodiversity loss, and Corruption Perception Index. These areas remain persistent challenges for many nations and have not witnessed the progress necessary to meet the 2030 targets.

### Multilateralism, and the need for Reforms-----

The report also evaluates countries' commitment to multilateralism and global financial reforms. It calls for urgent reforms of international institutions like the UN, World Bank, and IMF to align them more closely with the SDG agenda. Promoting SDG-based trade agreements, expanding the use of green bonds, and adopting mixed finance models (public-private partnerships) can facilitate crucial funding. Furthermore, offering debt relief to poorer nations by international financial institutions and redirecting fossil fuel subsidies to sectors like clean energy and healthcare can significantly accelerate SDG implementation.

### Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security.....

A strong push for sustainable agriculture is vital. Emphasis must

be laid on improving soil health, reducing carbon emissions, and tackling food wastage. With nearly 30% of global food production wasted currently, better storage and transportation facilities can help achieve SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and climate-related targets.

### Grassroots Participation .....

The success of the SDGs depends not only on global cooperation but also on local action. Local governments and communities must take the initiative by implementing district-level SDG action plans and by ensuring adequate funding and transparent and close monitoring, and community participation in planning. There is an inherent need for accountability processes for failure to meet the targets at each layer which may prove effective for inclusive growth and sustained development

### The Evolution of SDG initiatives .....

The idea of sustainable development-meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations-was first articulated in 1987. This gave rise to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aimed to address basic development challenges by 2015. Although progress was made, it was uneven and limited in scope. Hence there was a need for a broader, more integrated framework, with the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, by 193

countries. The four core principles which form the bedrock of SDGs include Universality (Goals apply to all countries, rich and poor) Interlinkage (Progress in one goal supports others), Inclusivity (No one should be left behind, especially the most vulnerable and Collective Responsibility implying that Governments, businesses, civil society, and individuals must collaborate in the development journey. Similarly, at the global level, it is the shared responsibility of all 193 nations.

As the 2030 deadline approaches, the challenges of meeting the SDG agenda are mounting. Climate threats, ongoing conflicts, income disparity, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic derailed the progress in poverty reduction (SDG 1), healthcare (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), and clean energy investment (SDG 7). Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries have suffered nearly 7% of global disaster-related economic losses between 2015 and 2022, exacerbating poverty and further delaying SDG gains. The 2025 World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) will be held under the theme "Partnerships for Accelerating Sustainable Development and Climate Solutions".

This theme emphasises the critical role of collaboration and collective action in achieving sustainable development and climate goals. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is not just a development task-it is a moral duty. It needs urgent global cooperation, new ways to fund implementation, local-level action, and the support of each one. We all have a role to play-by conserving resources and standing up for fairness. Together, we can create a fairer, more peaceful, and greener Planet where no one is left behind.

Sri Patnaik is writer

# Repositioning BRICS : A Strategic Opportunity



Asit Mohanty

The 2025 BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) summit will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on July 5th to 8th. This will be the seventeenth annual summit, with Brazil taking the role of host as part of the rotating presidency among the BRICS nations. Brazil's focus for the summit is 'Strengthening Global South Cooperation'. With the US stepping back or having a more cautious approach amidst complex international conflicts, BRICS seeks to promote a multipolar world order.

By emphasizing cooperation among emerging nations, the summit can serve as a counterweight to Western influence, especially in regions like the Middle East where conflicts like Israel-Iran escalate. The summit's agenda will likely include discussions on reshaping international institutions, addressing global security challenges, and finding ways to support peace and stability. In this geopolitical climate, BRICS' unified stance can influence global diplomacy and offer an alternative voice to Western-led narratives. The recent 12-day war between Iran and Israel has

exposed critical fractures in the global security architecture. Despite initial U.S. airstrikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, President Donald Trump's administration ultimately brokered a ceasefire under pressure from both sides. However, the U.S. response was marked by hesitation, internal contradictions, and limited strategic gains-prompting global observers to question Washington's reliability as a security guarantor. This perceived retreat has created a vacuum in global leadership-one that BRICS is uniquely positioned to fill. Why BRICS Matters Now?

BRICS, now expanded to include 10 members (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, UAE, Ethiopia, and Indonesia), represents: 45% of the world's population. Over 30% of global GDP. 30% of global oil production. With Iran now a member, BRICS gains strategic depth in West Asia and direct stakes in regional stability. The bloc's diversity-spanning continents, religions, and political systems-offers a counterbalance to Western-dominated alliances like NATO and the G7.

Strategic Imperatives for BRICS Empowerment: Institutional Strengthening - Expand the New Development Bank (NDB) to fund infrastructure, climate resilience, and digital connectivity across the Global South. Operationalize the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement to shield members from financial shocks. Geopolitical Mediation - Position BRICS as a neutral mediator in regional conflicts, including West Asia and



Africa. Launch a BRICS Peace and Security Council to coordinate diplomatic responses and crisis management. Currency and Trade Sovereignty: Accelerate efforts to de-dollarize trade, using local currencies or a BRICS digital currency. Promote a BRICS Payment System as an alternative to SWIFT, reducing vulnerability to Western sanctions. Narrative Leadership : Champion a multipolar world order rooted in sovereignty, non-intervention, and equitable development. Use platforms like the UN and G20 to advocate for Global South priorities-from climate justice to food security.

The Iran-Israel war has not only tested regional stability but also revealed the limits of U.S. hegemony. For BRICS, this is not just a moment of opportunity-it is a call to leadership. By acting decisively, the bloc can redefine global governance and offer a more inclusive, balanced, and peaceful world order. BRICS may be poised for greater global influence, but its path is far from smooth. Here are the key challenges it faces in asserting power on the world stage: Internal Diversity and Strategic Divides - BRICS is a mosaic of

political systems, economic models, and geopolitical interests. For example: India and China have unresolved border tensions and compete for regional influence. Russia and Brazil differ sharply on global alignments and democratic norms. This diversity makes it difficult to present a unified front on major global issues. Economic Asymmetries: China dominates the bloc economically, accounting for over 70% of BRICS GDP. This creates: Dependency concerns among smaller members. Resistance to replacing U.S. hegemony with Chinese dominance, especially in currency matters. Institutional Weakness - Unlike NATO or the EU, BRICS lacks: A permanent secretariat or enforcement mechanisms.

Clear membership criteria or expansion strategy, risking fragmentation. Currency and Financial Limitations: Efforts to de-dollarize trade face hurdles: The Chinese yuan is not yet a strong reserve currency. Many BRICS members still rely heavily on U.S. and EU trade. Global Perception and Legitimacy: Western powers often view BRICS as an anti-

liberal or anti-Western bloc. This raises questions: Can BRICS offer a constructive alternative to the current order? Or will it be seen as a coalition of convenience with authoritarian leanings? Expansion Risks - With 10 members and more aspiring to join, BRICS risks: Diluting consensus-based decision-making. Becoming a loose network rather than a cohesive force. External Pressures- U.S. sanctions on Russia, tensions with China, and instability in West Asia all affect BRICS' ability to act cohesively. The bloc must navigate: Geopolitical rivalries without becoming a proxy battleground. Global skepticism about its long-term coherence.

In short, BRICS has the numbers and ambition-but unless it resolves its internal contradictions and builds stronger institutions, its power may remain more symbolic than structural. If this is not done, the US will take advantage of it. As everyone knows, the US is not happy with BRICS. He tries his best to make BRICS weak. Trump has talked about ending BRICS as much as he is in power.

In particular, it was discussed in the last meeting of BRICS that a new currency will be implemented at the global level. That is, there was talk of a challenge to the US dollar, which angered the US and threatened to increase tariffs. So this is an opportunity for the BRICS countries to put aside all the internal conflicts and come to a consensus so that pressure can be put on the US.

Convener, Odia Language Protection Campaign  
Sujanpur, Jajpur  
Cell - 9437288028



## Cooperative Policy to come up by Jan 31: Minister



**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** A cooperative policy is expected to be finalised by January 31 next year. The policy aims to establish cooperative societies in every panchayat, offering a range of services, including LPG gas distribution, medicine shops, petrol pumps, public service centres, dairy farms, and milk distribution centres. Odisha Cooperation Minister Pradeep BalSamanta, who attended a meeting of Cooperation Ministers of all states chaired by Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi, informed about this. The meeting focused on the development of cooperative societies and future programs.

### Election of AIPNBOA's executive panel held

**Bhubaneswar, (DMC):** The triennial election to elect executive committee (EC) of All India Punjab National Bank Officers' Association (AIPNBOA), Bhubaneswar Circle, for a period of three years from 2025 to 2028 was held recently as per the constitution of AIPNBOA. Soumitri Pati, Senior Manager was appointed the Returning Officer to conduct the election through secret ballot. He was duly assisted by Assistant Returning Officers Soumendra Nath Behera and Rakes Pradhan. Com. Bailochan Sahoo and Com. Rosan Ray have been elected unopposed without necessitating any election. While Com. Balochan Sahoo has been elected as the Circle

BalSamanta said that the cooperative societies will prioritise service over profit, providing convenience to people at their doorstep. Amit Shah has directed state-level meetings to be held next month to ensure the program's effectiveness. The initiative also includes plans to establish a bank in every panchayat, offering loans of up to Rs 5 lakh with a subsidised interest rate. The interest rate percentage is yet to be decided. Regarding the chit fund issue, the Minister assured that depositors would receive their money after verification. He stated that depositors with claims up to Rs 5 lakh would receive their full amount.

Secretary and Com. Rosan Ray as the Circle President, others elected to the Executive Body are Manoranjan Hota, Working President, Purna Rout & Brijesh Palei as vice presidents, Sanjog Dash & Gyan Ranjan Mohanty as Joint Secretaries, Rashmi Ranjan Mohapatra as Organising Secretary, Sujata Barik as Treasurer, Anil Kumar Das as Sub Treasurer, Sumanta Kumar Parida, Subhojit Sahoo & Swamalata Sahoo as EC members. The first meeting of the newly elected executive body along with delegates, special invitees as well as advisors was held at Hotel Padmaja, Chandrasekharpur here on Wednesday.

## Special disinfection drive in flood-hit areas

**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** The Odisha government has initiated a special disinfection drive in the state, particularly in areas affected by recent floods and sporadic diarrhoea outbreaks. The drive is a joint effort of the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) and Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water (PR&DW) departments. A high-level meeting chaired by Secretary H&FW Aswathy S. was held to discuss the action plan for the drive. Director of Public Health Dr. Nilakantha Mishra presented updates on the current water and vector-borne disease situation across affected areas. The meeting emphasised the importance of active involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) members, social activists, and village



communities in the drive. The disinfection drive will be undertaken on July 4 and July 11, focusing on the village and institution levels. During the campaign, drinking water sources will be

super chlorinated, and health facilities, educational institutions, marketplaces, and public places will be properly cleaned and disinfected. Awareness campaigns will be conducted at the village and

household levels through ASHA, ANM, and health workers. The government has also directed food safety officers to intensify inspections of bottling plants, eateries, and hotels, ensuring strict adherence to food

safety protocols. Chief District Medical Officers and District Public Health Officers have been asked to undertake extensive tours and ensure result-oriented activities at the field level. The government is also focusing on maintaining the required stock of anti-venoms for snake bites, placing MBBS doctors in flood-affected areas, and intensifying laboratory surveillance. Senior officers and teams from the state level will visit affected areas for close monitoring and supervision of field-level activities. The efforts seem to be paying off, as the diarrhoea situation has been brought under control, with only 190 active cases reported from five districts. The government is also keeping a strict vigil on dengue and malaria situations.

### Woman home guard crushed to death

**Cuttack (DMC):** Tension prevailed in Cuttack city after a woman home guard was crushed to death under the wheels of a truck on Taladanda road stretch in the busy Chhatra Bazaar area on Thursday morning. The deceased has been identified as Manorama Panda, who was deployed at Malgodown police station. According to sources, a speeding truck ran over her in the busy marketplace when she was returning home on her bicycle after buying groceries. She sustained fatal injuries and died on the spot. Police soon reached the spot and sent the body for postmortem. The truck has been seized and the driver detained for questioning. Cuttack DCP Khilari Rishikesh Dnyandeo also visited the accident site to assess the situation. A case has been registered and investigation is underway. It is being alleged that the helper of the truck was behind the wheels at the time of the accident.

## Woman contractual staff can't be denied maternity leave: HC

**Cuttack (DMC):** The Orissa High Court has held that a woman employed on a contractual basis is entitled to maternity leave and associated benefits. The court observed that discrimination based on employment status violates Article 14 of the Constitution, which guarantees equality before the law. "Denying maternity benefits on the basis of nature of employment is abhorrent to the notions of humanity and womanhood," the bench of Justice Dixit Krishna Shripad and Justice M S Sahoo said, while hearing a case concerning Anindita Mishra recruited on a contractual basis by the state government in May 2014. After giving birth in August 2016, she applied for six months of maternity leave. Despite submitting the necessary medical certificates, the state government



rejected her request, stating that maternity benefits were not applicable to contractual employees. Challenging the decision, Mishra moved the HC the same year and a single-judge bench ruled in her favour in 2022, directing the government to grant her maternity leave. The state,

however, appealed the decision. On June 24, the division bench, however, dismissed the appeal at the admission stage, stating that it lacked merit. "The single judge has rightly granted relief to the employee, and viewed from any angle, the same cannot be faltered. The contention that the benefits of

maternity leave apply only to civil servants cannot be countenanced. Women employees for the purpose of availing such benefits constitute one homogenous class. The idea of maternity leave is structured on 'zero separation' between lactating mother and breastfeeding baby... A lactating mother has a fundamental right to breastfeed her baby... Similarly, a baby has a fundamental right to be breastfed and brought about in a reasonably good condition," the bench said. Quoting from ancient texts, the bench further remarked, "Yatranaryastupujyantarmanantetradevatah" - where women are honoured, the gods rejoice. Such ideal things should animate the purposive interpretation of state policy concerning the welfare of women." The state government has been asked to submit a compliance report to the registrar (judicial) of the court within eight weeks.

SNIPPETS

### PNB ED visits Bhubaneswar

**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** Punjab National Bank, Executive Director Bibhu Prasad Mahapatra visited Bhubaneswar Zone. He met Sampad Chandra Swain, Minister of State (Ind. Charge) of Industries, Odisha. He also met Sanjeeb Kumar Mishra, IAS, Principal Secretary, SC, ST Development department, Sanjay Kumar Singh IAS, Principal Secretary, PWD & Food Supply department, Jyoti Prakash Dash, IAS, Director, Panchayat Raj department. During interactions, Mahapatra apprised them about the participation of the bank in the development of Odisha, and cooperation in all government sponsored schemes. He requested the Minister to strengthen the relationship of the bank with Government. Further, he explained the benefits of all the newly launched schemes of the Bank to the authorities and presented booklets containing the schemes. He also visited the Zonal office and Circle office in Bhubaneswar. Bhushan Sharma, Zonal Head, Khsetrabasi Mishra, Deputy Zonal Head and Laxmikanta Mishra, Circle Head of Bhubaneswar were also present.

### UCO Bank gets new zonal head

**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** Smt. Varsha has joined as the Zonal Head of newly formed Cuttack Zone of UCO Bank. Prior to this, she was working as AGM of Risk Management at headquarters. Varsha has started her career in UCO Bank as a Probationary Officer in 2006. She had worked at several places of different capacities including Retail Loan Hub Head, Kolkata. During her tenure as Zonal Head of Cuttack Zone, she is likely to give more emphasis to retail, agriculture & MSME credit, CASA deposit, financial inclusion and better customer service.

## Graft Case HC grants interim bail to Raghuvanshi

**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** The Orissa High Court has granted interim bail to Enforcement Directorate's Deputy Director Chintan Raghuvanshi, who was arrested by CBI for allegedly taking bribe from a businessman on May 29 in Bhubaneswar. The interim relief was granted to Raghuvanshi by the HC for ten days purely on humanitarian ground so that he can see his newborn baby and attend the family functions following the child birth. The bench of Justice G. Satapathy has asked Raghuvanshi to surrender and return to the custody immediately on the expiry of the interim bail. Any violation will invite coercive action



against the officer, the Court said. Raghuvanshi, who was the Deputy Director in ED's office in Bhubaneswar, had initially approached the HC for interim bail on the grounds of pregnancy of his wife. However, his wife delivered a baby while the bail petition was pending in the court. Raghuvanshi subsequently urged the HC to grant him

interim bail so that he can see his newborn baby. It may be noted that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had arrested Raghuvanshi for allegedly taking Rs 20 lakh as bribe from a businessman in the capital city here on May 29. A 2013-batch IRS officer, Raghuvanshi had allegedly demanded Rs two crore as bribe from the businessman by threatening him with ED raids. The businessman had lodged a complaint in this regard with the regional office of the CBI here. Accordingly, a trap was laid and the CBI officials caught Raghuvanshi while taking Rs 20 lakh as part of the bribe from the complainant.

### ICMAI-Bhubaneswar chapter celebrates GST Day



**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** The ICMAI-Bhubaneswar Chapter celebrated GST Day in a grand manner at CMA Bhawan. To commemorate GST Day, a seminar was organised on the theme "GST Appellate Mechanism - Key Aspects and Procedure. Bijoy Kumar Kar, IRS (Retd.), former Chief Commissioner of Central GST, Central Excise & Customs, Bhubaneswar Zone, graced and inaugurated the occasion as the Chief Guest. In his address, he elaborated on the emerging appellate challenges and the need for a strong and accessible dispute redressal system under GST. CMA Niranjan Swain, Past Chairman of the Chapter & EIRC, Advocate of the Orissa High Court & Tax Consultant, graced and addressed the gathering as the resource person. With his deep understanding of tax laws and

practical experience, he guided the participants through the details of the GST appellate process, offering valuable insights on procedures, documentation and best practices. CMA Damodar Mishra, Secretary, ICMAI-EIRC, graced the occasion as the Special Guest and praised the Bhubaneswar Chapter for organizing such a topical and impactful seminar. He reiterated the Institute's commitment to professional development and continuous knowledge sharing. CMA Sarat Kumar Behera, Chairman of the Chapter, delivered the Welcome Address; CMA Soumya Ranjan Jena, Secretary of the Chapter, extended the Formal Vote of Thanks; and CMA Barada Prasan Nayak, Chairman of the Professional Development Committee, facilitated the entire programme.

## ECRICC Odisha wins first prize at Seafood Expo Bharat

**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** The Enhancing Climate Resilience of India's Coastal Communities (ECRICC) project in Odisha has been awarded the first prize in the Government Sector at the prestigious Seafood Expo Bharat 2025 (SEB-25) held from 1st to 3rd July 2025 at Chennai Trade Centre, Chennai. This recognition highlights ECRICC Odisha's outstanding efforts in promoting climate-resilient aquaculture and inclusive community-based development. "It was an excellent opportunity for our last-mile cadre to represent the state on a national platform" - one of the women climate champions confidently shared her journey on stage, inspiring many. Organized by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, SEB-25 is one of the country's largest

platforms for stakeholders across the fisheries and aquaculture value chain. The ECRICC Project is implemented nationally by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), with support from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and in Odisha by the Forest, Environment and Climate Change Department, Government of Odisha. The project promotes ecosystem-based adaptation and climate-resilient livelihoods in coastal communities. Odisha, as one of the key implementing states, is pioneering scientific mud crab farming, ornamental fisheries, and sustainable aquaculture practices, strengthened by empowered local institutions and climate champions. This initiative supports the Government of Odisha's commitment to achieving the Sustainable



Development Goals and contributes toward building a Vikshit Odisha by 2036, aligning with the Prime Minister's vision of a Vikshit Bharat by 2047. ECRICC Odisha showcased its achievements through a dedicated stall and actively participated in technical sessions covering seafood trade, shrimp aquaculture, value addition, and more. A major attraction was the live demonstration of pond-based mud crab farming, which drew

enthusiastic responses from visitors. The stall also featured multimedia displays and compelling transformation stories - particularly those led by women and marginalized communities - highlighting the project's inclusive and people-centered approach. A 14-member delegation from Odisha including SPMU and DPMU officials, climate champions, and beneficiary crab farmers represented the state. Their

participation enabled knowledge exchange, partnership building, and exploration of new avenues to scale community-based aquaculture. Notable dignitaries who visited the ECRICC Odisha stall included the Secretary of the Coastal Aquaculture Authority (CAA), the Counsellor of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food from the Embassy of Spain (New Delhi), and the CEO of the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad. These engagements provided a platform to showcase Odisha's progress in climate-resilient aquaculture and to advocate for broader collaboration. With over 3,000 national and international delegates attending, ECRICC Odisha's award-winning presence at SEB-25 significantly enhanced the project's visibility and opened up exciting possibilities for technical collaboration, policy engagement, and investment in coastal ecosystem restoration.



## Baba Nagar Railway Underbridge is making me sad There are always problems due to lack of maintenance



**Subarnapur, (DMC):** The railway underbridge at Vava Nagar, near Koshal High School on the outskirts of Sonepur city, has become a source of sorrow for the locals. Due to the lack of supervision by the Railway Department, even a little rain turns the underbridge into a pond. Due to this, people have to cross it with great difficulty. On one side, water is accumulating up to their knees.

On the other side, trees and creepers have grown on the stone pavements and have turned into a forest. The authorities are not coming to keep it clean and tidy. Above all, the underbridge built at a cost of crores of rupees is not working for the people. Therefore, the locals have demanded that the underbridge be ensured to drain the water and the anabana trees on its side be cleaned and trimmed.

## Inmates of child care institutions pay obeisance to Lord at Adapa Mandap



**Puri, (DMC):** A total of 80 children of Utkal Balashram and Neelachal Seva Pratishthan Child Care Institute today paid obeisance to Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra Devi Subhadra at Adapa Mandap. The inmates entered the Gundicha temple at 11 hours today in the programme organised by the district administration. Special darshan arrangements were made on the instructions of the newly appointed District Collector Chanchal Rana. After the darshan, the Chief Secretary distributed Mahaprasad to all the visitors. Arvind Agarwal and other officials were present and encouraged the children. This work of the district administration has been appreciated by all quarters.

## Rayagada DRM at the landslide restoration work site of Railway



**Rayagada, (DMC):** Despite adverse weather conditions, the rescue efforts are in full progress at the landslide site between Jarati - Malliguda section of KK line of Waltair division. Senior officers of Rayagada division, led by Rayagada Railway Division DRM Amitabh Singhal, have reached the spot with teams and equipment to start the rescue work. Waltair Division DRM Lalit Bohra is supervising the rescue work. He informed that the progress of the rescue work is being closely monitored. A total of 13 heavy-duty excavators and over 300 people are working day and night to clear the debris including mud and rocks. Half of the debris has been cleared by this morning. And the rescue work is in progress on this railway line. It is reported that the line will be opened very soon and the train movement will be normal.

## Advisory issued to Paradip fishermen not to venture into sea for missile test



**Paradip, (DMC):** The Fisheries & Animal Resources Development Department, Government of Odisha has issued an advisory to fishermen of Paradip not to venture into the sea for the upcoming missile test at Chandipur on July 17 and 18. This advisory has been issued in the areas where fishermen live in Fishing Harbour at Nehru Bonglow, Bali Plat, Nuabajar and Sandhkud of Paradip. During the test, the sea will be rough and big waves will be dangerous for fishing in the sea. So fishing has been banned for two days, that is July 17 & 18 of this month. So the state government has issued a precautionary advisory and advised fishermen to return to the coast before the testing date.

## Health and Family Welfare Minister kicks off a plantation drive in BhaluPali, Bolangir

**Bolangir, (DMC):** Health and Family Welfare Minister, Mukesh Mahaling on Thursday flagged up the plantation drive, "Ek ped maa ke Naam", on the occasion of Vana Mohstov at BhaluPali in Loisingha Forest Range in Bolangir forest division.

We should take care of plants like our mother so that we could get a better environment, achieve sustainable development, and the goal of Utkarsh Odisha 2036



and Vikasit Bharat 2047, says Mukesh Mahaling speaking to the mediamen. A total of one lakhs trees would be planted in Loisingha during this year Vana Mohstov, says Mukesh Mahaling, further

## Union Minister launches "Ek Peed Maa Ke Naam 2.0" campaign in Talcher

**Talcher (DMC):** Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan today separately participated in the tree plantation drive under "Ek Peed Maa Ke Naam 2.0" and the 76th Banamahotsav-2025 at the playground of Handidhua village in Talcher and the Gopal Prasad Reserve Forest. On this occasion, Shri Pradhan planted trees along with school students and members of social organizations and advised the people of the district to take a pledge to plant 1 million trees annually in Angul district for the next 10 years.

Shri Pradhan said that the "Tree for Mother" initiative conceived by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is an emotional idea. The second phase of this campaign has been started across the country to protect Mother Nature. This campaign is dedicated to a future where respect for nature; will be considered an integral part of our lives. Due to coal production in Talcher and Angul districts, environmental pollution is increasing at a high rate. For the progress of the country, it is necessary to protect the environment along with coal production. Therefore, we all should plant trees to reduce



pollution. Starting from the school level, students of all educational institutions, youth organizations, government institutions, Matrushakti, volunteers should take the responsibility of making Angul a green city by joining the "Ek Peed Maa Ke Naam 2.0" campaign.

He further said, this time there is a plan to plant 750,000 trees in Angul forest area, twice as many as last year. Then, by next September, we should take a resolution to plant 1 million saplings in Angul and continue this tradition for the next 10 years. Take care of the trees and make it a mass movement. He appealed to create the identity of Angul including Talcher in afforestation. On this occasion, Shri Pradhan launched the mobile fodder

distribution vehicle, information vehicle, Sabuj Angul mobile app, truck for safe rescue of wild animals, Angul Forest Division website and other portals under the initiative of Angul Banakhand. Shri Pradhan appreciated such an initiative for giving the tree plantation campaign in Angul a form of a mass movement and creating social awareness among the people.

Dhenkanal MP Rudra Narayan Pani, MLA Ashok Mohanty, Pratap Chandra Pradhan and Braj Kishore Pradhan, Angul District Collector, DFO, SP and many other officials attended the event. Thousands of people attended the event. More than 15 thousand trees were planted in the event today.

## TPWODL Strengthens Power Infrastructure in Sambalpur & Jharsuguda Districts

**Burla/Sambalpur,:** TP Western Odisha Distribution Limited (TPWODL), a joint venture between Tata Power and the Government of Odisha, continues to take significant steps in enhancing power infrastructure and improving service reliability across Western Odisha. In line with its commitment to provide uninterrupted and quality power supply, TPWODL has successfully upgraded and installed three Distribution Transformers (DTRs) in the districts of Sambalpur and Jharsuguda.

Under this initiative, the existing DTRs in Pansapada and Salepada villages of Rengali Block in Sambalpur district have been upgraded from 16 KVA to 25 KVA. This capacity enhancement is aimed at strengthening the local power distribution system, ensuring a stable and reliable electricity supply to the



consumers in these areas. The project is expected to reduce issues related to low voltage, tripping, and power outages significantly, thereby enhancing overall service quality. In another tactical intervention, TPWODL has installed an additional 250 KVA DTR at Telipada village in Jharsuguda district to address the

overloading on the existing 500 KVA DTR at Badmal Biju Chowk. This has been under taken to balance the load, reduce the risk of equipment failure, and support future increase in power demand, especially for nearly 100 consumers in the village. Speaking on the development, Mr. Parveen Verma, CEO, TPWODL stated, "We are continuously working to upgrade and modernize the distribution infrastructure in our licensed areas.

These recent upgradations reflect our proactive approach to improve service delivery, ensuring consumer satisfaction, and meeting the growing power needs of rural and semi-urban communities." TPWODL remains committed to deliver safe, reliable, and sustainable electricity to its consumers while driving rural electrification and infrastructure development across Western Odisha.

## Plantation by Tata Steel Foundation celebrating Van Mahotsav



**Kalinganagar,:** In observance of 'Van Mahotsav', Tata Steel Foundation, in collaboration with the Logistics Operations and Environment Department of Tata Steel Kalinganagar, successfully organised a mass plantation and riverbank clean-up drive at the Brahmani Riverbank area in Kalinganagar on Thursday. More

than 70 volunteers from various departments of Tata Steel Kalinganagar participated in the drive, planting 300 saplings along the Brahmani Riverbank. This effort aimed to enhance green cover, prevent soil erosion, and support local biodiversity. Apart from plantation, a plastic waste

clean-up drive was also conducted to mitigate pollution and help restore the ecological integrity of the river ecosystem. This 'Van Mahotsav' celebration underscores the critical role of volunteer-driven initiatives in promoting environmental stewardship and collective responsibility for a sustainable future.

## June has ended, yet farmers face a crisis..... Paddy sales, fake tokens, rain-related compensation, and crop insurance are urgent issues

**Bargarh, (DMC):** The Rabi season has drawn to a close, and as we step into the new Kharif season, the anticipation surrounding the resolution of paddy sale issues is palpable. Today, the Sanjukta Krushak Sangathan is set to meet with District Magistrate Shri Aditya Goyal to present an apparent four-point demand. Among their requests, they are expected to advocate for the prompt resolution of problems related to paddy sales, the crackdown on fake tokens, appropriate compensation for rain-related damages, and attention to crop insurance matters. With Rs 7,55,44,855 earmarked for rain-related compensation across various regions-including Bheden, Attabira, Bargarh, Jharbandh, Bhatli, Sohela, and

Paikamal-the government's first-time assessment of damages and allocation of an input subsidy brings hope. However, as many farmers from different blocks have reportedly been denied compensation due to rushed decisions, there is a strong call for a reevaluation to ensure rightful compensation is delivered. Moreover, PETA is poised to push crop insurance assessments to be completed within 10 days, with compensation ideally following within 15 days. Yet, the silence on updates thus far may lead to mounting pressure for swift action. Addressing reported farming losses is urgent; compensation is expected to be disbursed promptly. Farmers are counting on receiving payments in their accounts within 48 hours



of selling their paddy, but delays extending beyond three days have raised significant concerns. The plight of 4,000 to 5,000 farmers who are yet to receive payments, leaving substantial quantities of paddy unaccounted

From Page- 1

## Jaga Pradhan

untoward incident as hundreds of Pradhan's supporters had gathered at the office of the DCP. Soon after his arrest, the Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) Association withdrew its agitation. It was announced by association president Jyoti Mishra. Earlier on the day, the association had announced that its agitation will continue until demands including the arrest of Pradhan are met by the State government. "After holding a meeting on the issue, the association gave a three-day ultimatum to the state government for his arrest, accusing him of being the prime accused in the attack on Monday. The association had made three specific demands – immediate arrest of Pradhan, safety and security for all OAS officers, and public condemnation of the incident by the State government.

## CM inaugurates

Tribal culture is not limited to dance and music; it is a way of life, a soul. Protecting and promoting it is the collective responsibility of all. ShabariBhavan will play a pivotal role in keeping this culture alive and vibrant, the CM said. He further announced that a Tribal Culture and Heritage Bhawan and a Tribal Language Institute are being established in Bhubaneswar. A record Rs 68,881 crore has been allocated specifically for the welfare of the state's 40% tribal and scheduled caste population, in addition to regular welfare schemes. This reflects the government's commitment to tribal welfare. The Chief Minister expressed his belief that a society that respects its roots progresses rapidly. The tribal community is the pride of Odisha and the foundation of its culture. As a son of the tribal community, he vowed to dedicate his full efforts to advancing this society. The Chief Minister added that by 2036, the state aims to achieve comprehensive development, inclusive growth, and tribal empowerment to build a prosperous Odisha. The state's 24% tribal population will play a crucial role in this journey. The double-engine government has completed one year of successful governance and continues its efforts with renewed energy and confidence. In the coming days, the pace of development will accelerate further. This progress will be possible when the government, officials, and the public share a single goal: the development of the state. The government is not only united but also committed to the equitable development of the entire state. ShabariBhawan will stand as a symbol of pride for Odisha's people and an inspiration for the new generation, Majhi added.

## Govtinks pact

installations will enable timely and accurate weather data collection, contributing to a robust and decentralized weather monitoring network. The project will be jointly implemented by the Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment Department and the Revenue and Disaster Management Department, with funding from the PMFBY budget managed by the Cooperation Department. The MoU was signed by SubhamSaxena, Director of Agriculture and Food Production, and JogeshPatil, CEO of Skymet Weather Services Pvt Ltd.

## Info on Puristampede

share information, video footage or any other material through the e-mail puritragedy.enquiry@odisha.gov.in by July 20," it said. The notice further stated that that people can also meet and share information with Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary AnuGarg, who is heading the administrative inquiry into the incident, at the State Guest House in Bhubaneswar after 3 pm on July 9 and at the Special Circuit House in Puri on July 10 after 3 pm. The state government has also provided two landline telephone numbers (0674-2536882/2391970) to allow people to pass on information to the team, conducting the probe.

## HC relief for

a hotel at JayadevVihar in Bhubaneswar while allegedly taking Rs 10 lakh bribe from the director of a Bhubaneswar-based Penta A Studio Private Ltd and a middle-man identified as DebaduttaMohapatra, in December last year. The 1995-batch officer was also shunted out of three departments he was heading due to the investigation. Sethi, who was in-charge of social security and empowerment of persons with disabilities department, ST&SC development department, and Odisha language department, was posted as OSD of the General Administration department, a seemingly insignificant posting.

paddy from Chhattisgarh using fraudulent paddy cards in several areas, such as Satalma, Sarasara, Ghess, Adgaon, Pahadsrigida, and Panimora societies. This may ignite a demand for immediate and decisive action in response. There is hope that the Chief Minister will adopt a more farmer-centric approach to manage the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. The upcoming meeting will include the organisation's advisor, Ramesh Mohapatra, along with dedicated members such as Tapan Mishra, Karan Sahu, Prashant Sahu, Ekadasia Sahu, Lokanath Das, Brundaban Sahu, Vijan Padhi, and Suresh Nikenti. All of them are keen to see progress and resolutions that will positively impact the farming community.



## 118 Million Women Consumers In India Enter Credit Mainstream For 1st Time In 10 Years



**Mumbai, (H.S):** At least 118 million women consumers in India have entered the credit mainstream for the first time in the last 10 years, unlocking opportunities that were previously unavailable to them, according to a report on Thursday.

Over 714 million individuals have gained access to formal credit, positively impacting households across the country over the past two decades, said the report by TransUnion CIBIL, released at a conference here. Retail delinquencies (balance-level, at 90 days or more past due) have also improved by 130 bps in the last 10 years, the findings showed. As India's credit growth reaches new segments and geographies, the focus is shifting towards enabling access to

financial services supported by data-driven insights, transparency, and informed risk management." Credit reporting systems today operate as a key element in the national financial architecture, encouraging greater credit access, supporting financial inclusion, enabling effective supervision, and enhancing financial stability," Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Deputy Governor M. Rajeshwar Rao said.

At the heart of a sustainable credit landscape lies an empowered consumer, which is enabled when we have a financially aware and literate customer, he said. "While regulations mandate transparency and awareness, the responsibility needs to be fulfilled by all of us. Financial literacy cannot be achieved through a one-time

campaign; it has to be a sustained commitment for all the institutions and entities involved," he told the gathering. The setting up of credit information companies (CICs) was, in one sense, the starting point of this journey of financial inclusion and democratisation of credit. "Even as the journey continues, the role of the CICs remains integral and important in realising the vision of total financial inclusion," said Rao. According to TransUnion CIBIL MD and CEO Bhavesh Jain, India's credit ecosystem is becoming more inclusive, transparent, and future-ready."

Reliable data empowers lenders to take strategically informed decisions, which, in turn, supports borrowers in building and strengthening their financial profiles. Our focus remains to enable all stakeholders to navigate this transformation responsibly and sustainably," he mentioned. Axis Bank MD and CEO, Amitabh Chaudhry, said: "We must invest in financial literacy, helping borrowers understand credit health and long-term financial planning."

## BJP MLA Kishor Barman Inducted Into Tripura Cabinet, Takes Oath



**Agartala, (H.S):** Tripura Governor Indra Sena Reddy Nallu on Thursday administered the oath of office and secrecy to a new cabinet minister - Kishor Barman - at a simple ceremony at the Raj Bhavan. Barman, 45, a first-time MLA, belongs to the ruling BJP. In Tripura, the council of ministers comprises 12 members, including the Chief Minister.

With the new minister's induction, the cabinet has reached its full strength. Chief Minister Manik Saha, his council of ministers, and senior civil and security officials were present at the swearing-in ceremony, held at the Durbar Hall of Raj Bhavan in the New Capital complex, on the outskirts of the city. Barman, who is also the party's General Secretary, won the 2023 Assembly polls from Nalchar Assembly constituency in Sepahijala district. After the swearing-in ceremony, he, while

talking to the media, thanked the Chief Minister and the party's central leaders for including him in the Tripura cabinet. The opposition CPI-M and the Congress boycotted the swearing-in ceremony of the new minister, alleging rampant atrocities against the opposition parties' workers and leaders.

Thursday's induction of a minister was the second expansion of the cabinet headed by Chief Minister Saha. On March 7 last year (2024), two Tripura Motha Party (TMP) MLAs - Animesh Debbarma and Brishaketu Debbarma - were inducted into the ministry. On March 8, 2023, the BJP and Indigenous People's Front of Tripura (IPFT) coalition government led by Saha came to power for the second consecutive term. The TMP, headed by former royal scion Pradyot Bikram Manikya Debbarma, contested the 2023 Assembly

polls separately but in March last year, after signing a tripartite agreement with the Centre and the Tripura government, joined the BJP-IPFT coalition government, adding a new twist to Tripura politics. The IPFT currently has one minister, Sukla Charan Noatia, in the council of the ministry. The BJP-IPFT alliance had retained power in Tripura by winning 33 seats in the 60-member Assembly.

The BJP alone secured 32 seats while the IPFT managed one seat in the 2023 Assembly polls. The TMP, which contested the Assembly elections in 2023 for the first time, won 13 seats of the 42 seats it contested, emerging as the second largest party after the BJP. The TMP and the IPFT are both tribal based parties.

The CPI (M) won 11 seats in the last Assembly elections (2023) while the Congress got three. The CPI (M)-led Left Front and the Congress had a seat-sharing arrangement for the elections. The TMP became a political force in April 2021 after it wrested power in the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council. The politically important TTAADC has jurisdiction over two-thirds of Tripura's 10,491 sq km area, and is home to over 12,16,000 people, of which around 84 per cent are tribals.

## India's Sugar Industry Has Surged To Rs 1.3 Lakh Crore Mark: Pralhad Joshi

**New Delhi, (H.S):** Union Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution Minister Pralhad Joshi on Thursday said that India's sugar sector has, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, grown into a Rs 1.3 lakh crore industry, driving rural prosperity, energy security and green power through reforms like record ethanol blending and Atmanirbharta in fuels.

Addressing the 'Cooperative Sugar Industry Conclave 2025' at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre here, the minister said: "It's inspiring to see how the sector's evolution is shaping a sustainable and self-reliant future for India." The collective strength of the nation, innovation and efficiency have transformed this sector, he added. In an X post, Joshi said: "Addressed the 'Cooperative Sugar Industry Conclave 2025' & 'National Efficiency Award Ceremony' at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi, where we



celebrated the remarkable progress of India's sugar cooperative sector".

The minister had earlier highlighted that nearly 5 crore farmers (including family members) are engaged in the cultivation of sugarcane in India, and the industry is providing ample employment opportunities both directly and indirectly. He emphasised that the Centre, under the leadership of

the Prime Minister, accords top priority to the welfare of farmers and safeguarding the interests of consumers as well as the industry, thereby ensuring collaborative efforts to improve agricultural practices.

Joshi also highlighted India's commitment to advancing technology and skills in the sugar and biofuel sectors. Emphasising India's cultural and economic reliance on sugar, he noted India's

status as the world's largest sugar consumer and a significant biofuel producer, achieving over 12 per cent ethanol blending with petrol and aiming for 20 per cent soon. The Minister underscored the role of biofuels in combating climate change and detailed the positive impacts of India's Ethanol Blended with Petrol (EBP) Programme on the sugar industry and farmers.

Meanwhile, India's sugar production is projected to rise by 15 per cent in the 2025-26 season (October-September) to around 35 million tonnes, driven by expectations of an 'above-average' monsoon, which is likely to boost cane acreage and yields in key producing states such as Maharashtra and Karnataka, according to Crisil Ratings. The anticipated growth in output is expected to ease tightness in domestic supply and may also support higher ethanol diversion and a potential revival in sugar exports, the report said.

## 5,246 Yatris leave for Valley as Amarnath Yatra begins today

**Jammu, (H.S):** Another batch of Yatris left Jammu for the Valley as the annual Amarnath Yatra begins officially on Thursday, officials said. Officials added that the second batch of 5,246 pilgrims left Bhagwati Nagar Yatri Niwas on the Canal Road in Jammu for the Valley in two escorted convoys on Thursday.

Of these, 1,993 Yatris are going to Baltal base camp while 3,253 are going to Pahalgam base camp," officials said. The 36-day long Amarnath Yatra begins on Thursday as the first batch of Yatris left Baltal base camp for the holy cave shrine in the morning.

Other Yatris of the first batch left Pahalgam for the cave shrine in the morning. On their arrival in the Valley on Wednesday, locals belonging to civil society, trade and other sections of the society lined up with garlands and placards at the Navyug Tunnel in Qazigund town to welcome the Yatris.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, on Wednesday, flagged off the first batch of Yatris for this year's Amarnath Yatra from Jammu. Unprecedented security is being provided to this year's Amarnath Yatra as this is taking place after the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in which 26 civilians were killed by Pakistan-backed Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) terrorists.

## Manchester Hosts Fifth Car Festival in Massive Fanfare

**Manchester, (H.S):** Manchester City of United Kingdom hosted Fifth Rath Yatra Festival with spectacular fanfare and spiritual fervour. The abode of Lord of the Universe Gita Bhawan was aesthetically and elegantly decorated to mark the Grand Occasion. Commencing from the morning special religious rituals were performed before the Four Deities with utmost solemnity and unfettered devotion by the main priest Pandit Shyam Sunder Sharma. Organised by North West Odisha Society this year's Car Festival evoked unusual interests, unexpected enthusiasm and unprecedented excitement among both the organizers and participants.

More than thousand Odia and non-Odia devotees congregated at Gita Bhawan along with their family and relatives to take part in the Holy Event. At about 12.45 p.m. the four deities were taken in Dhadi Pahandi procession to the colourful chariot, parked outside Gita Bhawan. Superbly designed the chariot was decked up with an amazing Patachitra painting designed by Renowned Artist Pragyan Babu. The whole atmosphere got reverberated with the recitals of hymns, roaring slogans like Hari Bol, Jai Jagannath, sounding of hulahuli, blowing off conch and playing of musical instruments such as Ghanta, Mardala, Jhanja and Mrudanga. The highlight of the celebration was the Pandanti of Goddess Subhadra being performed exclusively by ladies. The long awaited and much cherished moment came when the chariot pulling began at around 1.00



p.m. The street of Manchester witnessed the Royal Sojourn of the Trinity on board the chariot in a majestic manner. The Gods and Goddess's caravan went through Wilbraham Road, Werburgh's Road, Brantingham Road and Withington Road before getting back to Gita Bhawan premises.

Master Carpenter Simranjeet Singh showed his extraordinary workmanship by repairing the moving chariot instantly when the Juggernaut was about to stop due to detection of a technical snag. The distinguished dignitaries present include Councillor Vimal Choski and Renowned Spiritual Preacher from India Devi Chitralekha. The highlight of the Car Festival was the presentations of a colourful Cultural Extravaganza. Famous Motivational Speaker Dr Deepak Gupta's Divine discourse was highly emotive and impressive. Special attractions of the supersonic show include soul soothing Bhajan recitals by noted vocalists like Tanishka Gupta, Dr. Siba Senapati, Disha Patnaik, ?Jayan Panigrahi, Dr. Kapeelmeet Kaur, ?Deeptiman

Rath, Dr Rajinder Singh, Priyanka Geemon, ?Harshangda Bhatnagar, Soumya Panda, Ms. Manorama and Ms. Supriya. Odissi Exponent Rekha Senapati, Saanvi Sahoo and Drishika Panigrahi enthralled the audiences with their scintillating Dance recitals.

The Cultural Programme was ably presented and co-ordinated by Ace Anchor Priyanka Beberta. The entire arrangements of the Rath Yatra Festival was well managed and skillfully conducted with active supervision of the Organising Committee consisting of Dr Siba Senapati, Rekha Senapati, Siba Ranjan Biswal, Bishnu Dash, Jeeban Panigrahi, Prasanta Sahu, Sudhakar Sahoo, Bibek Babu, Surendra Nath Acharya, Sanjeev Srichandan, Prabhat Singh and Sujeet Behera. The Organisers expressed their gratitude towards Manchester council, Manchester Police and Highways Authorities for their unstinted support and overwhelming co-operation to make this year's Car Festival a massive success.

## 10 ISRO Technologies Transferred To Indian Firms, Says IN-SPACE



**New Delhi, (H.S):** The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACE) on Thursday said it facilitated the transfer of 10 state-of-the-art technologies developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to six Indian companies.

The tripartite Technology Transfer Agreements (TTAs) were signed between NewSpace India Limited (NSIL), the six companies, and IN-SPACE at the IN-SPACE headquarters in Ahmedabad. The technology transfers will give private players the opportunity to access the developed technologies available with ISRO, enabling them to use space-related technology for commercial applications in space as well as other sectors. The technologies that foster satellite launch, ground

station infrastructure, and geospatial applications are expected to deepen industry participation, enable indigenisation, and reduce dependency on foreign technologies. "The transfer of these technologies marks yet another significant step towards empowering the private sector to harness and commercialise space technologies.

ISRO has a flourishing repository of R&D in space technologies, and it is time we leverage that to the optimum to strengthen India's space industrial ecosystem, and in that, industry-led innovation will play a key role," said Dr. Pawan Goenka, Chairman, IN-SPACE. Two advanced inertial sensors - the Laser Gyroscope and the Ceramic Servo Accelerometer - developed by ISRO's Inertial Systems Unit,

for potential use in satellite launch vehicles have been transferred to Hyderabad-based Zetatek Technologies. The company has over 25 years of expertise in Inertial Navigation System (INS) testing, calibration, and QA/QT equipment.

Three technologies related to ground station operations - S/X/Ka tri-band dual circular polarised monopulse feed, tri-axis antenna control servo system, and Ku/C/L and S Band Cassegrain feed - have been transferred to Avantel and Jisnu Communications, Hyderabad-based companies specialising in end-to-end communications solutions for space and defence platforms. These technologies, currently sourced from foreign vendors, will enable self-reliance in critical ground station infrastructure. Further, two

geospatial models developed by SAC/ISRO for pest forewarning and semi-physical crop yield estimation were transferred to Ahmedabad-based Amnax Info Technologies, to be deployed in agricultural decision-making and crop protection. A compact, multi-parameter, portable bathymetry system developed by NRSC/ISRO has been transferred to Jalkruti Water Solutions, Ahmedabad, to enable UAV-based integration for water resource monitoring.

Further, VSSC/ISRO's ceramic-based flame-proof coating technology - originally developed for launch vehicle applications - has been acquired by Ramdev Chemicals, Ahmedabad, for wider industrial applications. "With this transfer, we are taking a pivotal step toward building indigenous capabilities within India. ISRO, IN-SPACE and NSIL will collaboratively provide comprehensive handholding support to all the industry players to ensure successful absorption of the technology," said Rajeev Jyoti, Director, Technical Directorate, IN-SPACE.

**New Delhi:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) conducted extensive search operations across multiple cities, including Delhi, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, and Hyderabad on July 3, in connection with a corruption case linked to the Delhi Jal Board's (DJB) sewage treatment projects. The probe stems from an FIR lodged by the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) of the Delhi Government against M/s Euroteck Environmental Pvt Ltd and others under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and Prevention of Corruption Act.

The case pertains to alleged irregularities in the awarding of contracts worth Rs 1,943 crore for the augmentation and upgradation of 10 Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) in the national Capital. The four key tenders - related to STPs at Pappankalan, Nilothi, Najafgarh, Keshopur, Coronation Pillar, Narela, Rohini, and Kondli - were awarded in October 2022 to three Joint Venture (JV) firms. According to the FIR, only three JVs participated in all four tenders, each securing one or two



contracts through apparent mutual arrangement. Investigators suspect collusion among the JVs to manipulate the bidding process. The ACB alleges that the tendering process was deliberately made restrictive - notably through the imposition of the Integrated Fixed-film Activated Sludge technology requirement - limiting the number of eligible bidders.

Moreover, the estimated cost of the projects was inflated from Rs 1,546 crore to Rs 1,943 crore without proper justification or revised project reports,

allegedly causing a significant loss to public funds. ED's findings corroborated the FIR, revealing that all three JVs submitted identical experience certificates from a Taiwanese project, which were accepted by the DJB without verification.

After securing the tenders, the JVs subcontracted the entire work to Euroteck Environmental Pvt Ltd, the original accused in the FIR. During the searches, ED officials seized Rs 41 lakh in cash, along with several incriminating documents and digital evidence.



## Army Chief Lauds Indian Military Team For 'Focused' Joint Training in Bhutan

**Thimphu, (H.S):** Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Upendra Dwivedi visited the Indian Military Training Team (IMTRAT) in Bhutan on Thursday, where he was briefed on the vital role of the team in furthering close military cooperation between India and the Royal Bhutan Army. According to the Indian Army's Additional Directorate General of Public Information (ADGPI), the COAS interacted with the Indian Army and Royal Bhutan Army soldiers at IMTRAT and lauded them for their focused joint training initiatives and leadership development.

As India's oldest overseas mission, IMTRAT reflects the strength and depth of Indo-Bhutan Defence Cooperation. The Indian Army Chief also visited the Gyalsung Academy in Jamtsholing on Wednesday, where he received a briefing on Bhutanese King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck's visionary initiative aimed at nation-building and youth empowerment. The COAS lauded the Academy's commendable efforts in shaping the future of Bhutan's youth and appreciated the impressive



infrastructure. He noted with admiration the thoughtfully designed plans for the upcoming infrastructure, which will bring to life the King's grand vision. Reaffirming the deep-rooted friendship between India and Bhutan, the COAS stated that the Indian Army remains firmly committed to supporting these transformative initiatives. The King of Bhutan announced the launch of Gyalsung - Bhutan's National Service - during the Royal Address to the nation on the 112th National Day of Bhutan in December 2019. He has envisioned the institution of Gyalsung as a means to empower all Bhutanese youth to participate in the process of nation-building to further

enhance the security, peace, unity, harmony and sovereignty of the nation. The Gyalsung Program aims to realise the above vision by enabling each and every Bhutanese youth to actualise their innate potential and become productive and worthy citizens in the service of the Tsawa-Sum (The King, Country and People). The first batch of Gyalsung training commenced on September 5, 2024. Additionally, the King and the Queen (The Gyaltsuen) of Bhutan granted an audience to the Indian Army Chief in Tashichhodzong on Tuesday. The COAS was received in a ceremonial Chipdrel procession at the Tashichhodzong, and presented with a Guard of

Honour. Earlier, General Dwivedi also held discussions with Lieutenant General Batoo Tshering, Chief Operations Officer (COO) of the Royal Bhutan Army, to further strengthen military bonds and deepen strategic defence cooperation between India and Bhutan. The Indian Army Chief arrived in Bhutan on Monday on a four-day official visit aimed at further enhancing the enduring defence cooperation between the two countries.

He was given a warm and gracious welcome at the airport by Major General Dorji Rinchen, Deputy Chief Operations Officer (COO) of the Royal Bhutan Army. The COAS also laid a wreath to pay homage at the National Memorial Chorten in honour of Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, the third Druk Gyalpo of Bhutan and reviewed an impressive Guard of Honour at Tashichho Dzong, a prominent Buddhist monastery in the capital. Later, he held insightful interactions with Lieutenant General Tshering, reflecting the deep-rooted trust and camaraderie between the Indian Army and the Royal Bhutan Army.

## EAM Jaishankar Meets Heads of US FBI, National Intelligence

**Washington, (H.S):** External Affairs Minister (EAM), S. Jaishankar, met with two of the top US Intelligence officials, Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Kash Patel, and Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, on Wednesday. After meeting Gabbard, he posted on Social media platform X that he had a "good exchange on the global situation and our bilateral cooperation". Taking to X, EAM Jaishankar said it was great to meet Patel and they "appreciate our strong cooperation in countering organised crime, drug trafficking and terrorism".

Gabbard, who is from Hawaii and a former member of Congress, is a Hindu by faith, while Patel, also a Hindu, is of Indian descent. Counterterrorism is a major issue for India with scope for cooperation with the US across the world and North America, where supporters of terrorism are based in Canada. Following the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, the two countries signed the India-US Counter Terrorism Initiative in 2010. There are also an India-US Working Group on Counterterrorism and US-India Counterterrorism Designations



Dialogue which works to identify terrorists and linked individuals and organisations. For the US, fighting drug-smuggling is among the top issues under President Donald Trump. Before EAM Jaishankar's meetings with the US officials, Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced a crackdown on a transnational drug-smuggling operation based in India with tentacles stretching to the US.

According to the Press Information Bureau, Intelligence sharing by India's Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) led to the US Drug Enforcement Administration (USDEA) arresting a key player in an international drug trafficking network. Joel Hall, a major re-shipper based in Alabama, was

arrested following a coordinated operation, leading to the seizure of more than 17,000 tablets of controlled medication," the bureau said. An Indian-American, who was the network's key money launderer, is awaiting indictment, it said.

EAM Jaishankar came here to participate in the Quad Ministerial meeting, on Tuesday, with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and Foreign Ministers Penny Wong of Australia and Takeshi Iwaya of Japan. He is meeting key US officials to discuss issues of importance to the two countries. Other officials he met in bilateral settings were Rubio, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, and Energy Secretary Chris Wright.

## 4 Dead, 38 Missing After Ship Sinks in Indonesia, Prez Subianto Orders Immediate Rescue

**Jakarta, (H.S):** Four people have been confirmed dead, 38 are missing, and 23 others survived after a passenger ship sank in the Bali Strait of Indonesia early on Thursday, a senior official from the East Java Search and Rescue Office, Tholeb Vatelehan, said on Thursday.

The wooden vessel, KM Tunu Pratama Jaya, was travelling from Ketapang seaport in Banyuwangi Regency, East

Java, to Gilimanuk seaport in Jembrana Regency on Bali Island when it went down, according to the official. "As many as 23 people survived the incident, four were dead, and 38 others remained missing," Vatelehan told Xinhua news agency via phone.

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto has ordered the National Search and Rescue Agency (Basarnas) to



immediately rescue the passengers and crew of the inter-island ferry. Teddy Indra Wijaya, cabinet secretary, stated that the President issued the directive directly from Saudi Arabia, where he is performing the Umrah pilgrimage and undertaking an official visit.

From the Holy Land, he immediately instructed Basarnas and related agencies to initiate an emergency response and

rescue the passengers and crew as quickly as possible," Teddy said on Thursday. The President emphasised that victim rescue must be the top priority in the emergency operation, Teddy added.

Search and rescue operations have since been launched from both Bali Island and East Java, as the incident occurred near the maritime boundary between the two regions. I Nyoman

Sidakarya, head of the Bali Search and Rescue Office, confirmed the joint efforts.

The Banyuwangi Search and Rescue Office deployed more than 20 personnel, along with a rigid inflatable boat and one additional vessel to assist in the operation, Vatelehan said. "Strong winds, large waves, and powerful currents are currently hampering the rescue efforts," he added.

## IDF: Eliminated Rocket-Firing Facility Gaza, Struck 150 Targets In 24 Hours

**Tel Aviv, (H.S):** The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on Thursday confirmed that it had eliminated the terrorist cell responsible for launching rockets towards Sderot and Ibm from the Gaza Strip, as part of its ongoing operations to neutralise threats across the region. Taking to X, the IDF said, "The terrorist cell responsible for launching rockets toward Sderot and Ibm yesterday was eliminated.

IDF forces under the Southern Command continue to operate, guided by Military Intelligence and the Shin Bet, against terrorist organisations throughout the Gaza Strip. "The military added that troops from the 162nd Division were actively engaged in operations in the northern part of the Gaza Strip." Forces of the 162nd Division continue to eliminate terrorists, destroy terror infrastructure, weapons, and underground routes," the IDF said, noting that an Air Force aircraft, acting on intelligence provided by the 401st Brigade's fire control center, successfully struck the cell responsible for the previous day's rocket launches just minutes after



the attack. Over the past 24 hours, combat teams from the Nahal Brigade began new operations in northern Gaza, where they reportedly attacked dozens of targets. During one engagement, IDF troops identified and eliminated a "terrorist" who was advancing toward their position.

The IDF said that its forces continue efforts to locate and destroy "terror infrastructure" in the region, adding that in the most recent operations, troops attacked an operational shaft and several military structures being used against Israel. Additionally, in Khan Younis, the combat teams uncovered a cache of weapons, including rifles, pistols,

magazines, and mortar shells. Operations are also ongoing in the Rafah area and the western Negev region." Forces of the Gaza Division (143) continue to operate in defence of the western Negev communities while simultaneously conducting operations against terrorist organisations in the Rafah area," the IDF stated, adding that they had destroyed dozens of terror-related facilities and weapons stockpiles.

The IDF further revealed that the Israeli Air Force had struck approximately 150 targets across the Gaza Strip over the last 24 hours. The targets included "terrorists," underground routes, and additional terror infrastructure.

## Russia Expects 3rd Round of Talks With Ukraine Soon: Kremlin

**Moscow, (H.S):** The Kremlin expects the dates for a third round of Russia-Ukraine talks to be finalised "in the near future," Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. "We expect that it will be agreed upon soon," Peskov said on Wednesday, reiterating Moscow's stance that the scheduling of talks requires mutual consent. He noted that no specific date has been set and emphasised that the negotiation framework is inherently collaborative."

This is a mutual process," he said. The first round was held on May 16 in Istanbul and the second on June 2, also in Turkey. At the last meeting, Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov proposed that the third meeting take place during the last week of June. In the first round, the exchange of prisoners was agreed, while in the second round, the return of 6,000 bodies of Ukrainian soldiers and the exchange of sick prisoners and those under the age of 25 were agreed. However, despite the agreements of June 2, Moscow media reported that the Kremlin



had proposed two truces, demanding the withdrawal of the Ukrainian army from four regions that Russia considers its own (Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhia) and Ukrainian presidential elections within 100 days. For his part, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called for new sanctions because he sees no intention of peace in these demands. The conditions for an end to the armed conflict on the part of Russia have been repeatedly rejected by the Ukrainian leader because he sees them as a demand for surrender. Zelensky's Chief of Staff, Andriy Yemark, stressed that "the

Russians are doing everything possible to prevent a ceasefire and continue the war. It is essential to impose new sanctions now". In Istanbul, both countries wrote memoranda that Russian President Vladimir Putin described during the Eurasian Economic Union summit as completely opposed. "The memoranda, as expected, are diametrically opposed. But negotiations are taking place to find points of convergence. There is nothing surprising about them being different." According to the Kremlin spokesman, the speed of the next negotiation process depends on the Kyiv regime and

the mediating efforts of the US. He added that "there is a real reality on the ground that cannot be ignored and must be taken into account". Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov commented that the solution to the war in Ukraine is to eliminate the root cause of the conflict, adding that Russia is willing to stop the fighting. The Russian President recalled that in the next round of negotiations, which will take place after the agreed exchanges have been completed, according to him, the memoranda must be addressed.

For him, "the humanitarian component is important, as it creates the conditions for, as diplomats say, a thorough discussion of the essence of the problem." On the other hand, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan assured that he is in contact with US President Donald Trump and that both are willing to attend the negotiations. He told the Turkish news agency Anadolu of his commitment to do everything possible to make this happen as soon as possible.

## Emergency Response to Flooding Activated For China's Qinghai

**Beijing, (H.S):** China's Ministry of Water Resources on Thursday activated a Level-IV emergency response to flooding in the northwest Qinghai Province amid a new round of heavy rainfall. According to forecasts, heavy rainfall is expected in eastern and southern Qinghai from Thursday to Saturday.

As a result, significant rises in water levels are anticipated in the upper main stream and tributaries of the Yellow River in the province, with some small and medium-sized rivers in heavily affected areas potentially experiencing floods exceeding warning levels. Local authorities have been urged to enhance flood monitoring and early warning, ensure effective flood control for rivers, and protect people's lives and property. Based on 24-hour rainfall forecasts, the ministry



has issued alerts for 10 other provincial-level regions, including Hebei, Liaoning and Hainan, urging them to take precautions and prepare for heavy rainfall. A Level-IV emergency response to flooding is currently in effect in the three provincial-level regions of Chongqing, Sichuan and Gansu, Xinhua news agency

reported. China has a four-tier emergency response system, with Level I being the most severe response. Since mid-June, both provinces have experienced heavy rainfall and severe flooding. The situation is particularly serious in areas such as Rongjiang and Congjiang in Qiongdongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous

Prefecture of Guizhou Province, where large numbers of residents have been evacuated, and significant damage has occurred. Rongjiang County, widely known as the birthplace of the Village Super League, or Cun Chao, is beginning post-disaster recovery after being hit by two severe floods in less than a week.

Since June 24, back-to-back floods had inundated large parts of the county, with the Cun Chao stadium, which is situated in a low-lying urban area, submerged twice within five days. The emergency funds were also announced to support the affected areas in restoring daily life and economic activity as soon as possible, the ministry added. Meanwhile, six people had died due to severe flooding in Rongjiang County in southwest China's Guizhou Province.

## Norway Launches First National Strategy For Radiation Protection, Nuclear Safety

**Oslo, (H.S):** Norway has introduced its first-ever national strategy for radiation protection and nuclear safety, a move aimed at strengthening the country's health preparedness and security amid rising global tensions, Norwegian authorities announced.

The new strategy defines Norway's international obligations in the areas of radiation protection, nuclear safety, and emergency preparedness, reports Xinhua news agency, citing the Norwegian government's press release. It also addresses the shortcomings identified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) during its review of Norway's radiation safety systems in 2019. "I am very pleased that we are now putting in place the country's first national strategy in this area. It helps to increase health



preparedness and security in our country," said Jan Christian Vestre, Minister of Health and Care Services. Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide emphasised the growing relevance of nuclear safety issues. "Tensions in the world have increased, and issues related to radiation protection and nuclear safety have not been more important." He added that Norway intends to play an active role in international cooperation on these matters. The national strategy commits Norway to maintaining a high level of radiation protection to safeguard

human health and the environment. It sets out 10 key goals, including ensuring independent regulatory oversight, strengthening safety regulations, adopting a life-cycle approach to radiation-related activities, and minimising the risk of radiation and nuclear incidents. Norway also aims to improve patient safety in the medical use of radiation, enhance the management of radiation sources beyond governmental control, and ensure all radiation-related activities in the country prioritise safety as the highest concern.



# NBFCs Can't Charge Prepayment Penalties On Floating Rate Loans to MSEs; New RBI Rule Applicable From...



**New Delhi, (H.S):** The Reserve Bank of India has directed banks and other lenders not to charge pre-payment penalties on all floating-rate loans and advances, including for business purposes, availed by individuals and micro and small enterprises (MSEs). RBI's direction will applicable to all loans and advances sanctioned or renewed on or after January 1, 2026. Reserve Bank in its directive has mentioned that certain REs have been found to include restrictive clauses in loan contracts/ agreements to deter

borrowers from switching over to another lender, either for availing lower rates of interest or better terms of service. RBI said that these Directions shall apply to all commercial banks (excluding payments banks), co-operative banks, NBFCs and All India Financial Institutions.The central bank added that for all loans granted for purposes other than business to individuals, with or without co-obligants, an RE shall not levy pre-payment charges;(ii) For all loans granted for business purpose to individuals and MSEs,

with or without co-obligant(s);(a) A commercial bank (excluding Small Finance bank, Regional Rural bank and Local Area bank), a Tier 4 Primary (Urban) Co-operative bank, an NBFC-UL, and an All India Financial Institution shall not levy any pre-payment charges.A Small Finance bank, a Regional Rural bank, a Tier 3 Primary (Urban) Co-operative bank, State Cooperative bank, Central Cooperative bank and an NBFC-ML shall not levy any pre-payment charges on loans with sanctioned amount/limit up to Rs 50 lakh. In case of cash credit/ overdraft facilities, no pre-payment charges shall be applicable if the borrower intimates the RE of his/ her/ its intention not to renew the facility before the period as stipulated in the loan agreement, provided that the facility gets closed on the due date. An RE shall not levy any charges where pre-payment is effected at the instance of the RE, RBI added.

# India's Real GDP Growth Projected To Grow At 6.4-6.7 Pc In FY26: CII



**New Delhi, (H.S):** India's real GDP growth is projected to grow in a range of 6.4-6.7 per cent in FY26, reinforcing the country's position as the fastest-growing major economy in the world, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) said on Thursday.CII President Rajiv Memani said that at a time when global economic and political volatility is at its highest in over two decades, India stands out as a bright spot in an increasingly fractured global economy.

Speaking at a CII event in the national capital, Memani said competitiveness is India's passport to prosperity."But it must be earned through reform, through innovation, and through trust. CII remains committed to working alongside the government, industry, and citizens to accelerate India's rise as a confident, competitive, and globally connected economy," he said, adding that India's internal momentum is strong enough to withstand external shocks.In a

world where the rules of trade and technology are rapidly changing, we must anchor India's growth in competitiveness, rooted in scale, productivity, innovation, and resilience. It is our moment. But we must act decisively to seize it, he emphasised.To be able to meet the developmental and infrastructure needs, while maintaining the fiscal balance, CII suggests a focus on augmenting government revenues through calibrated disinvestment of public sector enterprises.

About 10 per cent of the total market capitalisation, which is about Rs 55 lakh crore, rests with public sector enterprises (PSEs)."We could look at divesting about 10 per cent of this market cap, which could yield about Rs 5 lakh crore. These proceeds could be utilised for enhancing public capex, retiring government debt, setting up a Sovereign Wealth Fund for investing in strategic assets overseas and acquiring critical

technologies," the CII President noted. To address the problem of India's "missing middle", CII has proposed a Capital Support Scheme for small and medium companies in the manufacturing sector going for R&D, technology acquisition and employment creation.

To optimise business costs associated with land, the premier industry chamber proposed the constitution of a dedicated Taskforce on "Land Availability at Affordable Rates" to develop policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of the manufacturing sector". "In order to meet India's ambitious energy transition targets, CII suggests drawing up sector-specific strategies, including that of mobility and proactively creating Green Hydrogen and Renewable Energy hubs. CII would also be launching a Mission on Energy transition, to encourage industry to shift to low-carbon alternatives," it said.

# NITI Aayog launches 'Chemical Industry: Powering India's Participation in Global Value Chains'

**New Delhi, (PIB):** NITI Aayog released its report "Chemical Industry: Powering India's Participation in Global Value Chains". This report offers an extensive analysis of India's chemical sector, highlighting both opportunities and challenges, and outlining a pathway for positioning India as a key player in global chemical markets.The global chemical industry is undergoing a major transformation, driven by shifting supply chains, demand for specialty and green chemicals, and heightened focus on innovation and sustainability. India's chemical sector, while significant in size and GDP contribution, remains fragmented and constrained by infrastructure gaps, regulatory inefficiencies, and low R&D intensity. India's 3.5% share in global chemical value chains and its chemical trade deficit at USD 31 billion in 2023, underscores its high dependence on imported feedstock and specialty chemicals. However, with targeted reforms encompassing a comprehensive range of fiscal and non-fiscal interventions will

enable India to have a USD 1 trillion chemical sector and achieve 12% GVC share by 2040, thus becoming a global chemical powerhouse.India's chemical sector faces several structural challenges that constrain its global competitiveness. A key issue is the country's heavy reliance on imported feedstock, which contributed to a USD 31 billion trade deficit in 2023, stemming from limited domestic backward integration.

Infrastructure gaps, outdated industrial clusters, and high logistics costs have created a cost disadvantage compared to global peers. Compounding this, India's low investment in R&D, with only 0.7% of investment against the global average of 2.3%, hampers indigenous innovation in high-value chemicals. Regulatory delays, especially in environmental clearances, further stifle industrial agility. Additionally, the sector is hampered by a 30% shortfall in skilled professionals, particularly in emerging areas such as green chemistry, nanotechnology, and process safety.NITI Aayog's report outlines several strategic

fiscal and non-fiscal interventions aimed at enhancing India's global competitiveness in the chemical sector. These initiatives listed below aim to transform aspirations into actionable progress: Establishment of empowered committee at the Central level along with creation of a Chemical Fund under the empowered committee with a budgetary outlay for shared infrastructure development, VGF, etc.

Administrative body at the chemical hub level, which will handle the overall management of the hubComposition of a Chemical Committee for ports to advise on and address infrastructural gaps in chemical trading at ports. Incentivize incremental production of chemical based on import bill, export potential, single source country dependence, end-market criticality etc. The scheme proposes for incentives on incremental sales to selected participants for a fixed number of years. Disbursement of R&D funds to drive innovation with enhanced collaboration between industry and academia through

# APEDA Organizes 'Indian Mango Mania 2025' in Abu Dhabi to Promote Indian Mango Exports

**New Delhi, (PIB):** The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry organized a Mango Promotion Programme in Abu Dhabi as part of its ongoing efforts to enhance the global presence of Indian agricultural products, particularly mangoes. The event marked the launch of 'Indian Mango Mania 2025'-a vibrant in-store mango festival held in collaboration with the Embassy of India in the UAE and the Lulu Group.

Timed with the peak of the mango season, the promotion aims to showcase India's finest mango varieties to international consumers, especially the large Indian diaspora across the UAE and the Gulf region. Premium Indian mango varieties displayed included GI-tagged and regional specialties such as Banarasi Langda, Dasheri, Chausa, Sunderja, Amrapali, Malda, Bharat Bhog, Prabha Shankar, Lakshman Bhog, Mahmood Bahar, Vrindavani, Fasli, and Mallika.The campaign was officially inaugurated by Ambassador of India to the UAE, Shri Sunjay Sudhir, at LuLu Hypermarket, Khalidiyah Mall, Abu Dhabi, in the presence of Chairman of Lulu Group, Shri



Yusuff Ali M.A. The event was also attended by Counsellor (Trade & Investment), Embassy of India, Shri Rohit Mishra; Deputy General Manager, APEDA, Dr. C.B. Singh; and other dignitaries.Speaking on the occasion, Shri Sunjay Sudhir stated that LuLu has been a vital platform in promoting Indian produce globally and that APEDA has played a key role in connecting Indian mango growers with markets in the UAE.

"Through this festival, the freshness and richness of Indian mangoes, especially from states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and the Eastern region, will reach households across the Gulf," he said.Chairman of Lulu Group, Shri Yusuff Ali M.A., echoed

these sentiments and reaffirmed the Group's commitment to strengthening India-Gulf market linkages. "Lulu is proud to showcase the best of India through our retail chains across the UAE and Gulf region," he said.

From India, Chairman of APEDA, Shri Abhishek Dev, in a message, reaffirmed APEDA's commitment to enhancing the export of agricultural and processed food products, including premium horticultural produce such as mangoes. "APEDA has facilitated the airlifting of diverse mango varieties from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh. This initiative not only celebrates India's mango diversity but also generates significant

# Corporate Profits In India Grew Nearly 3x Faster Than GDP Between FY20-25

**New Delhi, (H.S):** Mumbai: India Inc has shown remarkable financial strength over the last five years, with corporate profits growing nearly three times faster than the country's GDP between FY20 and FY25, a new report said on Thursday.The profit-to-GDP ratio has risen significantly to 6.9 per cent - reflecting strong earnings performance despite economic challenges, according to the data compiled by Ionic Wealth (Angel One).

The report, titled 'India Inc. FY25: Decoding Earnings Trends & Path Ahead', highlights that FY25 was a resilient year for Indian companies.Revenue of Nifty 500 firms grew by 6.8 per cent year-on-year (YoY), while EBITDA rose by 10.4 per cent and profit after tax (PAT) increased by 5.6 per cent. Notably, mid-cap and small-cap



companies outshined large-cap firms in terms of profit growth, recording 22 per cent and 17 per cent PAT growth respectively, compared to just 3 per cent for large caps. Sector-wise, BFSI (banking, financial services and insurance) emerged as a major driver of profitability, with its share of total profits nearly doubling since the pandemic. Auto, capital goods, and consumer durables also posted healthy earnings growth. Consumer durables led with a

massive 57 per cent PAT growth in FY25, followed by healthcare at 36 per cent and capital goods at 26 per cent, as per the report. Companies also benefited from margin improvements in sectors such as cement, chemicals, metals, and auto, helped by easing inflation and better input cost management.The report also points to a significant jump in capital expenditure plans. India Inc. aims to nearly double its capex to Rs 72.25 lakh crore during FY26-30, with a majority

of the investment expected to be self-funded.Around 80 per cent of this capex is focused on upgrading existing operations and generating new income, with sectors like power, green energy, telecom, auto, and cement leading the next wave of investments.

Looking ahead to FY26, the outlook varies by sector. Banks and NBFCs may see loan growth stabilise as interest rates are expected to ease in the second half of the year.The IT sector is likely to witness a recovery, driven by cost-optimisation deals and demand from BFSI clients.Pharma growth will be supported by expansion in chronic therapies and hospital networks, while the FMCG sector is expected to benefit from improving rural demand and a good monsoon, the report said.

# Musk-Run Starlink's India Authorisation Still Under Evaluation at IN-SPACE

**New Delhi, (H.S):** The Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACE) is currently evaluating the approval process for Elon Musk's affordable satellite-based internet service Starlink, which is likely to roll out in the country in a few months.Reliable sources told IANS on Thursday that "the authorisation is still under evaluation" at the space regulator's

end for Starlink services in the country.IN-SPACE, however, did not immediately comment on the status of the authorisation process, whether it has reached an advanced stage. IN-SPACE Chairman Dr Pawan Goenka has met Gwynne Shotwell, President and COO of SpaceX and the meeting focused on resolving outstanding issues related to authorisations. While the

groundwork is nearly complete, some technical and procedural steps remain before the service can be launched in a few months, according to sources. On Wednesday, Union Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia told IANS that all due diligence has been completed from their end for the entry of SpaceX's Starlink service in India, and once they receive the

necessary regulatory and licensing approvals from the space regulator, they can roll out the service in the country whenever they wish to." Now the ball is in Starlink's court to begin their services in India after receiving those approvals," Scindia said. Dr Goenka recently confirmed in reports that most of the regulatory and licensing requirements for Starlink have been addressed.

# Sensex, Nifty End Lower Amid Consolidation, Investors Await India-US Trade Deal

**Mumbai, (H.S):** The Indian stock markets ended lower on Thursday after a day of cautious trading, as late selling pressure erased earlier gains. Investors remained watchful amid hopes of a possible trade agreement between the US and India.The Sensex touched an intra-day high of 83,850 in early trade but eventually closed 170.22 points or 0.2 per cent lower at 83,239.7. Similarly, the Nifty also slipped by 48.1 points or 0.19 per cent, settling at 25,405.3 by the end of the session.Markets traded volatile on the weekly expiry day and ended marginally lower, continuing the ongoing consolidation phase, said Ajit Mishra of Religare Broking Limited.After an initial uptick, the Nifty oscillated sharply in both directions while remaining within Wednesday's trading range, ultimately closing at 25,405.30."However, the overall trend remains bullish and is expected to stay intact unless the index decisively breaks below the 25,200-mark. On the upside, the 25,650-25,750 zone is likely to act as an immediate hurdle," Mishra mentioned.

On the Sensex, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, Trent, and State Bank of India were among the top losers. On the other hand, Maruti Suzuki India, Infosys, NTPC, Asian Paints, Hindustan Unilever, and Eternal were among the top gainers - helping limit the downside. Broader markets showed subdued trends. The Nifty Midcap100 index managed to hold on to slight gains and closed flat with a positive bias. Following suit, the Nifty Smallcap100 index ended the day 0.26 per cent higher.In contrast, the Nifty Smallcap100 index ended the day 0.26 per cent lower.Among sectoral indices, the Nifty PSU Bank index was the biggest loser, falling 0.89 per cent due to selling pressure in stocks like Punjab National Bank, Union Bank of India, UCO Bank, and Central Bank of India.Other sectors such as metals, realty, banking, and financial services also ended lower.However, some pockets of the market saw buying interest. Sectors like media, auto, pharma, healthcare, consumer durables, oil & gas, and FMCG managed to close in the green. Market experts said that investors are likely to remain cautious in the coming sessions, keeping a close eye on global trade developments, FII activity and key economic cues.





## Harshaali Malhotra set to make South debut with 'Akhanda 2'

Harshaali Malhotra, who captured hearts nationwide with her portrayal of Munni in the 2015 blockbuster Bajrangi Bhaijaan, is all set to make her debut in South Indian cinema with the much-anticipated film Akhanda 2. The young actress recently took to her social media platforms to unveil the first poster of her character from the film, creating a wave of excitement among fans. The film, starring veteran actor Nandamuri Balakrishna, has already generated

considerable buzz since its announcement. From casting revelations to the initial glimpses, Akhanda 2 has kept audiences eagerly awaiting its theatrical release.

In a significant development, the filmmakers announced that Harshaali will play the role of 'Janani' in the film. Donning a traditional look, the actress appears graceful and poised in the poster shared by the production team. The caption accompanying the poster

reads: "A messenger's smile and a heart of gold. Introducing Bajrangi Bhaijaan fame Harshaali Malhotra as Janani from Akhanda 2. Akhanda 2 Tandavam in theatres this Dussehra."

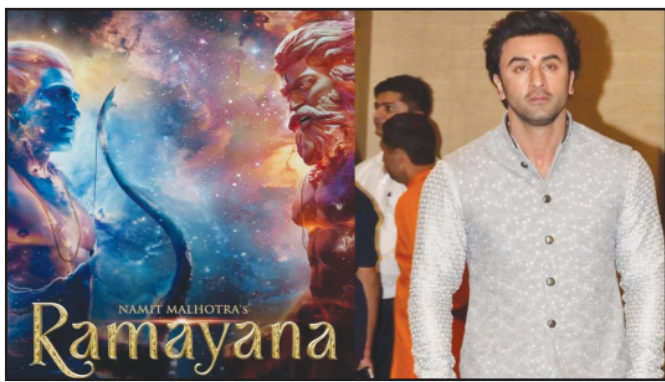
Harshaali also shared an emotional message reflecting on her journey from Munni to Janani. She wrote:

"There was a silence that said everything, a smile in the heart that stayed. There was a little Munni, but she grew big in memories.

Today, I return with another story – this time, with words. Munni was not just a character; she was a feeling, a memory, a heartbeat – something that stayed with you and me."

Akhanda 2 serves as the sequel to Balakrishna's 2021 hit Akhanda, which received widespread acclaim and was a box-office success. With the addition of Harshaali Malhotra to the cast, expectations around the sequel have soared even higher. The film is scheduled for release during Dussehra.

## Ranbir Kapoor, Yash-Starrer Epic 'Ramayana' First Glimpse Promises A Long Due Cinematic Justice To Indian Epic



The first glimpse of the upcoming Ranbir Kapoor and Yash-starrer epic 'Ramayana' was unveiled on Thursday. The first look promises the magnum opus of epic proportions. The run-time of the asset is heavily dominated by CGI, done extremely tastefully by Prime Focus and Academy Award-winning DNEG, the latter scoring the Oscar for Best VFX for 'Dune'. The film features a galaxy of stars with Ranbir in the role of Lord Ram, and Yash essaying Lankesh, Raavan, and actress Sai Pallavi playing Goddess Sita. Sunny Deol portrays Lord Hanuman, and Ravie Dubey essays Laxman. It gets bigger as for the first time in history, two music titans, Hans Zimmer and A. R. Rahman, both boasting Academy Awards, are joining forces for the film. The launch of the asset spanned the globe — with fan screenings across nine Indian cities and a spectacular billboard takeover at Times Square, New York. The story is set 5,000 years ago and

is revered by 2.5 billion people around the world. Helmed by the National Award-winning filmmaker Nitesh Tiwari and produced by Namit Malhotra and co-produced by Yash, Ramayana brings together a formidable army of Oscar-winning technicians, Hollywood's finest creators, and India's biggest names in acting and storytelling — reimagining one of civilization's most powerful epics as a cutting-edge cinematic universe, rooted in Indian culture and created for the world. Namit Malhotra, founder of Prime Focus, and CEO of DNEG, shared, "This is a cultural movement for every Indian around the world. With Ramayana, we're not just retelling history; we're introducing our legacy to the world. Bringing together the finest global talent allows us to tell this story with authenticity, emotion, and state-of-the-art cinematic innovation. We've seen Ramayana portrayed before — but this version reimagines its landscapes, creatures, and battles

with the scale and splendour they deserve. As Indians, this is our truth. Now, it will be our gift to the world". 'Ramayana' is a two-part live-action cinematic universe being reimagined on the scale of the biggest tentpoles produced to date. The film unites some of Hollywood and India's celebrated talent in a partnership like never seen before. Nitesh Tiwari said, "'Ramayana' is a story we've all grown up with. It carries the soul of our culture. Our aim was to honour that soul — and present it with the cinematic scale it truly deserves. As a filmmaker, it's both a huge responsibility and a heartfelt honour to bring it to life. It's a tale that has endured across millennia because it speaks to something deep and eternal within us. We are not simply making a film. We are offering a vision — one rooted in reverence, shaped by excellence, and made to transcend borders". The film also features Hollywood's top stunt directors with Terry Notary (Avengers, Planet of the Apes) and Guy Norris (Mad Max: Fury Road, Furiosa), choreographing the epic battles between gods and demons. The visual grandeur of ancient India is being reimagined by renowned production designers Ravi Bansal (Dune 2, Aladdin, etc) and Ramsey Avery (Captain America, Tomorrowland). 'Ramayana' is being filmed for IMAX and will be released worldwide with Part 1 releasing in Diwali 2026 and Part 2 in Diwali 2027.

## Priyanka Chopra Attends The Wimbledon Championship In London With Husband Nick Jonas



Actress Priyanka Chopra, who is busy promoting her Hollywood movie, "Heads of State" took some time off from her busy schedule to catch the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London with her actor and musician husband Nick Jonas. Taking to the stories section of her Instagram account, Priyanka posted a video from the stands, along with a picture of Nick holding his phone. In addition to this, Nick took to his Instagram stories and shared a photo of their official invite to the Royal Box. The picture showed two cards with

Priyanka and Nick's names on them. After that, he posted an image of PeeCee happily holding her phone. Other celebrities present at the match included Priyanka's "Heads of State" co-star John Cena, along with Olivia Rodrigo, Louis Partridge, and Shay Shariatzadeh. Meanwhile, Priyanka decided to shed light on the challenges of being an actress through a social media post. Talking about the not-so-glamorous side of stardom, she dropped a video on her IG in which she was heard saying, "I'm an actress of course my nails falls off right before the

red carpet. I'm an actress. Of course, my belt falls off on stage in front of everyone. I'm an actress. My plus-one stole my love. I'm an actress. Of course, I am promoting my summer blockbuster in midsummer heat in fall winter 2025 Burberry." Work-wise, PeeCee's "Heads of State" reached the audience on Wednesday. Directed by Ilya Naishuller, the project features her as an MI6 operative Noel Bisset who gets involved in an international conspiracy featuring two world leaders, played by Idris Elba and John Cena. Sharing her experience of working alongside the two, Priyanka said, "Oh, it was amazing. I didn't feel left out at all. It didn't feel like... It wasn't like it was high school. They wanted to work together when they did 'Suicide Squad', and that's where the inception of the movie came about. And Peter Safran (Producer) was like, we've got to bottle and sell this."

## 2nd Test: Shubman Gill Hits Unbeaten 265 As India Go Past 550, Take Control On Day 2

**Birmingham, (HS) :** Skipper Shubman Gill continued to dominate by hitting an unbeaten 265 – going past 250 for the first time in Tests – as England bowlers' toil continued with India reaching 564/7 in 141 overs at tea on Day Two of second Test of the Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy at Edgbaston here on Thursday. It was another session of relentless run-making by India as they made 145 runs in 31 overs, with Gill treating a sunny Edgbaston crowd to a masterful display of batsmanship, as he brought up his maiden double-century in Tests. He also got great support from Washington Sundar, who made 41 and was his able partner in a 144-run stand for the seventh wicket. Gill now holds the record for the highest score by an Indian batter on English soil and the highest score by an Indian captain in the longer format. It would be interesting to see if Gill, who has been hard to dislodge by England's bowlers, reaches the rare triple century mark in Tests. Gill's great handling of



Bashir continued in the second session, when he picked a four and a six off drive and a loft respectively. He then crunched Josh Tongue for two fours, before Sundar took charge by clipping Bashir for four, before playing and pulling Tongue for six. Gill then pulled a short ball from Tongue to bring up his 200, before punching the air while going down on one knee, and

made a trademark bow to his team-mates and the crowd.

Gill continued to be great by smacking Bashir for two fours, before cutting, punching, and creaming Harry Brook for three boundaries. He continued to dominate England by carting Carse, Bashir, and Brook for boundaries, the last of which went past a vacant slip area to get his 250. Sundar's resistance

ended on 42 off 103 balls when he played down the wrong line and was castled by Root. Gill came forward to drive Root for four before ending the session, which was firmly in India's favour. Brief scores: India 564/7 in 141 overs (Shubman Gill 265 not out, Ravindra Jadeja 89, Yashasvi Jaiswal 87, Washington Sundar 42; Chris Woakes 2-81, Joe Root 1-20) against England

## Pakistan Can Visit India For Hockey Asia Cup: Sports Ministry Sources

**New Delhi, (HS) :** Amid the growing uncertainty over Pakistan's participation in the upcoming Men's Hockey Asia Cup in India next month, the Sports Ministry sources have confirmed that their team will be allowed to cross the border for the continental tournament. However, they also added that final approval regarding the same will be issued by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs.

"We have no objection to Pakistan coming to play in the Hockey Asia Cup in India, as it is a multi-national event. However, I must clarify that matters related to visas fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs. Their decision will be final," said



sources from the Sports Ministry.

Rajgir, a historic city in Bihar, will host the Men's Asia Cup 2025 from August 29 to September 9 at the Rajgir Hockey Stadium. Following the deadly terror attack in Pahalagam on April 22 that claimed 26 lives, Pakistan's men's hockey team's participation in the continental

tournament was in jeopardy due to strained diplomatic relations between the neighbouring countries.

The Men's Asia Cup 2025 will serve as a qualifying event for the 2026 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup, set to be hosted by Belgium and the Netherlands. The winner of the tournament will earn a coveted spot in the

World Cup.

Moreover, India will also host the FIH Hockey Men's Junior World Cup 2025, which will be played in Chennai and Madurai from November 28 to December 10. They were grouped with archrivals India in Pool B in the expanded 24-team tournament.

Pakistan's men's hockey team last visited India in 2023 when the latter hosted the Asian Champions Trophy in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Harmanpreet Singh-led Indian team outclassed Malaysia 4-3 in the final to claim a record fourth title. Pakistan recently participated in the FIH Nations Cup in Malaysia, where it finished runners-up to New Zealand, who qualified for the FIH Pro League 2026-27 season.

## Top Shooters Back In India Reckoning Post Dehradun Rifle/Pistol Trials

**New Delhi, (HS) :** Olympians Anjum Moudgil (also world championship silver medalist) and Saurabh Chaudhary and world championship bronze medalist Mehuli Ghosh, are back in reckoning for team India spots after the conclusion of the National Selection Trials 3&4 for Rifle and Pistol shooters, at the Trishul Shooting Range in Dehradun. The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) has released the full domestic rankings list for Group A (eligible for India selection) shooters on their website, after the final match was played out on Monday (June 30, 2025). Double Olympian Anjum, one of India's finest woman rifle shooters ever, missed out on the first half of the international season comprising three World Cup stages, but is back in reckoning in women's 50m rifle 3 positions (3P), having displaced fellow Paris Olympian Shriyanka Sadangi in the top three. World record holder Sift Kaur Samra remains the top-ranked 3P women's shooter in India with an average of 593.38, followed by Ashi Chouksey (592.25) and Anjum (591.68). Sriyanka (589.90), Mehuli (588.58), and Surabhi Bharadwaj Rapole (588.08) complete the top six of this highly competitive field. Former Asian Games and Youth Olympics champion Saurabh Chaudhary is back as India's No.1 in the men's 10m air pistol with a top-ranked average of 583.93, followed by Aditya Malra (582.75) and Anmol Jain (582.33). Amit Sharma (582), Nishant Rawat (582), and Samrat Rana (581.45) took fourth, fifth, and sixth ranks, respectively.



Among the rifle shooters, Asian Championship 2024 gold medalist Mehuli Ghosh returns to the No. 1 spot in the domestic rankings of 10m Air Rifle Women with an average of 633.65, followed closely by Elavenil Valarivan (633.28) and Ananya Naidu (632.83). Rising names Arya Rajesh Borse (632.25), Ramita (632.05), and Sonam Uttam Maskar (631.60) also feature in the top six rankings. In the 10m Air Pistol Women, Suruchi continues to dominate the national circuit. With an average score of 588.25, she sits firmly at the top, enjoying a nearly 10-point lead over her nearest competitor, Palak (578.38). Paris Olympic double bronze medalist Manu Bhaker and Surbhi Rao both average 578, with Surbhi taking fourth due to a lower drop score. Rhythm Sangwan (577.88) and Esha Singh (577.83)

follow closely at fifth and sixth, respectively. World No. 2 Manu, who skipped T3 and T4 rounds, continues to lead the 25m Sports Pistol Women India rankings with an average score of 588.65. Simranpreet Kaur Brar (583.75), Esha Singh (583.50), Rahi Samobat (582.28), Abhidnya Patil (580.43), and Divya T.S. (580.38) round up the top six. Anish Bhanwala, fresh off wins in Trials 3 & 4, holds on to the No.1 spot in 25m Rapid Fire Pistol Men with an average of 581.25. He is followed by Neeraj Kumar (578.75) and Adarsh Singh (578.55). The next three spots are held by Bhavesh Shekhawat (576.63), Pradeep Singh Shekhawat (576.30), and Mandeep Singh (576.00).