



# DUMANI MAIL

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English Daily



## Sigachi fire kills 12 in Telangana



**Hyderabad (HS) :** An explosion at a chemical factory in Pashamylaram Industrial Area of Telangana's Sangareddy district killed at least 12 workers, and critically injured 22 others. The incident occurred at the Sigachi Chemicals facility in Patancheru, where a reactor reportedly exploded during routine operations. The blast triggered a massive fire within the factory premises, prompting emergency

response teams to rush to the site. Preliminary information suggests that the explosion occurred without any prior warning, catching workers off guard.

According to officials, six workers died on the spot, while two others succumbed to injuries during treatment. At least 22 people are undergoing treatment in hospitals, two to three of whom are said to be in critical

condition. Inspector General of Police Satyanarayana confirmed that the fire is yet to be brought fully under control. "Eight people have died in the incident. 26 people are undergoing treatment in hospitals with serious injuries," he had said earlier in the day. He added that firefighting personnel, the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Hydra cranes,

and local police are actively involved in rescue operations. "At the time of the accident, around 150 workers were present. About 90 of them were at the exact spot where the blast occurred," Satyanarayana said. Local authorities and fire personnel were engaged in rescue and containment efforts, with the injured shifted to nearby hospitals for treatment. The police cordoned off the area, and measures were being taken to ensure the fire did not spread further. An investigation is underway to determine the exact cause of the explosion and assess whether safety protocols were followed. As of now, the extent of damage to the facility remains unclear. Further details are awaited.

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy inquired about the details from officials regarding the fire accident. He expressed grief over the incident and issued orders to intensify relief measures. He directed that all necessary actions be taken to rescue any workers trapped in the factory and to provide emergency medical assistance to the injured.

## India, US finalise terms of trade deal, announcement likely

**New Delhi (HS) :** Negotiators from India and the United States have finalised all terms of an interim trade agreement, raising expectations that the deal will be announced by July 8, ahead of the scheduled expiration of the US tariff pause on July 9, according to reports.

An Indian delegation led by Rajesh Agrawal, Special Secretary in the Department of Commerce, has reportedly been in Washington to wrap up the negotiations, and sources indicate both sides have locked in terms across multiple sectors. The suspension of a 26 percent US tariff on Indian goods—originally imposed on April 2—is set to end July 9, and Washington has signalled it will not extend the pause unless an interim deal is reached. The agreement under discussion covers key areas of strategic interest. The US has pressed for duty reductions on electric vehicles, wine, petrochemicals, farm goods, dairy, apples, tree nuts, and genetically modified crops. India, in turn, is seeking tariff relief for labour intensive exports including



textiles, gems and jewellery, leather goods, garments, plastics, chemicals, shrimp, oil seeds, grapes, and bananas. Notably, India has reiterated that agriculture and dairy remain firm "red lines", aligning with its stance in previous trade agreements. Both governments are expected to convert the interim deal into a comprehensive Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) by October, furthering the momentum initiated during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's February visit

to Washington, where both countries endorsed the goal of doubling bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030.

The US President Donald Trump has been signalling a removal of trade barriers in public statements, describing such an outcome as "unthinkable," and emphasising that the deadline is unlikely to shift. If successful, the interim deal will avert the reinstatement of high reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods and

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## Rath Tragedy Administrative probe begins



**Bhubaneswar (DMC) :** In the wake of the tragic stampede at Saradhabali in Puri that claimed the lives of three devotees during the ongoing Rath Yatra festivities, the Odisha government has taken strict and swift action, both administratively and operationally. The incident, which triggered widespread concern over crowd management and security preparedness, is now under the scanner of a high-level probe.

The administrative investigation will be led by AnuGarg, the Development Commissioner of Odisha, who has been entrusted with the responsibility of completing the inquiry within one month. This decision underscores the state government's seriousness in identifying the lapses that led to the mishap and ensuring such tragedies do not recur. "30 days time has been provided to us; we will start our work soon," said Garg on Monday. As immediate fallout of the incident, the Odisha government on Sunday

transferred the Puri Collector and the Superintendent of Police (SP). In addition, two police officers, who were reportedly in charge of security and crowd control during the event, have been suspended pending inquiry. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi has ordered a complete overhaul of the remaining Rath Yatra proceedings, directing officials to ensure streamlined execution of the rituals and public arrangements with utmost safety and discipline. The tragic incident occurred during a peak moment at Saradhabali near the Gundicha Temple, where a massive crowd had gathered in the wee hours of Sunday. In the absence of adequate control and coordination, a sudden rush led to a stampede, resulting in the unfortunate deaths of three devotees and injuries to several others.

The investigation led by AnuGarg will focus on identifying administrative lapses,

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## BMC Additional Commissioner assaulted inside office

### 3 persons arrested



Three persons have been arrested by Commissionerate Police so far. They have been identified as corporator Jeevan Rout, Rashmi Mahapatra and Debashis Pradhan who will be presented in court under Sections 333/132/121(1)/121(2)/109/351(2)/62/140(2)/304/54/61(2)/189(2)/190(3/5) BNS. Further investigation is in progress to ascertain the involvement of others persons in the assault.

**Bhubaneswar (DMC) :** A senior official of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) was allegedly assaulted by a group of miscreants at the office while he was conducting a grievance redressal meeting on Monday. As per information,



around six unidentified youths entered the office room of Additional Commissioner of BMC, Ratnakar Sahoo and attacked him without provocation. While the motive behind the assault remains unclear, a video of the incident later went viral on social media, triggering sharp criticism from different quarters. Sahoo, a senior officer of the Odisha Administrative Service (OAS), said he has reported the matter to higher authorities. The officer also lodged a complaint at

Kharavela Nagar Police Station. Reacting sharply to the incident, BMC employees staged a dharna near the main entrance of the corporation building and ceased work for the day as a mark of protest. They demanded immediate action against the culprits and enhanced security for civic staff.

Sahoo said the attackers assaulted him in the presence of corporator Jiban Rout. They also dragged the additional commissioner out of his office

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## OAS Association demands action



The Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) Association has strongly condemned the recent attack on the BMC Additional Commissioner and has demanded immediate and stringent action against the culprits. The Association held

an emergency meeting on Monday to discuss the escalating incidents of violence against government officials and resolved to press for greater security measures. The OAS Association has

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## Utterly Shocked: Naveen

**Bhubaneswar (DMC) :** Voicing concern over the assault of a senior officer of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), BJD president Naveen Patnaik on Monday demanded immediate and exemplary action against those involved in the incident. The former Chief Minister said he was utterly shocked seeking a video of the incident. Ratnakar Sahoo, Additional Commissioner, BMC, a senior officer of the rank of

Additional Secretary was dragged from his office and brutally kicked and assaulted in front of a BJP corporator, he said.

"What is more appalling is that this happened in broad daylight, in the heart of the capital city - Bhubaneswar to a senior officer while he was in his office, hearing grievances of people," said Naveen, who is also the Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Odisha Assembly. The former CM expressed the hope that

Majhi will direct immediate action to be taken to restore faith in his government and not allow this heinous act to go unpunished like the assault on an officer by the ex-Governor's son. "The people of Odisha will not forgive this," he added. BJD leaders and workers also staged a protest over the issue. As a result, vehicular movement came to a standstill for a few hours causing inconvenience to commuters.



## Red alert issued for Himachal Pradesh, 3 dead in 24 hours

**Chandigarh (HS) :** A red alert for heavy to very heavy rainfall across several parts of Himachal Pradesh has prompted the state government to announce the closure of all educational institutions, including schools and colleges, in four districts Kangra, Mandi, Sirmaur, and Solan.

In a separate incident, a five-storey building collapsed in the Bhattakufar area of Shimla early

today. Fortunately, there were no casualties as the building had been evacuated the previous night. According to the State Emergency Operation Centre, one person each drowned in Una and Bilaspur districts, while another died after falling from a height in Shimla. As of this evening, 259 roads remain blocked across the state 139 in Mandi, 92 in Sirmaur, 20 in Kullu, four in Una, three in Solan,



and one in Kinnaur district. In addition, 614 electricity transformers and 130 water supply schemes have been disrupted. Three people died in the last 24 hours, taking the total monsoon-related death toll in the state to 44 so far, and 82 have been injured. The causes of death include flash floods (8), drowning (6), snake bites (2), electrocution (2), falling from steep rocks (4), and road accidents (21).

A landslide near Koti on the Shimla-Kalka National Highway (NH-5), which connects Shimla and Chandigarh, damaged sections of the road, resulting in a traffic jam stretching two to three kilometres. The collapse of the Bhattakufar building was captured on video and widely circulated on social media. The footage shows the building initially upright, before a widening crack leads to its

sudden and complete collapse, while heavy rainfall continues in the background. In response to the worsening situation, State Revenue, Horticulture and Tribal Development Minister Jagat Singh Negi chaired a high-level meeting today to review monsoon preparedness. Officials from the Public Works Department, Jal Shakti, Electricity Board, State Disaster

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## Global Growth

In recent assessments of the world economy, agencies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have lowered their expectations of global growth this year, with trade policy shocks and geopolitical tensions affecting economic momentum. The IMF has, for instance, projected world growth at just 2.8 per cent in 2025, down 50 basis points from its assessment in January. The World Bank has pegged growth to slow down even further to 2.3 per cent this year, with most economies expected to witness a deceleration compared to last year. In the midst of this marked deterioration, the Indian economy is broadly expected to maintain its growth momentum. The RBI had pegged growth for the year at 6.5 per cent, in line with the pace last year. In the recent State of the Economy report, economists at the RBI note that the high-frequency indicators for May point towards economic activity being "resilient". There are several points to note. For one, the agricultural sector appears to continue to fare well. According to the report, conditions have been "largely favourable" for good sowing in the ongoing kharif season. This bodes well for rural demand. The finance ministry's monthly review also says that "rural demand has strengthened further, supported by a healthy rabi harvest and a positive monsoon outlook". Alongside, capacity utilisation in the manufacturing sector remains "above its long-period average", and other high-frequency indicators such as E-way bills, toll collections and digital payments also point towards "strong growth". But the performance of some other non-agri indicators suggests that, overall, it's a mixed trend. The index of industrial production rose by just 2.7 per cent in April, and the eight core sectors - coal, steel and cement, among others - grew by only 0.8 per cent during April-May. According to a note from ICRA, eight key indicators saw a deceleration in the same period. These include electricity generation, two-wheeler production, port cargo traffic and domestic airline passenger traffic. The RBI report notes that there are signs of moderation in urban demand. The finance ministry's report also acknowledges "signs of softening in areas like construction inputs and vehicle sales".

Exports are another area of concern. Merchandise exports are up only 3 per cent in the year so far. Excluding petroleum, growth is better. But an uncertain trade environment and weak global demand hang heavy. As per the IMF, world trade is expected to grow at just 1.7 per cent this year, down 1.5 percentage points from its earlier assessment. The finance ministry's report also says the "external challenges could potentially impact India's growth trajectory". This will call for deft handling.

1st July

## Doctor's Day (India)



Doctor's Day, which takes place on July 1 in India, is a special day that is commemorated worldwide in different countries on various dates. In India, a single person inspired the creation of their national version of Doctor's Day. His name was Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, and he was one of India's most well-known and respected doctors. Every year, on July 1, the life and achievements of this incredible man are celebrated, and the millions of health care workers, patients, and medical organizations are honored.

Doctor's Day goes beyond just India; it has been observed by many countries for years and honors physicians' contributions to communities. It is observed as a holiday in some countries by patients, beneficiaries of the healthcare industry, and healthcare organizations.

Throughout India, Doctor's Day is observed on July 1 in honor of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, who was a legendary physician and West Bengal's second Chief Minister. He was born in Patna in 1882 and was the eldest of five siblings. Dr. Roy enrolled in the Calcutta Medical College in 1901 before leaving India for further studies after completing his medical studies in India. Dr. Roy even became close with Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom struggle at one point in his life. There is a well-known story about how he had traveled to see Gandhi while he was fasting. He refused to take medicine because it was not manufactured in India. Upon hearing Gandhi refuse treatment in solidarity with his people, Dr. Roy responded and said that he was to treat someone who had represented his country's 400 million people so fiercely. Gandhi then took medicine and continued his fight for the greater good.

One of the things Dr. Roy was dedicated to was providing affordable healthcare to all people of India. In fact, he was instrumental in establishing several facilities in Kolkata, including the Jadavpur TB Hospital, Chittaranjan Seva Sadan, Kamala Nehru Memorial Hospital, Victoria Institution, and Chittaranjan Cancer Hospital. And in 1926, he established the Chittaranjan Seva Sadan for women and children, which is considered by many to be one of his most outstanding achievements. The incredible life led by Dr. Roy inspired The Indian Medical Association to dedicate July 1 to his achievements and spirit. So Doctor's Day was established in India starting in 1991.

Bidhan Chandra Roy is born in Patna Bengal Presidency, British India, on July 1. Roy enrolls at the Calcutta Medical College and, upon graduating, leaves for England for further studies. Dr. Roy becomes the Chief Minister of West Bengal following India's newly gained Independence.

## Whether integration of urban and rural SHGs is beneficial ?



Dr. Seela Subba Rao

Despite vast expansion of the formal credit system encompassing spheres of social and mass banking, the dependence of the rural poor on the money lenders still continues in many areas especially for meeting their emergent needs i.e. consumption needs, medical needs and etc. The search for alternatives started with internal introspection regarding the innovations, which the poor had been traditionally making to meet their financial service needs. As a result, the poor tended to come together in a variety of informal ways for pooling their savings and dispensing small and unsecured loans at varying costs to group members based on need. In the process of working on various approaches for eradication of poverty through asset formation, an informal agency called the self-help groups (SHGs) was evolved for expanding credit supply to the poor. The banks which were hitherto reluctant to finance individual rural poor without any security, came forward to finance in group mode without any collateral security. The traditional attitude of the banker that the poorest of the poor were not reliable and that the banks were not meant for them, was proved to be a myth by this model. Now, SHGs are the most prominent channels for financially empowering the deprived rural female to enable them to move from subsistence to sustainability in the country. The SHG-Bank linkage programme has touched new heights aiming to integrate the rural poor, particularly women, with the formal banking system.

**Rapid growth of SHGs across the country-** The proliferation of bank-linked SHGs demonstrated significant expansion from formation of mere 255 SHGs in 1992 to a staggering 144.22 lakh SHGs in the financial year 2023-24. Concurrently, credit disbursed to SHGs surged from Rs.29 lakh in 1992 to Rs.209286 crore as on 31 March 2024. However, the year-to-year growth of savings linked SHGs decelerated from 12.7 per cent during 2022-23 to 7.6 per cent in 2023-24. The reduction could be due to saturation in SHGs formation in southern States like Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Karnataka. Out of 144.22 lakh SHGs, all women SHGs constitute around 85 per cent (in absolute terms 120.43 lakh) and similarly out of Rs.209286 crore loan outstanding of total SHGs, women SHGs workout around 96 percent (in absolute terms Rs.202716 crore). Government of India has launched the Lakshmi Didi scheme for matured SHG women as a step towards women led development in rural areas. The Graduated Rural Income Generation Programme (GRIP) has been also launched to uplift the ultra-poor through a returnable grant concept, fostering asset generation and a foothold to formal financial services for the hitherto unserved rural ultra-poor women. Another initiative to digitalise SHG transactions providing real-time banking solutions at the doorstep of SHG members has been also launched across the country. Thus, the rapid growth of SHGs across the country is remarkable and proved to be a very successful socio-economic experiment.

**Integration of urban & rural SHGs (case study in Telangana)-** At present Telangana has a vast network of 65 lakh women members, with 47.40 lakh rural women organised into 4.37 lakh SHGs and 17.60 lakh urban women in 1.73 lakh SHGs. These SHGs operate under a structured system of federations including Village Organisations, Mandal Mahila Samakhya and Town-level Federations. In a significant step towards women's empowerment and poverty alleviation, fostering economic



self-reliance and strengthening the role of SHGs, the Telangana government has decided to integrate, both urban and rural SHGs in the State. The Society of Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) and Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas (MEPMA) were set up to facilitate the mobilisation of poor women into self-sustaining community-based organisations that work towards alleviation of poverty and overall development in rural and urban areas respectively. The SHGs under the jurisdiction of MEPMA will now be brought under the control of SERP. As part of this new initiative, urban poor women beyond notified slum areas will also be included in the rural SHGs network, besides forming adolescent SHGs in the age group of 15 to 18 years and elderly SHGs women above 60 years of age across the State. It has been reported that orders on administrative structure, staff pattern, budget and etc to operationalise "the Indira Mahila Shakti Mission 2025" will be issued shortly. Many advantages may accrue due to the proposed integration of urban SHGs with rural SHGs. It allows rural SHGs to tap into urban markets, providing a platform to sell their products and services, thereby boosting their incomes and livelihoods. By accessing urban markets, rural SHGs can diversify their income sources beyond traditional agriculture, promoting sustainable livelihoods. The integration can create new economic opportunities in both rural and urban areas fostering

entrepreneurship and job creation. SHGs foster unity and cooperation among members leading to a stronger network and improved social cohesion. With new administrative structure, there can be reduction in administrative overhead costs also.

**Road ahead-** While government of Telangana's decision to integrate urban and rural SHGs is a recent development, the integration of SHGs across different contexts is not a new concept and is already being implemented in varying degrees in other States. Many States have SHGs operating under a shared national network, but their roles and functioning differ on local socio-economic conditions and policy support. States like Andhra Pradesh and Kerala are often cited as examples of successful SHG models with indicatives like the SERP in Andhra Pradesh and the Kudumbashree Mission in Kerala. Both States have focussed on financial independence, capacity building and integration with local governments for both urban and rural SHGs. Taking cue from this, certain States such as Odisha, Assam and Jharkhand have developed their own strategies for integrating urban and rural SHGs. It is pertinent to mention that the "Mission Shakti" Programme was adopted by government of Odisha for promotion of women's self-help groups (WSHGs) and also achieving women's empowerment in the State. The National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) is a central government initiative that supports SHGs across the

country. It encourages the convergence of SHGs with local governance structures like Gram Panchayats which can integrate urban and rural perceptions.

While both rural and urban SHGs aim to empower marginalized communities through savings and credit, certain key differences do exist in their context challenges and opportunities. This includes livelihood focus, access to resources and government support. Rural SHGs often focus on agricultural activities, livestock rearing and related enterprises aiming to improve their income and food security, whereas urban SHGs focus on informal sector activities, micro-enterprises, and services capitalising on urban market opportunities. Further rural SHGs face challenges such as limited access to markets, infrastructure & technology, and seasonal fluctuations in income. In case of urban SHGs, they encounter challenges related to competition, issues of land tenure and informal nature of their business. In order to address these issues of SHGs, a plethora of initiatives need to be taken up. Establishment of SHG products Bazaars or Mahila Shakti Bazaars is very much needed at District as well as Mandal levels to boost their sales. Banks may simplify their loan procedures and offer tailor-made financial products to SHGs. Promotion of digital tools to improve record keeping, communications and access to market is the need of the hour for SHGs and their federations. Introduction of micro-insurance products for security and sustainability of SHGs is very important. While the integration of urban and rural SHGs is garnering traction, many challenges are yet to get addressed. These include ensuring financial literacy among SHG members, strengthening market linkages for SHG products, and addressing issues of gender inequality & social inclusion. With the support from Central & State governments, NGOs, and financial institutions, SHGs can further deepen their impact and contribute to building a more inclusive and equitable society in the coming years.

AGM (retd) NABARD

## Misconceptions about generic medicines !



Asit Mohanty

False statements or misconceptions often circulate claiming that government-provided generic medicines are of lower quality or less effective compared to branded medicines. Such misinformation can lead to unnecessary fear and hesitation among patients, even though both types of medicines contain the same active ingredients and are subject to strict regulatory standards. In reality, generic medicines, including those supplied by the government, are proven to be equally safe, effective, and of the same quality as their branded counterparts. The key difference is the price - generics are typically more affordable because they do not carry the high costs associated with research, marketing, and branding. Governments and regulatory agencies ensure that all medicines, whether generic or branded, meet rigorous safety and efficacy standards. Spreading false information about generics undermines public trust and can prevent people from accessing affordable medicines that are just

as reliable as the branded versions.

Generic medicine is a type of medicine that contains the same active ingredients as a brand-name drug but is typically sold at a lower price. It is used to treat the same conditions and provides the same therapeutic benefits as the original branded medication. Same active ingredient: The core substance responsible for the medicinal effect. Same dosage and strength: It matches the dose of the original medicine. Same form: Whether tablet, capsule, injection, etc. Same safety and efficacy: It undergoes rigorous testing and regulation to ensure quality. How is a generic medicine made? Research & Development: Unlike brand-name drugs, generics do not go through extensive new research. Instead, they rely on the original drug's data, which is protected for some years. Formulation: Manufacturers create the medicine using the same active ingredient and similar excipients (inactive substances), following strict guidelines to replicate the original drug closely. Manufacturing process: The active ingredient is synthesized or extracted. It is then combined with excipients - substances like fillers, binders, and stabilizers. The mixture is processed into the final form: tablets, capsules, injections, etc. Quality control: The finished product undergoes rigorous testing to ensure it meets regulatory standards for potency, purity, and safety. Regulatory approval: The manufacturer submits data to regulatory authorities for approval, proving the generic is equivalent to the original drug (bioequivalence). Market release: Once approved, the generic medicine can be produced at a large



scale and sold in the market with a different brand name or as a "generic." In essence, generic medicines are essentially the same as branded medicines in terms of their ingredients and effects, but they are manufactured by different companies after the patent protection period for the original drug ends. Their production involves replication under strict regulatory standards to ensure safety and efficacy. Government-provided generic medicines are essentially the same as normal generic medicines. Both contain the identical active ingredient, dosage, form, and are administered similarly to their brand-name counterparts. The primary difference lies in the branding or source, with government generics being supplied through public health programs. Generics, in general, are typically much less expensive than brand-name drugs due to lower marketing and research costs. They offer the same therapeutic effect and safety profile as their brand-name equivalents. Therefore, there is no significant difference in terms of efficacy or quality between government-supplied and other generic medicines.

The cost benefits of generic versus brand-name drugs are significant and primarily stem from the differences in development, marketing, and manufacturing costs. Here's a detailed comparison: Lower Price Point: Generics are usually sold at a substantially lower price, often 30% to 80% cheaper than their brand-name counterparts. This is because generics do not require the costly research and development (R&D) that brand-name drugs do, as they are copies of already approved medicines. Reduced Marketing Expenses: Generic manufacturers spend less on marketing and advertising, unlike brand-name drug companies that invest heavily in promoting their products to healthcare providers and consumers. Cost-Effective for Patients and Healthcare Systems: The lower cost makes medications more accessible, especially in low-income settings. It reduces the financial burden on patients, insurance companies, and government health programs. Encourages Competition: The availability of generics fosters competition in the pharmaceutical market, further driving down prices and increasing

access. Same Efficacy and Safety: Despite the lower cost, generics meet the same quality, strength, and dosage standards as brand-name medicines, backed by regulatory agencies like the FDA or equivalent bodies worldwide. In essence, generics offer the same therapeutic benefits at a fraction of the cost, making healthcare more affordable and sustainable. This cost advantage is one of the main reasons they are widely promoted and prescribed globally.

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Convener, Odia Language Protection Campaign  
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# No e-KYC, no rice: Govt warns beneficiaries

**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** The Odisha government will suspend ration cards of nearly 20.58 lakh people for not doing e-KYC verification, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Krushna Chandra Patra said here on Monday.

Speaking to media persons, the Minister said the last day for e-KYC (know your customer) verification was Monday (June 30). The e-KYC verification drive was started across the state in August 2024 to remove ineligible and dead beneficiaries from the national and state food security schemes. The deadline was extended multiple times. "We are planning to suspend the ration cards of 20.58 lakh beneficiaries, who have not completed their e-KYC verification till the last date. We will give them a window



period of three months," Patra said. During the next three months, their rice quota will not be issued so that all genuine beneficiaries will come to the fair price stores for their quota of rice, he said."

Whenever they will visit the PDS store, we will conduct their e-KYC verification and renew their ration cards," the minister said. He further said that the government will deactivate the ration cards of the beneficiaries, who will not turn out at the PDS

stores during the period. As per available data, a total of 3.25 crore people in the state are beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), while another 6.48 lakh people have been covered under the State Food Security Scheme (SFSS).

On paddy procurement, Patra said the government has procured 19 lakh metric tonnes of paddy during this Rabi crop season while 12 lakh MT of paddy were procured during the last Rabi season. Still, the government will procure paddy from farmers, who have taken their paddy to mandis and got tokens, said the minister while advising such farmers to complete their iris scan. "As per the new rule, those who fail to complete e-KYC will no longer receive rice under PDS from this month. The

supply will be suspended for three months," the Minister stated. He clarified that ration benefits will only resume after successful e-KYC verification. "If the e-KYC is not completed within these three months, the beneficiary's ration card will be permanently cancelled," Patra warned.

The state government has urged all eligible beneficiaries to complete the e-KYC process as soon as possible to ensure continued access to subsidised food grains. A higher amount of paddy was procured during this year because the state government has started providing Rs 3,100 per quintal of paddy to the registered farmers. Earlier, many farmers were selling their paddy to traders of other states, he said.



The 10th century Mukteshwar Mahadev Temple in Bhubaneswar

## Heavy rainfall warning issued until July 5



**Bhubaneswar:** The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued Orange and Yellow warnings for heavy to very heavy rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning, and gusty winds across several districts of Odisha until July 5.

According to the IMD's mid-day weather bulletin, a low-pressure area over the Northwest Bay of Bengal is expected to move west-northwestwards, affecting northern Odisha in the next two days. On July 1, an Orange warning is in place for

Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, and Koraput districts. Yellow warnings are issued for Rayagada, Nuapada, Jharsuguda, Balasore, Bhadrak, Gajapati, Deogarh, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Angul, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, and Ganjam.

For July 2, Orange warnings continue for Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, and Sambalpur, with Yellow alerts for Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Bargarh, Sonepur,

Angul, Deogarh, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, and Dhenkanal. Similar warnings extend from July 3 to July 5 for Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Deogarh, Sambalpur, and Bargarh.

The IMD has also advised fishermen not to venture into the sea along and off Odisha's coast from June 30 to July 2, 2025, due to the hazardous weather conditions. Residents are urged to stay alert and take necessary precautions.

## Odisha to boost farmer income with cold storage expansion plans



**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** A meeting on strengthening cold storage infrastructure was held today at Lok Seva Bhavan under the chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo. Chairing the meeting, Deputy Chief Minister Singh Deo maintained, "Agriculture is a continuous process. It provides food to the people throughout the year and provides a

continuous source of employment. Odisha is an agricultural state and is rich in natural resources. Its long coastline and maritime transport system are also being strengthened." Deputy Chief Minister and Minister of Agriculture, Farmers Empowerment and Energy, Singh Deo, further said that Odisha, which was previously a

food-deficient state, has now become a food-surplus state. Now, its fruits, vegetables and food grains are also being exported to foreign countries. The demand for Odisha's indigenous fragrant rice and vegetables abroad is gradually increasing. Providing farmers with adequate farm-to-market linkages, fair prices for their produce, and protection of surplus grain are our priorities.

Keeping this in mind, the process of constructing cold storages in every sub-division of the state is underway. This will help in boosting the income of our farmers and can eliminate the artificial shortage of items in the state. A proposal was also presented by a company in the meeting for the construction of cold storage facilities in the state. Director of Agriculture Shubham Saxena and other senior officers were present at the meeting.

## RLD makes political debut in Odisha

**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** Marking its formal entry into Odisha's political landscape, the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) Saturday announced the formation of its state unit and appointed youth leader and social activist Jitendra Kumar Hati as the state



president. The announcement was made by RLD national general secretary Trilok Tyagi during a press meet at the Press Club here. Also present was the party's National Advisor Ashish Kumar, who pledged full support to the new state leadership. Tyagi stated that this is the first time the party is establishing an organisational base in Odisha with an aim to expand its political presence in the region.

He said the party will focus on key issues like farmers' distress, women's empowerment, access to clean drinking water, education, healthcare, and unemployment. He also confirmed RLD's intent to contest in the upcoming panchayat and general elections in the state. Newly-appointed state chief Jitendra Kumar Hati said he is committed to strengthening the party at the grassroots by addressing real issues, especially those affecting farmers, and working towards the sustainable development of Odisha's mineral resources.

officials from the Health Department, the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS), and the Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO) to ensure that all water sources are thoroughly sanitized. Minister Naik also urged the public to drink only boiled water and to rely on verified clean tube wells for daily consumption.

He reassured citizens that the recent diarrhoea outbreak is under control and that monitoring efforts are ongoing. With monsoon rains increasing the vulnerability to waterborne infections, the state government's efforts aim to minimise health risks and ensure access to safe drinking water across Odisha.

## 53 L tubewells cleaned to combat waterborne diseases

**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** In a major push to prevent the spread of waterborne diseases during the monsoon season, the Odisha government has undertaken the cleaning of over 5.3 lakh tube wells across all 30 districts, Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Minister Rabi Narayan Naik informed on Monday.

Speaking to reporters, Minister Naik emphasised the state's proactive approach in safeguarding public health, especially in the wake of recent diarrhoea outbreaks reported from various regions. "We have cleaned approximately 5.3 lakh tube wells, including public and private sources, particularly in saline-



prone areas. The cleaning drive also covered overhead tanks and deep borewells," he said. The minister added that in the coastal belt where the risk of water contamination is significantly higher a second round of 100% tube well cleaning has been completed to ensure added protection. Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi and Health Minister Dr. Mukesh Mahaling have issued stringent directives to

## 1800 e-Challans issued during Rath Yatra celebrations

**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** During the world-famous Puri Rath Yatra, the State Transport Authority under the Commerce & Transport Department has undertaken strict enforcement measures.

These will continue during the upcoming major days of the festival, including Bahuda Yatra and Suna Besha. With thousands of

vehicles heading towards Puri for the world famous festival, special attention is being given to errand drivers as per government directives.

Accordingly, seven special teams under the jurisdiction of RTO Puri have been deployed for continuous enforcement across various routes. Emphasis is being laid on e-challan issuance by intensifying vehicle checks. Intelligent Enforcement

Management System has been effectively operational on National Highway-316 (Bhubaneswar to Puri) and Key State Highways including Puri-Konark and Konark-Pipili routes.

Between June 27 and 29, nearly 1800 e-challans have been issued for violations such as riding without a helmet, wrong-way driving, over-speeding, and using mobile while driving.



**Bhubaneswar, (DMC):** The 19th National Statistics Day was celebrated by the Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Planning & Convergence Department Government of Odisha in the State Convention Center of Lokseva Bhawan, Bhubaneswar.

"Anu Garg, Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary in her address urged upon all to develop a statistical system which will effectively monitor the goals and targets set in the Vikashit Odisha-2036 and 2047. Citing the example of Subhadra scheme, she

said that the Government of Odisha is emphasizing on the use of data and, in this process, the state has prepared a robust database that may be used in implementation of other beneficiary-oriented scheme.

"Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja in his address set a grand vision for developing the state statistical system in to a State-of-the-Art system. This should work like a mirror to measure the socio-economic progress of the State and find out the areas of shortfall and way forward. He also stressed the need for

institutional capacity building. "Director Economics & Statistics, Odisha, Dr. Bijay Bhusan Nanda acknowledged the support of Government for strengthening the state statistical system and highlighted the modernization process of DE&S in the last couple of years."

Ashish Kumar, Former Director General, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, Government of India was the chief speaker on this occasion. He highlighted the role of National Statistical Office, Government of India in conducting sample surveys to provide data on regular intervals for the unorganized sector of the economy.

These data are being used by different departments in their planning and policy formulation. Directorate of Economics & Statistics being a partner with the NSO has a significant role to play to gather reliable data across sectors.

### HEALTH HAZARD

## Heart disease rising among younger population in Odisha

**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** Odisha is witnessing a worrying rise in heart-related ailments among its younger population, mirroring a nationwide trend that experts are calling a silent epidemic. According to state government data, heart attacks account for 282 deaths per lakh population, marking it as a leading cause of mortality in the region.

Heart disease, once considered a condition of the elderly, is increasingly striking India's youth - with fatal cases now reported in individuals as young as 17. Nationwide, heart-related ailments contribute to nearly 25 per cent of all deaths, with the Cardiology Society of India estimating around 3 million heart attacks annually. Several high-profile deaths have brought the issue into focus - actor Siddhaanth Suryavanshi, singer KK, comedian Raju Srivastava,

and reality TV star Sidharth Shukla all died young due to cardiac arrest. More recently, reports claimed that Shefali Jariwala, known for the song Kaanta Laga, also died of cardiac arrest. Beyond the headlines, similar tragedies are unfolding across the country - people collapsing suddenly in gyms, markets, or even during wedding celebrations.

Experts warn that changing lifestyles, poor diets, stress, and lack of awareness are major contributors to the alarming trend. "Heart disease takes many forms - including congenital defects, coronary artery disease (causing heart attacks), valve disease, cardiomyopathy, and arrhythmias," explained Susanta Pradhan, cardiologist at Utkal Institute of Medical Sciences and Hospital. "It's important to distinguish between



heart attack and cardiac arrest. A heart attack occurs when blood flow to the heart muscle is blocked, while cardiac arrest happens when the heart suddenly stops pumping, which can result from a heart attack or an arrhythmia," he said. He added, "Warning signs like chest pain, sweating, dizziness, or lightheadedness should never be mistaken for gas or indigestion. Timely medical help can save lives. A balanced lifestyle -

including moderate exercise, stress control, healthy eating, and regular check-ups - is our strongest defense. Pratap Kumar Das, senior consultant at Capital Hospital and PGIMER, Bhubaneswar, emphasised the difference between the two conditions: "Heart attacks occur when blood flow to part of the heart muscle is blocked, often due to hypertension, diabetes, or high cholesterol. The heart may continue beating, though

sometimes irregularly. Cardiac arrest, however, is caused by an electrical malfunction that makes the heart stop completely - the person collapses, has no pulse or breathing, and loses consciousness.

Echoing the concerns, Dibya Ranjan Behera, consultant, Interventional Cardiologist at Manipal Hospitals, Bhubaneswar, said, Coronary Artery Disease is the most common and dangerous form of heart disease in adults. Alarming numbers of young people are affected due to smoking, poor lifestyle choices, stress, and unhealthy diets. Fast food will make you fast - towards disease. Experts are urging young Indians to prioritise heart health. Behera warned, "Fatigue, breathlessness, chest pain, blackouts, palpitations - these are red flags. Don't wait for tragedy to strike before acting."



**Bhubaneswar (DMC):** In a major crackdown on corruption, the Odisha Vigilance Department on Monday unearthed disproportionate assets worth crores from Dayanidhi Bagh, Joint Director, Soil Conservation and Watershed Development.

The raids, carried out simultaneously at eight different locations, have exposed a massive network of illegal wealth allegedly amassed by the senior officer. According to official sources, Dayanidhi Bag owns a lavish farmhouse spread across 40 acres in Nabarangpur, valued at nearly Rs 1 crore. Contrary to expectations, the farmhouse is not a modest setup, but a sprawling estate pointing to large-scale misappropriation. The vigilance team also discovered: 11 acres of

land in Bhawanipatna, A 3BHK flat in Gothapatna, Bhubaneswar; A bungalow in Chandrasekharpur; An under-construction house of 3,000 sq ft in Nabarangpur; A shopping complex in Nabarangpur with five commercial shops; Financial investigations further revealed bank deposits worth ₹55 lakh, large quantities of gold, and several benami vehicles registered under proxy names.

This operation has revealed a pattern of illicit wealth accumulation, with land and property investments dispersed across the state. Officials stated that the probe is ongoing, and the asset evaluation is still underway as the list of questionable holdings continues to grow. A senior vigilance officer said, "This is one of the most extensive raids in recent months. The scale of asset acquisition by Mr. Bag is staggering and raises serious questions about the misuse of power and position." The department is expected to take further legal action following the completion of asset valuation and verification.

## Higher Education Commissioner & District Collector review Rath Yatra

**Puri , (DMC):** Rath Yatra in Puri, the Srijus have already conquered the Adapa Mandap. "It is the responsibility of all of us to manage the darshan system of devotees in an orderly manner," said Arvind Agarwal, Commissioner and Secretary, Higher Education Department and Special Officer, Adapa Mandap Darshan and Bahuda Yatra Review. A review meeting was held at the Circuit House today.

Presiding over it, district collector Chanchal Rana directed all the departments to expedite all the works of the rath yatra. Commissioner Shri Agarwal Rath Yatra is a programme of collective

and concerted efforts. Lakhs of devotees are coming to Puri. He advised everyone to be careful so that they come back with a good experience with beautiful vision. Both the officials had directed to make drinking water supply more functional as the Adapa Mandap darshan is currently underway.

In particular, the devotees waiting for darshan at the barricades were instructed to be prepared for any health problems including distribution of drinking water, ORS, etc., sanitation and sanitation system, electricity supply, transport system, improvement of parking lots, maintaining peace and order, information and broadcasting



arrangements, keeping in touch with the temple administration. A detailed discussion was held on organizing cultural programmes, holding of Pallishree Melas and exhibitions, deployment of volunteers at various important places as per requirement, fire fighting arrangements, etc. and instructions were given to the concerned departments to work

responsibly. It was advised to work in coordination with each other and provide all support to the devotees and the pilgrims. At the outset, ADM Administration Sarat Chandra Behera welcomed everyone and discussed as per the schedule of work. Among others, ADM Revenue Dr. Sarat Chandra Mohapatra, Sri Mandir Development Administrator

Debabrata Sahu, ADM Protocol Nilamadhab Bhoi, Chief Development Officer and Executive Officer of Zilla Parishad Priyaranjan Prusty, Municipal Executive Officer Abhimanyu Behera, Deputy Collector Raj Kishore Jena, PKDA Secretary Dilip Kumar Maharana, Additional Deputy Collector Nilamadhab Majhi, Additional Deputy Nilamadhab Majhi were present on the occasion.

The meeting was attended by all the district-level officials who briefed them about the functioning of their departments, requirements and future preparations on the occasion of Rath Yatra.

## Macha gaon Canal system disrupted



**Jagatsinghpur, (DMC):** In 1866 Macha gaon Main and Branch canal system developed by British Government for remedial measure of draught. But the canal bed disrupted due to lack of maintenance by Irrigation department. As per data of Irrigation department about 657 KM length Main and branch canal in 6 Blocks of Jagatsinghpur district and 34 thousand 83 Hecter agriculture land irrigated by Macha gaon Main and branch canal. Though initiative taken by

State Govt for renovation of Macha gaon canal by ADB funding after 150 years but it failed due to proper supervision. At per provision canal irrigation started from 14th July to last of November for Kharif season. But rest 7 months canal remain dry and canal system blocked by different type of plant, waste materials and wids. This year Irrigation department failed to start renovation and cleaning of canal bed and Pani-Panchayats are silent till 30th June. In such slow action by Irrigation department total canal system can't be cleaned and repair within stipulated time. Farmers will suffer a lot to avail irrigation facility properly as alleged by Farmers. Even Pani- Panchyat system not working properly in the district.

## Barpali railway flyover bridge construction is at a slow pace ! The government needs to tackle the challenge head-on and speed things up



**Bargarh, (DMC):** The much-anticipated railway flyover bridge is finally taking shape, but its long journey has been nothing short of a rollercoaster! After eight years of ups, downs, and unexpected twists, this ambitious project stretching from Barpali College Street to Jagannath Nagar is still under construction. Originally slated for completion in 2021, the flyover has faced

challenges, including four tender processes and contractor changes, leaving the public eager and frustrated for results. As the construction drags on, the service road has become a muddy mess, mainly thanks to heavy rains that have turned the ground beneath the flyover into a watery obstacle course. This hazardous stretch has become a hotbed for accidents, forcing vehicles and

daring pedestrians to navigate a treacherous path. Yet, amidst the turmoil, there's a surge of civic spirit! Residents are rallying together, passionately voicing their urgent demand for the timely completion of this crucial link. The road is vital for connecting Sonpur, Boudh, and Bhubaneswar, and it serves as a bustling artery for countless businesses, students, and commuters during peak hours, which see traffic jams from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and into the evening! Amid all the noise, a loud call for better coordination between the state government and railway authorities echoes through the community, as citizens clamour for alternative traffic control measures and immediate improvements to the road.

Social media is buzzing with demands for swift action, and there's a growing chorus urging that the space beneath the flyover be prioritised for completion. Excitement and anticipation fill the air as the community stands united, eager for the day when this vital bridge finally opens to traffic!



with advanced gadgets, are carrying out relief and rescue operations, informed the Minister. The rescue operations saw some issues at night on Sunday. However, all the operations have been intensified in the affected areas on Monday morning. Stating that the situation is gradually improving, the Minister said another low pressure is likely to form and it may trigger rain in Jharkhand and Odisha. However, the state government is already in alert mode to deal with any situation,

## Odisha begins identification drive for suspected Bangladeshi national in Paradip

**Paradip -** Paradip Police have launched an identification drive targeting suspected Bangladeshi nationals residing near the port city of Paradip. Model police, with support from district administration, have detained around a dozen Bengali-speaking individuals from Lockpada under the jurisdiction of Paradip Model Police Station. Their identity documents are being verified. The operation follows after the directive and instructing officials to take strict action against illegal immigrants in the region. Following the direction, Paradip Model Police have verifying the documents, voter ID cards, Aadhar cards etc. of Bengali-speaking minority community living in Lockpada area of Paradip. Eight people from Erasama area were kept in the Atharabanki shelter home with the help of Paradip police and the process of verifying their documents is underway. The verification will continue till the identification process not overs, stated Kabuli Barik, IIC, Paradip Model Police station.



to be set up in this ashram complex will be managed by this Ashram stated the President of Ashram Management Committee. The Heads of the Ashram are Babaji Bhav Sagar Das and Baba Udayanath Das. Among others, Chief Advisor of the Ashram Vaishnav Charan Patnaik, President Basanta Kumar Nayak, secretary Chinmay Das coordinated the program smoothly and made arrangements for serving prasad to everyone.

to be set up at the Shri Jagannath Tattwa Ashram. The Minister Shri Swain's generosity, humility and promise of cooperation were highly appreciated by the established spiritual figures of Paradip region present in the discussion. Tapas Ranjan Pati, a devotee of the world famous spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Ji and a prominent yoga guru of Paradip, informed the Honorable Minister that the first large-scale Yoga Education Center of Paradip

From Page- 1

## India, US...

provide a meaningful boost to both economies. Further negotiations are anticipated this autumn to expand the agreement's scope across additional sectors.

## Administrative...

security flaws, and coordination failures. The findings are expected to shape future protocols for mass religious gatherings in Odisha.

## OAS Association...

indicated that it will pursue the matter vigorously with the state government and relevant departments to ensure the safety and security of its members and all government employees. Further actions, including potential protests or representations, may be considered if their demands for decisive action are not met.

## BMC Additional...

Senior BJP leader and Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi condemned the incident and said the law should take its course in the matter. "I condemn this behaviour towards a Government Officer on Duty," Aprajita said in a post on X. One being informed, a team from Kharavela Nagar Police Station visited the BMC office and reportedly verified the footages of the CCTV cameras installed on the premises to identify the accused persons and take action against them.

## Red alert issued...

Response Force (SDRF), Revenue, and other departments participated. During the meeting, it was reported that heavy rainfall had particularly impacted Kangra and Mandi districts, with machinery already deployed for emergency response. The Himachal Pradesh Electricity Board confirmed disruptions to 968 transformers due to adverse weather, with restoration work underway. Likewise, 23 drinking water schemes under the Jal Shakti department were affected, and efforts are ongoing to restore services swiftly.

## Record Rabi Paddy Procurement in Odisha

**Bhubaneswar, (DMC):** An inter-ministerial review meeting was held in Bhubaneswar on Monday under the chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo to assess the Rabi paddy procurement in Odisha for the 2024-25 season. The meeting revealed that procurement in the state has surpassed expectations, with 19 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of paddy procured against the initial target of 14 LMT, an official statement said after the meeting. The final day of Rabi procurement was Monday. Compared to last year's procurement of 12 LMT, this season has seen a record high, reflecting the state's continued support to farmers.

## Mirdha Toppo appointed Special Secy to CM

**Bhubaneswar, (DMC):** The Odisha government on Monday appointed OAS officer (Super Selection Grade) Mirdha Toppo as special secretary to Chief Minister Mohan Majhi. Toppo is currently serving as the Project Director, DUDA (District Urban Development Agency) in Keonjhar. He began his journey in grassroots governance, serving as BDO in Patna, Karanjia, and Jhumpura blocks. His effective leadership and people-centric governance at the block level earned him widespread appreciation and set the foundation for future responsibilities. Toppo was subsequently promoted and posted as Additional District Magistrate (ADM) in Bargarh district.

## OAS officers to go on mass leave

**Bhubaneswar, (DMC):** The Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) Association has strongly condemned the assault on Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Additional Commissioner Ratnakar Sahoo and has announced a statewide mass leave by its members starting Tuesday.

## MCL to start operation in two new coal mines in Odisha's Talcher area by FY 2029-30

**SAMBALPUR, (DMC):** Mahanadi Coalfield Ltd (MCL), a subsidiary of Coal India Ltd (CIL) is going to start operation in two of its new mines having total coal reserve of 35 million tonnes (MT) in Talcher coalfield area of Odisha's Angul district, a senior company official said."

We are going to start operation of the Subhadra coal mine having a reserve of 25 MT in Talcher area by the end of financial year 2025-26," chairman cum managing director (CMD) of MCL, Uday A Kaole, said during a media interaction here. Similarly, the Balabhadra coal mine with a capacity of 10 MT will be made operational by the end of financial year 2029-30, he said.



## Flood situation under control, says Govt

**Bhubaneswar:** Having issued a flood alert for Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts following incessant downpour, the Odisha government on Monday conducted a thorough review of the situation amid rise in the water level in rivers. Several low-lying areas in these two districts are set to be inundated as rivers like Subarnarekha and Budhabalang are reportedly swelling in an alarming way, sources said.

Heavy rain in the catchment areas in Jharkhand seems to have worsened the situation, prompting authorities to closely monitor river gauges and strengthen embankments where needed. Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari, who held a review meeting, told reporters that the overall flood situation in the state is under control. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a red warning for heavy rain in several parts of

the state for the next few days. The Minister said some dams in Jharkhand like Chandil are incomplete and the Odisha government officials are in touch with the neighbouring state over the developments. While the water level of Budhabalanga river is gradually falling, Subarnarekha is on the rise.

As there is a possibility of heavy rain in the coming days, low-lying areas like Jaleswar and other places will be affected for some time, he said. Stating that the water level of Subarnarekha and Budhabalanga rivers are likely to start receding soon, Pujari said dry and cooked food is being provided to people in affected villages. Central Range RDC and other officials are in high alert mode. ODRF teams are deployed at Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Balasore. An additional two teams from Cuttack are being sent to Balasore. The Fire Services Department personnel, equipped



he said, adding that there have been breaches in some areas but there is no need to panic. As agriculture sector has been adversely affected, the state government will provide adequate compensation for the loss, he said. Officials said 77 wards across Gram Panchayats and municipal areas in Mayurbhanj district have been affected. Over 5,000 people have been shifted to various relief centres. To support them, 44 free kitchens are functioning across affected areas. Seven teams of Odisha

Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) and seven Fire Service units have been deployed in the district. In Balasore, 35 Gram Panchayats and wards have been impacted, leading to the evacuation of 1,138 people. Food arrangements have been made at six different locations. Four ODRF teams are already on the ground, while two more are being dispatched from Cuttack.

Eight Fire Service teams are also engaged in rescue and relief efforts. Additionally, NDRF (National Disaster Response Force) teams are stationed in both Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts. Several areas including Basta, Baliapal, Jaleswar, Bhograi, Remuna, and Sadar are among the worst-affected. The state government is in constant coordination with authorities in Jharkhand to monitor and manage the situation. Though 7 to 8 breaches had occurred in embankments, most have already been repaired.

## COVID-19 exposed harm humans, animals, environment: President



**LUCKNOW, (HS) :** Emphasising that the COVID-19 pandemic had exposed the harmful impact of a consumption-driven culture on humans, animals, and the environment, President Droupadi Murmu stressed the need to organize Animal Health Melas to promote grassroots-level animal care and suggested holding veterinary camps in villages. While addressing the 11th Convocation of the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) in Bareilly on Monday, the President expressed

### Chandrashekhar Azad's booked for vandalism; over 65 arrested

**LUCKNOW, (HS) :** Prayagraj Police on Monday arrested over 65 persons allegedly involved in Sunday's violence incited by the supporters of Nagina MP Chandrashekhar Azad in the Karchhana area. Police authorities also claimed they were contemplating invoking the Gangsters Act against the accused. The action follows Sunday's incident wherein supporters of Nagina MP Chandrashekhar Azad and the Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram) went on a rampage for over two hours, indulging in vandalism, arson, damaging about a dozen vehicles, and pelting stones at cops. They accused the police of not allowing the MP to meet the family of a Dalit man, Devi Shankar, who was allegedly burnt to death in Isauta village in Karchhana area, and the family of a "rape survivor" in the nearby Kaushambi district.

### Andaman Sea jolted by three earthquakes in one day

**Port Blair, (HS) :** The Andaman Sea was jolted by a third earthquake on Monday. The earthquake of magnitude 4.7 struck the region at around 12.06 pm today, as per the National Centre for Seismology (NCS). The seismic activity also occurred at a depth of 10 kilometres, similar to the past two quakes in a day. In a social media post on X, the NCS wrote, "EQ of M: 4.7, On: 30/06/2025 12:06:25 IST, Lat: 9.60 N, Long: 93.79 E, Depth: 10 Km, Location: Andaman Sea." The Andaman Sea experienced a second earthquake of magnitude 4.6 on the Richter Scale today, with the tremors occurring at 11.22 am, just an hour after the first quake at 10:09 am. The social media post of NCS read, "EQ of M: 4.6, On: 30/06/2025 11:22:23 IST, Lat: 9.45 N, Long: 93.93 E, Depth: 10 Km, Location: Andaman Sea." Earlier today, an earthquake of magnitude 4.7 hit the Andaman Sea, according to the National Centre for Seismology (NCS). According to the NCS, the earthquake occurred at 10:09 am at a depth of 10 kilometres. In a social media post on X, the NCS wrote, "EQ of M: 4.7, On: 30/06/2025 10:09:03 IST, Lat: 9.43 N, Long: 94.17 E, Depth: 10 Km, Location: Andaman Sea."

## America's Rhodes Island State Hosts Car Festival in Grandeur

**Rhodes Island, (HS) :** U.S.A's Rhodes Island State celebrated the Eighth Car Festival of Lord Jagannath with spectacular fanfare and spiritual fervour. The abode of the Lord of the Universe at Sri Siddhi Vinayak Temple at Warwick, was elegantly decorated befitting to the Grand Occasion. The day began with the performance of special religious rituals like Mangala Arati and homo in front of the Four Deities in the morning by the priest Chandra Sekhar . At about 11.30 a.m. the Idols were taken in Dhadi Pahandi procession by the servitors and spectators to the colourfully decorated chariot parked in front of the Temple. Floral ornamentation of Deities and Chariot were aesthetically and immaculately done by Padmini Panda, Sudeepa Nayak and Shradha Nayak.

The whole atmosphere got reverberated with the chanting of hymns, roaring of slogans like Hari Bol and Jai Jagannath, blowing of conch and playing of musical instruments such as Ghanta, Mardala, Jhanja and Mrudanga. The splendid scene of

concern over the decreasing visibility of domestic animals in rural areas and emphasised the need to protect and promote livestock wealth as a national responsibility. She said such activities could play a vital role in strengthening public health. "These animals have historically supported agriculture. While we have embraced technology, essential soil partners like earthworms are vanishing, leading to barren lands. Restoring soil fertility requires collective efforts from farmers, scientists, veterinarians, and citizens," she said.

The President urged the graduating veterinary doctors to let compassion and empathy guide their work as doctors and researchers, especially in their service to voiceless animals. During the ceremony, the President conferred degrees and medals to meritorious students. Reflecting on the deep bond between humans and animals, she said the relationship was much like that of a family. "While we now live in a modern, tech-driven world, in earlier times, animals were our tools and companions. Farmers could not progress without them.

## Pakistani Couple Found Dead in Rajasthan

**Rajasthan, (HS) :** Two days after a young couple's bodies were found in Rajasthan, about 11 kilometres away from the International Border, police have identified them as two Pakistan nationals who had fled to India and likely died of dehydration. The bodies of the couple were spotted by a local shepherd on Saturday, who then informed the Border Security Force (BSF). Voter IDs found with the bodies showed the couple was from Pakistan's Sindh district. While the man was identified as 17-year-old Ravi Kumar, the woman was identified as 15-year-old Shanti Bai. A mobile phone SIM card of Pakistani origin was also found.

Further, a jerry can was found near the man's mouth, likely pointing to the fact that he couple had travelled with water, but had run out. Their blackened

**New Delhi, (HS) :** New high-resolution satellite imagery with shows, for the first time, the impact of Indian precision strikes against two major terrorist training camps in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) during Operation Sindoor last month. While the armed forces have not identified the weapons used in the attack, it is believed that both were targeted with loitering drones.

The images are of two camps, the Syedna Bilal Camp in Muzaffarabad, 36 kilometres west of Tangdhar in Kashmir, and the Kotli Gulpur camp, which is 40 kilometres west of Rajouri in Jammu. Both were struck in the early hours of May 7, when India targeted multiple terrorist infrastructure sites in Pakistan and PoK following the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, in which 26 civilians lost their lives. It was the worst terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir since the Chattisinghpora massacre in March 2000, in which 36 Sikhs were killed. The Syedna Bilal Camp in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, was a key staging area for terrorists affiliated with the Jaish-e-Mohammed. The camp also



bodies suggest they died of thirst and dehydration, sources said. They added that it is likely that the couple left home and tried to cross the border illegally on foot, only to lose their way in the desert. The woman was wearing red and white bangles in her hands, usually worn by newly-wed brides. Police sources say they had applied for a visa to travel to India, but the process went into limbo as cross-border tensions escalated following Operation Sindoor. Dilip

## Shefali Jariwala's Sudden Death: Was It Cardiac Arrest or Linked to Anti-Ageing Drugs?

**Sabyasachi K.**

**Mumbai, (HS) :** The sudden death of television actress Shefali Jariwala has left fans and the entertainment industry in deep shock. Best known for her iconic appearance in the remix song Kaanta Laga and reality shows like Bigg Boss 13 and Nach Baliye 5 and 7, Shefali passed away at the age of 42 in Mumbai on Friday, June 27.

On the day of her death, Shefali reportedly collapsed at her residence between 10 PM and 11 PM after her health suddenly deteriorated. Her husband, actor Parag Tyagi, immediately rushed her to Bellevue Multispecialty Hospital. However, by the time they reached, Shefali was declared dead on arrival. "The on-duty doctor declared her brought dead," confirmed a hospital source. While initial media reports suggest that Shefali died of a cardiac arrest, the exact cause of her death remains officially unconfirmed. The All Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA) posted on social media platform X, stating that she passed away due to a



sudden heart attack. However, questions began to surface when certain reports hinted at the possibility of her prolonged use of anti-ageing drugs playing a role in her demise. Family members and close associates have not provided any detailed statements about the cause of her death so far. Parag Tyagi, in his brief interaction with the media, urged people not to sensationalize the tragedy, but he refrained from



served to train terrorists in weapons handling, jungle survival and explosives and ordnance. The before and after images of the strike show a group of interconnected buildings (81 x 92 feet) having been taken out in what appears to be a drone strike. There is no collateral damage in the area.

According to army sources, recruits were sent to Syedna Bilal for specialised training in June 2023. They were being prepared to be launched across the Line of Control in Uri and Keran sectors with the aim of targeting the railway bridge between Kathua and Ramban. Post

Singh Sodha, district coordinator of Hindu Pakistani Displaced Union and Border People's Organisation, said posts on social media received a response that the couple had left from their home in Pakistan on June 21. Their motorcycle was seen near the neighbouring country's Numpur Dargah and after that there was no contact between them and their families. "It appears the couple was trying to reach India to escape religious persecution in Pakistan, where minorities are targeted. Perhaps they wanted to build a new life in India and live without the fear of persecution," he said.

A Pakistani refugees' organisation tried to find people in Jaisalmer who may know the couple or their family, but said they had no close relatives on this side of the border.

commenting on the circumstances surrounding Shefali's passing. The autopsy has been conducted, but the forensic report has reserved its opinion on the cause of death. This has raised further speculation about potential contributing factors. According to Mumbai Police, an Accidental Death Report (ADR) has been registered, and while no foul play has been suspected at this stage, the investigation remains open. "Preliminary findings suggest it may be a natural death, but the exact cause is still being determined," said a police official. Adding another layer to the mystery, several reports have emerged suggesting that Shefali had been regularly consuming anti-ageing medications over the last seven to eight years. Allegedly, her regimen included hormonal injections like growth hormones, testosterone, and other substances aimed at slowing the ageing process. Medical experts caution that these substances can severely impact cardiovascular health. Hormonal therapies can disrupt normal heart function, lead to abnormal blood pressure, and in extreme cases, trigger life-

training, these terrorists were transported to staging camps and launch pads in Pakistan's Punjab, where they received specialised communication training. After the training, they were divided into groups of four to eight terrorists and were infiltrated into India through the International Border between March and May 2024. The majority of terror attacks in Jammu last year were executed by these terrorists. Top JeM terrorists, including Mufti Asghar Khan Kashmiri, Amir JeM, Abdullah Jehadi and Ashiq Negroo, regularly visited the camp. Guest houses were also built near the camp for

### Telangana BJP MLA Raja Singh resigns from party

**HYDERABAD, (HS) :** Expressing his dissatisfaction with the party high command deciding to appoint former MLC N Ramchander Rao as the new BJP state president, Goshamahal MLA T Raja Singh on Monday ended his rather tempestuous ties with the saffron party. After tendering his resignation from the party, the MLA, who reached the party office intending to file his own nomination for the post, alleged that some senior leaders threatened his supporters warning them of suspension if they proposed his name as the BJP state chief or signed his nomination papers. He handed over his resignation letter to party president and Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, requesting that the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly be informed that he no longer represents the BJP in the Assembly. Speaking to reporters, the Goshamahal MLA accused several senior leaders of attempting to weaken the party and of being indifferent to its prospects of returning to power in the state. He said he had faced various problems and embarrassments since 2014, and claimed to be on a terrorist hit list.

senior JeM commanders visiting Muzaffarabad. Army sources said the camps are known to be backed and protected by Pakistan's intelligence, particularly the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), which provides training, weapons, and safe passage for terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir. "These images of precision strikes at the terrorist camps at Kotli and Muzaffarabad, without any collateral damage, are a clear display of Indian capability," Lieutenant General Satish Dua (retired), who commanded the Srinagar-based 15 Corps responsible for military operations in the Kashmir Valley, said. "For decades, we felt helpless that despite knowing their precise locations, we could not strike at the terror camps due to self-imposed restrictions in the nuclear backdrop. But Pahalgam changed all that," he added. These Maxar satellite images of the strike on the Syedna Bilal Camp in Muzaffarabad back on-ground photographs of the attack published by the German news outlet TRT Deutsch.

India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7 and struck nine infrastructure sites linked to groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed and Hizbul Mujahideen.



### Accident in AP, 3 killed and 5 critical in truck and tempo collision

**Annamayya, (HS) :** In a tragic accident in Andhra Pradesh, as many as three people died and five other persons sustained serious injuries after a lorry collided with a tempo traveller in Andhra Pradesh's Annamayya district, police said on Monday. The incident took place at Kurabalakota Mandal of the Tamballapalle Constituency, near Dommanna Bavi Mudivedu Sub-Inspector Dilip stated that an unidentified lorry hit the tempo traveller. The critically injured individuals were immediately shifted to Madanapalle Government Hospital via the 108 ambulance service. Transport Minister Mandipalli Ram Prasad Reddy took cognizance of the road accident in Annamayya district and expressed his deep sorrow over the incident. The Minister instructed the officials at Madanapalle Government Hospital to provide immediate medical treatment to the injured. He conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased. The Minister directed the transport authorities to initiate prompt rescue operations at the accident site. Mudivedu Sub-Inspector Dilip said that a case has been registered, and further investigation is underway in the matter.

## SC junks Lalit Modi's plea seeking BCCI to pay ED penalty

**New Delhi, (HS) :** The Supreme Court on Monday junked a plea filed by former cricket administrator Lalit Modi seeking an order to the BCCI to pay a penalty of Rs 10.65 crore imposed on him by the ED for violating the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA). A bench of Justices P S Narasimha and R Mahadevan, however, said Modi will be entitled to avail civil remedies as available according to law. The Bombay High Court on December 19 last year had imposed a cost of Rs 1 lakh on Modi while dismissing his petition seeking an order to the BCCI to pay a penalty of Rs 10.65 crore imposed on him by the Enforcement Directorate for violating FEMA. The high court had said the petition was "frivolous and wholly misconceived" as the adjudication authority under FEMA has imposed the penalty on Modi. Modi, in his plea, said he was appointed as vice president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, during which period he was also the chairman of the Indian Premier League governing body, a subcommittee of the BCCI. The plea claimed that the BCCI is supposed to indemnify him as per the bylaws. The HC bench, however, referred to a Supreme Court judgment of 2005, which said the BCCI does not fall under the definition of a 'state' as defined under Article 12 of the Constitution.

### 3 Ceasefire-Linked Kuki Militants & Bystander Shot Dead

**Imphal/Guwahati, (HS) :** The deputy chief of a Kuki insurgent group which is among the 17 armed groups under the banner of the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) was shot dead in an ambush in Manipur's Churachandpur today, sources said. Two other members of the Kuki National Army (KNA) and a bystander were also killed in the ambush claimed by a rival group. United Kuki National Liberation Army (UKNA). The KNO is one of the two umbrella groups of tribal insurgents - the other is the United People's Front (UPF) - which signed the controversial suspension of operations (SoO) agreement with the Centre and the state government. The KNA deputy chief who was killed in the ambush has been identified as Thenkthong Haokip alias Thahpi, 48, while the two other KNA members have been identified as Seikhogin, 34, and Lengouhao, 35, sources said.

## HIV Crisis Deepens Fiji with Alarming Rise in Child Infections, Deaths

**Suva, (H.S):** Serious concerns continue to mount over the impact of HIV in Fiji, as eight children were among the 126 people who died from HIV-related illnesses last year. The grim figures were shared by UNAIDS Pacific Adviser Renata Ram during the Fiji Medical Association's 2025 North Mini-Conference held in Labasa over the weekend, according to Xinhua news agency. Her message underscored the urgent need for stronger, more accountable, and innovative health systems. Ram described Fiji's HIV situation as worsening, making this year's conference theme - Future-Proofing Healthcare Standards in Fiji: Accountability, Ethics and Innovation - especially timely. She revealed that Fiji recorded its highest-ever number of HIV cases in 2024, with 1,583 new diagnoses. This marks a staggering 281 per cent increase from 2023, which saw 415 cases, and more than a 500 per cent rise compared to 2018,



when just 131 cases were reported. Of the 2024 cases, 1,542 were adults. But of even greater concern were the 41 cases among children - 32 of them due to mother-to-child transmission. This is nearly four times the number of child infections in 2023 when just 11 were recorded."

These numbers are not just a result of better testing," Ram stressed. "They reflect a true surge in infections." She noted that most people are being diagnosed at a late stage, often

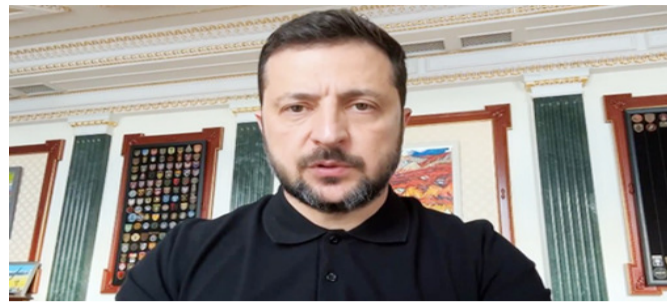
with advanced illness - a clear sign that prevention, testing, and treatment services are not reaching people early enough. Ram warned that more than half of new infections are among young people, with growing links to injecting drug use and high-risk sexual behaviour - issues often hidden due to stigma and fear."

This crisis goes beyond health," she said. "It reveals deeper social challenges such as poverty, gender-based violence, and discrimination in accessing care." Despite the troubling

statistics, Ram commended the Fijian government for its recent announcement of a 10 million Fijian dollar budget allocation to support the national HIV response, calling it a bold and timely move that reflects strong political will to protect the health and dignity of all Fijians. She also praised the Fiji Medical Association for its critical advocacy, especially its early warnings and efforts in pushing for the official declaration of the HIV outbreak.

Ram raised particular concern about delayed health-seeking behaviour in the Northern Division on Vanua Levu, where many people turn first to traditional medicine or wait until symptoms worsen before seeking medical help. She urged the health sector to bridge the gap between traditional and modern medicine, encouraging innovative and respectful approaches to build trust and reach vulnerable communities sooner.

## Ukraine aligns with EU sanctions against Iran, says Zelensky



**Kyiv, (H.S):** Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Monday announced that Ukraine is aligning with the European Union's sanctions package targeting the Iranian administration, describing them as "the most brutal regimes in the world." "Our institutions are working on the synchronisation of European and Ukrainian sanctions."

We are also fully aligning the European sanctions package targeting the regime in Iran, which includes numerous individuals, companies, and entities not only involved in military production and external terror schemes against neighbouring countries in the region but also in internal repression within Iran itself," he said in a video statement posted on X on Monday. "It is one of the most brutal regimes in the world. No surprise that Putin found common ground with it," he added, referring to Russian President Vladimir Putin. He further asserted that global sanctions against Russia must be

treated as a top priority, calling them a vital tool to limit Moscow's strategic capabilities and undermine its ability to continue the war against Ukraine. Zelensky also mentioned that he signed a decree enacting the decision of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council on withdrawal from the Ottawa Convention - the convention banning anti-personnel mines. "Russia has never been a party to this convention and uses anti-personnel mines with extreme cynicism. And not just now, in its war against Ukraine - this has long been a trademark of Russian killers: to destroy life by every means available," the Ukrainian

President said. "They use chemical and ballistic weapons, including medium-range missiles, and various types of mines, including anti-personnel ones. Unfortunately, that is the reality," he added. He stressed that Ukraine is aware of the complexities involved in withdrawing from such a convention, especially during wartime. "But we are taking this political step and sending a signal by it to all our partners - this is where attention must be focused. This concerns all countries along Russia's borders. It is anti-personnel mines that very often have no alternative as a tool for defence," Zelensky added.

## Israeli Army Kills 21 Palestinians Across Gaza : Civil Defence

**Gaza, (H.S):** At least 21 Palestinians were killed on Sunday in Israeli airstrikes and gunfire across the Gaza Strip, Gaza's civil defence said, as the Israeli army ordered the evacuation of wide areas in Gaza City and northern parts of the enclave amid escalating military operations. According to Mahmoud Basal, spokesperson for the civil defence in Gaza, Israeli warplanes struck residential houses and tents sheltering displaced people in various areas of the enclave, killing at least 17 people, including women and children. Dozens of others were injured, some critically, Xinhua news agency reported.

Basal told Xinhua that four other Palestinians were killed while searching for food near the U.S.-backed aid distribution centre in the Shakoush area, north of Rafah in southern Gaza. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli army on these incidents. Munir al-Bursh, director general of Gaza's health authorities, told Xinhua on Sunday that the Israeli army has intensified its attacks over the past 24 hours, targeting residential areas and shelter centres. "We are witnessing daily casualties and a worsening health crisis. Artillery fire is dispersing crowds waiting for aid," al-Bursh said, noting that most injuries were to the head and chest. Gaza's health authorities warned that the humanitarian and medical situation has reached catastrophic levels due to the continued blockade that restricts the entry of emergency medical



supplies. Meanwhile, local sources told Xinhua that Israeli artillery shelled the eastern and southern outskirts of Gaza City, Jabalia in the north, and Khan Younis in the south, amid fierce fighting with Palestinian armed groups. Al-Qassam Brigades, the military wing of Hamas, said in a press statement on Sunday that its fighters had targeted an Israeli D9 bulldozer with a Yasin 105 missile east of Khan Younis, causing it to catch fire. The group also claimed to have shelled Israeli army positions in the Ma'an area with mortars.

Also on Sunday, the Israeli army issued evacuation orders for residents in Jabalia and the Gaza City neighbourhoods of al-Zaytoun, al-Tuffah, al-Daraj, and al-Sabra, urging civilians to move to the al-Mawasi area in southern Gaza. The directive marks one of the largest evacuation orders issued in recent months. Israeli army spokesperson for Arabic media Avichay Adraee warned that military operations would intensify in these areas and expand westward toward the city centre. Following the warning, witnesses

reported that dozens of families fled their homes under heavy bombardment. Streets were filled with civilians, many carrying belongings on foot or in private vehicles, heading southward in search of safety. On Sunday, Palestinian presidential spokesperson Nabil Abu Rudeineh warned of the danger of what he described as the largest displacement campaign in Gaza since the start of the conflict. He urged the United States to pressure Israel to halt its operations and push for a ceasefire to prevent further escalation.

Abu Rudeineh reaffirmed that any political initiative must guarantee the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including the establishment of an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital based on the 1967 borders. At least 6,175 Palestinians had been killed and 21,378 others injured since Israel renewed its intensive strikes in Gaza on March 18, bringing the total death toll since October 2023 to 56,500, and injuries to 133,419, Gaza's health authorities said on Sunday.

## Turkiye, Syria Restore Direct Transport Links at Global Forum

**Istanbul, (H.S):** The Global Transport Connectivity Forum concluded on Sunday in Istanbul with the signing of 12 cooperation agreements aimed at enhancing cross-border logistics and regional integration. Among them was a landmark agreement between Turkish and Syrian delegations to resume direct road transport between the two countries after years of suspension, Xinhua news agency reported."

Commercial transport will resume under the International Road Transport Agreement signed between the two countries in 2004," announced Turkish Transport and Infrastructure Minister Abdulkadir Uraloglu, noting that cargo transfers at border gates will end, allowing goods to move directly between Türkiye and Syria without transshipment. "The resumption of transport links will reinforce our countries' positions in



regional trade between Europe and Asia and integrate the Middle Corridor with Gulf nations," Uraloglu said. "This will enable direct road access from Türkiye to Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and other Gulf countries." The strategic importance of the Middle Corridor - a key east-west trade route - was a recurring theme throughout the forum. Addressing participants on Friday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan underscored

efforts to align the Middle Corridor with China's Belt and Road Initiative, describing it as a transformative project to connect Europe and Asia more securely and efficiently. Also known as the Trans-Caspian East-West Middle Corridor Initiative, this route connects Türkiye with the South Caucasus, the Caspian Sea, Central Asia, and ultimately China, as part of Türkiye's ongoing efforts to revitalise the ancient Silk Road, according to the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

Erdogan noted that while shipments through the Suez Canal typically take around 35 days and those via the Cape of Good Hope about 45 days, the Middle Corridor is projected to reduce transit times to under 15 days once planned investments are complete. Looking ahead, Erdogan projected that the ongoing and future Middle Corridor projects would generate a total economic output of 114 billion U.S. dollars, further strengthening the region's role as a global trade hub.

Another key development was the signing of a memorandum to establish a Joint Steering Committee among Türkiye, Somalia, Ghana, Mauritania, the Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Liberia, and Guinea. "As Türkiye, we will provide all kinds of support for the African continent to take its rightful place in the global transport system," said the transport minister.

## Two Firefighters Shot Dead While Battling Wildfires in US' Idaho

**Idaho, (H.S):** Two firefighters were fatally shot while responding to a fire near Canfield Mountain in northern Idaho, local authorities confirmed, prompting a massive law enforcement operation as sniper fire continues to pose an active threat in the area. The Kootenai County Sheriff's Office on Sunday (local time) said fire crews had arrived at the scene of a blaze near Canfield Mountain - located just north of Coeur d'Alene - around 1:30 p.m.

Roughly 30 minutes later, gunfire erupted in the vicinity. "We don't know how many suspects are up there, and we don't know how many casualties there are," Sheriff Norris told reporters. "We are actively taking sniper fire as we speak." He added that evacuation efforts are still underway and that it "would be safe to assume" more people remain trapped or in danger on the mountain. Canfield Mountain, located on the outskirts of Coeur d'Alene - a city of about 55,000 near the Washington state border - is a



well-known destination for hikers and mountain bikers. The unexpected gunfire turned a typical wildfire response into a volatile emergency as officers and firefighters scrambled for safety and control. Idaho Governor Brad Little strongly condemned the attack, writing on X, "This is a heinous direct assault on our brave firefighters.

I ask all Idahoans to pray for them and their families as we wait to learn more." "As this situation is still developing, please stay clear from the area to allow law enforcement and

firefighters to do their jobs," he added, urging the public to avoid obstructing ongoing emergency efforts. The Kootenai County Emergency Management Office has issued a public alert urging people to stay away from the Canfield Mountain Trailhead area and Nettleton Gulch Road, which lies about four miles (6.5 kilometres) north of downtown Coeur d'Alene.

Law enforcement agencies are continuing their search for the suspect or suspects, as the mountain remains under threat from both the wildfire and active sniper fire.

## North Korea's Kim Jong-Un Meets Russian Culture Minister

**Seoul, (H.S):** North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has met with Russia's Culture Minister Olga Lyubimova in Pyongyang and discussed ways to further deepen cooperation in culture and the arts, the North's state media reported on Monday. The meeting took place on Sunday at the headquarters of the ruling party's Central Committee and was also attended by Russian Ambassador to North Korea Alexander Matsegora, reports Yonhap, quoting the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

Leading a culture ministry delegation, Lyubimova arrived in Pyongyang on Saturday at the invitation of the North's culture ministry to mark the first anniversary of the countries' comprehensive strategic partnership treaty. During the meeting, Kim appreciated the broad and in-depth exchanges and cooperation seen across various sectors since the treaty's signing, saying they have made tangible contributions to the mutual development and well-being of the two countries' peoples, the KCNA said. Kim also noted that exchanges in culture and the arts play a great role in strengthening the foundation of the public



mindsets of the two countries and firmly consolidating the ties of friendship, comradeship and mutual understanding between the two countries' peoples. "It is important for the cultural sector to guide the relations between the two countries," the KCNA quoted him as saying.

"It is necessary to further expand the exchange and cooperation in the field of culture and art to know well about each other's excellent cultural traditions and learn more." The North Korean leader, in particular, highlighted Lyubimova's visit, accompanied by Russian art troupes, as an important opportunity to broaden the North Korean people's understanding of Russian culture, expressing "belief that the current visit would further

raise the militant comradeship and feelings of friendship between the two countries." The Russian culture minister said her visit came at a time when the "solidity and invincibility" of the North Korea-Russia friendship and solidarity are being demonstrated more clearly than ever and bilateral cultural cooperation has reached its highest level ever, the KCNA reported.

The two also discussed future plans for bilateral cooperation and exchanges in the cultural sector, and watched performances staged by visiting Russian art troupes and North Korean artists, the news agency added. Photos released by the KCNA showed that an image of North Korean forces deployed

on the Russian side in the war against Ukraine was used as the stage's backdrop while Russian art troupes performed. Another image showed the forces waving the North Korean and Russian national flags while North Korean artists sang. Kim's daughter, known as Ju-ae, was seen next to him while the North Korean leader held a meeting with Lyubimova, marking her second presence at a major diplomatic event after accompanying him to an event at the Russian Embassy in Pyongyang in May.

Separately, North Korea's Culture Minister Sung Jong-gyu held a meeting with Lyubimova the previous day at the Mansudae Assembly Hall, where they discussed in-depth ways to deepen cultural cooperation and exchanges, according to the KCNA. The two also signed an agreement on cultural cooperation between the two countries' culture ministries, effective from 2025-27. The meetings came as Pyongyang and Moscow have deepened bilateral cooperation across various fields, including culture and the military, since the signing of the mutual defence treaty on June 19, 2024, in Pyongyang.

# India Will Continue To Be Fastest Growing Economy, Even Perform Better: FM Sitharaman

**New Delhi, (H.S):** India will continue to be the fastest-growing economy at the current rate of growth - or even better - and with the monsoon being good, agriculture will come up with a more positive number, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday. The GDP growth accelerated to a robust 7.4 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2024-25, as result of which the growth rate for the full financial year works out to 6.5 per cent on the back of a strong performance of the agriculture, construction and services sectors, according to latest RBI data.

In a series of posts on X social media platform, taken out from media interviews, the finance minister said this growth rate will continue, and may even become better with good monsoon around. She further said that deepening of our markets is actually showing and "the retailers are benefitting, ordinary citizens are benefitting". "Our systems are



transparent. They are digitised and can be accessed from home. Individuals are able to do it on their own rather than depend on others to help them out. These are signs of a very good dynamic economy," FM Sitharaman emphasised. According to her, it is clear from the policy that labour-intensive units will be given support. "We have been specific that handicrafts, handmade goods etc will get succour. So there is no way in which we are choosing between one (labour) and the other (capital/tech). Manufacturing,

whether it is employment-intensive, or requires automation, policy support will be given," the Finance Minister highlighted. Budget after budget over the past 11 years, this government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi "has made sure that we make some concrete policies that will help people, particularly the MSMEs," she added. Like the way PM Modi pushed the Aspirational Districts to meet saturation in most of the schemes, the Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana will make

agricultural productivity the centre focus, and the value addition as the way in which farmers' income can be increased even in these areas, she mentioned. "So these are areas in which, in fact, I did suggest to the banks that in these 100 districts, banks should come up with tailor-made schemes for them," said FM Sitharaman. PM Modi has also been very keen that defence will not be left wanting."

Defence's requirements will be met. Since 2014, attention has been given to small and greater details of demands from defence, whether it is bulletproof jackets or getting the goods in time to the higher reaches," she posted. "Indian defence production itself has seen a different growth and today they are also becoming prominent exporters. Other than exports, the way in which domestic capacities have given us the advantage of buying from India for Indian purposes has actually marked the difference," FM Sitharaman added.

# India's Industrial Production Registers 1.2 Per Cent Growth In May

**New Delhi, (H.S):** India's industrial growth, based on the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), recorded a 1.2 per cent growth in May this year, according to data released by the Ministry of Statistics on Monday. The data showed that the manufacturing sector, which provides quality jobs for the country's young graduates passing out of the country's universities and engineering institutes, registered a 2.6 per cent growth in May over the same month of the previous year.

However, the mining sector output fell marginally by (-) 0.1 per cent during the month, and the power sector proved to be a laggard with a contraction of (-) 5.8 per cent in electricity generation. This negative growth in the mining and power sectors pulled down the overall figure for industrial growth during the month. Within the manufacturing sector, 13 out of 23 industry groups recorded a positive growth in May 2025 over the same month of the previous year. The top three positive contributors



are - "Manufacture of basic metals" (6.4 per cent), "Manufacture of machinery and equipment" (11.8 per cent), and "Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products" (6.9 per cent). In the industry group, "Manufacture of basic metals", item groups "MS blooms/billets/ingots/pencil ingots", "MS slabs" and "Flat products of Alloy Steel" have shown significant contribution to growth.

In the industry group "Manufacture of machinery and equipment", item groups "Separators including decanter centrifuge", "Pumps of all types", and "Stationary and internal combustion piston engines not for motor vehicles" have recorded a

significant growth. In the industry group "Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products", item groups cement and glassware have shown strong growth. The figures on use-based classification show that the production of capital goods, which comprise machines used in factories, went up by a robust 14.6 per cent in May.

This segment reflects the real investment taking place in the economy, which has a multiplier effect on the creation of jobs and incomes going ahead. The infrastructure sector clocked a growth of 6.3 per cent on the back of big-ticket government projects being implemented in the highways, railways and ports sectors.

# Gold Slips To One-Month Low As US-China Trade Tensions Cool

**New Delhi, (H.S):** Gold prices on Monday slipped, touching their lowest level since May 29 as improving trade relations between the U.S and China reduced for safe-haven assets. With investors turning to riskier options, spot gold dipped 0.3 per cent to 3,264.64 dollars per ounce while U.S. gold futures were down 0.4% at 3,275.30 dollars.

Asian stock markets opened higher on Monday boosted by improving global investor sentiment. The upbeat mood followed comments from U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, who said that trade issues with China over rare earth shipments had been resolved. He also hinted that new trade deals with other countries could be wrapped up by Labor Day on September 1. Meanwhile, U.S.



10-year Treasury yields edged up slightly. However, not all tensions have eased. U.S. President Donald Trump abruptly ended trade talks with Canada last Friday, calling Canadian taxes on American tech companies a "blatant attack." He also threatened to impose new tariffs on Canadian goods within a week. On a more positive note, the ceasefire between Iran and Israel after a 12-day conflict seems

to be holding which has helped lower geopolitical risks and reduced the demand for gold as a safe-haven asset. Gold is losing some of its shine as stable global conditions and high interest rates make other investments more attractive. Meanwhile, Donald Trump has once again called for the U.S. Federal Reserve to cut interest rates, hinting at possible easing of monetary policy in the future.

# More Indians Now Invest in Equities as Financialization of Household Savings Rises : SBI

**New Delhi, (H.S):** The financialization of household savings in India has gained significant momentum as equities as percentage of household savings in the country has increased from 2.5 per cent in FY20 to 5.1 per cent in FY24, an SBI Research report said on Monday. The Indian credit market is witnessing some structural shifts with headline bank credit growth.

Thus, arithmetic average possibly hiding more things than it reveals, the report mentioned. In future, sources of credit origination through bank deposits (primarily household savings in bank deposits) needs to be keenly watched, it added. According to the report, public sector Banks/PSBs show stable growth of 12.2 per cent in FY25 compared to FY24 growth of 13.6 per cent. However, the share in incremental credit of PSBs has



increased to 56.9 per cent in FY25 from 20 per cent in FY18. "The government's 4R's strategy of recognition, resolution, recapitalisation and reforms have reaped rich dividends. The asset quality in the banking system is now at a record low of 2.6 per cent in H1 FY25 from 11.5 per cent in FY18," the report explained. Now, PSBs share in outstanding credit has improved to 52.3 per cent in

outstanding credit in FY25, after 14-years of decline to 51.8 per cent in FY24 from 75.1 per cent in FY10. The sectoral credit growth indicates credit growth to various sectors of the economy has softened driven by a moderation in growth of credit to services sector and agriculture and allied activities. Personal loans share in incremental credit growth has declined in FY25 to 37 per cent from 43 per cent in FY24,

while industry share has increased to 17 per cent in FY25 from 11 per cent in FY24. "The X factor in credit growth is credit to MSME sector, rising by 17.8 per cent (year-on-year)," said Dr Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Advisor, State Bank of India."

Interestingly, the MSMEs depend greatly on large corporates through backward integration (and at times, forward integration) and hence, the MSMEs activity level could be a gauge of corporate activities (with all channels of financing options (banks/non-banks) embedded holistically)," he noted. Moreover, private credit deals totalled Rs 774 billion in FY24, growing 7 per cent over CY23, satiating the growing needs of varied strata of India Inc. through tailored financing solutions primarily via Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) while issuances of NCDs remains in practice.

# GST Enters 8th Year After Rollout With Record Collections, Thumbs Up From 85 Pc Taxpayers

**New Delhi, (H.S):** The Goods and Services Tax (GST), widely hailed as one of the biggest economic reforms in post-Independence India, will on Tuesday complete eight years of its success story, with collections soaring to a record Rs 22.08 lakh crore in 2024-25, marking a year-on-year growth of 9.4 per cent, with the number of taxpayers in its ambit surging past 1.51 crore. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called GST "a path-breaking legislation for New India" at its launch on July 1, 2017.

Eight years on, the numbers speak for themselves, reflecting India's strong fiscal position. The average monthly collection stood at Rs 1.84 lakh crore in 2024-25, a blockbuster year. In 2020-21, the total collection was Rs 11.37 lakh crore, with a monthly average of Rs 95,000 crore. The following year, it rose to Rs 14.83 lakh crore, and then to Rs 18.08 lakh crore in 2022-23. In 2023-24, GST collections reached Rs 20.18 lakh crore, showing consistent growth in compliance and economic activity. According



to a Deloitte survey, 85 per cent of taxpayers have reported "a positive experience with GST" and view it as a more simplified and transparent tax process that facilitated the Ease of Doing Business. This marks the fourth year in a row where sentiment has improved.

The 'One-Nation, One-Tax' made tax compliance easier, reduced costs for businesses, and allowed goods to move freely across states. It brought together a wide range of indirect taxes under one umbrella by replacing levies like excise duty, service tax, VAT and others. This helped remove the cascading effect of taxes and brought consistency in the tax system across the country. The Deloitte report titled GST@8

described the past year as a blockbuster for GST. It credited the government's timely reforms, clear guidance to taxpayers, and steady upgrades on the GST portal as key reasons behind this success. These measures not only improved Ease of Doing Business but also strengthened the tax base. GST is a consumer-friendly reform.

It places the end-user at the centre of the tax system. With the removal of multiple taxes and improved compliance, the average tax rates have come down. The number of registered taxpayers has grown from 60 lakh to around 1.51 crore. This has expanded the tax base and allowed the government to lower rates on many essential items. Goods like

cereals, edible oils, sugar, snacks and sweets now carry lower tax rates. A study by the Finance Ministry noted that GST helped households save at least four per cent on monthly expenses in total. Consumers now spend less on daily necessities. GST has transformed the logistics industry. Long queues of trucks at state borders and corruption-prone checkpoints have become a thing of the past. Goods now move faster and more freely across state lines.

Transport time has improved by over 33 per cent, according to several studies. Companies have cut down on fuel costs, and major highways are less congested. GST has brought major relief to micro, small and medium enterprises. Earlier, thresholds under VAT and other state taxes were very low, making compliance difficult for small businesses. GST changed this by setting a higher exemption limit. Initially fixed at Rs 20 lakh, the threshold for goods was later raised to Rs 40 lakh, giving breathing space to many small traders and manufacturers.

**Mumbai, (H.S):** The USA's shift toward de-globalisation may ironically lead to a new avatar of globalisation that is multi-polar, regional, and driven by domestic imperatives for which India is well-positioned to emerge as one of the new centres of gravity, industrialist Anand Mahindra has said. In his address to shareholders in the Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) Annual Report for 2024-25, Anand Mahindra, said globalisation is evolving and the US market centrality and China-centric supply chains are being replaced by multi-polar, regional collaborations.

As structural and political uncertainties diminish US dominance, alternative capital destinations are emerging, he observed. Global supply chains are diversifying away from China, creating new trade partnerships. Lower tariff barriers among regional partners may emerge, boosting free trade and reshaping international trade centres of gravity, Mahindra pointed out. Recent US-China tariff talks and strengthened trade ties with the UK suggest a



pragmatic layer to US trade policy, combining protectionism with strategic global engagement." However, there remains a strong likelihood of significant decoupling between the US and China," he observed. He admitted that "India, too, will face challenges" due to the ongoing global turmoil in the midst of a growing wave of protectionism."

However, whether it be, a country or a business, the winners will be the ones who can successfully navigate uncertainty and ambiguity - the ones who are resilient," Mahindra remarked. China's adversarial stance may create opportunities for India to position itself as a supply chain alternative - a long-term goal for Indian business. Innovation and R&D could receive renewed focus, while manufacturing could once again take centre stage."

Restrictions on China and high tariffs for other competing countries could open new markets for Indian goods. The potential exists, but achieving it will require a concerted focus on manufacturing and a palpable increase in private investment." Speed and agility are essential, as countries like the Philippines and Vietnam are already touting themselves as future manufacturing hubs," Mahindra opined.

Companies could benefit from aligning their strategies with national objectives, as renewable energy, Defence and digital infrastructure are becoming sunrise industries in India, he pointed out. He also highlighted that India is a stable democracy, generally regarded as a trustworthy partner, and bolstered by a strong military that is not politicised. In a reference to Pakistan, Mahindra said, "The situation with our provocative neighbour is always volatile, but I am optimistic that we can demonstrate the limits to our tolerance without impeding our path to economic ascendance."

# India's GST Collection Hits Record 22.08 Lakh Crore in FY25, Rises 9.4 Pc

**New Delhi, (H.S):** India's Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection for the financial year 2024-25 touched a record high of Rs 22.08 lakh crore, marking a 9.4 per cent increase compared with the previous year, the government announced on Monday.

The average monthly collection for the year stood at Rs 1.84 lakh crore. The government highlighted that GST revenues have more than doubled in just five years. In 2020-21, the total collection was Rs 11.37 lakh crore, with an average monthly figure of Rs 95,000 crore. This steady rise

in revenue points to stronger tax compliance and consistent economic growth. The trend of rising GST collection has continued month after month. In May 2025 alone, the gross GST collection rose by 16.4 per cent to over Rs 2.01 lakh crore.

This increase was driven by both domestic transactions and imports. Domestic revenues grew by 13.7 per cent to Rs 1.50 lakh crore, while import-related GST rose sharply by 25.2 per cent to Rs 51,266 crore. In terms of tax breakup for May, the central GST stood at Rs 35,434 crore and the

state GST at Rs 43,902 crore. The Integrated GST (IGST), which is shared between the Centre and states, amounted to Rs 1.09 lakh crore. As of April 30, there are over 1.51 crore active GST registrations in India.

These include more than 1.32 crore normal taxpayers, around 14.86 lakh composition taxpayers, and 3.71 lakh taxpayers registered under Tax Deducted at Source (TDS). India is also preparing to mark a major milestone on July 1 as the country celebrates eight years since the launch of the GST regime.

**New Delhi, (PIB):** Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman will lead the Indian delegation from the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, on an official visit to Spain, Portugal and Brazil from 30th June to 5th July 2025.

As part of her visit to Seville, Spain, the Union Finance Minister will attend the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) organised by the United Nations, and deliver a statement on behalf of



India. The Union Finance Minister will also participate and deliver a keynote address at the International Business Forum Leadership Summit on "From FFD4 Outcome to Implementation: Unlocking the Potential of Private Capital for Sustainable Development", in

Seville. On the sidelines of the FFD4, Smt. Sitharaman will meet senior ministers from Germany, Peru and New Zealand, and President, European Investment Bank (EIB).

As part of her visit to Lisbon, Portugal, the Union Finance Minister is expected to have a bilateral meeting with Minister of Finance, Portugal; besides interacting with prominent investors and members of the Indian diaspora. At Rio de Janeiro, the Union Finance Minister will address the 10th Annual Meeting of New Development Bank

(NDB) as India's Governor and also attend the BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting (FMCBG). As part of the NDB meetings, Smt. Sitharaman will also deliver an address during the NDB Flagship Governors Seminar on "Building a Premier Multilateral Development Bank for the Global South".

On the sidelines of the NDB meetings, the Union Finance Minister will hold bilateral meetings with her counterparts from Brazil, China, Indonesia and Russia.



## Sonakshi slams 'bizarre' culture: You can't even go to a funeral without being clicked

Sonakshi Sinha speaks out against paparazzi and body shaming, promoting a healthy body image in her career. Bollywood actors like Alia Bhatt, Kajol and others have called out the 'disrespectful' paparazzi culture and criticised it for invading their privacy. In a recent interview with Times Now, Sonakshi Sinha also expressed her thoughts on the paparazzi culture and opened up about dealing with body

shaming.

Talking about the ways she coped with body shaming throughout her years in the industry, Sonakshi said, "It's a vicious circle. I think I became that person. Because while growing up, I didn't have any role model to look up to or somebody who tells me that it's okay to be how you are. I wanted to be somebody who projected a very healthy body image and I have done so in my

entire career. Realistic."

Sonakshi further slammed the paparazzi culture and said, "Look at what social media has become. Look at what the pap culture has become. You can't even go to a funeral without being clicked. I found it very bizarre. Beyond a point, you have to start ignoring these things and just live the way you want to live. But it did take a bit to get used to." Sonakshi is all set to headline her brother

Kush S Sinha's directorial debut, Nikita Roy. The supernatural thriller film also stars Paresh Rawal, Arjun Rampal, and Suhail Nayyar in key roles. Produced by Nicky Bhagnani, Vicky Bhagnani, Kinjal Ghone, Dinesh Gupta, Ankur Takrani, and Vipin Agnihotri, the film was initially scheduled to clash with Kajol's Maa and Vishnu Manchu's Kannappa on June 27.

However, the makers have

postponed the release to July 18. Sharing a statement on Instagram, they said, "We have found ourselves in the midst of multiple releases and a battle for screens. With advice from our well-wishers in the fraternity, distributors, and exhibitors, we have collectively decided to push our release... so that we can reach a wider audience." They concluded with a promise that "18th July will be worth the wait."

## Paresh confirms his return to Hera Pheri 3 weeks after

Weeks after Paresh Rawal announced his departure from the upcoming film Hera Pheri 3, the actor has now confirmed his return to the franchise. Speaking with Himanshu Mehta on his podcast, Paresh also addressed the controversy around the film. He also praised Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty and Priyadarshan.

When asked about the controversy around Hera Pheri 3, Paresh denied that there was one. He said, "Nahi controversy kuch nahi hai (There's no controversy). I believe that when people have loved something so much, then you have to be extra careful. It is our responsibility toward the audience. The audience has given you so much adulation. You can't take things for granted. Mehnat karke unko do (Work hard and give them the film). So I was of the opinion that sab saath mein aaye, mehnat karein. Aur kuch nahin (Everyone should come together, work hard). It is all resolved now." When asked again if all was well now and if fans would see the trio in the film, Paresh said that earlier, too, they were working together in the film. "Pehle bhi aane hi waali thi (Earlier too the film was scheduled to release), but it's just that we had to fine-tune ourselves (laughs). After all, all of them are creative, be it Priyadarshan, Akshay or Suniel. They are friends for many, many, many years."

The OG trio of Hera Pheri-- Raju (Akshay), Shyam (Suniel Shetty), and Baburao Ganpatrao Apte, aka Babu Bhaiya (Paresh)-- has been loved



by fans across the globe for over two decades now. Paresh's sudden departure from the upcoming film earlier this year had left fans shocked and disappointed. After being sued by Akshay Kumar's production company and returning Rs 11 lakh with interest, actor Paresh Rawal confirmed he is returning to Hera Pheri 3 in a recent interview. The film has been embroiled in controversy since May after Paresh Rawal announced his exit from the film in an X post. According to reports, soon Akshay Kumar sued his frequent collaborator for sabotaging the shoot and demanded Rs 25 crore in compensation. As per a Bollywood Hungama report earlier, after quitting the film, he had returned the signing amount along with an interest of 15%.

## Sarzameen Teaser: Ibrahim Plays Terrorist in Prithviraj & Kajol's Kashmir Saga



Dharma Productions released the teaser of its upcoming Hindi thriller movie Sarzameen featuring Kajol, Prithviraj Sukumaran and Ibrahim Ali Khan on Monday. The teaser promises an intriguing tale, set against the volatile backdrop of Kashmir.

The teaser shows Prithviraj Sukumaran, a decorated Army officer, risking his life for the nation. Prithviraj's character seems to be driven by a personal loss. Kajol appears to be starring

in the role of the officer's (Prithviraj Sukumaran) wife in the film. The couple share some emotionally-charged moments. But what became a talking point of the teaser was Ibrahim Ali Khan's drastic physical transformation. Ibrahim, who is introduced to the audiences right at the end of the teaser, shows the scars on his back before the viewer gets to see his face. With an unkempt beard and Kohl-rimmed eyes, the teaser hints

that Ibrahim is playing a terrorist in Sarzameen. The details about his character are under wraps. The actor, who made his debut earlier this year with Dharma Productions's Nadaaniyan, is creating waves on the Internet with his intense look and chiselled physique. From the looks of it, the characters played by Prithviraj and Ibrahim will take on each other in the snow-capped landscape of Kashmir.

Sarzameen is directed by Boman Irani's son Kayoze Irani. He previously directed a short story in the Netflix anthology Ajeeb Daastaans (2021). Backed by Dharma Productions, the film will premiere on JioHotstar on July 25. Ibrahim Ali Khan earlier worked as an assistant director on Karan Johar's directorial Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani. Sarzameen, starring Prithviraj Sukumaran, Kajol, and Ibrahim Ali Khan will release on JioHotstar.

## Sitaare Zameen Par beats Ghajini, creates new record

Aamir Khan's movie Sitaare Zameen Par has finished its second weekend on a good note at the box office, garnering approximately Rs 122.65 crore in 10 days. The movie has gone up to become Aamir Khan's sixth top-grossing movie in India, overtaking the lifetime collection of his movie Ghajini. Sitaare Zameen Par collected Rs 14.50 crore on its second Sunday and reached Rs 122.65 crore in total.

## CISCE Zonal Athletics Meet Held at Belpahar English Medium School

Jharsuguda: The Council for Indian Certificate Examination (CISCE) Zonal Athletics Meet concluded at Belpahar English Medium School. A total of 120 athletes from eight ICSE schools of Jharsuguda zone participated in the competition. Various athletics events were held for boys and girls in the under-14, under-17, and under-19 categories.

The competition was inaugurated by Soumesh Sahu, President of the BEM School Management Committee, as the chief guest. Kanhu Charan Pradhan, Secretary of the Management Committee, was present as the special guest. Sanjay Kumar Mishra, Principal



of the school, delivered the welcome speech. Hamid Kumar Mahapatra, Physical Education teacher and Field Marshal of the competition conducted the proceedings. On the Prize distribution ceremony Kanhu

Charan Pradhan, Secretary of the Management Committee, distributed certificates and medals to the athletes. The event was attended by other school officials, including Prafulla Kumar Mahapatra, Deputy

## Gambhir faces growing pressure ahead of second England Test

**Edgbaston, (HS) :** Gautam Gambhir is under growing pressure ahead of the second Test against England after India's loss at Headingley made it seven defeats in 11 red-ball matches since he became coach last year. The 43-year-old former opening batsman is facing flak from some quarters for his selections, man

agement and how he carries himself in press conferences. India are ushering in a new era following the retirements of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, with Gambhir widely reported to have played a part in the exit of at least one of the two veteran stars. Led by new captain Shubman Gill, the visitors were beaten by five



## Gambhir Restricts Jasprit Bumrah to 3 Tests

**New Delhi, (HS) :** On

the tour of England, one of the toughest places for the Indian team to win a Test series, the fact that the tourists would have Jasprit Bumrah, arguably the best pacer in the world, available for just three games out of five, is baffling for many. Bumrah, who featured in almost the entire Indian Premier League (IPL) season for the Mumbai Indians, has been allotted just three games against England. India's head coach Gautam Gambhir already made the decision clear, making many wonder why lesser-important games couldn't be removed from Bumrah's schedule to manage his workload. Former South Africa captain AB de Villiers, who also had to manage the workload of Dale Steyn during their active days, isn't onboard with the Indian team management's decision over the call to give Bumrah just three matches on the 5-Test tour.



"He is probably the top bowler in the world in all formats right now. So, it's very difficult to decide a way to rest him," De Villiers said. Citing Steyn's example, De Villiers said that Bumrah should've ideally been rested in lesser-important T20Is and ODIs.

## Suryavanshi shines with blistering knock but India U19 all out for 290

**Nottingham, (HS) :** The second Youth ODI encounter between India U19 and England U19 on Monday witnessed a fiery exchange as pacer Jack Home gave a send-off to Vaibhav Suryavanshi. French produced a match-turning spell, claiming a four-wicket haul that dashed India U19's hopes of reaching the 300-run mark as they were all out for 290. His outstanding penultimate over proved decisive—conceding just two runs while picking up two key wickets, it stalled India's momentum right at the death.

Rahul Kumar fell short of his fifty, but his valuable contribution brought stability to the innings, keeping India U19 on course for a strong total close to 300. Abhigyan Kundu couldn't capitalise on his promising start, falling before making a significant impact, as India U19 find themselves in



trouble with five wickets down and momentum slipping away. Vihaan Malhotra missed out on a deserved fifty, and his wicket came at a crucial juncture, disrupting India U19's momentum and giving England a much-needed opening to shift the tide. England dealt a major blow

by dismissing Chavda, who joins Vaibhav Suryavanshi back in the pavilion. The crucial stand is broken, and with three wickets, India U19 find themselves under pressure as the momentum shifts in favour of the hosts.

India U19's scoring rate took a significant dip after the departure of Vaibhav Suryavanshi, who had set the tone with a blistering knock. His aggressive intent had kept the English bowlers on the backfoot, but once he fell for 45, the middle order found it difficult to maintain the same tempo.

## Dhoni Applies for 'Captain Cool' Trademark

**New Delhi, (HS) :** Former Indian cricket team captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni has filed a trademark application for the phrase 'CAPTAIN COOL', a sobriquet widely associated with his calm on-field demeanour. According to the Trade Marks Registry portal, the application's status is 'accepted and advertised'. It was published in the official trademark journal on June 16. The application was filed on June 5. The proposed trademark is registered under the category for sports training, providing sports training facilities, sports coaching and services.

No comments could immediately be obtained from Dhoni. Interestingly, another company, Prabha Skill Sports (OPC) Pvt Ltd, had earlier filed a similar application for the phrase. However, that application's status is showing as 'rectification filed'. Earlier this month, Dhoni was inducted into the ICC's Hall of Fame for the year 2025 along with seven cricketers, including Australian great Matthew Hayden and South Africa's Hashim Amla. The ICC hailed Dhoni as a player who excelled not just in numbers but also in "extraordinary consistency, fitness and longevity".

## Ayush Clinches US Open 2025 Title, Runner-Up in Tanvi

**New Delhi, (HS) :** 20-year-old Ayush Shetty captured his first BWF World Tour title at the US Open 2025, defeating Canada's Brian Yang 21-18, 21-13 in a commanding final performance. The victory marks India's first men's singles title away from home since Lakshya Sen's 2023 Canada Open triumph.

Ayush, currently ranked 34th in the world, battled through a formidable draw to secure the title, including a gritty semifinal win over World No. 6 Chou Tien Chen. The 6'5" Karnataka shuttler displayed resilience, bouncing back after a first-game loss to defeat the top seed from Chinese Taipei 21-23, 21-15, 21-14 in 67 minutes. Meanwhile, 16-



year-old Tanvi Sharma stole hearts and headlines with a sensational run to the women's singles final. Though she fell short against World No. 21 and top seed Beiwen Zhang, the spirited performance - ending in a 21-11, 16-21, 21-10 result - showcased her as a rising star. Tanvi, the youngest Indian to reach a BWF World Tour final, stunned the second seed Nguyen Thuy Linh in the opening round and defeated multiple seasoned opponents on her way to the final. Their performances not only underline India's depth in emerging talent but also hint at a promising future for Indian badminton on the global stage.