

Dumani Mail

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Delhi: Consumer Commission orders refund, compensation over delay in wedding bus service

New Delhi : The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (Central), Delhi, has directed a transport service provider to refund the amount paid by a complainant and pay compensation for deficiency in service after a wedding procession ("Barat") allegedly reached its destination several hours late due to a bus breakdown.

According to the complaint, a bus had been booked in October 2022 for travel from Delhi to

Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh, in connection with the complainant's marriage ceremony scheduled for December 8, 2022.

The complainant stated that although the bus was scheduled to arrive at 2:30 PM, it allegedly reached late. It was further alleged that the vehicle later broke down on the way near Jewar, leaving the Barat stranded around 58 kilometres from the destination.

The complainant

claimed he had to arrange alternative buses during the night to continue the journey and return to Delhi the next day.

The opposite party contested the allegations and argued that the complainant himself had not paid the full agreed amount of Rs 18,500. It was also claimed that the delay occurred because relatives and friends of the complainant were late, and that the bus had broken down after being taken on a pothole-ridden route

allegedly suggested by one of the complainant's acquaintances using Google Maps.

After examining the material on record, the Commission observed that the service provider had admitted receiving Rs 14,000 from the complainant and was aware that the bus had been hired for a marriage function.

The Commission held that once the amount was accepted, the service provider could not avoid its

obligations on the ground of partial payment.

The Commission noted that it was undisputed that the bus broke down midway and that the Barat ultimately reached the destination around 3:00 AM, after the scheduled marriage rituals. It was further observed that no effective alternative arrangement was shown to have been made by the transport operator after the breakdown.

The Commission stated that marriage ceremonies are

time-bound events and delays in the arrival of a Barat can cause inconvenience, embarrassment, distress and mental agony to both families and guests. It added that compensation under consumer law is not restricted only to financial loss but also extends to harassment and mental suffering caused by deficient service.

At the same time, the Commission said the complainant had failed to

produce sufficient proof regarding alleged payments of Rs 18,000 and Rs 14,000 for alternative transport arrangements.

It also found that allegations regarding the driver being drunk, the bus being in poor condition, or seats being broken were not established through evidence.

Accordingly, the Commission directed Capricorn Transport Services (OP2) to refund Rs 14,000 with 6 per cent

annual interest from December 8, 2022, and additionally pay Rs 50,000 as compensation for mental agony, harassment and inconvenience.

The order stated that if the amount is not paid within 30 days, the total sum of Rs 64,000 would carry 9 per cent annual interest until realisation.

The order was passed by the Bench comprising President Divya Jyoti Jaipuriar and Member Dr. Rashmi Bansal on May 5, 2026.

Cabinet Approves Increase in Supreme Court Judge Strength to 37

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Tuesday approved a proposal to increase the sanctioned strength of judges in the Supreme Court of India from 33 to 37, excluding the Chief Justice of India.

The decision paves the way for the introduction of the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2026 in Parliament. The proposed amendment seeks to revise the existing provisions of the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956.

According to the government, the increase in judicial strength is aimed at



improving the efficiency of the apex court and ensuring faster disposal of cases. The move comes amid a rising tendency of cases and growing workload on the judiciary.

The expenditure on

salaries, staff, and associated infrastructure for the additional judges will be met from the Consolidated Fund of India.

Constitutional Backdrop

Article 124 of the Constitution of India provides for the establishment of the Supreme Court and empowers Parliament to determine the number of judges over time.

The strength of the Supreme Court has been revised multiple times since Independence. Initially capped at eight (including the Chief Justice), the number was increased

through successive amendments—from 10 judges in 1956 to 13 in 1960, 17 in 1977, and 25 in 1986.

Further expansions raised the strength to 30 in 2008 and later to 33 in 2019. The current proposal seeks to take this number to 37, marking another step in the gradual expansion of judicial capacity.

Focus on Speedy Justice

The government stated that augmenting the number of judges will enable the Supreme Court to function more effectively, reduce case backlog, and strengthen access to timely justice.

Supreme Court rules consumers should not pay for unused services

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has ruled that consumers cannot be made to pay for a service they no longer receive, saying tariff determination is not merely a mathematical exercise but a regulatory balancing act aimed at protecting consumer interests.

A bench of Justices P S Narasimha and Alok Aradhe set aside a February 2025 order of the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity, APTEL, in connection with the Rithala Combined Cycle Power Plant in Delhi. The apex court restored the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission's 2019 order, which had denied recovery of the remaining capital cost of the plant through tariff after electricity supply stopped in March 2018.

The court observed that consumers cannot be burdened with charges for a service no longer provided. It said safeguarding consumer interest is a central principle under the Electricity Act, 2003.

The dispute arose after APTEL directed that the entire capital cost of the plant be recovered through depreciation over 15 years. However, the Supreme Court noted that the Power Purchase Agreement for the plant was approved only for six years. The plant was set up ahead of the 2010 Commonwealth Games to meet Delhi's urgent power requirements.

India Post launches modernisation drive with revamped Nehru Place post office in New Delhi

New Delhi: Jyotiraditya Scindia inaugurated the renovated Nehru Place Post Office in New Delhi, calling India Post modernisation a major step toward "Viksit Bharat 2047."

The upgraded post office was launched along with Rekha Gupta and Chandra Sekhar Pemmasani.

Scindia said India Post is being transformed into a digital, citizen-friendly service network through infrastructure upgrades, better logistics and modern customer services. Around Rs 5,000 crore has been

invested in IT upgrades and Advanced Postal Technology.

New services include UPI-enabled payments, OTP-based delivery, longer working hours and faster Speed Post delivery options.

India Post currently operates over 1.65 lakh post offices, handles nearly 90 crore letters and 7.5 crore parcels yearly, and manages over 40 crore savings accounts with deposits above Rs 23 lakh crore.

Rekha Gupta said Delhi was chosen for the first upgraded post office under

the national modernisation drive and praised India Post's evolution into a multi-service centre offering banking, Aadhaar, passport, insurance and digital services.

The Nehru Place facility was redesigned under a pilot project covering 40 post offices in 17 states, featuring modern waiting areas, modular counters, better lighting, barrier-free access and digital service zones.

The Department of Posts plans to modernise 120 more post offices during 2026-27.

Delhi govt to conduct audit of its schools; CM detects lack of facilities in surprise check

New Delhi: The Delhi government will conduct structural audits of its government schools, officials said on Friday. Chief Minister Rekha Gupta inspected a Delhi government school in North Delhi's Rupnagar, and noticed a lack of facilities there and decided to audit all the government schools, they said.

She interacted with students regarding drinking water facilities, fire safety, sanitation, heat-related relief measures and educational arrangements. "The officials have received clear instructions that no negligence will be tolerated regarding students' safety and basic facilities," she posted on X after visiting the school. She said a detailed list of necessary improvement works has been sought from the school administration.

The chief minister directed authorities to submit a list of necessary improvements regarding basic facilities, infrastructure, and educational arrangements. She said the government schools in Delhi had been facing mismanagement, dilapidated infrastructure, and gaps in basic facilities.

The current government has been working continuously on a war footing for the last year to strengthen basic facilities, improve infrastructure and ensure a safe and improved environment for students in the schools, she added.

DGT to host high-level industry consultation today in Uttar Pradesh

New Delhi: The Directorate General of Training (DGT) under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship will host a high-level industry consultation today at the National Skill Training Institute, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. The Ministry said that the event marks a pivotal moment in India's pursuit of a globally competitive aerospace skills ecosystem. It will bring together more than thirty senior industry leaders, CEOs, and policy experts under one roof to deliberate on the establishment of a National Centre of Excellence (NCoE).

The Ministry added that the programme will focus on substantive discussions around the proposed NCoE framework, the roles and responsibilities of a Lead Industry Partner, co-investment models, curriculum co-development mechanisms and international recognition of qualifications for global mobility of trainees. The Ministry said the NCoE at Kanpur will be defined by the expertise, standards, and ambition that industry brings to it.

DRDO & Indian Air Force successfully conduct maiden flight-trial of indigenous TARA glide weapon

New Delhi: Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Air Force (IAF) have successfully conducted the maiden flight trial of the Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation (TARA) weapon off the coast of Odisha yesterday.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has congratulated DRDO, IAF, DePP, and the industry for the maiden flight trial. He described it as a significant development in advancing India's indigenous defence capabilities.

TARA is India's first indigenous glide weapon system that converts unguided warheads into precision-guided weapons. It has been designed and developed by the Research Centre Imarat, Hyderabad, along with other DRDO laboratories.

The indigenous glide weapon system is the first to utilise state-of-the-art low-cost systems aimed at enhancing the lethality and accuracy of a low-cost weapon to neutralise ground-based targets.

The development of the kit has been undertaken with Development-cum-Production Partners and other Indian industries, which have already started production activity.

Delhi HC to order removal of AI-generated fake videos of Congress MP Shashi Tharoor

New Delhi: Delhi High Court to order removal of AI-generated fake videos of Congress MP Shashi Tharoor. The court today said it will pass an interim order protecting Tharoor's personality and publicity rights in a case seeking the removal of alleged deepfake videos falsely depicting him as praising Pakistan.

A Bench of Justice Mini Pushkarna issued summons to the Centre and social media intermediaries, including Meta and X, and directed them to file replies within four weeks. The court indicated that interim directions would be passed on Tharoor's plea seeking the immediate removal of the content. Appearing for Tharoor, senior advocate Amit Sibal told the court that several AI-generated videos falsely attributed politically sensitive

remarks to the Congress leader, posing a serious threat to his reputation and India's international standing. He argued that despite repeated complaints under the Information Technology Rules, the content continued to resurface through different URLs. Meta informed the court that some identified links had already been removed from its platforms. However, Tharoor's counsel said similar videos were repeatedly being uploaded through new links. Tharoor has sought protection against the alleged unauthorised use of his name, likeness and identity across digital platforms. The case comes amid a growing number of public figures approaching the Delhi High Court against AI-generated deepfakes and misuse of personality rights.

Akashvani organises marathon in Delhi to mark its 90th anniversary

New Delhi: Akashvani organised a marathon in the national capital today as part of the celebrations marking 90 years of its distinguished service to the nation.

The nearly 3.5-km marathon began from Akashvani Bhavan and passed through Krishi Bhavan, Rail Bhavan, and the RBI Building before concluding at Akashvani Bhavan. Employees of Akashvani, Doordarshan, and Prasar Bharati, along with their family members, participated in the Marathon.

All participants were

awarded a finisher medal, while trophies were presented to the top three finishers in both male and female categories.

Prasar Bharati CEO Gaurav Dwivedi and Director General of Akashvani Rajeev Kumar Jain flagged off the run.

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Similar marathon and walkathon events are being organised across Akashvani's extensive nationwide network, ensuring widespread public engagement and outreach during the 90-year celebrations.

Bharti CEO Gaurav Dwivedi said that the marathon will take the message of the fitness movement to the people.

Director General of Akashvani Rajeev Kumar Jain said that a series of events will be organised this month at 232 Akashvani



Kendras across the country. He said that the celebration marks the contribution of Akashvani as a public broadcaster in serving the country.

The event aims to promote the message of fitness, public participation, and national unity, in line with the government's vision of a healthy and active India.

The initiative reflects Akashvani's continued commitment to connecting with citizens and promoting socially relevant causes beyond broadcasting.

Akashvani was established in 1936 and continues to be one of the country's most trusted broadcasting platforms. In an age dominated by the digital world, Akashvani continues to hold a special place in people's lives, blending nostalgia with relevance.

It broadcasts news, music, and public service programmes in various languages. Through this Marathon, Akashvani not only celebrates its glorious history but also promotes the messages of fitness, unity, and public outreach.

BJP Announces Names of Mandal In-Charges for Sambalpur District.

Sambalpur-07/05(DMS) : With the approval of Odisha BJP State President Manmohan Samal, Sambalpur BJP District President Ram Chandra Meher on Wednesday announced the names of Mandal in-charges for all 27 Mandals of Sambalpur district.

According to information shared with the media through BJP regional media coordinator Manas Ranjan Baksi, the appointments have been made for Mandals under Sambalpur, Rengali, Rairakhol and Kuchinda Assembly constituencies.

Under the Sambalpur Assembly constituency, Sushant Purohit has been appointed for Samaleswari Mandal, Ashwini Swain for Hirakud Mandal, Niranjan Kishore Das for

Mahanadi Mandal, Anil Behera for Burla Mandal, Sameer Ranjan Babu for Sakshigopinath Mandal and Phani Bhusan Mishra for Bir Birsa Munda Mandal.

Similarly, under the Rengali Assembly constituency, Prashant Barik has been assigned Rengali Mandal, Naveen Pradhan Laida Mandal, Sudhir Kumar Gupta Shasan Mandal, Ashish Hota Gosala Mandal, Prakash Kumar Pradhan Paramanpur Mandal and Damodar Kar Maneswar Mandal.

For the Rairakhol Assembly constituency, Netrananda Raul has been given charge of Nakatideul Mandal, Pramod Kumar Sahu Kisinda Mandal, Bichitrananda Sahu Charmal Mandal, Raja Pal Rairakhol Nagar Mandal, Pratap Pradhan

Santhakabi Bhimabhoi Mandal, Sasmita Dehuri Jujumura Mandal, Namraskant Pattnaik Padiabahal Mandal and Santosh Kumar Hasti Huma Mandal.

Under the Kuchinda Assembly constituency, Birendra Kumar Choudhury has been appointed for Keseibahal Mandal, Biranchi Narayan Darka and Rudra Pratap Deo for Bamra Mandal, Dushmanta Nayak for Kuchinda Nagar Mandal, Bibhuti Kalyan Patel and Mamata Patel for Chaitra Mandal, Sunil Kumar Das and Sushant Kumar Kerketta for Gudguda Mandal, Deepak Kumar Patel and Sunil Kumar Muduli for Gunduruchuan Mandal, and Naresh Singh Thakur along with Arun Kumar Patel for Jamankira Mandal.

Jitu Munda perform purification as per community ritual, mix with his caste



Keonjhar : Jitu Munda of Dianali village, of Patna block in Kendujhar district,

has performed purification of his sister as per the tradition of their community in Wednesday. This is second time Jitu performed the purification of his sister and gave a feast to the community members.

Jitu has dug the burrial ground and pick out the skeletal remain of his sister and carried in a sac to the bank at Malliposi branch to prove she is dead to withdraw money from her account. Later he took the skeleton and buried in the ground. Hence as per the ritual and decision of their community he has performed the purification, sources said.

After the incident had become the focus of discussion in the country and abroad, later, the local authorities arranged the death and legal heir certificate in a day and

the bank authorities reached Jitu and gave all the money due. There after Jitu was given assistance from various organizations.

However, Jitu became pure on Wednesday after his community imposed to undergo purification of his sister followed by a meeting on May 3, else as per the custom he would not allow to mix with community.

As per their community custom, he offered cock and goat to deity and sacrifice before their deities to became pure.

On Wednesday morning after taking ritual bath in the village pond, family member sprinkled him with turmeric water as a mark of purification. Later the community members joined a feast organised by Jitu. After feasting caste brother, Jitu has mixed with his caste.

On Wednesday, Odisha Government's Forest and

Environment Minister Ganesh Ram Singh Khuntia visited Jeetu and inquired about the incident and shown condolences. On behalf of the minister, clothes were distributed to the people of Jeetu's community along with Rs 50,000 cash.

"It is a very unfortunate incident. We will study, why this type of incident happen. Jitu became pure as per the community custom. Hope this type of incident will not repeat in any other case" said the Minister.

On 27 of April Jitu went to the Odisha gramineen Bank with skeletal remain of his sister to withdraw 19,300 deposited in the name of his sister who died three months ago, as a proof of evidence. Later bank official inform the local police. Later he took the skeletal remain back to Village about three kilometres on foot and buried in the same place.

CHRC Organizes 17th National Human Rights Conference and it's Foundation Day Ceremony in Baripada on May 10

Balasure, : The Citizens' Human Rights Clinic (CHRC), Odisha will organise its 17th National Human Rights Conference along with the Foundation Ceremony of its Baripada Unit on May 10, 2026, at 10:40 AM. The event will be held at the Rotary Club, Baripada, near Chhau Padia.

Dr. Krushna Chandra Mohapatra, Hon'ble Minister of Housing & Urban Development and Public Enterprises, Odisha, will attend as Chief Guest. The Guests of Honour include Sri Varun Guntupalli, IPS, Superintendent of Police, Mayurbhanj; Sri Netrananda Malick, OAS (SAG), Additional District Magistrate, Mayurbhanj; Sri Krushnananda Mohanty, Chairperson of Baripada Municipality; and Prof. (Dr.) Banshidar Mallick from NIFFT, Ranchi.

Dr. Mohendra Kumar Mohanty, Vice-Chancellor of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanj Deo University, Baripada, will be the Chief Speaker.

On the occasion, a special edition of CHRC's magazine titled "Ama Katha: Samata" will be inaugurated. Selected individuals will also be felicitated for their contributions to human rights activities.

The delegate session is scheduled to commence after lunch, focusing on key human rights concerns.

The event is being organised under the leadership of Dr. Gopabandhu Mallick, Chairman, CHRC, and Sri Swarup Kumar Basa, Executive Secretary, CHRC. Other dignitaries expected to attend include Sri Sanjay Chaudhry, Dr. Shyam Sundar Das, and Sri Bijay Kumar Agarwalla.

Forest Land Diversion for Koraput-Rayagada Rail Line Doubling Inspected by DFO Rayagada



Rayagada, In a significant step towards strengthening railway infrastructure in the tribal-dominated region of southern Odisha, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Rayagada, Sachin Anna Saheb Ohol, along with the Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF), forest field staff, and representatives of East Coast Railway, conducted a detailed site inspection regarding the proposed diversion of forest land for the doubling of the Koraput-Rayagada Railway Line.

The inspection was carried out in the railway stretch between Tikiri and Bhalumaska stations, where additional land has been proposed for expansion works under the railway line doubling project. The joint field visit aimed to assess the extent of forest land involved, environmental considerations, and the feasibility of the proposed alignment.

Officials examined the forest areas likely to be affected by the project and reviewed ground-level conditions to ensure that the railway expansion work complies with environmental and forest conservation

norms. Discussions were also held on minimizing ecological impact while facilitating infrastructure development in the region.

The Koraput-Rayagada railway route is considered strategically important for passenger movement and mineral transportation in southern Odisha. Railway doubling on this route is expected to improve train operations, reduce congestion, and enhance connectivity between Koraput, Rayagada, and adjoining districts.

Forest department officials emphasized the importance of balancing developmental activities with environmental protection. Necessary recommendations and observations from the inspection are expected to be submitted to higher authorities as part of the forest clearance process.

Local residents and railway users have welcomed the proposed doubling project, expressing hope that the development will lead to better transportation facilities, economic growth, and faster movement of goods and passengers in the region.

77th Foundation Day of Gopabandhu Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya Celebrated

Puri : The 77th Foundation Day of Gopabandhu Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya was celebrated in a joyful and festive atmosphere on the college campus. On this occasion, a free healthcare camp and free medical check-up program were organized, benefiting many patients and members of the general public.

The program began in the morning with the hoisting of the college flag bearing the institution's emblem. The meeting was then inaugurated under the chairmanship of the Principal, Professor Dr. Bipin Bihari Khuntia. Distinguished guests including Dr. M. M. Rao (former Director of the Central Ayurveda Research Institute, Bhubaneswar), Vaidya Manas Ranjan Hota, faculty members and professors of the college, as well as former principals and professors, were present on the occasion. The event commenced



with the singing of Bande Utkala Janani and concluded with the National Anthem.

Later, during the scientific seminar session, Vaidya Manas Ranjan and Dr. Sanjeeb Kumar Das, Associate Professor of the Department of Kayachikitsa at Sri Sri Ayurveda Science and Research Hospital, Cuttack, shared their views on the role of treatment and research in Ayurveda. Professor Dr. Ranjan Kast delivered

the vote of thanks. In the evening, students presented a variety of cultural programs that captivated the audience. Notably, all the teaching and non-teaching staff of the college played a significant role in the successful organization of the celebration. The 77th Foundation Day of the college has been regarded as a memorable chapter symbolizing the harmony of Ayurvedic education, service, and culture.

Odisha Matric Exam Result 2026 to Be Declared on May 2

Bhubaneswar: The Board of Secondary Education Odisha (BSE Odisha) will announce the Class 10 (Matric) examination results on May 2, 2026. Officials confirmed that the results will be declared at around 4:00 PM, while students can access their scorecards online from 6:00 PM onwards. Where and How to Check Odisha Class 10 Results

Students can check their results on the official websites: www.bseodisha.nic.in and www.bseodisha.ac.in

To ensure inclusive access, especially for students in areas with limited internet connectivity, BSE Odisha has also provided an SMS facility. SMS Method to Check Results Students can follow these steps to receive their results via SMS: This option helps ensure that all students, regardless of internet availability, can access their results conveniently.

Fire Safety Awareness Week Successfully Concludes at Paradip Port Authority

Paradip : The Fire Safety Awareness Week, organized across Paradip Port Authority (PPA) with the objective of strengthening awareness and preparedness for fire-related emergencies, concluded successfully with enthusiastic participation from various sections of society.

The week-long programme, which commenced on April 14, 2026, was organized by the Paradip Fire Department in collaboration with CISF, local organizations, educational institutions, industries, and community volunteers. The initiative aimed at educating residents, employees, businesses, and institutions on essential fire prevention and emergency response measures.

This year's theme, "Safe School, Safe Hospital and Fire Safety Aware Society – Together for Fire Prevention", highlighted the importance of collective responsibility and proactive measures in ensuring safety and minimizing fire hazards.

During the week, several awareness and engagement activities were conducted, including Educational workshops and seminars on fire prevention and emergency, Fire safety drills and live, Public awareness campaigns across various locations, Community engagement programmes involving schools, industries, and local residents, Special sessions focusing on industrial safety and disaster management.

The valedictory function was held at Jayadev Sadan in the presence of Heads of Departments, senior officers, employees, CISF personnel, participants, and members of the public. Addressing the gathering, Shri P. L. Haranadh, IRTS, Chairman, Paradip Port Authority, emphasized the importance of community participation in fire safety awareness. During the closing ceremony, Paradip Port Authority reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining world-class safety standards

with the vision of transforming Paradip into a premier "Fire-Safe Port." The Chairman highlighted that Paradip Port remains the only port in India where the CISF Fire Wing is entrusted with complete fire safety operations.

Reiterating the Port's commitment towards strengthening emergency preparedness, the Chairman stated that there would be no constraint in funding for procurement of advanced firefighting assets and modern safety equipment. He emphasized that investments in fire safety infrastructure are essential for safeguarding lives, port operations, and critical regional infrastructure.

The Chairman also announced several important safety and community welfare initiatives being undertaken by the Port. He informed that Pipenet Natural Gas (PNG) would be introduced to 586 residential quarters by June 5, World Environment Day, replacing LPG connections. The



initiative is expected to significantly reduce fire risks due to the lower density of PNG while also providing cost savings to residents.

Further, he informed that a new Trauma Care Centre with a specialized Burn Unit, the first of its kind in the region, has been established at the Port Hospital to provide immediate medical support for fire-related injuries and emergencies.

He further stated that through continuous modernization of equipment, rigorous training of

personnel, and extensive awareness programmes in schools, hospitals, industries, and residential areas, Paradip Port Authority is steadily emerging as a benchmark for industrial safety and emergency preparedness in the country.

Shri Sanat Kumar Patel, Commandant, CISF, delivered the welcome address, while Shri Manoj Chauhan, Dy. Commandant (Fire), presented the annual performance report of the CISF Fire Wing, highlighting its operational achievements,

preparedness initiatives, and emergency response capabilities during the year.

The programme was also attended by Shri Ajinkya Baburao Mane, Additional SP, Paradip Port; Shri A.K. Bose, Adviser (Traffic); Capt. Alekha Charan Sahoo, Deputy Conservator; and Shri Dr. Bibhuti Bhusan Das, Chief Medical Officer, along with other dignitaries.

As part of the concluding ceremony, awards were distributed for Best Housekeeping, along with prizes for winners of various competitions conducted during the Fire Safety Awareness Week. Participants included school students, housewives, PPA employees, port users, industries, and members of the general public, who actively contributed towards spreading awareness on fire safety among citizens.

The programme also featured impressive Fire Rescue and Disaster Management

demonstrations conducted by the CISF Fire Wing, showcasing modern firefighting techniques, rescue operations, and emergency response preparedness.

Shri Akash Jaiswal, Assistant Commandant, CISF, proposed the vote of thanks.

The Paradip Fire Department expressed gratitude to all participating organizations, volunteers, and citizens for their wholehearted cooperation and support in making the Fire Safety Awareness Week a grand success. The department reiterated its commitment towards continuous public awareness initiatives and efficient emergency response services for ensuring the safety and well-being of the community. Paradip Port Authority remains committed to strengthening fire safety systems, enhancing emergency preparedness, and fostering a strong culture of safety across the Port and surrounding community.

Odisha Health Minister Inaugurates Vedanta Lanjigarh's First-of-its-Kind 24x7 Telemedicine Facility

Bhubaneswar: New telemedicine facility to benefit over 70,000 people across nearly 70 villages in Kalahandi and adjoining areas

Vedanta's initiatives are strengthening healthcare, education, livelihoods and grassroots art, sports and culture – with a focus on women & child development

Over 10 lakh lives impacted through Vedanta's community development programmes across Odisha

Lanjigarh : Dr. Mukesh Mahaling, Hon'ble Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Odisha, today inaugurated Vedanta Aluminium's first-of-its-kind 24x7 Telemedicine Facility in Lanjigarh, Kalahandi district, launched in partnership with Tata Img through a virtual event. The initiative marks a major step towards strengthening healthcare access in Kalahandi by bringing timely specialist medical consultation closer to communities across remote villages, employees, families, business partners, etc.

Dedicated Telemedicine Room has also been established at Vedanta Lanjigarh Hospital for assisted consultations. In addition, through the Tata Img App, beneficiaries can

access free audio and video consultations with nearly 30 specialist and super-specialist doctors, reducing the need for long-distance travel for medical guidance. The service is expected to benefit more than 70,000 people across nearly 70 remote villages in Kalahandi and adjoining regions.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Mukesh Mahaling, Hon'ble Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Odisha, said, "Vedanta's 24x7 telemedicine facility is a meaningful step towards improving healthcare access for communities in Kalahandi, especially in remote tribal and rural areas where timely medical consultation can make a significant difference. Vedanta's broader work in healthcare, education, women empowerment and livelihoods reflects how responsible industry can support the state's development priorities. Continued collaboration between government, industry and communities will be important for ensuring inclusive and balanced development across Odisha."

According to Mr. Pranab Kumar

Around Kalahandi and the Raigarh region, these interventions are helping build healthier, more skilled and self-reliant communities. Across Odisha, Vedanta Aluminium's community programmes have positively impacted more than 10 lakh people, supported by over ₹500 crore invested in social development initiatives over the years.

Bhattacharyya, CEO Vedanta Alumina Business, "Odisha remains central to Vedanta's growth journey, and the well-being of local communities is at the heart of our work in the state. With the launch of this telemedicine service, we are enhancing last-mile access to quality healthcare for those who need it the most. Across Odisha, especially in Kalahandi and Rayagada, many such meaningful interventions are rapidly bringing these areas to the socio-economic mainstream of the state. We remain committed to working closely with our local communities and the government to contribute meaningfully to Odisha's inclusive and sustainable development."

Vedanta's diverse community projects such as Project Aarogya bringing healthcare closer to remote villages through preventive care, health camps and medical outreach, while Project Sakhi is helping women build skills, confidence and income opportunities through entrepreneurship and self-help groups. Project Sangam is strengthening farmer livelihoods through watershed development, irrigation support and climate-resilient agriculture. Vedanta's education initiatives, including DAV Vedanta International School, the first English-medium school in the region, and Nand Ghars which are modernized anganwadis, are expanding access to quality learning, early childhood care, nutrition, healthcare support and women empowerment. Together with youth skilling and community infrastructure projects, these initiatives are helping build healthier, more educated, self-reliant and empowered communities across the region.

Around Kalahandi and the Raigarh region, these interventions are helping build healthier, more skilled and self-reliant

communities. Across Odisha, Vedanta Aluminium's community programmes have positively impacted more than 10 lakh people, supported by over ₹500 crore invested in social development initiatives over the years.

The occasion also highlighted Vedanta Aluminium's world-class alumina refinery in Lanjigarh, India's largest alumina refinery and among the largest globally outside China, with a capacity of 50 lakh tonnes per annum. A key pillar of India's aluminium value chain, the refinery has strengthened Odisha's position as a major aluminium hub while driving regional progress through employment, local enterprise support, allied livelihoods and socio-economic development around Lanjigarh.

Vedanta Aluminium's Odisha operations have also contributed significantly to the state's industrial and economic development. The company has said it has invested over ₹1 lakh crore in Odisha and supports more than 20,000 MSMEs and business partners, creating large-scale direct and indirect livelihood opportunities across its value chain.

Teen girl dies by suicide in Gurugram

New Delhi: A 17-year-old school girl allegedly died by suicide here in Manesar, police said on Friday.

No one was home in Khoh village at the time of the incident. When the family returned from an outing they found the class 12 student, Priya Kumari, hanging in her room, they said.

The girl's family hails from Rohtas district in Bihar. Her father stated that he runs a grocery store, while her mother is a teacher at a private school, police said.

CEO of Delhi-based private company booked after intern alleges sexual harassment

New Delhi: Delhi Police has registered an FIR against the CEO of a private company based in south Delhi following a complaint by a former intern alleging sexual harassment, intimidation, and abuse of authority during her stint with the firm, an official said.

According to police, the woman accused the CEO of inappropriate conduct, mental harassment, and creating a hostile work environment during her internship with the company.

The complainant also alleged that she was subjected to intimidation and repeated misconduct by the accused, prompting her to approach the police.

Police host 'Juventica' program on Children's Digital Safety at Paradip



Paradip: The Odisha Police, in collaboration with UNICEF, organised the JUVENTICA – Digital Rights & Safety of Children Conclave at Police Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, bringing together policymakers, senior police officials, educators, parents, students and child rights experts to address the growing challenges children face in the digital world.

In this connection, a 'Juventica' awareness programme was conducted at Paradip Model Police station, Lock and Abhayachandpur police station on Friday under the supervision of IIC Babita Dehuri, Rashmi Ranjan Das and Samir Rout respectively. All the events were coordinated by Ajinkya Baburao Mane (IPS), ASP, Paradip.

Addressing the gathering in a video conferencing, Yogesh Bahadur Khurania, Director General of Police, Odisha highlighted the evolving responsibilities of law enforcement in tackling cyber threats against children. He said the police

are strengthening cyber safety awareness and investigative capacity by setting up 20 additional Cyber Police Stations across districts and engaging cyber experts to support field investigations. He also noted that 71 police stations have been upgraded with child-friendly corners, with a commitment to make the entire police system in Odisha more child-friendly. He also pointed to the rising complexity of cyber threats targeting children. He noted that India's internet user base has grown from around 125 million in 2011 to over 845 million in 2021, making online child protection an increasingly critical responsibility. He highlighted the work of the Children and Women Online Abuse Monitoring Unit in removing child sexual exploitation and abuse material and other harmful content from the internet. The DG emphasised the need for prevention and awareness alongside enforcement, stressing that children, parents and teachers must be equipped with the knowledge to use the internet safely and responsibly.

Grand Inauguration and Foundation stone lay out Programme



Jagatsinghpur, Instead of 4 PM one grand inauguration and foundation stone lay out Programme organised by Rural Development, Panchayatraj and Drinking water department at 6 PM at Naba Krishna Choudhury Stadium, Jagatsinghpur. In the programme one mega Drinking water project for 145 villages, 12 village road, one bridge, 18 village water supply project and 180 Solar project inaugurated by honourable Minister of Rural development, Panchayatraj and Drinking water Department Rabi narayan Nayak. Besides that foundation stone for 68

village road, 6 Bridge and Village Water project laid by honourable minister. Collector J. Sonal presided over the programme. Industries Minister cum Paradip MLA, Sampad Swain, Jagatsinghpur MLA cum President District Planing Board Amarendra Das, MLA Balikuda-Erasama Sarada Jena, Tirtol MLA, Ramakanta Bhio, Chairman Municipality and chief development and Executive of Zilla Parisad address the gathering. Due to severe heat wave gathering was very low at this grand inaugural and foundation lay out ceremony at Naba Krishna Choudhury Stadium.

MCL partners with IIM Sambalpur to upskill workforce in AI & ML



Sambalpur, 08 May, 2026: Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) taking a significant step towards digital transformation and employee capacity building has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Sambalpur to provide specialised training in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML).

Shri Keshav Rao, Director (Human Resources), MCL and Professor Shri Mahadeo

Jaiswal, Director, IIM Sambalpur, signed the MoU, in presence of Shri Uday Anant Kaole, Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD), MCL.

Under this collaboration, IIM Sambalpur will train 500 officers of MCL from diverse disciplines on AI and ML applications tailored to the coal and energy sector. The specially designed and customised curriculum aims to equip MCL executives with advanced knowledge and practical insights into AI and ML, enabling them to address complex challenges,

optimise processes and drive innovation across the organisation.

On this occasion, CMD, Shri Kaole highlighted the growing importance of advanced technologies in enhancing organisational efficiency. "Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning are essential tools for improving decision-making, operational efficiency and productivity" He added. He expressed his confidence that this partnership will have a transformative impact across MCL's functional domains through the integration of AI-driven solutions.

Eight arrested in illegal narcotics trafficking in Mining area

Keonjhar: Keonjhar Police achieved a major success against illegal narcotics trafficking by busting a Ganja supply network under the mineral rich Barbil police station and arresting eight persons.

Acting on reliable intelligence, a police team led by Inspector Ashok Kumar Nayak, IIC Barbil police station conducted a raid near New OMC Colony, behind the JSW Office, Bhadrasahi after in presence of witnesses and an executive magistrate.

During the raid, 33.190 kg of contraband ganja (a commercial

quantity) was recovered along with an Auto Rickshaw bearing Registration No. OD-09-Y-5862. Besides that, the police team seized Cash amounting to Rs. 2,000/-, One mobile phone, and one electronic weighing machine used during weighing from their possession. SDPO Barbil Debendra Nath Pingua, said this while addressing a press meet at Barbil. "They were arrested under the NDPS Act of 1985. Keonjhar Police reiterates its commitment to strict action against narcotics trafficking and appeals to the public to share credible information regarding drug-

related activities" Pingua said. The arrested persons were identified as Biju Behera (25) of Village Kuanr, Ghanashyam Sanangi (35) under Sunajhari village, Sushil Parihol (22) of Village Temra under Kanjipani police station, MD Muntazir Alam (33) of Village Jhumpura under Jhumpura police station, Sadam Hussain (36) of Village Baidrasahi (Ward No.-02) under Town police station, Arjun Keshari (55) of Ward No.-04, Jatadhari Patra (35) of Ward No.-06 (Tala Basti), MD Sarbar Alam (30) of Village Azad Basti under Barbil police station.

First coordination meeting for Rath Yatra held in Puri

Puri: The first coordination meeting for this year's world-famous Rath Yatra was held at the Town Hall here on Thursday to ensure smooth and disciplined conduct of the festival and associated rituals.

As per the schedule, Rath Yatra will be held on July 16, while Bahuda Yatra is scheduled for July 24. Suna Besha will take place on July 25 and Niladri Bije on July 27. Debasana Purnima will be observed on June 29.

Chairing the meeting, Central Revenue Divisional Commissioner Sudhanshu Mohan Samal said all rituals and activities related to Lord Jagannath are guided by the will of the deity and stressed the need for coordinated efforts among departments



for successful conduct of the festival. He urged officials to complete assigned responsibilities on a priority basis and maintain close coordination for orderly management of the Yatra.

Puri MP Sambit Patra and Puri MLA Sunil Kumar Mohanty attended the meeting and offered

suggestions for smooth and disciplined conduct of the festival.

District Collector Dibya Jyoti Parida welcomed participants and sought cooperation from all departments for effective management of the annual event.

Niti administrator

Priyaranjan Prusti informed the meeting that construction of the three chariots would require a total of 865 pieces of timber. Since 47 pieces were left over from last year, an additional 818 pieces were needed, of which 710 have already been received. The Forest Department is supplying the remaining timber in phases, he said.

Discussions were also held on arrangements related to health and sanitation, drinking water supply, electricity, transport, road repair and development, parking facilities, law and order, railway services, live telecast of the festival, temporary information centres for pilgrims, LED display systems and

deployment of volunteers. Samal directed the departments concerned to expedite the works.

Among others, Central Range IG Satyajit Nayak, Endowment Commissioner Satya Sundar Sadangi, SP Prateek Singh, Puri DFO Dhanaji Raoso Magar, Puri Municipal Corporation Commissioner Sneha Arugula and senior officials from various departments attended the meeting. Temple management committee members, servitors, prominent citizens and media representatives also participated in the discussions. Additional District Magistrate (Administration) Sarat Chandra Behera proposed the vote of thanks.

Shashi Shekhar Vempati Appointed as Chairperson of Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)

The Government of India, through a notification issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting dated May 6, 2026, has appointed Shashi Shekhar Vempati as the Chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). He shall hold office for a period of three years from the date of joining.

Consequent upon the elevation of Praseon Joshi as Chairman of Prasar Bharati, he has stepped down from the position of Chairperson, Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), leading to the present appointment.

Shashi Shekhar Vempati brings with him extensive experience in media, broadcasting, and public communication. His appointment is expected to further strengthen the functioning of the CBFC.

Odisha Government Proposes New Framework for Metro Project Linking Puri, Bhubaneswar, and Cuttack

Bhubaneswar: Odisha government has reiterated its commitment to the proposed metro project connecting the twin cities and Puri under a revised framework.

Following discussions regarding project viability, Urban Development Minister Krushna Chandra Mahapatra clarified that the ambitious transport initiative has been kept on hold rather than cancelled.

The administration is currently evaluating alternatives to ensure the system is financially sustainable and properly integrated with the region's broader transit networks.

Addressing Feasibility and Transit Concerns Earlier, the state cabinet had terminated the agreement with the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and approved the expenditure incurred on the initial phase (amounting to ₹273.51 crore) following recommendations from an inter-ministerial committee. The committee cited feasibility challenges, including lower-than-expected ridership projections and non-compliance with the National Metro Rail Policy (2017). Minister Mahapatra emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to modern infrastructure: "If the metro is implemented without alternative roads, people will face inconvenience."

The state government is focused on developing alternative road networks and support mechanisms alongside the transit project to ensure long-term public welfare and smooth urban connectivity. Key Highlights of the Transit Transition Project Status: Temporarily suspended for review and framework restructuring, not entirely scrapped.

Bengal Violence

THE irony is stark: West Bengal has been rocked by bloodshed just days after the end of the Assembly elections, which remarkably did not witness any major incident of violence. The shocking murder of Chandranath Rath, a close aide of BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari, has escalated tensions between the saffron



party and the Trinamool Congress (TMC). Adhikari, a top contender for the CM's post, has claimed that Rath was shot dead because of his association with him; according to the victim's mother, the killing was an act of vengeance following Mamata Banerjee's Bhabanipur loss to Adhikari. Post-poll attacks have also claimed the lives of Abir Sheikh and Biswajit Pattanaik, both TMC workers, and two BJP supporters, Madhu Mondal and Jadhav Bor.

The battle lines have hardened in the wake of the saffron party's resounding victory, which ended the TMC's 15-year-long rule. Upping the ante against the Election Commission of India (ECI), Mamata has not only rejected the poll verdict but also refused to step down as CM. Her defiance has emboldened some of her supporters to vent their anger on the victors. The BJP, in turn, is struggling to rein in its workers, who are using violent means to settle scores with the TMC.

It's unpardonable that clashes are taking place despite the ECI's directives to the state authorities regarding restrictions on victory processions. The police and Central forces must work in close coordination to restore law and order. Vigil should be intensified across the state, especially in sensitive districts. Those responsible for the killings and vandalism must be identified and arrested without any delay. A crackdown on miscreants, irrespective of their political affiliation, is the need of the hour. Leaders of both parties must desist from inciting their workers. Bengal, which has a long history of electoral violence, direly needs to turn over a new leaf.

Hung Assembly

TAMIL Nadu's unfolding post-election uncertainty has once again brought the constitutional role of the Governor under scrutiny. With Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam emerging as the single largest party but falling short of the halfway mark, the question before Raj Bhavan is politically explosive yet constitutionally settled: who should be invited to form the government? The Constitution does not automatically grant the single largest party the right to govern. The Governor is expected to determine which formation is most likely to command the confidence of the Assembly. However, decades of political controversies have shown how this discretionary power can become a source of suspicion, allegations of bias and charges of partisan intervention.

The Supreme Court has repeatedly clarified the constitutional position, emphasising that majority must be tested on the floor of the House, not in the Governor's subjective satisfaction. The Karnataka 2018 episode is the clearest precedent, when the BJP emerged as the single largest party but lacked a majority. The Governor invited it to form the government and granted 15 days to prove numbers. The SC intervened, ordered an immediate floor test to prevent prolonged political manoeuvring and possible defections. Unable to gather support, BJP's Yediyurappa resigned before the trust vote, after which HD Kumaraswamy formed the government with Congress support. In 2017, in Goa, the Governor invited a post-poll coalition because it demonstrated majority support earlier than the Congress, despite the latter being the largest party. These cases establish a crucial principle: numbers on the Assembly floor matter more than claims outside it.

If Vijay can demonstrate a workable majority, he should be allowed to take oath and face a floor test within days. Equally, if another coalition reaches the majority mark first, it too has a legitimate constitutional claim. Hung verdicts are part of democracy. Constitutional ambiguity should not be.

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Tale of Three States

The recent election results in Bengal and Tamil Nadu have belied the forecast of practically all pundits and psychologists like Pranoy Roy who was crisscrossing a cross section of Bengal with his outstretched mike and mobile. Kerala seemed destined for a change, with a competent and ageing Chief Minister, with Christians and Muslims miffed with some of the policies of the Left wing. Some have even pronounced the death of left ideology in India, with first Tripura, then Bengal and now Kerala not enjoying popular traction and cadre based depth. Such an elegy for the left may be premature, but the churn in Tamil Nadu where there was no ant incumbency simmer against Stalin, and such a huge backlash against Mamta Banerjee has been rather unprecedented. The only close parallel is Odisha, where a competent regime of Naveen Patnaik was trounced by the BJP juggernaut in 2024 elections. Beyond the immeasurable reasons, a dispassionate look at how these states have performed against various development parameters will throw some light on the ongoing debate.

The report of the Niti Ayog, based on survey made by NFHS V (2019-21), bring out the following trends in respect of these three states. They are broadly represented as multi-dimensional poverty, as per the SDG, which look at education, health and living standard as better indicators of the innards of poverty, rather than the facile reference to poverty line.

Quite clearly Bengal under Mamta's 15-year rule has performed poorly in terms of quality of education & budget priority for the sector. In particularly the deprivation% in terms of cooking fuel, housing, nutrition and sanitation are rather alarming. The anaemia % among women has gone up from 62.2% in 2015-16 to 70.8% (2021) under Didi's watch. Except for providing direct cash transfer to women @1000-1200 per month under the Lakhmir Bhandar Scheme, effective supply chain distribution of protein supplements, iron and folic acid through the Anganwadi appear to be very weak in West Bengal.

Kerala is a shining totem of human development, with multi-dimensional poverty % minimal, with a high score on education, allocation to education, sanitation, while its record on



Professor Satya Narayan Misra

providing cooking fuel, housing, and nutrition is not too edifying. The capability approach of Sen has found its fruition substantially in Kerala. Congress with its welfare leanings and socialistic moorings is likely to continue the good work done by Vijayan for a decade under the LDF.

Tamil Nadu is an interesting state which combines the free market model of Bhagawati with freebies as the leitmotif of its popular appeal among common men and women. It found an unexpected ally in the Supreme Court when in the Balaji Case (2013) it considered distribution of goods serving a public purpose and in consonance with the mandate to the state to 'promote distributive justice'. Tamil Nadu has an edifying record as manufacturing hub for automobiles, as also deprivation parameters. Stalin's loss at the best be explained by Tamilian's predilection for film stars like MGR, who kick-started the Mid-Day Meal scheme which had a tectonic spread effect through the country. Efficiency & Welfare have been bed mates in Tamil Nadu, while Bengal has tripped in the efficiency scale. Kerala remains the outlier quite like a Scandinavian country, high on human rights and capability and low mindless pursuit of wealth.

It was Galbraith who had wittily observed: The only job of economic forecasting is to make astrology look respectable. The futility of our election analysts like veteran Pranoy Roy had predicted a 10% advantage for Mamta over Modi. Quite clearly this prediction has

been upended. Whether it has to do with scars of RG Kar is difficult to surmise. With possibly the best female campaigners, Mamta is clearly on the back foot in terms of women's overwhelming support. Even her solid Muslim vote bank of 27% seem to have been purloined by BJP to certain extent. Mamta has realised that the cadre based support which she had snatched from the Left has now been taken over by the groundswell of BJP workers who serenade the nook and corner of Bengal.

In a seminal paper Growing Cleavages in India? in the EPW March 2019 issue the Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee & renowned economist Thomas Piketty, based on the trends from elections 1962-2014 have bemoaned 'the rise of religious divide and persistence of strong caste based cleavage, while education, income and occupation play a diminishing role in determining voter choice'. Further political conflicts are increasingly focussed on religious-ethnic conflicts rather than tangible material benefits & class based redistribution'. The authors are cognizant of rise of BJP under the charisma of Modi and its deadly cocktail of Hindu consolidation & Viksit Bharat.

While the analysis is still salient on BJP's trump card of religion based politics, the authors need to study trends during the decade long supremacy of Modi in India, sans Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Bengal. In particular, Bengal seemed to be the insuperable challenge to Modi & Saha, which seems to have been surmounted because of Mamta's poor track record on employment, industrialisation and capacity building quotient, abetted by an overenthusiastic CEC who played his cards rather audaciously and a Supreme Court, which turned a deaf ear to the plethora of voters who were disenfranchised by SIR.

However, Modi's victory is also a reflection on intransigence of opposition parties to glue together on a common platform. Congress, as the Main Opposition looks sclerotic under the amorphous leadership of Mr Rahul Gandhi, who otherwise carries credence through his dogged determination to expose Adani-Ambani-Modi axis. The masses do not possibly care about crony capitalism. The wheel of Hindu fundamentalism had never been so raucous in Tagore's secular Bengal.

In A Tale of Two Cities, Dickens wrote: It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. It was the winter of despair. For Modi-Saha, it was the best of times, and for Didi and Stalin, it was the worst of times, and a summer of despair!

India's shadow classrooms: Who gets to learn after school

Dr Vijay Garg

Every evening, across India, millions of students leave school only to head to another classroom, whether a tuition centre, a coaching institute, or a private tutor's home. What was once a supplement to formal schooling has evolved into a widespread, unequal parallel system. New data from the Comprehensive Modular Survey on Education (2025), released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), offers a clear picture of how entrenched this "shadow education" system has become and who it leaves behind.

Nationally, 27% of students are enrolled in private coaching. But this headline figure masks stark disparities across regions and social groups that raise deeper questions about access, equity, and the role of the state.

The most striking pattern is geographic. A cluster of eastern states, including West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, and Jharkhand, forms what might be called India's "coaching belt", where private tutoring has shifted from optional to near-essential.

West Bengal stands out: 74.6% of its students take private coaching. In Odisha, the figure is 57.1%; in Bihar, 52.5%; and in Jharkhand, 39.7%. All are well above the national average of 27%. Several northeastern states, including Tripura and Manipur, show similarly high participation rates, gesting a broader regional pattern rather than isolated anomalies.

What is striking is that many of these states are among India's poorer regions. This is not simply a story of affluent households purchasing an advantage, but a wider phenomenon: families across the income distribution are paying for tutoring because they do not trust the formal school system to deliver adequate learning outcomes.

The contrast with other parts of the country is stark. In Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, participation is in single digits, with similarly low levels in parts of southern India. In these states, coaching remains selective. In the eastern belt, it is close to unavoidable.

Expenditure patterns reinforce this divide. Households in West Bengal spend an average of Rs 7,878 per student annually on coaching - more than three times the national average of Rs 2,409. Odisha (Rs 5,074) and Bihar (Rs 3,221) also exceed the national average by a wide margin. That Bihar and Odisha, among the poorest states in India, record such high spending underscores how deeply embedded coaching has become, even at significant financial cost.

Several factors likely explain this concentration: historically entrenched tutoring cultures, concerns about school quality, intense competition for limited higher education seats, and a self-reinforcing social norm where coaching becomes a marker of parental investment. Once most children in a neighbourhood attend tuition classes, not sending one's child risks leaving them behind, regardless of whether the coaching is actually effective.

While the survey report does not publish estimates by caste group, our analysis using unit-level data reveals

a hierarchy closely aligned with India's social stratification.

Among students from general category households, 34.5% were enrolled in private coaching. The figure drops to 26.3% for OBC students and 26.4% for SC students before falling sharply to 14.4% for ST students. In effect, ST students are less than half as likely as their general-category counterparts to access private tutoring.

The expenditure gap is even more pronounced. General category students spend an average of Rs 4,129 per year on coaching, four times the Rs 1,030 recorded for ST students. SC and OBC students fall in between at Rs 1,953 and Rs 2,083, respectively.

These disparities matter because private tutoring in India tends to function less as a remedial tool for struggling students and more as a means for gaining competitive advantage in high-stakes examinations. Unequal access to coaching is therefore likely to translate into unequal outcomes in board exams, entrance tests, and access to higher education and employment.

Taken together, the geographic and caste-based patterns point to a common dynamic: access to supplementary education is stratified along the same lines as India's broader social and economic inequalities.

In states where public education systems face persistent challenges, private coaching has emerged as a de facto substitute that families must pay for. At the same time, disadvantaged social groups, particularly Scheduled Tribes, remain significantly less able to access this parallel system. This creates a layered inequality. The formal system promises universal access through policies like the Right to Education Act. But alongside it operates a vast, fee-charging ecosystem that is neither universal nor equitable and that increasingly shapes educational outcomes.

India's education policy continues to focus overwhelmingly on schools: infrastructure, curricula, and enrolment. Yet for a substantial share of students, learning now extends beyond school hours into an unregulated and largely invisible market for private tutoring.

This raises difficult policy questions. Should the State attempt to regulate the coaching sector? Should access to supplementary learning be subsidised for disadvantaged groups? Or should the priority be to improve school quality to reduce dependence on private tutoring altogether? There are no easy answers. But ignoring the shadow education system is no longer tenable. The NSO data makes one thing clear: India's education system does not end at the school gate. For millions, the real contest over learning and opportunity continues after school, in paid classrooms that remain outside the ambit of public policy. Treating schooling as synonymous with learning risks overlooking this parallel system and the inequalities it sustains.

Dr Vijay Garg Retired Principal? Educational columnist Eminent Educationist street kour Chand MHR Malout Punjab

What We Forget to Teach Our Students

Dr Vijay Garg

In classrooms across the world, education is often measured in marks, rankings, and outcomes that fit neatly into report cards. Students are trained to solve equations, memorize historical timelines, and write structured answers. Yet, beneath this carefully designed system lies a quiet omission—an entire dimension of learning that rarely finds its place in textbooks. What we forget to teach our students may, in fact, matter more than what we do.

At the heart of this gap is the absence of learning how to live. Schools prepare students for exams, but not always for uncertainty. They teach how to find the right answer, but not how to ask meaningful questions. In real life, problems are rarely presented in neat formats. They are ambiguous, emotional, and complex. Without the ability to navigate ambiguity, students often feel unprepared when they step outside the structured boundaries of school.

One of the most overlooked lessons is emotional intelligence. Students are rarely taught how to understand their feelings, manage stress, or respond to failure. When a student performs poorly, the focus is usually on improving marks rather than understanding the emotional impact of disappointment. Over time, this creates individuals who may excel academically but struggle to cope with pressure, rejection, or self-doubt.

Closely linked to this is the lack of emphasis on resilience. Failure is often treated as something to avoid rather than an essential part of growth. Students learn to fear mistakes instead of learning from them. As a result, they may become risk-averse, choosing safe paths over innovative or meaningful ones. True education should normalize failure as a stepping stone, not a setback.

Another critical gap is critical thinking. While students are taught to absorb information, they are not always encouraged to question it. In an age overflowing with information, the ability to evaluate sources, detect bias, and think independently is more important than ever. Without these skills, knowledge becomes passive rather than empowering.

Equally important is communication. Many students can write exams well but struggle to express their ideas clearly in real-life situations. The ability to articulate thoughts, listen actively, and engage in meaningful dialogue is essential—not just for careers, but for relationships and civic life. Communication is not just about language; it is about understanding perspectives and building connections.

We also tend to neglect financial literacy. Students graduate knowing complex formulas but often lack basic understanding of money—how to save, invest, budget, or manage debt. This gap can lead to poor financial decisions later in life, affecting stability and independence. Perhaps one of the most profound omissions is ethical and moral reasoning. While schools may have rules and values, they do not always create space for deep discussions about right and wrong in complex situations. Students need opportunities to explore dilemmas, understand consequences, and develop a personal sense of responsibility.

SC Flags Delay In Lakhimpur Kheri Trial, Directs Trial Court To Ensure Witness Presence

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday expressed disappointment over the slow pace of trial in the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence case and directed the trial court to take lawful measures to secure the presence of witnesses while ensuring compliance with the witness protection scheme. A Bench of Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi highlighted with concern that no prosecution witness had been examined during the last two months despite the issuance of bailable and non-bailable warrants. "We are disappointed to note that the so-called status report does not assign any reason for the non-production of witnesses on previous dates. No witness appears to have been examined for two months," the CJI-led bench observed. During the hearing, the state government informed the apex court that in the principal trial relating to the deaths of protesting farmers, 44 prosecution witnesses have been examined and 15 witnesses discharged, while 72 witnesses still remain to be examined. In the connected trial relating to the subsequent mob violence, 26 out of 35 witnesses had already deposed, and nine witnesses remained pending for examination. Senior advocate



Siddharth Dave, appearing for Ashish Mishra — the prime accused in the case and son of former Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra Teni — submitted that no witness examination had taken place in the recent past despite coercive processes being issued by the trial court. "No witness has been examined for the last two months. Bailable warrants issued, even non-bailable warrants issued, but no one has appeared," he told the top court. Questioning the prosecution over the delay, the bench remarked: "What have you done from March till today? Instead of summoning three-four witnesses, summon seven-eight witnesses. At least those who are present can be examined." Referring to an earlier status report, the apex court

recorded that despite a witness appearing before the trial court on one occasion, the prosecution chose not to examine the witness, resulting in further delay. Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the victims' families, alleged before the Supreme Court that witnesses were being intimidated. "Police are threatening witnesses before the date of hearing, that is why they are not coming," Bhushan submitted. Recording its dissatisfaction with the status report filed by the state authorities, the apex court directed the presiding judge conducting both trials to take lawful measures for securing witness attendance and to ensure compliance with the witness protection mechanism. It further directed the trial court to

endeavour to conclude both criminal trials in a time-bound manner. The apex court also took note of the third connected criminal proceeding concerning allegations of witness intimidation. Referring to the status report stating that the investigation against one accused was still pending despite the filing of the charge sheet, the bench directed the investigating officer to conclude the remaining probe and submit the final report before the competent trial court within four weeks. In its earlier orders, the apex court had flagged the slow pace of the trial, asking the prosecution to drop unnecessary formal witnesses to expedite proceedings. It had also considered a status report from the Lakhimpur Kheri police regarding an FIR lodged against Mishra and his father for alleged witness intimidation, directing that the matter be probed by an officer of DSP rank. In October 2021, eight people were killed in Lakhimpur Kheri District's Tikunia in violence that erupted when farmers were protesting against UP Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya's visit to the area. According to the UP Police FIR, four farmers were mowed down by an SUV, in which Ashish Mishra was seated.

Ashok Kumar Lahiri Takes Charge As NITI Aayog Vice Chairman

New Delhi, 8/5: Ashok Kumar Lahiri has taken charge as Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog, the government think tank said on Friday. Lahiri brings extensive experience in economic policy and public finance, having previously served as Chief Economic Adviser to the government and as a member of the 15th Finance Commission. According to NITI Aayog, his experience across academia, public institutions and international organisations will further strengthen his efforts towards evidence-based policymaking and economic transformation. The think tank said it looks forward to his contributions in advancing India's development agenda and supporting strategic policy initiatives across sectors. Lahiri, a BNP MLA from West Bengal and noted economist, had earlier been appointed to the post following approval from Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He succeeds Suman Bery, who served as Vice Chairman since May 2022. Earlier in April, PM Modi said that NITI Aayog has emerged as a vital pillar in India's policy-making architecture, strengthening



cooperative federalism, advancing reforms and improving 'Ease of Living'. He congratulated Lahiri and other newly appointed full-time members, saying the reconstituted NITI Aayog would serve as a dynamic platform for innovation and long-term strategic thinking across sectors. "My best wishes to Ashok Kumar Lahiri on becoming the Vice Chairman. My best wishes also to Rajiv Gauba, Prof. K. V. Raju, Prof. Gobardhan Das, Prof. Abhay Karandikar and Dr. M. Srinivas on becoming Full Time Members of NITI Aayog. Wishing all of them a productive and impactful tenure ahead," PM Modi said. PM Modi also met Lahiri and congratulated him on

his appointment, expressing confidence that his experience in economics and public policy would strengthen India's reform journey and contribute to the vision of 'Viksit Bharat'. Lahiri, who represents Balurghat in the West Bengal Assembly, has had a distinguished career spanning academia, policymaking and financial institutions. Moreover, he has served as Chief Economic Adviser, worked with institutions such as the Delhi School of Economics, Asian Development Bank, Bandhan Bank and the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, and has also been associated with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

Google Explores AI Infrastructure, Server And Drone Manufacturing Investments In India: Ashwini Vaishnaw

New Delhi, 8/5: Alphabet-owned Google is exploring fresh investments in India focused on artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure and the local manufacturing of servers and drones, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Friday. Sharing details of his meeting with Google executives on social media platform X, Vaishnaw said the company is evaluating opportunities across AI infrastructure development as well as electronics manufacturing in India. "Google is exploring investments in India across AI infrastructure and the manufacturing of servers and drones," he said. The development comes amid increasing global investments in AI capabilities and data centre expansion. The minister's remarks also come shortly after Google CEO Sundar Pichai announced that the company would raise its total capital expenditure to \$185 billion this



year, largely driven by aggressive investments in AI infrastructure. Speaking at the Google Cloud Next 2026 summit last month, Pichai said more than half of Google's machine learning computing resources would now be allocated to its cloud business. Google has already unveiled a massive \$15 billion investment plan in Andhra

Pradesh to build what it described as a 'gigawatt-scale AI ecosystem' in Visakhapatnam. As part of the initiative, the company in April began work on its India AI Hub project in partnership with AdaniConneX and Nxtira by Airtel. Google had termed the project its "largest investment in India's digital future to date." The initiative includes India's

first gigawatt-scale AI hub spread across three data centre campuses and will also feature a 1 GW hyperscale AI data centre. The Andhra Pradesh government has allocated nearly 600 acres of land in Turluvada, Rambilli and Adavivaram for the ambitious AI infrastructure project. Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony on April 28, Vaishnaw had said India is well positioned to become a trusted global partner in electronics manufacturing and supply chains, supported by strong policy initiatives and expanding technological capabilities. The minister also urged global technology companies, including Google, to scale up local production of servers, graphics processing units (GPUs) and semiconductor chips in India, underlining the government's push to strengthen domestic electronics manufacturing.

New Delhi, 8/5: Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal held a meeting with Dr. MJ Khan, Chairman of the Indian Chamber of Food & Agriculture, and discussed initiatives to further enhance the quality of life of the country's farmers and sharing India's farm expertise with African countries as part of the goal to boost development of the Global South. Khan is a prominent Indian agricultural expert and policy analyst. He is a leading voice in agribusiness, agriculture policies, and sustainable development, having pioneered initiatives like the National Policy on Organic Farming and the Global Agriculture Leadership Summit. "Discussed initiatives to further enhance the quality of life of our farmers, strengthen India's position in the global agriculture landscape, deepen collaboration with the African region, and share India's expertise in the sector," Goyal said in a post on X. "Also, deliberated on new pathways to enhance agricultural cooperation for long-term food security," he added. The India-Africa partnership in agriculture is a strategic alliance focused on



enhancing food security through technology transfer, capacity building, and private sector investment. India supports African nations in upgrading agricultural productivity, farm mechanization, and food processing to reduce reliance on food imports, fostering sustainable, resilient agri-food systems across the continent. India has already taken steps to provide African farmers with training in soil health, water management, and crop production, sharing expertise from its own agricultural advancements. Key focus areas

include low-cost technology solutions, farm mechanization (tractors), and improved seed varieties. India has also extended Lines of Credit (LOCs) for agricultural machinery to countries like Angola and Lesotho, and supports agri-business investments to boost productivity. The collaboration aims to reduce post-harvest losses and promote climate-smart agricultural practices to address food insecurity. This partnership is key to strengthening food security across the Global South.

India Targets Big Boost To MSME Ties Under 2026 BRICS Chairship

New Delhi, 8/5: As Chair of BRICS in 2026, India is spearheading a renewed agenda for MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) cooperation under the BRICS Partnership on the New Industrial Revolution (PartNIR). During India's Chairship, the Ministry of MSME is mandated to convene three SME working group meetings and the inaugural BRICS MSME Forum. The first SME Working Group Meeting was successfully convened online on 24th April 2026 with a specialised focus on "Access to Finance for MSMEs". The deliberations among BRICS Member Countries centred on the themes of "Bridging the MSME Credit Gap through Financial Inclusion, Literacy and Credit Readiness" and "Fintech-Driven Ecosystems: Expanding SME Credit and Seamless Global Trade Payments". The webinar witnessed active participation from BRICS Member Countries and served as an important platform for exchanging experiences and best practices on MSME financing challenges and



opportunities. Discussions highlighted the critical role of MSMEs as key drivers of economic growth, employment generation, innovation, and inclusive development, and underscored the persistent challenges relating to timely and adequate access to credit. The deliberations emphasised the need for a multi-pronged approach to bridge the credit gap through financial inclusion and improved financial literacy and strengthening credit capacities of MSMEs. The meeting further emphasised the importance of

enhanced collaboration among BRICS economies to strengthen institutional capacities, promote innovative financing mechanisms, and build a supportive ecosystem for MSME finance. The discussions also facilitated valuable policy exchange among BRICS Member Countries facing similar developmental challenges and reaffirmed the shared commitment towards fostering resilient, inclusive, and globally competitive MSME sectors across BRICS economies.

Delhi Crime Branch Busts Two Illegal Factories Making Fake Cement; One Arrested

New Delhi, 8/5: The Delhi Police Crime Branch has busted two illegal factories allegedly involved in manufacturing and packaging counterfeit UltraTech Cement in northeast Delhi, recovering a huge quantity of fake cement bags, adulterated material and machinery used in the operation. According to a press release issued by the Crime Branch on Friday, the raids were carried out in Mandoli Industrial Area and Jawahar Nagar Industrial Area following a complaint from UltraTech Cement Ltd. One accused, identified as Rizwan, was arrested during the operation. The Crime Branch stated that the accused were allegedly preparing duplicate cement by crushing damaged cement and mixing it with clinker material before packing it in counterfeit UltraTech-branded bags for sale in the market. "Staff of ER-II/ Crime Branch showed promptness and professionalism by busting two illegal factories involved in manufacturing and



packaging duplicate/counterfeit cement," the press release said. Police said the action began after Kamal Singh, authorised representative of UltraTech Cement Ltd., informed authorities that fake cement was being manufactured on a large scale during night hours using counterfeit packaging material. Following the complaint, a special raiding team was constituted under the leadership of Inspector Sunil Kundu and under the overall supervision of ACP Narender Singh, ER-II/

Crime. The team included SI Arjun Singh, ASI Upender, ASI Satender, HC Prince, HC Mohit, HC Rajeev and HC Vikas. During the first raid at New Mandoli Industrial Area, police found accused Rizwan allegedly supervising the illegal manufacturing process. "During interrogation, he disclosed that damaged cement was being crushed and mixed with clinker material for preparation of duplicate/counterfeit cement, which was then packed in fake UltraTech branded bags," the

Crime Branch said. A second raid at Jawahar Nagar Industrial Area led to the detection of another illegal unit involved in similar activities. Police recovered 2,725 empty counterfeit UltraTech cement bags of different variants, 341 filled fake cement bags, nearly 1,780 bags of damaged cement, and 420 bags containing clinker material allegedly used in producing counterfeit cement. Large quantities of loose, adulterated cement were also seized. Both factory premises, along with the machinery and materials used in the operation, have been sealed by the police. The arrested accused, Rizwan, 25, is a resident of Amroha district in Uttar Pradesh and was allegedly working as a supervisor at the units. Delhi Police said an FIR has been registered under relevant Sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and the Copyright Act at the Crime Branch police station. Further investigation into the racket is currently underway with the search on to find the big fish behind the operation.

IWT: Pakistan Needs To Credibly, Irrevocably Renounce Support For Cross-Border Terrorism

Jerusalem, 8/5: India's decision to place the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance following last year's April 22 Pahalgam terror attack carried out by a Pakistan-based terror group is "principled, proportionate, conditional, and reversible". The move is not an attempt to weaponize water, but a decision to suspend cooperation with a party that has long weaponised terrorism from its territory, a report has detailed. According to a report in The Jerusalem Post, Islamabad's response was rhetorical from the onset, portraying the abeyance "as an act of war, branded water weaponization" given Pakistan's heavy reliance on the Indus water system - one of the world's largest river basins. It highlighted that a year after the Pahalgam terror attack, Pakistan brought the issue before the United Nations Security Council, calling on India to "restore full implementation" of the treaty and warning of potential "grave humanitarian consequences". Although the UN



Security Council bears primary responsibility for international peace and security, the report said, it is "not a treaty-interpretation body, nor a tribunal" over the performance of a 1960 bilateral instrument. Referring to Article 26 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT), it argued that parties are obligated to implement treaties in good faith, a standard that cannot be met through selective compliance while the underlying conditions of peaceful coexistence are

eroded. India's position, the report said, that "sustained Pakistani sponsorship of cross-border terrorism", culminating in the Pahalgam attack, has shattered the very foundation of bilateral cooperation - which "is not a creative interpretation" but the "black-letter application of pacta sunt servanda (treaties must be performed in good faith)". The report noted that Pakistan must "credibly and irrevocably" renounce support for cross-border terrorism. This requirement is purposive and

grounded in the customary international obligation, reinforced by Security Council Resolution - that "every state prevents the use of its territory for terrorist acts against others". It added that Pakistan's claim of "weaponization" conflates the treaty's "cooperative scaffolding with its physical entitlements". India, the report stressed, has not "diverted, dammed, or interdicted Pakistani waters" in violation of the provisions of the agreement but has suspended the cooperative apparatus: "data exchange, commission engagement, and treaty-level dispute mechanisms". Highlighting India's principled and consistent stance while continuing the abeyance, the report said, "The path back to the treaty is open. It runs through Pakistan's credible, irrevocable, and verifiable abandonment of cross-border terrorism through no other forum and certainly not the Security Council."

Operation Sindoor: Pakistan's Fake Victory Spectacle Couldn't Hide Crisis Within Terror Groups

New Delhi, 8/5: For Pakistan, 'Operation Sindoor' resulted in a loss of face. After terror infrastructure was hit hard by the Indian armed forces who were avenging the Pahalgam terror attack, Pakistan set out a fake narrative of emerging victorious. Rallies and processions were taken out to create an impression that the Pakistan Army had hit back and won the battle. While the perception was created, the reality was something different. An official said that events were strategically planned across Pakistan to commemorate fake victory. On the other hand, social media handles run by Pakistanis worked overtime to put out false narratives. Following the conclusion of 'Operation Sindoor', Pakistan's Army chief instructed the Shehbaz Sharif government to release Rs 500 crore. This money was then distributed evenly to federal governments, business and religious groups. All were asked to organise massive rallies across Pakistan. The

programme mandate by the Pakistan Army was titled 'Ashra-e-Tashakur Fateh-E-Muneeb,' which means ten days of gratitude for a decisive victory. To cement the fake claim further, Asim Munir even pressured the Sharif government to make him Field Marshal. An Intelligence Bureau official said that while these rallies took place on a grand scale for ten days, something more serious was brewing within. Some of the rallies even focussed on thanking the Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Tayiba for the so-called victory. However, within the ranks of these two terror groups something serious was simmering. Both Hafiz Saeed and Masood Azhar had started to question the Pakistan Army and the ISI. They wanted to know what happened to the guarantees and protection that they had been assured. These groups have been operating with ease only due to the funds and protection that the Army and the ISI offer them. During 'Operation Sindoor', the Jaish-e-

Mohammad lost its Bahawalpur headquarters. Its chief Masood Azhar even lost most of his family members and several other cadres. The Muridke camp, which is the Lashkar-e-Tayiba's primary training facility was blown to pieces during the Indian operation. Both these terror groups, which have wrecked havoc in India, had not witnessed such a huge hit. There have been encounters and terrorists have been killed on Indian soil. However never have they been struck so hard and that, too, deep inside Pakistan. Another official said that the impression that the Pakistan establishment sought to create in the aftermath of the operation worked among a few people, but clearly their proxies were not impressed. They knew what they had lost and the fact that the Army could not even defend them is what left them completely disgruntled. The official also said that many cadres, too, had started questioning their own leadership.

US, Iran Clash Again While US Says No Intention Of Escalation

Tehran, 8/5: Iran's main military command, Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters has said that the US army attacked two Iranian vessels near the Strait of Hormuz and concurrently carried out airstrikes on civilian areas in southern Iran in cooperation with some regional states. The attacks by the US "aggressive and terrorist" army violated the ceasefire between Iran and the United States, said Ebrahim Zolfaghari, the headquarters' spokesman, according to Iranian media. One of the targeted vessels was an oil tanker sailing from Iran's territorial waters near Jask toward the Strait of Hormuz, while the other was entering the waterway near Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates, Zolfaghari said, adding that the targeted civilian areas included Bandar-e Khamir and Sirik, both in Hormozgan province, Xinhua news agency reported. He noted that Iran's armed forces immediately



retaliated by attacking US military vessels east of the Strait of Hormuz and south of Iran's Chabahar port, causing significant damage. He warned that Iran would give a crushing response to any aggression without any hesitation. Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps Navy said early Friday that Iranian forces carried out a "large-scale and precise combined operation" using ballistic missiles, anti-ship

cruise missiles and explosive drones targeting US destroyers. It added that intelligence assessments indicated "significant damage" to US vessels, prompting three destroyers to retreat from the Strait of Hormuz area. US Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a statement that US forces intercepted "unprovoked Iranian attacks" and responded with self-defence strikes as their Navy ships passed through the Strait of Hormuz. CENTCOM added that

it "does not seek escalation but remains positioned and ready to protect American forces." President Donald Trump said on Thursday that no damage was done to the three world-class American destroyers that just transited out of the Strait of Hormuz. In a Truth Social post, Trump said Iran suffered great damage and threatened that future attacks would be "a lot harder, and a lot more violent." Meanwhile, Fox News correspondent Jennifer Griffin quoted a senior US official saying that the US military carried out strikes on Iran's Qeshm Port and Bandar Abbas, but added that it was not a restarting of the war or an end to the ceasefire, Xinhua news agency reported. Earlier, Trump announced that Project Freedom, the US military operation to guide commercial ships out of the Strait of Hormuz, would be paused to see whether a peace deal could be reached with Tehran.

Italy Parliamentary Committee To Probe Chinese Tech Investments

New Delhi: Italy's parliamentary intelligence committee, Copasir, is preparing a new inquiry into Chinese investment in the Italian economy, primarily focusing on strategic assets and high tech start ups, a report has said. The probe that is expected to begin in May will comprise long hearings with experts, economists, business representatives and signals renewed concern in Rome over Beijing's economic footprint, Italy-based media house Decode 39 said in a report. Copasir had done a similar investigation seven years back that concentrated on China's role in mobile networks and 5G infrastructure, and the new investigation will be of a wider scope. Under new committee chair Lorenzo



Guerini, Copasir plans to deliver a detailed report to Parliament within a few months, people familiar with the matter told the media house. "Chinese stakes in key

sectors of the Italian economy remain a source of national security concern, especially where infrastructure, technology and access to sensitive markets are involved,"

the report said. The report said that Rome is increasingly concerned about small, high-potential technology startups being exposed to predatory investment strategies that target know-how, patents and industrial secrets of these companies. "Several high-profile files have helped push the China question back to the top of the security agenda," the report said. Italian tyre manufacturer Pirelli has recently been in news for adjusting its operational structure in the US market, following Italian government's "golden power" restrictions that impacted the influence of its largest shareholder, Sinochem, a state-owned Chinese company.

MoS Kirti Vardhan Singh Holds 'Productive Meeting' With UN Chief Guterres On IMRF Sidelines

United Nations: India's Minister of State of External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh has met with Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on the sidelines of International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) to discuss issues of mutual concern. After the meeting, Singh took to social media platform X and wrote: "Had a productive meeting with Secretary General of United Nations HE Mr. Antonio Guterres on the sidelines of the IMRF." Singh is in New York to attend the UN's Second International Migration Review Forum. He hosted a reception at India's UN mission for the heads of delegations to the meeting on

Thursday after addressing the plenary meeting of the forum. Singh led a commemoration of Operation Sindoor that gave a resounding blow to Pakistan for defending and aiding terrorists. India's resolve to fight terrorism remained as strong as ever, he said on Thursday. The meeting commemorating the first anniversary of Operation Sindoor paid tributes to India's UN Mission to "the bravery and professionalism of our armed forces, which is unparalleled". Singh met several leaders for bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the forum. Earlier on Monday, he and the Philippines Secretary for Migrant Workers, Hans Leo Cacadac, discussed

collaboration on the shared issues of mobility and migration, according to an X post by India's UN mission. Ecuador's Deputy Minister of Human Mobility, Saul Pacurucu, discussed with him "strengthening cooperation on safe, orderly and regular migration, mobility partnerships, and bilateral issues of mutual interest". At his meeting on Tuesday with the European Union's Migration Commissioner Magnus Brunner, they "took stock of multiple meetings of the India-EU comprehensive framework on cooperation in mobility and the recently launched Legal Gateway Office in ICT (information communications technology) Sector", Singh tweeted.

India's Holistic Approach To Emigration Backed By Digital Innovation: Kirti Vardhan Singh

United Nations, 8/5: India's holistic approach to emigration is backed by digital innovation to cover all aspects of employment abroad, from hiring, preparation for departure, proper employment and return, according to Kirti Vardhan Singh, the Minister of State for External Affairs. India's eMigrate platform shows how "digital technologies are no longer just enablers, they are reshaping governance itself", he said on Thursday at an event organised by India's

mission. Held on the sidelines of the Second International Migration Review Forum, the event on "Leveraging Digital Innovation in Migration Governance" showcased India's eMigrate system. India's holistic approach, he said, "recognises that migration is not merely a movement of people, but a continuum that spans pre-departure preparation, safe transit, dignified employment, and eventual return and reintegration". Singh said that eMigrate starts with vetting

employers and recruiters, bringing transparency to the process of hiring by allowing prospective employees to verify them and avoid fraud. "Currently, we have around 2,98,000 registered foreign employers and 2,457 active recruiting agents registered on the eMigrate portal", he said. They can also recruit through the portal. The platform serves workers by also integrating with platforms for skilling, employment, documentation, service delivery, multilingual

interfaces, as well as online grievance redressal and payment transfer at no cost. India's Permanent Representative P. Harish said that India was making available to everyone the digital tools it has developed, like eMigrate, because of the nation's commitment to South-South cooperation. "We have not patented these digital public platforms. We have made it available for free, put it on the net in an open source format, made available to our friends and partners so that they can adapt

it according to their needs and requirements," he said. "This is very much a part not only of our bilateral but also of our UN-mediated South-South cooperation frameworks that we have in assisting our friends and partners in the Global South", he added. Harish said that the distinction between refugees and migrants must be kept. Ecuador's Vice Minister of Human Mobility, Saul Pacurucu, said that his country has put 100 per cent of its consular services online and would learn from

India's experience in coordinating interoperability of digital platforms across the labour migration cycle. International Organisation for Migration's Senior Director Kim Eling said, "India is demonstrating how technology can be used, not simply to modernise systems, but to better protect people". He said the scale of eMigrate operations is "amazing". Saudi Arabia's Permanent Representative Abdulaziz Alwasil said, "As a major

destination country hosting a large and diverse expatriate population, with over 10 million foreign workers contributing to its labour market, the Kingdom recognises both the opportunities and the responsibilities associated with labour mobility". "Saudi Arabia has undertaken a wide range of reforms under its ongoing national transformation efforts to mobilise its labour market and strengthen migration governance frameworks," he said.



London, 8/7: Two British nationals have been confirmed to have contracted hantavirus, with a third suspected of infection, on the South Atlantic island of Tristan da Cunha, the UK Health Security Agency said on Friday. None of the British citizens on board the cruise ship MV Hondius is currently reporting symptoms, but they are being closely monitored, said the agency, adding that all British passengers and crew onboard will be asked to isolate for 45 days upon returning to Britain. British government staff will be on site to support British nationals disembarking when the ship docks in Spain's Tenerife on Sunday, Xinhua news agency reported. The agency is aware that seven British nationals disembarked the ship at St Helena, a South Atlantic island, on April 24. Two of them have returned to Britain and are isolating at home and have not reported symptoms of infection. Four of them remain in St Helena, and the seventh has been traced outside Britain. On Thursday,

the World Health Organisation (WHO) said that five of the eight cases reported on board the cruise ship MV Hondius had been confirmed as hantavirus infections, while the other three were considered suspected cases. The WHO denied that the deadly hantavirus outbreak on the cruise ship was "the start of a COVID pandemic," saying its risk to the public remained low. Meanwhile, the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention has classified the hantavirus outbreak as a "level 3" emergency, the lowest, ABC

News reported on Thursday. This means a low risk to public health, but the situation is being actively monitored by the health agency, said the report. On Thursday, the WHO said that five of the eight cases reported on board the cruise ship MV Hondius had been confirmed as hantavirus infections, while the other three were considered suspected cases. The WHO denied that the deadly hantavirus outbreak on the cruise ship was "the start of a COVID pandemic," saying its risk to the public remained low.

Bringing Classrooms Closer: Vedanta Supports Ekal Vidyalayas in Rayagada and Kalahandi

Bhubaneswar, 8/5 (DMS): In India's development journey, education plays a critical role. However, given the vastness and diversity of our landscape, the last-mile delivery of this constitutionally enshrined right has been a recurring challenge, especially in rapidly growing states like Odisha. This is most visible in tribal regions, where geography, dispersed settlements and socio-economic barriers hinder access to essential services. In districts like Rayagada and Kalahandi, the gap is particularly evident in the early years of learning. For many tribal children, formal education often begins in a language unfamiliar to them, within systems that do not reflect their lived reality. Recognising this need, Ekal Vidyalayas have adopted a decentralised, community-based model, bringing learning into villages and delivering it in local dialects. Vedanta Aluminium has been extensively supporting this unique model's expansion in the region with nearly 400 such schools in Kalahandi and



Rayagada supported by the company, taking the project's transformational impact beyond classrooms and into communities. The company's efforts go beyond financial support and extend to onboarding teachers, providing learning materials and linking classroom education with practical awareness sessions through its wider community programmes. Each of the Ekal

Vidyalayas is designed to eliminate access barriers as far as possible, helping ensure that children in the 6-10 age group have access to foundational learning opportunities. Classes are held within the village, often in open or shared spaces, led by a teacher/Acharya, drawn from the same or nearby community. This ensures familiarity, language alignment and continuity. Alongside this, the

company's additional interventions in sanitation, health and nutrition further augment the ecosystem within which these schools operate. The model is simple but deliberate. Teaching methods rely on storytelling, songs and local references, ensuring comprehension in the early years. The focus remains on retention and foundational learning, rather than just enrolment.

Gold, Silver Rally Up To 1 Pc As West Asia Tensions Escalate

Mumbai, 8/5: Gold and silver prices traded higher on Friday amid renewed geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran, with precious metals surging up to 1 per cent. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures (June 5) opened at Rs 1,52,672 per 10 grams, up Rs 411 from the previous close of Rs 1,52,261. At around 12:20 pm, the yellow metal was trading Rs 592 or 0.38 per cent higher at Rs 1,52,853 per 10 grams. During the session so far, it touched an intraday high of Rs 1,53,103, rising Rs 842 or 0.55 per cent. Meanwhile, silver futures (July 3) opened at Rs 2,59,999 per kg against the previous close of Rs 2,58,540, a gain of Rs 1,459 or 0.56 per cent. The white metal was trading Rs 3,126 or 1.21 per cent higher at Rs 2,61,666 per kg. Silver touched an intraday high of Rs 2,62,723, up Rs 4,183 or 1.61 per cent. The commodity market experts said MCX gold continues to show improving momentum after opening firmly above the Rs 1,52,000 level. Analysts noted that a sustained move above Rs 1,53,000 could strengthen bullish sentiment and push prices towards the Rs 1,55,000-Rs 1,56,000 range. Immediate support for gold is seen between



Rs 1,52,000 and Rs 1,51,600, with stronger buying support emerging near Rs 1,50,000 levels. For silver, analysts said prices remained firm after opening with a gap-up above the Rs 2,60,000 mark. A decisive breakout above the Rs 2,64,000-Rs 2,66,000 resistance zone could extend the rally towards Rs 2,72,000-Rs 2,75,000 levels, while support is placed around Rs 2,56,000. Precious metals also witnessed gains in international markets. COMEX gold was trading 0.28 per cent higher at \$4,725 per ounce, while COMEX silver rose 0.17 per cent to \$80.30 per ounce. The rally in precious metals followed renewed tensions

in West Asia after Iran accused the United States of violating the month-long ceasefire agreement, while Washington defended its actions as retaliatory following alleged attacks on American naval vessels in the Strait on Thursday. Iran's military claimed that US forces struck an Iranian oil tanker, another vessel and civilian locations in the Strait as well as on the Iranian mainland. Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump said the ceasefire remained in effect and that Washington was awaiting Tehran's response to its latest peace proposal. Moreover, Brent crude rose 2.82 per cent to \$102.89 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude gained 4 per cent to \$98.64 per barrel.

India At Forefront Of Global Space Transformation: Nidhi Khare

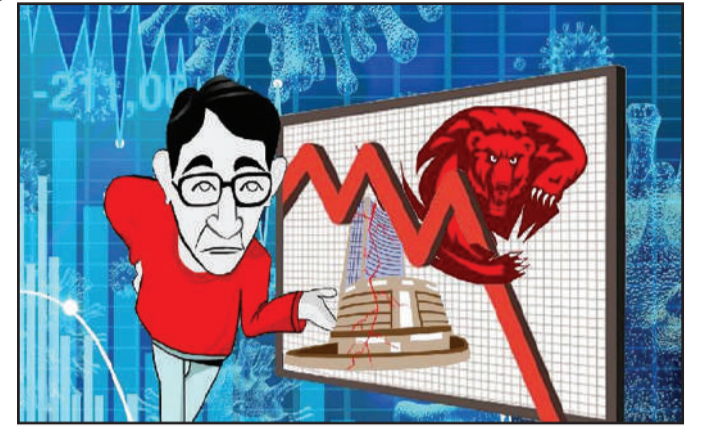
New Delhi: India is at the forefront of global space transformation and is steadily emerging as a major hub for innovation and private sector participation in the space industry, Nidhi Khare, Secretary, Department of Consumer Affairs, has said, it was announced on Friday. Addressing the opening plenary of the 35th ISO TC 20/SC 14 meeting on 'Space Systems and Operations' here, Khare has highlighted that the importance of international collaboration in developing global standards for the space ecosystem, according to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution. "It is a matter of immense pride for India to host this meeting as we stand at the forefront of global space transformation," she said. Khare noted that major policy reforms and the establishment of the Indian National Space Promotion and

Authorization Centre (IN-SPACE) have laid the foundation for India's emergence as a global space hub. According to her, the reforms have created opportunities for startups as well as established industries to expand their participation in the country's rapidly growing space sector. She added that standards developed through international collaboration and shared expertise would play a crucial role in ensuring that space activities remain safe, sustainable and inclusive. The international meeting hosted by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the national standards body of India, has brought together delegates from several countries, including representatives from national standards bodies, international space agencies, industry and academia. BIS Director General Sanjay Garg underlined the importance of standardisation

in strengthening quality, safety and global competitiveness in India's expanding space industry. He said BIS is working to align Indian standards with international frameworks to support the evolving needs of the sector and help Indian private companies compete globally. According to Garg, hosting the ISO meeting in India would also enable Indian experts to participate directly in the global standardisation process, strengthening both domestic capabilities and international cooperation. IN-SPACE Chairman Pawan Goenka said India's space ecosystem is witnessing transformative growth driven by policy reforms and increasing private sector participation. He stressed the importance of robust global standards in supporting innovation, building industry confidence and helping India integrate more deeply into the global space economy.

Sensex, Nifty End Lower As US-Iran Tensions Weigh On Market Sentiment

Mumbai, 8/5: Indian benchmark indices ended lower on Friday as renewed tensions between the United States and Iran dampened investor sentiment and triggered caution across sectors. The selloff was largely led by banking stocks, while gains in IT shares helped limit the downside. The Nifty ended 150.50 points or 0.62 per cent down at 24,176.15 and the Sensex ended 516.33 points or 0.66 per cent down at 77,328.19. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, experts said that the 24,250-24,300 level continues to act as an immediate resistance zone, and a sustained breakout above this mark could strengthen momentum further toward the broader hurdle near the 24,400-24,500 levels. "On the downside, the 24,100-24,000 region remains a crucial support area, which will be important to maintain the current market structure," an analyst stated. Among the top gainers on the Nifty index were Titan, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise and Asian Paints, which managed to buck the broader market

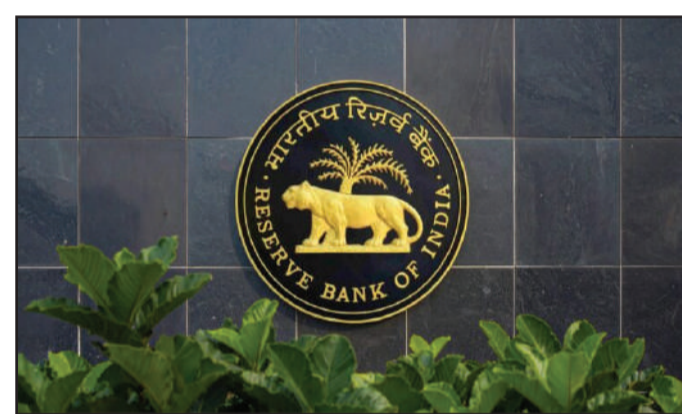


weakness. However, SBI, Coal India, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank and Bajaj Finance were among top laggards. On the sectoral front, banking counters witnessed heavy pressure. The Nifty PSU Bank, Nifty Private Bank, and Nifty Bank indices emerged as the worst-performing sectoral gauges during the session as investors trimmed exposure to financial stocks amid rising global uncertainty. In contrast, the Nifty IT index outperformed other sectors, supported by defensive buying and expectations of stable demand for technology

services. Meanwhile, oil prices moved higher as hopes for a near-term resolution to the conflict in West Asia faded. Brent crude futures rose 0.66 per cent to \$100.72 per barrel on the Intercontinental Exchange, adding to concerns over inflation and potential pressure on economies dependent on oil imports, including India. "Renewed hostilities between US and Iranian forces near the Strait of Hormuz triggered a sharp unwinding of optimism across global markets and risk assets, after Iran claimed the US had violated the ceasefire agreement," an expert stated

Economists Don't Expect RBI To Exhibit Any Urgency To Tighten Policy Rate

New Delhi, 8/5: Economists on Friday said they do not expect the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) monetary policy committee to exhibit any urgency to tighten policy as yet amid fast-evolving geopolitical situation. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said last month that Central Bank is closely monitoring the fallout from the West Asia conflict and will not make firm commitments on the future path of policy rates. He signalled that the central bank was in no hurry to move on rates. "We are in a wait-and-watch mode," he said. According to Radhika Rao, Senior Economist and Executive Director, DBS Bank, India's April inflation is expected to rise to 3.9 per cent YoY from 3.4 per cent in the previous month, edging closer to the mid-point of the target range, versus a benign 2.1 per cent in FY26. Food



inflation is likely to have edged up towards 4.5 per cent from 3.7 per cent, reversing last year's weak momentum, driven by selected perishables such as tomatoes and eggs, along with cereals and edible oils, and further exacerbated by untimely rains in some regions. "Core inflation, however, is expected to remain stable and modest at 3.4 per cent, helped by a pullback in precious

metal prices. Signs of an updrift should also be captured in transport inflation due to ATF prices and services in the restaurant and hospitality sector (commercial cooking gas price adjustments)," said Rao. The broader impact of high global oil prices is yet to percolate through retail inflation, as pump fuel prices remain unchanged. Markets will also monitor El Nino

developments and their impact on monsoon strength. Meanwhile, the jump in imported costs on account of elevated commodity prices and a weak rupee is likely to be more apparent in the WPI gauge, which had already outpaced retail inflation in March and is expected to extend the uptrend in April as well, said the economist. In its April meeting, the RBI kept repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent with a neutral stance. Assocham had appreciated the "calibrated step aimed at strengthening stability in the macroeconomic environment", adding that it helps sustain growth momentum and ensure price stability. Madan Sabnavis, Chief Economist, Bank of Baroda, indicated dimmed likelihood of any further rate cuts as the RBI has flagged El Nino as a risk to inflation, too, and projected a GDP growth at 6.9 per cent and inflation at 4.6 per cent.

Indian Stock Market Slumps As Middle East Tensions Hit Investor Sentiment Hard On Friday

New Delhi, 8/5: Benchmark equity indices plummeted on Friday as escalating military activity near the Strait of Hormuz rattled global investors. Selling pressure intensified throughout the session, causing the BSE Sensex to drop 516.33 points, finishing at 77,328.19. Simultaneously, the Nifty 50 gave up 150.50 points to settle at 24,176.15. This sudden downturn reflects deep anxiety over energy supply routes, as the Strait remains a vital artery for global oil shipments. Renewed military friction between the United States and Iran has stalled expectations for a regional ceasefire. Market analysts noted that these developments forced a "risk-off" mood, where traders liquidate stocks to move into safer assets. Historically, the Indian market has remained sensitive to West Asian instability because the country imports over 80 per cent of its crude oil requirements. While Brent crude hovered near the USD 100 mark, the threat of further escalation prompted widespread profit booking. Public sector banks bore the brunt of the sell-off, with the Nifty PSU Bank index crashing by more than 3 per cent. Metal and auto stocks also faced significant headwinds. Conversely, the IT sector provided a silver lining as the Nifty IT index climbed 1.21 per cent.

India-UAE Ties Deepen Across Defence, Trade And Technology: Report

New Delhi, 8/5: India-UAE ties are deepening across defence, trade, investment and emerging technologies, which reflects a broad-based strategic partnership that continues to expand beyond traditional areas of cooperation, a report has said. The report by The Secretariat noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's



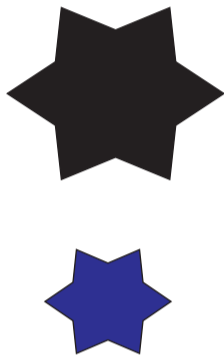
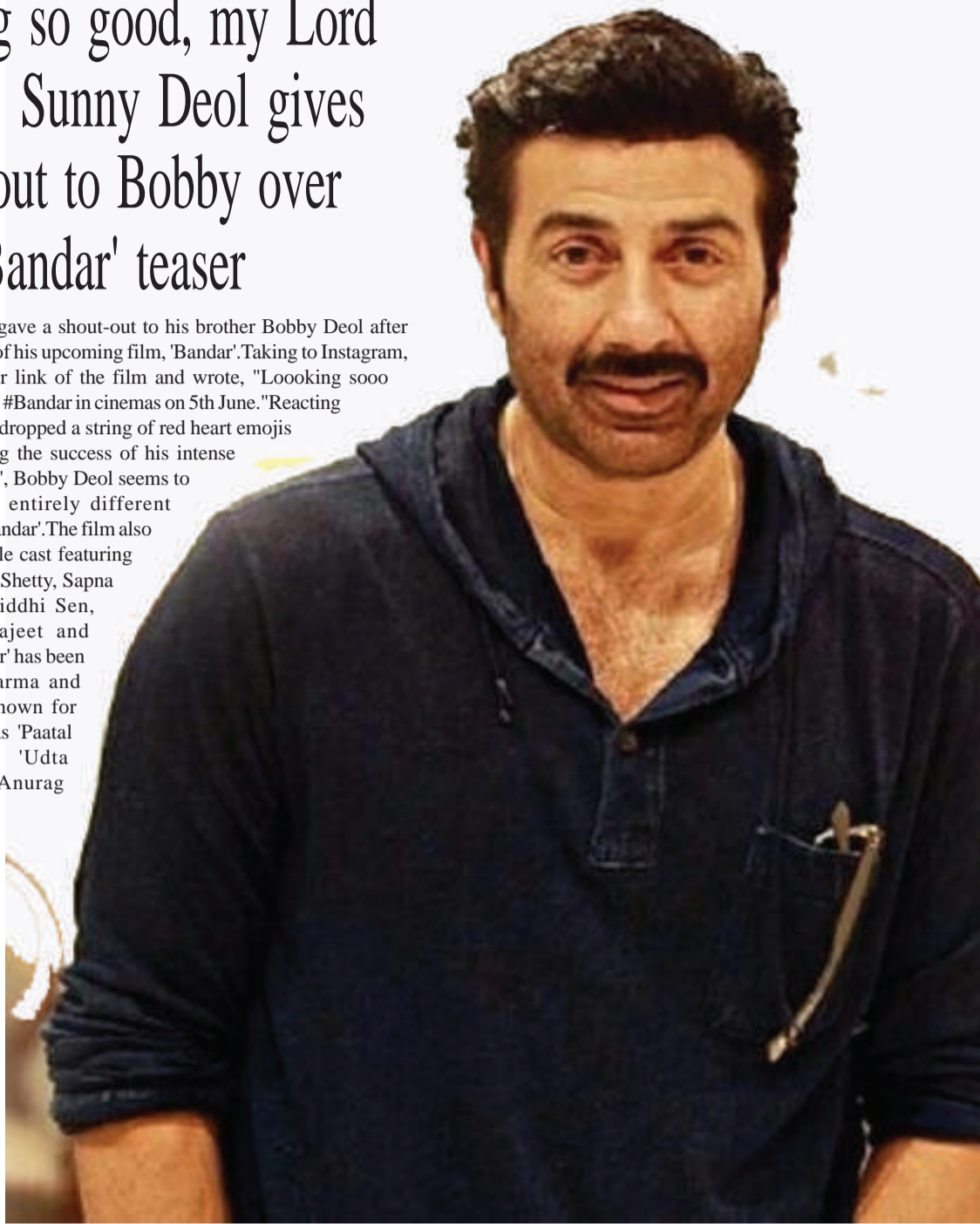
proposed stopover in the United Arab Emirates en route to Europe in May underscores the growing importance of the bilateral relationship, particularly at a time of heightened geopolitical tensions in West Asia. "During the visit of UAE President Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan in January, India and the UAE signed a Letter of Intent for finalising a Strategic Defence Partnership (SDP) framework to strengthen the defence partnership," the report said. It further stated that the visit is not only a reflection of India's engagement with the Gulf leadership amid ongoing regional instability, but also highlights the strategic convergence between the two countries in sectors ranging from energy security to investments and diaspora linkages. According to the report,

India and the UAE are now increasingly aligned as strategic partners, with cooperation extending to defence manufacturing, maritime security and counter-terror coordination. The report outlined that the Indian diaspora in the UAE has also become a major pillar of the relationship, contributing significantly to the Gulf nation's economy while strengthening India's global outreach. It highlighted that defence cooperation between the two countries has expanded in recent years, moving beyond a buyer-seller dynamic to structured engagement through institutional mechanisms such as the Joint Defence Co-operation Committee (JDCC). It pointed out the growing interest in joint ventures and industry partnerships in the defence

sector. On the economic front, bilateral trade has crossed significant milestones following the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), making the UAE India's third-largest trading partner and a major export destination. Investment flows, including sovereign wealth fund participation, have also increased substantially, it said. The report added that both countries are now exploring collaboration in artificial intelligence, supercomputing, digital public infrastructure and energy transition technologies, signalling a shift towards a high-tech strategic partnership. However, it cautioned that India must carefully balance its broader West Asia engagements while deepening ties with the UAE.

"Looking so good, my Lord Bobby": Sunny Deol gives shout out to Bobby over 'Bandar' teaser

Sunny Deol on Friday gave a shout-out to his brother Bobby Deol after the release of the teaser of his upcoming film, 'Bandar'. Taking to Instagram, Sunny posted the teaser link of the film and wrote, "Looking sooo goood my Lord Bobby. #Bandar in cinemas on 5th June." Reacting to Sunny's post, Bobby dropped a string of red heart emojis in the section. Following the success of his intense performance in 'Animal', Bobby Deol seems to be venturing into an entirely different cinematic space with 'Bandar'. The film also boasts a strong ensemble cast featuring Sanya Malhotra, Raj B Shetty, Sapna Pabbi, Saba Azad, Riddhi Sen, Jitendra Joshi, Indrajeet and Nagesh Bhonsle. 'Bandar' has been penned by Sudip Sharma and Abhishek Banerjee, known for acclaimed titles such as 'Paatal Lok', 'Kohrra' and 'Udta Punjab'. Directed by Anurag



Shakira returns to football stage with new 2026 FIFA World Cup anthem Dai Dai

Shakira returns to football stage with new 2026 FIFA World Cup anthem Dai Dai. Shakira has officially returned to the football spotlight by revealing a teaser for 'Dai Dai', her newest anthem for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. This upcoming track features Nigerian superstar Burna Boy and is scheduled for a full release on May 14. Fans received a first look through a one-minute video filmed at the historic Maracana Stadium in Brazil, signaling the singer's first official tournament song since her 2010 global sensation. Teaming up with Burna Boy brings an Afrobeats influence to the tournament, reflecting the diverse culture of the host nations. This partnership follows her legendary success with 'Waka Waka (This Time for Africa)', which dominated music charts for nearly a year. While she has performed at multiple closing ceremonies, this marks her formal return as the voice of the world's biggest sporting event. Hosting duties for 2026 will be shared across the United States, Canada, and Mexico, making it the most geographically vast competition in football history. With 104 matches scheduled, the energy of 'Dai Dai' will need to resonate across sixteen different host cities. Historically, World Cup anthems serve as vital cultural bridges, often becoming more memorable than the matches themselves, much like the 1998 hit by Ricky Martin. Opening ceremonies begin in Mexico City, while the final showdown will take place in New Jersey. Fans are already drawing parallels between this new rhythmic teaser and her previous record-breaking hits, hoping for another melody that unites stadiums worldwide.



SPORTS

Global Chess League Returns To India For Season 4

New Delhi, 8/9: The Global Chess League (GCL) and FIDE on Friday announced that season 4 will take place in India, a country where chess is not just played, but lived, followed, and celebrated like never before, with the host city to be announced in the coming days. The last edition of the Global Chess League took place in Mumbai in December 2025. Alpine SG Pipers won the title after a strong campaign. Since it started, the league has aimed to change the game with a fast-paced franchise-based format. It features rapid matches and mixed-gender teams, hoping to make chess a popular spectator sport worldwide. Across previous seasons, India has delivered packed arenas, electric fan zones, and a surge of digital engagement that has reshaped how chess connects with audiences. Season 4 will once again bring together the world's leading players in a team-based format that blends elite competition with high-intensity storytelling. Arkady Dvorkovich,



president, FIDE, said, "India continues to play a defining role in the global growth of chess, both through its exceptional talent and the passion of its fans. The Global Chess League has introduced a new energy to the sport by combining world-class competition with an engaging team format that appeals to new

and existing audiences alike. We are excited to bring Season 4 to India and look forward to celebrating the game with millions of fans who are helping shape the future of chess worldwide." Gourav Rakshit, Commissioner, Tech Mahindra Global Chess League, said, "The Global Chess League has played

a pivotal role in transforming chess into a more dynamic and spectator-friendly sport. India's passion for the game and its rapidly growing chess ecosystem make it a natural destination for the league. We look forward to another exciting season that brings together the world's best players and a global fanbase."

New Rules Are Introduced To Maintain The IPL's Transparency: BCCI Vice President Rajeev Shukla

Lucknow 8/9: BCCI vice president Rajeev Shukla said the governing body is rolling out stricter regulations for all IPL players to improve transparency and strengthen security arrangements during the tournament. Shukla stated that fans and outsiders will no longer be allowed to meet players inside team hotels or buses, with the new rules expected to be implemented in the coming days to ensure tighter protocols and better protection for cricketers throughout the league. "New rules are in the works, and, according to the news directives, player access will be



regulated. Unauthorised individuals will not be allowed to approach players, whether at the hotel or on the team bus.

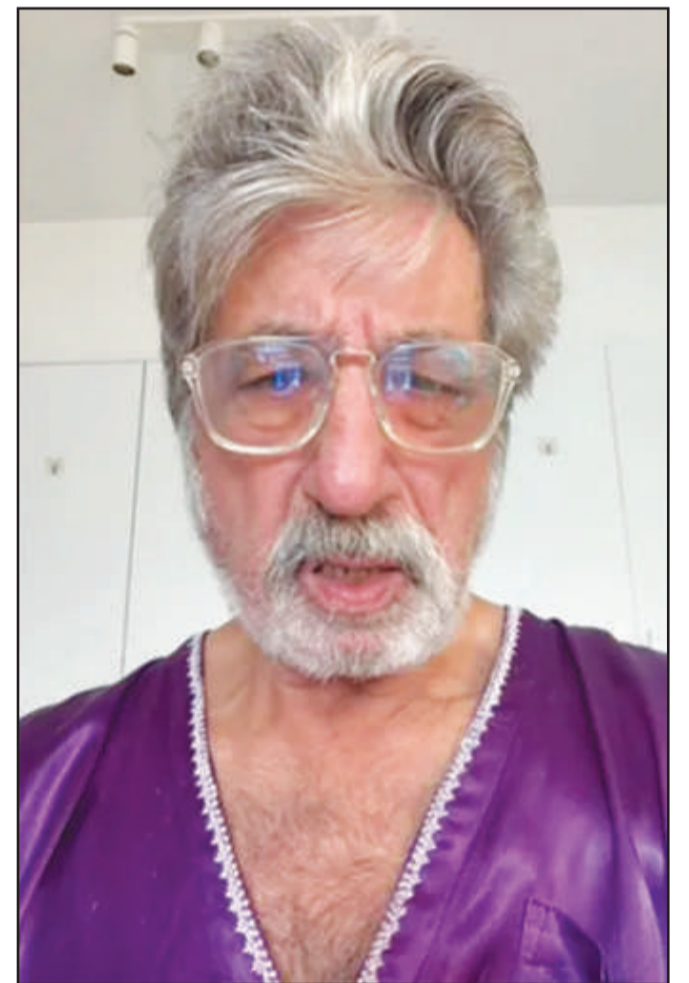
These rules are expected to be implemented within the next few days to ensure that the transparency of the IPL is

maintained completely," Shukla said. Earlier on Friday, the BCCI issued seven pages of guidelines for the 10 IPL franchises, warning them about the potential dangers of targeted honey-trapping during the league. The board said it will conduct unannounced "surprise checks" to ensure strict adherence to the league's extensive regulatory framework and operational guidelines. According to the directive, Saikia noted that no one is permitted to enter a team member's room, regardless of their relationship with the player or official, without the prior knowledge and approval of the team manager.

Shakti Kapoor calls viral death rumours "not good," assures fans he is safe

Veteran actor Shakti Kapoor has reacted strongly after fake reports about his death started circulating online. The actor called the rumours "completely fake" and said he is "healthy and happy." In a video message shared on his Instagram account, Shakti Kapoor called rumours "not good." The veteran actor said he plans to take legal action and file a cyber complaint against those spreading the false news. Addressing his fans and followers, Kapoor said, "Hello everyone, the news of my death is completely fake. I am healthy and happy. Please ignore it. I am going to cyber complain about it. But this is not good. That's not good."

Shakti Kapoor is one of Bollywood's most popular character actors and is known for playing both comic and villainous roles. Over the years, he has appeared in more than 700 films and became especially famous during the 1980s and 1990s. Some of his well-known films include 'Raja Babu', 'Andaz Apna Apna', 'ChaalBaaz', 'Coolie No. 1', 'Judwaa', 'Satte Pe Satta' and 'Bol Radha Bol'. The actor was last seen in 'Mere Husband Ki Biwi', directed by Mudassar Aziz. The film starred Arjun



Kapoor, Rakul Preet Singh and Bhumi Pednekar in lead roles. Before that, he also appeared in

Sandeep Reddy Vanga's Animal alongside Ranbir Kapoor, Anil Kapoor and Rashmika Mandanna

Neetu Kapoor Delivers Emotional Masterclass in Family Comedy Daadi Ki Shaadi

Neetu Kapoor brings a rare blend of grace and vulnerability to her role as Vimla Ahuja in the newly released drama, Daadi Ki Shaadi. Set against the scenic, mist-covered backdrop of Shimla, the plot centers on a widow whose life turns upside down after a social media post about her desire to remarry goes viral. While the movie introduces a refreshing conversation about elderly companionship, it often struggles to maintain its momentum over a lengthy runtime. Vimla's sudden digital announcement serves as a wake-up call for her three adult children, who return to their ancestral home out of social

anxiety rather than genuine concern. Joining this family reunion is Tony Kalra, portrayed by Kapil Sharma, who acts as a comedic bridge between the clashing generations. Sharma's natural timing provides essential levity during the first half, making the friction between the Ahuja and Kalra families feel both relatable and humorous. Riddhima Kapoor Sahni enters the acting world at 45, playing Vimla's daughter with a grounded sense of realism. Her performance adds a layer of authenticity to the sibling dynamics, reflecting a modern family's struggle with guilt and

responsibility. Viewers in regions like Odisha, where traditional family structures are highly valued, will likely find the film's focus on the isolation of the elderly particularly moving. However, the second half of the story falters as the screenplay transitions into heavy melodrama. The narrative loses its light-hearted charm and begins to resemble older, lecture-heavy films that focus more on shaming children than exploring the parents' emotional needs. Instead of diving deeper into Vimla's personal growth, the script relies on repetitive arguments and predictable emotional cues.