

# Dumani Mail

Published simultaneously from NEW DELHI, Bhubaneswar (Odisha), Keonjhar (Odisha).



## NEET Exam cancelled over paper leak allegations; CBI probe ordered



New Delhi: The National Testing Agency has decided to cancel the NEET (UG) 2026 examination conducted on 3rd of this month for admission to undergraduate medical education.

In a social media post, NTA informed that this decision has been taken in the interest of students and in recognition of the trust on which the national examination system rests.

The agency also stated that the government has decided to refer the matter to the Central Bureau of Investigation, CBI for a comprehensive inquiry into the allegations of paper leak.

The agency said it will extend full cooperation to the Bureau and provide all materials, records, and

assistance required for the investigation.

It said the decision was taken following inputs examined by the NTA in coordination with central agencies and investigative findings shared by law enforcement agencies.

The NTA said that the examination will be reconducted on dates to be notified separately.

The registration details, candidature information, and examination centres selected for the May 2026 cycle will remain unchanged and be carried forward to the reconducted examination. The agency informed that no fresh registration will be required, and no additional examination fee will be levied.

## Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya addresses CII Annual Business Summit 2026 in New Delhi

New Delhi: Union Labour and Employment Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has said that the government has worked towards expanding social security coverage for workers while reducing the compliance burden on industries in the country.

The Minister was addressing the CII Annual Business Summit 2026 on "Next-Gen Labour Reforms: Driving Industry Growth and Job Creation" in New Delhi.

The Minister said social security coverage has increased from 29 crore people a decade ago to 94 crore at present. Highlighting the new labour codes, Mr Mandaviya said the reforms are both labour-centric and industry-centric.

He added that the government is committed to being pro-poor, pro-farmer and industry-friendly and stressed the need for industry and labour to move together towards a shared future.



New Delhi: AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi over austerity measures he has asked people to follow and said he needs to tell people about the condition of the country's economy.

Addressing a press conference, Kejriwal said the country has passed through crises, including wars, in the past, but no prime minister before Modi announced seven most stringent steps, requesting people to follow them.

He also said the obvious reason behind the austerity measures suggested by Modi was the ongoing war between America and Iran, but "there could be some

other reason behind the slipping economy of the country".

The former Delhi chief minister also questioned why all the austerity measures were targeted at the middle class and why the prime minister himself, ministers, officers and ultra rich of the country should not have to make the sacrifices.

The prime minister recently appealed to people to limit their purchase of gold, foreign travel and use of petroleum consumption among several other suggestions. The opposition has attacked the ruling party over the remarks and termed them "evidence of failure".

## PM Modi to be on 6-day visit to UAE, Netherlands, Sweden, Norway & Italy beginning Friday

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be on a six-day visit to the United Arab Emirates UAE, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, and Italy from Friday.

The visit will further deepen India's partnership with Europe across sectors, particularly trade and investment ties in light of the recently concluded India-EU FTA.

On the first leg of his five-nation visit, Mr Modi will reach UAE on Friday, where he will meet the President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The two leaders will exchange views on bilateral issues, in particular energy cooperation, as well as regional and international

issues of mutual interest.

Then the Prime Minister will reach the Netherlands on Friday and call on King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima. He will also hold talks with Prime Minister Rob Jetten.

Prime Minister's visit will build on the momentum of high-level engagements and close cooperation spanning diverse sectors, including defence, security, innovation, green hydrogen, semiconductors and a Strategic Partnership on Water.

For the third leg of the visit, Mr Modi will travel to Gothenburg, Sweden on Sunday and hold bilateral talks with his Swedish counterpart, Ulf



Kristersson. They will review the entire bilateral relationship and explore new avenues of cooperation. The two Prime Ministers will also address the European Round Table

for Industry, a leading pan-European business leaders forum, along with President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen. In the fourth leg of his visit, the Prime Minister

will reach Norway on Monday for the 3rd India-Nordic Summit and bilateral engagements.

Prime Minister will call on King Harald V and Queen Sonja and hold bilateral talks

with Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre.

Mr Modi will also address the India-Norway Business and Research Summit along with the Norwegian Prime Minister. As part of the final leg of his visit, the Prime Minister will undertake an official visit to Italy on Tuesday.

Mr Modi had last visited Italy in June 2024 for the G7 Summit. During the visit, Mr Modi will call on the Italian President Sergio Mattarella and hold talks with Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.

The visit takes place in the backdrop of a strong momentum in bilateral ties with both sides proactively implementing the Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-2029.

## Prashant Pise appointed as next Ambassador of India to Sultanate of Oman

New Delhi: Additional Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, Prashant Pise, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman.

A 1995 batch Indian Foreign Service officer, Mr Pise, will succeed Godavarthi Venkata Srinivas from the 1993 Indian Foreign Service batch in Muscat. Mr Pise's first overseas posting was in Cairo from 1997 to 2000.

He then worked in Tripoli till 2004. He also served in the Eurasia and United Nations Economic and Social Divisions in the Ministry of External Affairs as Deputy Secretary from 2004 to 2006, working with Russia, the Commonwealth of Independent States, Central Asia, and United Nations matters related to economic and social issues.

He presently holds the position of Additional Secretary (Emigration Policy and Welfare) in the Ministry of External Affairs and led the Indian delegation to the eighth Ministerial Consultations of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue held in Dubai in February 2026.

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## IMD issues 'yellow alert' for Delhi-NCR, forecasts thunderstorms and light rain

New Delhi: forecasting light rain accompanied by thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds across the national capital on Tuesday.

According to the weather agency, Delhi is likely to witness "very light to light rainfall" during the day, along with thunderstorms and lightning activity.

Wind speeds are expected to range between 30-40 kmph during the forenoon and may intensify to 40-50 kmph later in the day.

The IMD said similar weather conditions are likely to persist through the evening and night. The maximum and minimum temperatures are expected to settle around 36 degrees Celsius and 28 degrees Celsius, respectively.

In its advisory, the IMD urged residents to remain cautious in view of the gusty winds and thunderstorm activity. People have been advised to avoid standing in open areas or taking shelter under trees and electric poles during

thunderstorms.

The weather agency also warned that traffic movement could be disrupted in some parts of the city due to rain and strong winds. Farmers and those engaged in construction activities have been advised to take necessary precautions.

Meteorologists attributed the sudden change in weather conditions across the NCR to the influence of a western disturbance coupled with local meteorological activity.

## ED arrests former West Bengal Minister Sujit Basu

New Delhi: Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested the former Fire and Emergency Services minister of the Government of West Bengal, Sujit Basu, in Kolkata in connection with the South Dum Dum Municipality Recruitment Scam. Officials at the ED said that Bose allegedly recommended around 150 candidates for various posts under the South Dum Dum Municipality in exchange for pecuniary benefits during the former TMC regime.

The officials noted that ED has traced direct proceeds of crime in the form of flats allegedly acquired by him in lieu of providing municipal jobs to various individuals. The probe

agency have also identified substantial cash deposits in bank accounts under his control. Mr Bose will be produced before the Special Court today. Akashvani correspondent reports that Enforcement Directorate on Monday night arrested former fire and emergency services minister of West Bengal Sujit Bose over alleged corruption in recruitments to South Dum Dum Municipality, where he was vice-chairman from 2010 to 2021.

After more than 10 hours of interrogation, he is the first former minister to be arrested since the BJP government took charge in Bengal. The alleged irregularities took place

between 2014 and 2016, ED officials said. According to ED sources, across 17 municipalities, about 1,000 employees were recruited unlawfully. In the recent Assembly poll, Bose lost to the BJP by over 37,000 votes.

According to the Enforcement Directorate, the arrest was made under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Investigators have alleged that Bose recommended appointments of several candidates in the South Dum Dum Municipality in exchange for financial benefits. The agency has also reportedly traced suspicious financial transactions during the course of the investigation.

## Supreme Court suggests expeditious disposal of bail applications pending in HCs across country

New Delhi: The Supreme Court today suggested a series of measures for the expeditious disposal of bail applications pending in high courts across the country. A bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi emphasised the need for a robust mechanism to ensure timely hearings of anticipatory and regular bail pleas while safeguarding the rights of victims. The apex court suggested automatic listing of bail applications, fixing an outer timeline for their disposal and prioritising such matters in cause lists. It also recommended that bail pleas be listed weekly or fortnightly through a software-based system to avoid delays.

The court observed that the pendency of bail applications was particularly high in the Allahabad High Court and called for a definite hearing mechanism. Similar concerns were also raised regarding delays in the Patna High Court. The bench stressed that avoidable adjournments by government counsel should be discouraged and reminded courts of their duty to protect personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution.

The Supreme Court also underlined the importance of timely forensic science laboratory reports, especially in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) cases, and said investigating officers must ensure victims are able to participate in proceedings and avail legal representation.

## President confers National Florence Nightingale Awards to fifteen Nursing professionals

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu today conferred the National Florence Nightingale Awards 2026 to fifteen Nursing professionals at a function held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The award has been given for their outstanding contribution in the field of nursing.

These prestigious awards are presented to Registered Nurses, Midwives, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives, and

Lady Health Visitors serving across Central and State Governments, Union Territories, and voluntary organisations.

Each award includes a Certificate of Merit, a cash prize of one lakh rupees and a medal symbolising the nation's gratitude for the invaluable service rendered by these health warriors.

In her message, President Murmu stated that this occasion is a fitting tribute to the



invaluable contribution of nursing personnel and healthcare professionals

who serve the nation with compassion and unwavering dedication.

She said nursing personnel exemplify the highest standards of service and play a crucial role in delivering quality healthcare, often in the most challenging circumstances.

The President commended all the awardees for their inspiring devotion to duty and their tireless efforts in upholding the highest standards of patient care.

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare

Jagat Prakash Nadda, Ministers of State for Health Prataprao Jadhav and other senior officials were present at the occasion.

The National Florence Nightingale Award was instituted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 1973.

This award is given as a mark of recognition for the meritorious services rendered by the nurses and nursing professionals to society.

# Murder accused sentenced to life imprisonment

Keonjhar : Keonjhar District Session Judge Gopal Chandra Behera today sentenced Chasha Dehuri (30) to life imprisonment and imposed fine of Rs 10,000 in a murder case. He also sentenced him to one year in jail in addition, for nonpayment of the fine. The deceased was identified as Nila Dehury, 30, of Kadakala village under Banspal block.

According to public prosecutor Pradip Kumar Das, on October 7, 2021, the deceased Nila from Kadakala village under Nayakot police station was grazing cattle with Jagdish Dehuri and Sagu Dehuri of Nilagiri village. At around 4 pm, Chasha Dehuri of the said village fought with them over a previous



enmity. Chasha got angry and hit them with the wooden handle of an axe. Later, Chasha went home in anger, returned with a bow and arrow and shot Nila, who died on the spot. The others

escaped. After the deceased Neel's brother Ramesh Giri, filed a complaint at the Nayakot police station regarding this incident, the police reached the spot and recovered the body. The police registered a case under Section 302, arrested Chasha and forwarded him to court. Swarnamani Hembram, investigation officer conducted the investigation, and submitted chargesheet to the court. The court passed the above sentence based on the statements of 9 witnesses and the police investigation report. The court also ordered the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) to pay compensation to the deceased's legal heirs.

# TPNODL Contract Employees Stage Demonstration Over Job Termination

Keonjhar : Contract workers of Tata Power ( TPNODL) staged a protest against the company over alleged illegal retrenchment of staffs. Hundreds of workers demonstrated and raised slogans in front of the Executive Engineer's office in Anandapur, demanding justice.



It has been alleged that TPNODL, the private power distribution company under the Anandapur Sub-Division Electricity Department, has retrenched several contract workers without proper justification. The workers submitted a memorandum addressed to the CEO through the Executive Officer and warned that their agitation would continue until their demands are fulfilled. The workers stated that many of them had been serving the company as contract employees for a long period, and the sudden termination of their jobs has caused severe distress among them and their

families. They further alleged that the retrenchment was carried out without prior notice or valid reason, which they termed unfair and inhumane.

The protesting workers demanded the immediate reinstatement of all retrenched employees, job security for contract workers, and an end to what they described as exploitation by the company management. Speaking on the occasion, Debapriya Patra, President of the Keonjhar District

Electricity Employees' Union, said that the workers have been serving the company sincerely despite low wages and difficult working conditions. He warned that if the management fails to address their grievances at the earliest, the agitation would be intensified in the coming days. The union also cautioned that if the alleged illegal retrenchment is not stopped immediately, hundreds of workers will take to the streets and launch a massive protest across the district.

# Keranga Annual Peace Conference concludes

*Children of God, we are all brothers: Maulana Fazl Haq Khan*

Khordha : The two-day 59th Keranga Annual Peace Conference, organized by Keranga Ahmadiyya Muslim Organization on the outskirts of Khordha, has concluded. Keranga President Osim Ahmad Khan presided over the first session of the second day. The meeting began with the recitation of the Holy Quran. Nasar Khan recited the Holy Quran while Halimuddin Khan read the Odia translation. Urdu Nazm Sangeet Osi Ahmad Khan performed. Maulana Akhtaruddin Khan, who joined as the first speaker, spoke on the subject of financial assistance and bequest institutions. Maulana Syed Fazle Naim, who joined as the second speaker, called on people to become believers in God. Maulana Shek Ishaq joined as the third speaker and highlighted Islamic principles and education for building good character. Maulana Ataul Mujib Lone, Central Secretary, Reforms and Guidance, Ahmadiyya Muslims, presided over the closing ceremony of the second session.



Taslim Ahmad recited the Holy Quran while Muhammad Fazle Umar read the Odia translation. Ishaq Ali performed Urdu Nazm. Maulana Fazl Haq Khan of Cuttack joined as the keynote speaker and spoke about religious tolerance and freedom of conscience, saying that we are all children of God. That is why we are all brothers and sisters of mankind. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is our identity. He called upon everyone to establish

lasting peace, brotherhood, unity and integrity in the world. Former MLA, of Jatni Suresh Rautray, former Cuttack Barabati MLA and Odisha Janata Congress Party President Mohammad Mukim, Rabi Satpathy, Manamath Rautray and Subendu Mallick were the guests of honour in this conference and shared their views on strong nation building, development and progress of the nation and world outlook. The outstanding

performance of the students of Keranga in the field of higher education were awarded by the chief guest and president. Maulana Halim Aham read out the message of peace for the believers of Eminence Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, the Supreme Head of the World Ahmadiyya Muslim Organization. Odia Nazam Masood Khan performed. In his presidential address, Maulana Ataul Mujib Lon said that it is very important for children to be cultured. This is possible through good education. Keranga President Osman Ahmed Khan proposed the vote of thanks. At the end of the conference, a collective musical Tarana was performed by the Youth Union of Keranga and Mahimudabad villages. A collective prayer for world peace was offered and a gathering was held. Many delegates from Kerala m, Karnataka, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab and hundreds of Ahmadiyya Muslims from various districts of Odisha participated in this conference.

# TPNODL Contract Employees Stage Demonstration Over Job Termination

Keonjhar : Contract workers of Tata Power ( TPNODL) staged a protest against the company over the alleged illegal retrenchment of staff in the Keonjhar, Ghasipura and Joda electricity division offices. Hundreds of workers staged protests at the Executive Engineer's offices in Keonjhar, Ghasipura and Anandapur, raising slogans and demonstrating to demand justice.



It has been alleged that TPNODL, the private power distribution company under the Anandapur Sub-Division Electricity Department, retrenched several contract workers without proper justification. The workers submitted a memorandum addressed to the CEO through the Executive Officer and warned that

their agitation would continue until their demands are fulfilled.

Sanjib Giri, the employees' leader, said, "About 400 workers mostly linemen and helpers, will receive notices of retrenchment. Our demands are cessation of retrenchment, immediate re-engagement, unconditional continuity of service, and restoration of peace. The protest

will continue until the dispute is settled. Superintendent of Engineering, TPNODL, Keonjhar Minaketan Samal said " The management has taken the decision and I cant comment on the policy decision of the management. But hundreds of workers get notice, for which they staged protest". The workers stated that many of them had been serving the company as

contract employees for a long period, and the sudden termination of their jobs has caused severe distress among them and their families. They further alleged that the retrenchment was carried out without prior notice or valid reason, which they termed unfair and inhumane. The protesting workers demanded the immediate reinstatement of all retrenched employees, job security for contract workers, and an end to what they described as exploitation by the company management. Speaking on the occasion, Division Secretary Trilochan Moharana said that the workers have been serving the company sincerely despite low wages and difficult working conditions. He warned that if the management fails to address.

# Delays in Construction of ROB at Khariar Road : People are facing problems in commuting

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD : The construction of the Railway Over Bridge (ROB) on National Highway 353 at Khariar Road in Nuapada district, Odisha, is experiencing delays primarily due to slow progress in the construction of approach roads and general infrastructural bottlenecks on the NH-353 stretch.

in lieu of existing level crossing No.RV-71 at Km 435 on NH-353 at Khariar Road is underway by Agency namely Ashirbad Eng. & Construction PVT. Ltd with estimated cost Rs.77, 49, 01,515/-.

While the central government has prioritized the upgrading of this section to a 4-lane road to improve connectivity between Chhattisgarh and Odisha, the project has faced significant challenges. The delay in constructing this ROB, which connects Chhattisgarh to Odisha, has resulted in traffic bottlenecks for residents, traders and commuters.

When the work was started, an information board was installed where date of commencement of the construction was mentioned 27/06/2023 and stipulated date of completion was 26/12/2024. When contacted to NH SDO Kailash Chandra Dash said, the period of completion was extended up to April 2026 and due to some problem the completion of the work is getting delayed.

Construction works of four lane ROB and it's approach roads

It is alleged by the people of Khariar Road that the substandard materials are using for the construction works.

# Politics Intensifies Over Brutal Attack in Kanas Area

## Photo of Main Accused With Satyabadi MLA Goes Viral; Former MLA Rama Ranjan Baliarsingh Raises Questions

Puri: The political atmosphere has heated up over the brutal attack that took place on the 2nd in the Kanas block area. Alleging that no concrete action has been taken even after nine days of the incident, former Satyabadi MLA Rama Ranjan Baliarsingh reacted sharply during a press conference. He said the incident has created a sensation at the national level and strongly condemned it.

currently hiding and what happened to the Bullet motorcycle and scooter allegedly used in the crime. He further alleged that thousands of trips of illegally stored sand are lying in front of the accused's house, yet the administration has not seized it. The former MLA said there should also be a fair investigation into whose houses the accused visited after the attack. He directly alleged that the role of the Satyabadi MLA in the entire episode should be investigated and that those operating behind the scenes should also be made co-accused.



The former MLA stated that it was extremely painful for such an incident to occur in his own village. He also questioned the Superintendent of Police's statement describing the matter as a dispute between two groups. He remarked, "Has the MLA become the spokesperson of the Home Department?" Rama Ranjan Baliarsingh claimed that photographs of the main accused with the Satyabadi MLA are circulating on social media. According to him, the horrific incident was carried out under the provocation of sand mafias. He said that in his 40 years of political life, he had never witnessed such a horrifying incident. Raising several serious questions, he asked where the main accused is

He also questioned the functioning of the Revenue and Mining Departments. According to him, the victim's brother had been threatened a day before the incident. He further claimed that the four individuals said to have been arrested were not actually arrested but had surrendered at the direction of the MLA.

Rama Ranjan Baliarsingh demanded that the National Security Act (NSA) be invoked against the attackers. He warned that if strict action is not taken, the law-and-order situation in the Kanas area could deteriorate further in the coming days.

# Memorandum Submitted to Union Minister Seeking Inclusion of OBCs in Census

## Caste Census Will Be Ensured: Dharmendra Pradhan

Sambalpur-(DMS) : The State OBC Forum submitted a memorandum to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan demanding the inclusion of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in Column 12 of the Central Government census form and Column 13 of the State Government census form in the ongoing caste census exercise.

nationwide caste census after 94 years is a welcome step. It said the census helps gather data related to population, social, economic, educational, occupational and living conditions, which enables the government to formulate policies and welfare schemes in proportion to the population.

The memorandum was handed over at the local Circuit House under the leadership of State OBC Forum President Shankar Kumar Patra.

The memorandum pointed out that while Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are identified under Articles 341 and 342 of the Constitution, OBC communities are recognized under Article 340. Odisha alone has nearly 200 OBC castes, which are entitled



to reservations in education, government jobs, Panchayati Raj institutions and urban local bodies.

The forum also stated that the Kaka Kalelkar Commission, Mandal Commission and Rohini Commission had

recommended caste-based enumeration of OBCs. It argued that without proper data, planning and allocation of funds

for the development of OBC communities would not be possible.

According to the memorandum, excluding more than 75 crore OBC population across the country from the census would be unfortunate. The organization further claimed that around 52 percent of Odisha's population belongs to the OBC category and that ignoring them would make the vision of a developed India incomplete.

The forum warned that if OBCs are not included in the ongoing census, it would be compelled to launch a

statewide awareness campaign and agitation across Odisha.

After receiving the memorandum, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan assured the delegation that caste-based census provisions would be ensured.

Among those present were State OBC Forum General Secretary Hiralal Behera, Vice-President Naren Sahu, spokesperson Biranchi Sahu and hundreds of OBC activists from Sambalpur, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Balangir, Kalahandi, Sundargarh and Deogarh districts.

Joint public grievances hearing camp held in Haja Gram Panchayat.



Khordha : A joint public grievances hearing camp of the khordha district administration was held i at Haja Gram Panchayat under Begunia block, khordha under the chairmanship of Zilla Parishad Chief Development and Executive Officer, Jyoti Shankar Sahu.MLA, Begunia, Pradeep Kumar Sahu, Sub-Collector,Kordha, Sankalp Swastik Sahu, Deputy Superintendent of Police,Assistant Collector, Grievances, BDO and Tehsildar, Begunia, Haja Gram Panchayat Sarpancha Damayanti Samantray participated prominently and co-operated with the district administration in hearing various grievances of the public. A total of 118 grievances were received in this camp, out of which 106

grievances were individual and 12 grievances were related to collective problems. Zilla Parishad Chief Development and Executive Officer, Jyoti Shankar Sahu resolved 81 grievances on the spot and order the official to resolve the other grievances as soon as possible as per the law. MLA, Pradeep Kumar Sahu, Zilla Parishad Chief Development and Executive Officer, Jyoti Shankar Sahu and all the officers visited the education and information stalls opened towards the successful implementation of various development and flagship schemes of the state and central governments. All the district level officers of various departments and media representatives were present at this camp.

Encroachment was evicted for the JMFC court building



Keonjhar: Local protests occurred in the Putulia village under the Patna police station area on Monday when the local administration began demolishing houses on encroached plots. The plot was cleared for the construction of the JMFC court building. The administration, in the presence of Magistrate Rabi Shankar Hembram, additional tahasildar, demolished three houses including a broiler farm house and cleared the encroachment. During the protest, women came in front of the JCB vehicle despite police

deployment. Because of this, the woman confronted the police for some time, and the situation became tense. A platoon of police has been deployed at the scene as tension prevails. The administration demolishing one tiled house, one tin-roofed house and the broiler farm house with the help of a JCB. Patna Tahasildar Ashwani Kumar Nayak said, "3 acres and 48 decimals of land are required for the JMFC court. Three houses were demolished and other encroachments were cleared. Notice was issued earlier as per the law."

Children suffering from thalassemia underwent free Bone Marrow Transplant

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD : Two children from Nuapada suffering from Thalassemia has undergone free bone marrow transplant in Mumbai in the efforts of Marwari Yuva Manch Jagriti Sakha Khariar Road. After a successful operation, the children have now returned home healthy on Monday evening. Blood has now started forming in their body. It is to be noted that Jagriti Sakha Khariar Road had organised HLA (Human Leukocyte Antigen) Test Camp for children suffering from Sickle Cell and

Thalassemia on 23rd January 2024 at Agrasen Bhawan. Children from Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh had reached the camp. The siblings of the affected children and their parents were tested. 9 children had 100% HLA match for free BMT (Bone Marrow Transplant). Project Director Rachna Jain informed in a press meet that four children had left for Mumbai Hospital for BMT. Of these, a girl namely Rekha Rana D/o - Hrushikesh Rana of village Mahuabhatha, Nuapada returned after successful

BMT on 17th December 2025. Now on Monday ( 11th May 2026, two children namely Yashbant Rana son of Basanta Rana of Komna and Gorakhnath Rana son of Bhupendra Rana of village Mahuabhatha returned after successful BMT. Parents of the children said that the treatment was free, for this they expressed their gratitude to the Jagriti Sakha Khariar Road. Jagriti Sakha Secretary Sonal Dongarwal, Kanta Jain, Anita Agarwal, Rachna Jain were present in this Press Meet at Agrasen Bhawan Khariar Road.



'Samayara Chakra' 15th Anniversary Celebrated with Poetry Recital, Talent Awards, and Cultural Program

Balasure, 12/5 (Krushna Kumar Mohanty): The 15th anniversary celebration of the monthly news-based magazine 'Samayara Chakra', regularly published from Balasure, was held at Gandhi Smruti Bhavan premises with grandeur and enthusiasm. The occasion featured poetry recitation sessions, talent felicitation ceremonies, discussion forums, and cultural

programmes. Speakers at the event observed that no newspaper or magazine can attain true recognition without literature. They stated that while the path of truthful journalism is filled with challenges, falsehood can never permanently establish anyone on the throne of credibility. They further remarked that every human life is like an open page of a

newspaper, where one should leave behind such meaningful signatures that future generations may learn the art of living from them. The guests also appreciated 'Samayara Chakra' for extending its role beyond journalism by actively participating in social service, talent recognition, cultural activities, and regional development initiatives, thereby contributing towards the creation

of a progressive society. Associate Editor Satyabhama Jena welcomed the guests, while Prof. Dr. Ashwini Kumar Pradhan coordinated the programme. The meeting, presided over by social worker and poet Abhay Das, was attended by Pratap Chandra Sarangi as chief guest. The keynote address was delivered by Shobhana Mohanty. Distinguished guests included

Basta MLA Subasini Jena, youth leader Bikram Panda, educationist Pankaj Kumar Jena, social worker Gangadhar Jena, Writer Kalinkar Das and poet Nirod Sundar Jena, who addressed the gathering. Editor Sarbeswar Jena introduced the guests and presented the editorial report. On the occasion, 23 distinguished personalities from different fields were felicitated for their remarkable

contributions, and the annual special issue of 'Samayara Chakra' was formally unveiled. The first session featured poetry recitation and a literary discussion forum conducted by fiction writer Shantanu Pattnaik under the chairmanship of senior litterateur and poet Brajendranath Giri. Udala NAC chairperson Pramila Panda attended as chief guest.

Meeting of Paddy Procurement Committee for Rabi Season held

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD : District Level Paddy Procurement Committee meeting for the KMS-2025-26 Rabi Season was held under the Chairmanship of Collector Madhusudan Dash at Sadbhabna Meeting Hall in Nuapada on Tuesday. Khadiyal MLA Adhiraj Mohan Panigrahi, Nuapada MLA Jay Dholakia, MP Representative Jadumani Panigrahi, Zilla Parishad President Doli Majhi,

It was decided to open paddy mandi for Rabi Season on May 20 in Khariar. All the Paddy Procurement Centres (PPC) in Nuapada District will start in ful fledged by 25th May. Dilip Nirmalkar, CSO Trinath Bhoi, Sub Collector Surmi Soren, CDAO Pradeep Kumar Nayak,

DRCS Shiba Prasad Swain, RMC Secretary Arya Kumar Muduli, Millers & farmer Representatives along with other district level officers were present in this meeting. It was decided to open paddy mandi for Rabi Season on May 20 in Khariar. All the Paddy Procurement Centres (PPC) in Nuapada District will start in ful fledged by 25th May. In existing Rabi season 19,347 farmers have registered their name in PACS to sell their paddy.



DEA Delegation Visits Paradip Port Authority for Industry Interaction and Infrastructure Review

Paradip : A high-level delegation from the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance, Government of India, led by Ms. Juhi Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, DEA, visited Paradip Port Authority (PPA) as part of the Government of India's field outreach programme aimed at engaging directly with industry stakeholders and understanding sectoral challenges. The delegation visited the Administrative Building of Paradip Port Authority and held detailed discussions with senior officials of the port on key issues related to port infrastructure, logistics, trade facilitation, industrial growth, operational efficiency and

future expansion plans. Shri P. L. Haranadh, IRTS, Chairman, Paradip Port Authority, welcomed the delegation in the presence of Shri T.Venu Gopal, Deputy Chairman, Shri A.K. Bose, Advisor (Traffic Manager), along with Heads of Departments and senior officials of PPA. During the interaction, Paradip Port Authority highlighted the port's strategic importance in India's maritime trade ecosystem and its vital contribution towards handling major cargo volumes, supporting industrial growth and strengthening the logistics network of the eastern region. The discussions also focused on infrastructure development initiatives,

multimodal connectivity, mechanisation, operational challenges and measures being undertaken to improve efficiency and ease of doing business at the port. The DEA delegation's visit provided an important platform for constructive dialogue between policy makers and industry stakeholders, enabling better understanding of on-ground realities and future requirements of the maritime and industrial sectors. Paradip Port Authority reaffirmed its commitment towards supporting national economic growth through world-class port infrastructure, efficient cargo handling and sustainable development initiatives.

IMD forecasts heatwave conditions over Delhi

New Delhi: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted heatwave conditions over Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Chandigarh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Vidarbha over the next two days. The Met Department also predicted hot and humid weather over Coastal Andhra Pradesh, Gangetic West Bengal, Gujarat, Kerala, Mahe, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal. Meanwhile, heavy to Very Heavy Rainfall is likely to prevail over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya. Heavy rainfall is also predicted over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura and Sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim.

CBSE to conduct Class 10 second phase examination from 15 May 2026

New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education, CBSE, will conduct the second phase of CBSE 10th exam – 2026 from 15th May. The exam is optional for those students who want to improve their scores. All passed students will be allowed to improve their performance in any of the three subjects out of Science, Mathematics, Social Science and Languages. The board had announced the Class 10th results for the first main exam on the 15th of this month. This initiative aligns with the National Education Policy 2020, which advocates for the alleviation of exam-related stress by providing students with a second opportunity within the same academic year.

World Mother's Day Celebrated

Puri: World Mother's Day was celebrated at the local Youth Hostel conference hall under the aegis of the Snehalata Sarat Rautaray Memorial Trust. The program was conducted under the chairmanship of the Trust President, Lalatendu Mishra. Senior servitor Madhusudan Singari attended as the chief guest. Former CBI legal advisor Rajashree Mahapatra attended as the distinguished guest, while social worker Jayanti Mahapatra, educationists Jyoti Mishra and Sucheta Mishra, and Krishna Mahapatra were present as

honored guests on the dais. Senior advocate and founder of the Trust, Rachita Rautaray, delivered the welcome address and spoke about the significance of Mother's Day. The guests expressed that "Janani Janmabhumi cha Swargadapi Gariyasi" — mother and motherland are greater than heaven itself. They said that all sorrows disappear when wiped away by a mother's affection. A mother's upbringing is filled with pure love, making her incomparable. The word



"Mother" itself cannot be fully described, as it contains all the happiness and peace in the world. Every form of respect begins and ends with the mother. They further stated that no matter how many hardships arise in life,

everything feels insignificant before a mother. A mother's prayers possess such immense power that even death fears approaching her child. When a mother is present, it feels as though everything exists in the world. While one may

repay everyone else's debt in life, the debt owed to a mother can never truly be repaid till death. On this occasion, Kusum Manjari Mahapatra was honored with the Senior Mother Award. Social workers Pramila Singh, Mamali Mishra, Mamata Pradhan, and several talented individuals were also felicitated. Geeta Mishra, Sujata Satpathy, and Chandramani Das assisted in conducting the program. The event concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by journalist Laxmi Narayan Pattnaik.

Dream big to achieve greatness: LS Speaker at DU event

New Delhi: People who dream big are the ones who achieve great things, said Speaker of the Lok Sabha Om Birla on Thursday. He was attending the annual day celebrations of Delhi University's Maharaja Agrasen College, where he addressed students as the chief guest. The event was presided over by Rajni Abbi, Director of South Campus, and held at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Auditorium.



## Education Scam

THE widening investigations by the Enforcement Directorate into alleged education-sector scams worth nearly Rs 4,000 crore reveal how deeply corruption has penetrated one of the most socially sensitive sectors. What began as isolated cases of paper leaks or recruitment irregularities is now emerging as a sprawling ecosystem involving forged accreditations, fake degrees, scholarship frauds, admission rackets and manipulation of public recruitment systems. Investigators are reportedly examining scams linked to teacher recruitment in West Bengal, scholarship frauds in states such as Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, fake accreditation cases involving private educational groups, and even the controversial NEET-



UG 2024 paper leak case. The ED has already attached assets worth around Rs 1,500 crore and made arrests across multiple states.

The education economy in India has expanded rapidly over the past two decades, particularly in private higher education, coaching centres, recruitment systems and professional certification. But regulation has failed to keep pace. The result is a dangerous nexus between politicians, middlemen, private institutions, recruitment agencies and corrupt officials. In addition, fake universities and unrecognised institutions have flourished across the country, issuing invalid degrees and exploiting students desperate for employment or professional qualifications. The University Grants Commission regularly identifies such 'fake' institutions, but enforcement remains patchy. Every leaked examination paper weakens the value of honest effort. Every fake degree devalues genuine academic achievement. Fraudulent teacher appointments compromise the quality of education itself, while fake medical or technical qualifications can endanger public safety.

There is also a political dimension to the aggressive expansion of ED investigations. The agency has been accused of selective activism and disproportionate targeting of Opposition-ruled states. If investigations stretch endlessly without convictions, the credibility of anti-corruption enforcement weakens. The challenge is twofold: dismantling entrenched corruption networks while ensuring that probe agencies remain accountable, impartial and legally robust.

## Austerity Push

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi's post-poll austerity push has an ominous ring to it. Apparently, all's not well on India's economic front. Global headwinds, particularly the war in West Asia, are taking their toll on an economy that remained resilient even during the Covid-19 pandemic. The PM has asked citizens to work from home, use public transport, avoid unnecessary foreign travel and postpone the purchase of gold. Citing the habits adopted during the disruptive pandemic, he has stressed the need to reduce fuel consumption and save foreign exchange. His call for a "civic Satyagraha" is a politically astute move, considering that the majority of the states are ruled by the BJP on its own or in alliance with other parties. Yet, it seems that the Modi government is preparing the people for a crisis that it failed to anticipate.

India heavily imports crude oil and gold, both of which strain foreign exchange reserves when global prices surge. Encouraging fuel conservation, domestic tourism and reduced dependence on imports are sensible responses to a volatile international environment. However, the fact is that the government largely remained occupied with the Assembly elections over the past month and a half. Economic management took a back seat during this period. Now, efforts are afoot to deal with the challenges.

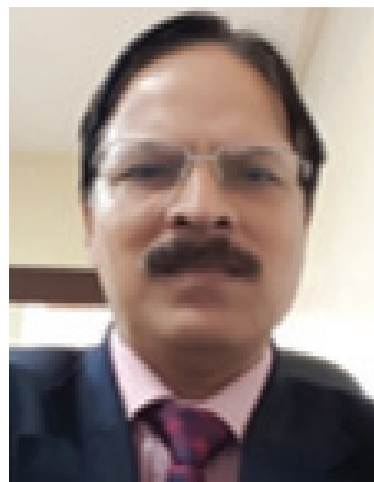
Asking families to put off weddings abroad or avoid buying gold reflects anxiety over the rupee's alarming depreciation. A government that has repeatedly projected economic strength is now urging behavioural restraint on a nationwide scale. Some steps may have unintended consequences. India's jewellery sector supports millions of livelihoods, and a big drop in gold purchases could hurt workers far more than wealthy investors. Also, the work-from-home policy is not practical for large sections of the workforce. Indeed, civic responsibility matters, but it is no substitute for contingency planning. The government must urgently do course correction.

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# Economics of a Glass of Wine

During the recent West Bengal state elections, when the Election Commission imposed ban on sale of liquor for nine days, the state government was more sad than the drinkers as the loss to the exchequer on account of tax was substantial. The neighbouring states who have implemented ban on sale of liquor in their territory were happy as their neighbour would be poorer at least during the election period. For some states the liquor tax is one of the largest source of income and more the people drink, the happier is the government.

The tax on liquor is outside the purview of GST system like petroleum products as the states have viewed these two items as the hens laying golden egg. The alcohol tax varies from state to state in India with Goa having the lowest rate of 49% on MRP and Karnataka having the highest rate of 83%. Gujarat, Bihar and Nagaland do not earn anything from liquor tax due to prohibition on sale of liquor in these states while other states earn around 60-70% on the MRP. In terms of amount earned, UP remains at the top with annual income of Rs 45000-52000 crore followed by Tamil Nadu and Karnataka with earnings of Rs.44000 crore and Rs 35000 crore respectively. States like UP, Karnataka, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh earn about 20-25% of the state tax revenue from liquor and the liquor tax contributes Rs. 2.50 lakh crore (about 13.7%) to the tax revenue of all states in India. State governments use liquor revenues to fund essential public services, including infrastructure,



Subash Chandra Misra

education and health.

The global alcoholic beverage market is estimated to be at \$1.8 trillion and the Indian market at \$ 70 bn with a growth rate of 6-7% per annum. India stands second to china in terms of consumption. While the states are happy when the liquor sales go up, there are certain issues which are flagged by social activists for consideration of the states. Consumption of liquor is associated negatively with health and therefore rise in consumption results in deteriorating health of citizens, absenteeism at work places and production loss which entail a cost on the economy. Poor people and workers are seen to be spending money on liquor, more so on spurious liquor, when they do not have enough money to buy food for the family. It is estimated that consumption of illicit alcohol is

responsible for crime, death and disability of people. Drunken driving results in road accidents and premature mortality. There have been instances where women groups have been opposing liquor shops in residential areas. Thus promoting liquor for revenue is against social goals. Therefore, there is a popular 2-2-2 health advisory on liquor which says not more than 2 pegs a day, not more than 2 days a week and no consecutive two drink days.

The per capita consumption of liquor in India is much lower at 3.2 litres of pure alcohol per person per year as against the global average of 5-6 litres and European average of about 9 litres. It has been found that liquor consumption like tobacco is inelastic to price rise which implies that even with rise in tax and price, liquor consumption is unlikely to come down. Resultantly, increase in tax increases the revenue of the states. Further, the overriding share of alcohol revenue in the state revenue makes their budgets vulnerable to consumption trends as it binds the hands of the government in taking any policy decision on reduction of liquor consumption in the state.

Alcohol consumption is not new to India. It has been associated with Indian culture since ancient days. Most of the alcohol consumed in India is produced domestically and only a small portion is imported. As per the 2024 data, more than 95% of the liquor consumed in India is made in India. In 2023-24, India exported liquor to the extent of \$ 325 million to destinations like USA, Europe and South East Asia. Liquor

export is growing and the industry expects it to touch USD one billion soon. Liquor production in India is concentrated in states like Maharashtra, Karnataka, West Bengal, Haryana, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh. Indian alcohol industry engages 40 lakh farmers and supports approximately 8 million livelihoods directly and indirectly. Liquor industry has occupied a unique place even in major developed economies. The industry contributes more than \$ 1.8 trillion annually to the global GDP and supports 70 million jobs worldwide.

Liquor industry is undergoing several changes in the recent years. While urbanisation is associated with increased consumption of IMFL, the young consumers are seen to be opting for lighter drinks with low alcohol contents. The regulation on the industry which lies with the state government is fragmented and non uniform and leads to smuggling and inter state movement of liquors and drinkers. Policies of some states are in vernacular and not available online which creates a barrier in the trade and gives rise to corruption due to lack of clarity on the policy. Recently the Government of Karnataka decided to adopt a variable tax structure based on percentage of alcohol content in the product which may set a precedent for other states. Under this policy stronger liquor preferred by the lower segment of the society will be more expensive and premium liquor containing less alcohol will be cheaper.

The author is a Retired Chief General Manager of Reserve Bank of India.

## Gratitude & Happiness

Utkalananda Ajaya Kumar Behera

We often tend to take things for granted in our lives, which becomes a reason for our misery. Gratitude bestows immense happiness, both to the giver and the receiver when offered with purity of heart. A simple 'Thank You' can transform a situation or relationship diametrically. Service of mankind, when done with selflessness, is a natural outcome of gratitude.

Gratitude should also not be with an expectation of the greeting or gesture to be returned. Even if we offer a glass of water to someone with gratitude and selflessness, seeing the essence of Nirankar in them, it becomes a reason for bliss and joy. Gifting, sharing and caring are extremely sublime and delightful acts. This kind of offering becomes sewa, selfless service.

The sun, rivers, trees, earth and air, all have been continuously providing us with their resources, without any expectation. But we humans become selfish and enforce conditions while giving away even a little bit of what we have and expect much more in return. This is the reason for our sorrow. This does not necessarily mean that we should not desire to grow in life.

It only means that after having performed a specific action, we should leave its outcome to the divine verdict, stay content and be thankful for what we are receiving. It means that growth is mutual and universal. We can't expect to save our home if our neighbour's house is on fire.

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# More Trees Doesn't Always Mean Less Heat

Dr Vijay Garg

In the age of climate change, one message is repeated almost everywhere: "Plant more trees to reduce heat." Governments launch plantation drives, schools organize green campaigns, and environmental groups encourage citizens to grow trees in every possible space. Trees are rightly considered the lungs of the Earth. They absorb carbon dioxide, release oxygen, provide shade, protect biodiversity, and improve air quality.

But an important scientific truth is often ignored: more trees do not always mean less heat.

In some situations, poorly planned tree planting can actually increase temperatures, worsen water shortages, harm ecosystems, and create environmental imbalance.

This does not mean trees are bad. It means that the right tree, in the right place, for the right ecosystem matters far more than simply planting large numbers of trees.

The relationship between trees and temperature is much more complex than it appears.

Why Trees Are Generally Considered Cooling Agents

Trees cool the environment in several natural ways:

- Shade Effect**  
Tree canopies block direct sunlight from reaching roads, buildings, and soil. Shaded surfaces remain cooler than exposed concrete or asphalt.
- Evapotranspiration**  
Trees release water vapor through leaves, a process known as transpiration. This cools the surrounding air much like sweat cools the human body.
- Carbon Absorption**  
Trees absorb carbon dioxide, one of the major greenhouse gases responsible for global warming.
- Wind Regulation**  
Forests can regulate local wind systems and help maintain regional climatic balance. Because of these benefits, urban planners and environmentalists often promote afforestation as a solution to rising temperatures.

However, reality is not always that simple.

When More Trees Can Increase Heat

**1. Dark Forests Absorb More Solar Radiation**  
Trees are darker than grasslands, deserts, or snow-covered land. Dark surfaces absorb more sunlight.

This phenomenon is linked to something called albedo, which refers to the amount of sunlight a surface reflects.

Snow reflects most sunlight. Grasslands reflect moderate sunlight. Dense forests absorb much more heat. In colder regions, especially near the poles, replacing snow-covered land with

forests may actually warm the Earth because forests absorb more solar energy.

Scientists have observed that some large-scale plantation projects in northern regions reduced surface reflectivity and contributed to warming instead of cooling.

**Forests Need Water — A Lot of Water**

**2. Excessive Tree Planting Can Worsen Water Scarcity**

Trees consume significant amounts of water. In dry and semi-arid areas, planting water-hungry tree species can:

- Lower groundwater levels
- Dry up streams
- Reduce soil moisture
- Harm local agriculture

Some plantation drives introduce fast-growing species like eucalyptus because they grow quickly and survive easily. But eucalyptus trees consume enormous quantities of water.

In many regions, farmers have reported falling groundwater levels after large-scale eucalyptus plantations.

Thus, tree planting without understanding local water conditions can unintentionally intensify drought-like situations.

**Not Every Ecosystem Needs Dense Forests**

**3. Grasslands Are Not "Empty Land"**  
One major ecological mistake around the world has been treating grasslands and open ecosystems as "unused" or "degraded" land.

As a result, governments and organizations sometimes plant forests in natural grasslands.

But grasslands are themselves rich ecosystems supporting:

- Unique birds
- Insects
- Grazing animals
- Native plant species
- Turning natural grasslands into forests can destroy biodiversity instead of protecting it.

In India, for example, several species adapted to open landscapes suffer when dense plantations replace natural habitats.

The lesson is clear: Every green space does not need to become a forest.

**Urban Tree Planting Can Sometimes Trap Heat**

**4. Poor Urban Planning Can Create Heat Pockets**

Trees help cities cool down, but only when planned correctly.

In overcrowded urban areas: Dense tree cover without ventilation may block airflow.

Heat can become trapped between buildings.

Humidity may increase discomfort. Certain tree species also prevent wind

circulation when planted improperly along narrow roads or between tall buildings.

Cities need scientific urban forestry, not random plantation drives.

**Wrong Tree Species Can Harm Local Climate**

**5. Exotic Trees May Disturb Ecological Balance**

Many plantation campaigns focus only on the number of trees planted, not the species selected.

Non-native or invasive species can:

- Reduce biodiversity
- Consume excessive water
- Alter soil chemistry
- Prevent native plants from growing

For example: Prosopis juliflora in parts of India spread aggressively and disrupted ecosystems.

Some ornamental urban trees contribute little ecological value.

Planting native species adapted to local climate is far more effective than mass planting exotic trees.

**Tree Density Matters**

**6. Overcrowded Forests Increase Fire Risk**

In some regions, excessive forest density increases:

- Dry biomass accumulation
- Competition for water
- Forest fire intensity

Climate change has already made wildfires more severe worldwide.

Poorly managed forests can become fuel sources during heat waves.

Healthy forests require ecological management, not merely increasing tree numbers.

**The Myth of "One Solution Fits All"**

Climate challenges are complex. No single action can solve global warming everywhere.

Tree plantation is valuable, but it is not a magical universal solution.

Different landscapes require different approaches:

- Ecosystem Best Climate Strategy
- Urban cities Smart urban forestry + cool roofs

Dry regions Water conservation + native vegetation

- Grasslands Grassland restoration
- Wetlands Wetland protection
- Mountains Native forest conservation

Agricultural land Agroforestry

Environmental planning must respect ecological diversity.

**Protecting Existing Forests Is More Important**

Ironically, while massive plantation drives gain publicity, old natural forests continue disappearing.

A mature forest: Stores far more carbon than young saplings

# Himanta Sarma, Suvendu Adhikari And Samrat Choudhary: BJP's New Regional Power Trio

New Delhi, 12/5: Himanta Biswa Sarma, Suvendu Adhikari, and Samrat Choudhary, regional leaders from three different states and varied political backgrounds, have now been entrusted by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leadership with carrying forward the party's "double engine" agenda in Assam, West Bengal, and Bihar, respectively. Having emerged from different political traditions, these three leaders have played significant roles in strengthening the BJP's position in their respective states. Their rise also reflects the BJP's willingness to back leaders seen as capable and politically promising, despite many of them having held secondary roles in their former parties. In Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma was sworn in on Tuesday for a second consecutive term as chief minister, marking the BJP-led alliance's third straight term in the state. Sarma, who succeeded Sarbananda Sonowal in May 2021, emerged as one of the BJP's key political strategists in the Northeast. Now 57, he began his political journey in Congress, where he built a reputation as a strategist and election manager.



In the 1996 Assam Assembly election, Sarma lost the Jalukbari seat to Asom Gana Parishad leader Bhrigu Kumar Phukan. Since then, he has won the constituency six consecutive times. During the Congress government led by Tarun Gogoi, Sarma handled key portfolios, including agriculture, finance, health, and education. Sarma joined the BJP in August 2015, citing alleged misgovernance, nepotism within the Congress, and what he

described as the party leadership's lack of attention towards Assam's concerns. Sarma quickly established himself as a key political strategist for the BJP in the Northeast. As convener of the North-East Democratic Alliance (NEDA), he played a central role in bringing regional parties together against Congress in the region. He played a key role in the BJP's victory in the 2016 Assam election, which brought an end to the Congress party's 15-year rule in

the state. He also emerged as an important strategist behind the BJP's electoral gains in Tripura, Manipur, and Arunachal Pradesh. Since taking over as chief minister, Sarma has introduced programmes such as "Mission Basundhara" aimed at streamlining land rights and "Gunotsav" to improve the quality of school education, while also pushing infrastructure expansion, including the establishment of new medical colleges. In West Bengal, May 9

marked a major political milestone for Suvendu Adhikari, who was sworn in as the state's first BJP chief minister after unseating his former mentor-turned-political rival, Mamata Banerjee. The 55-year-old Adhikari has remained a central figure in West Bengal politics and is widely known for his leadership role in the 2007 Nandigram movement. The agitation proved to be a turning point in the state's political history, laying the groundwork for Mamata and the Trinamool Congress (TMC) to rise to power. Adhikari rose from grassroots politics to become one of the BJP's most influential leaders in West Bengal, with victories over Mamata in Nandigram in 2021 and in Bhanipur in 2026 underscoring his organisational strength and political reach. The Adhikari family continues to wield influence in Purba Medinipur and neighbouring districts. His father, Sisir Adhikari, is a veteran politician and former Union minister, while his brothers, Dibendu Adhikari and Soumendu Adhikari, are also active in politics.

# NEET-UG 'Paper Leak' Sparks Outrage In Delhi; NSUI, ABVP Demand Accountability

New Delhi: Protests erupted in several places on Tuesday after the National Testing Agency (NTA) cancelled the NEET-UG 2026 examination conducted on May 3, as students and student organisations questioned the credibility of the examination system and demanded strict action over the alleged paper leak. Students alleged that irregularities in one of the country's most competitive entrance examinations had caused deep emotional and financial distress to millions of aspirants who had spent months preparing for the test. Many students said the cancellation of the examination, along with allegations that the paper had been leaked before the exam, had severely impacted their morale and future plans. Student organisations also intensified their criticism of the examination body and the government, demanding accountability and an independent probe into the alleged leak. The National Students' Union of India (NSUI) claimed that the government was forced to cancel the examination only after sustained protests and pressure from students and youth organisations. However, the organisation asserted that merely cancelling the examination would not deliver justice unless strict action was taken against those allegedly involved in the paper leak network. "The students' battle will continue until action is taken against the networks responsible for leaking the papers, the National Testing Agency is held accountable, and strict measures are initiated against the entire nexus involved in this collusion," an NSUI member said. The NSUI further demanded that institutions such as the NTA be "disbanded", while also calling for the resignation of Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and an independent enquiry into the paper leak scam. Speaking to IANS, NSUI President Vinod Jakhar questioned the government's response to the controversy and alleged that crucial details regarding the leak had still not been clarified. "The government has not yet said anything about the paper leak. Around 120 questions were already leaked before the examination. Students and their families are concerned. What is the accountability of the government here? We want Dharmendra Pradhan to resign. The NTA is also incapable of conducting an examination," Jakhar said.

# BJP Calls Out Udhayanidhi Stalin's Hatred For Sanatan, Says No Lessons Learnt Despite Poll Drubbing

New Delhi, 12/5: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) tore into former Tamil Nadu Deputy CM Udhayanidhi Stalin over his anti-Sanatan rant in the Assembly on Tuesday, stating that the "Sanatan-haters" suffered a humiliating defeat in recent elections but have failed to learn any lessons. BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla, taking strong exception to Stalin's renewed calls for "abolishing" Sanatan, this time inside the Tamil Nadu Assembly, said that the DMK is doomed to decay further because of its Sanatan hate. Udhayanidhi Stalin, the Leader of Opposition in the Tamil Nadu Assembly, kicked up a fresh row as he called for the eradication of Sanatan in the presence of the newly elected Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay. "Sanathanam that divides people should be eradicated," Stalin said in his address. The video clip of Stalin landed up on social media and soon went viral, drawing strong backlash from the state and central BJP leaders. BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla said that Stalin junior



has resorted to what he does best – peddling insult and hatred against Sanatan. He said that the DMK, despite taking a beating in recent elections, continues to hurl insults at the Sanatan Dharma and warned that people of Tamil Nadu and the country will punish him further for this. He said that all tall leaders of the India bloc, including Gaurav Gogoi, Mamata Banerjee and MK Stalin, suffered ignominious defeat because of their ideology of "Sanatan hate" but refused to mend their ways. "Hurling abuses at Sanatan is their pattern, insulting

Sanatan is their votebank strategy, and this is their only identity," he said in a pointed jibe. CR Kesavan, another BJP spokesperson from the state unit, equated Stalin with Rahul Gandhi, terming him "Gandhi of Tamil Nadu." "Rahul Gandhi mocked the sacred Sengol, and he insulted & boycotted the Pran Prathishta ceremony of Ram Mandir. Like Rahul Gandhi, who has been rejected for the past 3 Lok Sabha elections, Udhayanidhi Stalin, despite being punished and ousted by the Tamil people, continues with his toxic rant.

# NEET-UG 2026 Cancellation: Oppn Claims 'Mafia Involvement' In Paper Leak

New Delhi, 12/5: The Opposition leaders on Tuesday claimed involvement of "mafia" or "influential people" in the NEET-UG paper leak. They said that the BJP-led Centre should be answerable to the lakhs of students and their parents who put in their years of hard work and money to prepare for the medical exam. The Opposition's response came after the National Testing Agency (NTA) cancelled the NEET-UG 2026 examination conducted on May 3 and announced that the exam would be re-conducted on dates to be notified separately. The Rajasthan investigators are probing allegations that a "guess paper" circulated before the exam contained questions that closely matched those on the actual paper. Congress leader Sachin Pilot highlighted that "paper leak" has not been reported for the first time. "Lakhs of students work hard and their parents, too, put in so much effort to save enough money so that their children are able to attend coaching for these



exams," he told reporters. "Now, questions are being raised on the system itself and NTA is getting exposed," he added. Pilot stated that since paper leaks are happening repeatedly, there must be the involvement of some "mafia" and "gangs" behind it. "The head of such gangs must be some influential person since the questions in the main paper and 'guess paper' were exactly similar." Later, speaking to IANS, he said accountability needs to be taken for such incidents. "I

think those responsible must stand up and take accountability. If the department is not able to conduct exams fairly, every year it's happening repeatedly, I think those responsible should have to step aside," he said. He appealed to the Central government to pay attention to such incidents and urged for a time-bound judicial enquiry into the case. "Not a CBI but a judicial enquiry is required into the case," Pilot stressed. AAP leader Saurabh Bharadwaj cautioned that it is

possible that all the "paper leaks" have not yet come into the public eye. "This is among those cases that we are getting to know of. There may be several unknown cases of paper leaks," he told IANS. Bharadwaj claimed that the Supreme Court not scrapping the NEET-UG examination in 2024 despite reported irregularities, "messed with the future" of lakhs of medical students. "The then SC verdict gave a message that even if paper leak was caught later, at least those who had received the questions beforehand and those who received money for it, would be benefitted," he said. Trinamool Congress MP, Saugata Roy, said such incidents would "break the trust" that people have in the NTA. Echoing similar views as Congress leader Pilot, AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi said: "What will happen to those students who have been preparing hard for the exam and whose parents have spent lakhs of rupees on coaching fees?"

# India Set To Host BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting This Week

New Delhi, 12/5: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar will chair the BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting set to be hosted by India on May 14-15, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced on Tuesday. Addressing a weekly media briefing on Tuesday, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that BRICS Foreign Ministers and heads of delegations from member and partner countries will participate in the meeting and also call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "India will host the BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting on 14th and 15th May 2026. The meeting will be chaired by External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar. BRICS Foreign Ministers and heads of delegations from member and partner countries will participate in the meeting. They will also call on honourable Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. During the meeting, the Foreign Ministers of BRICS member



countries will exchange views on global and regional issues of mutual interest," said Jaiswal. "On the second day, BRICS member and partner countries will participate in a session, themed BRICS at 20 Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability. This will be followed by a session on the reforms of global

governance and multilateral system. The BRICS Foreign Ministers held their last meeting on the margins of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly on 26 September 2025. The meeting was chaired by India in its capacity as the incoming chair for BRICS 2026," he added. The MEA spokesperson also reflected on the participating

countries, joint statement and the issue of joint statement. "Several foreign ministers from BRICS countries will be participating. Some of them, I think, will be arriving this afternoon. And as and when they arrive, you'll come to know the participation... On the question of joint statement, we will come back to you on this. We will let

you know as things progress," he said. "BRICS works on the basis of consensus. So it is for the BRICS countries to decide as to what to do with membership. The expansion has happened recently; partner countries' expansion happened in Kazan, and earlier in Johannesburg; several other countries joined the BRICS grouping. So it is something for the BRICS group to decide based on the kind of consensus that they developed among themselves," he added. India holds the BRICS chair in 2026 guided by the theme of 'Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability', reflecting a people-centric and humanity-first approach articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the 17th BRICS Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 2025. BRIC was formalised at the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York in 2006.

# One-Vote Victory Row: TVK MLA Moves SC Against Madras HC Order Barring Him From Floor Test

New Delhi, 12/5: Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) MLA R. Seenivasa Sethupathi has moved the Supreme Court challenging the Madras High Court's interim order restraining him from participating in any floor test proceedings in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly amid a dispute over his one-vote victory from the Tirupattur Assembly constituency. The plea was mentioned for urgent hearing before Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant by senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi on Tuesday. The apex court agreed to list the matter for hearing on Wednesday. The challenge comes immediately after a vacation Bench of the Madras High Court passed an interim order restraining Sethupathi from "voting or otherwise taking part in any floor test, including confidence motion, no-confidence motion, trust vote or any voting proceeding in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly where the numerical strength of the House is tested, until further orders". A Bench of Justices L. Victoria Gowri and N. Senthilkumar had passed the interim direction while hearing a writ petition filed by former Tamil Nadu Minister and DMK leader K.R. Periakaruppan, who lost the Tirupattur Assembly seat in Sivaganga district by a margin of just one vote. According to the official results declared by the Election Commission of India (ECI), Sethupathi secured 83,365 votes, while Periakaruppan polled 83,364 votes. Periakaruppan had alleged serious irregularities in the counting process and claimed that a postal ballot meant for Tirupattur Assembly constituency No.185 in Sivaganga district was mistakenly sent to Tirupattur Assembly constituency No.50 in Tirupattur district near Vellore and was rejected there instead of being transmitted back to the correct constituency. In its order, the Madras High Court observed that the case disclosed a "peculiar constitutional anomaly where a postal ballot admittedly relatable to a live and concluded election in one constituency was allegedly diverted to another constituency bearing a similar nomenclature and came to be rejected there".

# Pak Gangster Shahzad Bhatti Network Under Scanner As India Pushes For Extradition

New Delhi, 12/5: The name of Pakistan-based gangster Shahzad Bhatti has surfaced repeatedly in multiple investigations linked to terror recruitment, radicalisation, and espionage activities in India over the past several months. More than a dozen cases have reportedly been registered against him by various agencies. Bhatti, a Lahore-based gangster, has allegedly been operating out of Dubai for several years while frequently travelling between Pakistan, the UAE and other countries in the Middle East, according to investigating agencies. With multiple cases linked to terror recruitment and radicalisation being registered against him, Indian agencies are now prioritising efforts to secure his extradition and bring him to trial.



An Indian security agency official said Bhatti had managed to exploit certain legal and jurisdictional gaps to stay beyond the reach of Indian investigators. "He is not an Indian national and belongs to Pakistan. Moreover, he has never travelled to India, which has made the extradition process more complicated," the official said. Another official said that although the extradition process would be complicated, it was still achievable. Agencies are expected

to coordinate with countries where Bhatti is believed to be operating in an effort to bring him to India for trial, the official added. Officials pointed to previous terror investigations to underline that such extraditions, though difficult, are possible. One of the key accused in the 26/11 Mumbai attacks was extradited to India after exhausting all legal appeals in courts in the US. In the case of David Headley, extradition could not proceed because of a plea bargain agreement with US authorities. Under the pact, Headley was allowed to remain in the US and could not be extradited

to India. Indian investigators, however, were permitted to question him, and later appeared through video conferencing during the trial proceedings. Officials describe Bhatti as a high-value operative who is likely to receive protection from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). According to security agencies, there are concerns that he may return to Pakistan if Indian efforts to secure his extradition begin to gain traction. An Intelligence Bureau official said the immediate priority was to dismantle Bhatti's recruitment network, which investigators

believe has been functioning largely through social media platforms. Bhatti and several of his Pakistan-based associates are alleged to have used online channels extensively to identify and recruit operatives. Investigators said youngsters from various states were allegedly targeted with promises of money, influence and recognition. They are made to believe they will become heroes. "Financial incentives and the lure of power have also been used during recruitment," the official said. Investigators believe Bhatti's recruitment network was intended to facilitate attacks in different parts of the country.

# Pakistan Admits Iranian Military Planes Parked At Strategic Airbase during US Tensions

Islamabad, 12/5: Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs officially acknowledged on Tuesday that Iranian military aircraft are stationed at a strategic airbase in Rawalpindi. This confirmation comes despite Islamabad's public stance as a neutral mediator between Washington and Tehran. While the government rejected claims that these assets were hidden to escape American strikes, they admitted several planes remain on Pakistani soil following the recent ceasefire in West Asia. Government officials identified the presence of aircraft, including an Iranian Air Force RC-130 reconnaissance variant, at the high-security Nur Khan Air Base. Reports from international observers suggest these military assets moved across the border shortly after a temporary truce was declared in April. Islamabad maintains that the arrival of these planes relates strictly to logistical needs for ongoing diplomatic talks and denies any secret military preservation agreement with Tehran. This development creates a diplomatic challenge for Pakistan, which has historically balanced its security partnership with the United States against its shared border interests with Iran. American lawmakers have already begun questioning whether Pakistan can remain an impartial broker while providing a safe haven for Iranian hardware. The foreign office statement described the aircraft presence as administrative, intended to facilitate movement for diplomatic personnel and security teams. However, the long-term parking of intelligence-gathering planes at a major military installation has sparked debate in Washington. Some officials argue that this arrangement protected Iranian aviation from potential destruction during the peak of hostilities. As the ceasefire remains fragile, Islamabad's dual role as a peace broker and a physical host for military equipment remains under intense global observation.



# Evacuated Cruise Passenger Tests Positive for Hantavirus during their Flight Home

Washington, 12/5: Medical officials confirmed Sunday that an American passenger evacuated from a hantavirus-stricken luxury cruise ship tested positive for the virus while flying home. This individual was among 17 U.S. citizens being repatriated from the MV Hondius, a vessel recently anchored in Tenerife following a deadly outbreak. While the laboratory-positive passenger currently shows no signs of illness, a second traveler on the same flight has begun developing symptoms, prompting immediate isolation protocols. Emergency Bio-Containment Measures Military and government aircraft handled the evacuation to prevent any exposure to the general public. Upon landing in Omaha, Nebraska, the infected individual will be moved to a specialised bio-containment unit at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. This facility previously managed high-risk patients during the Ebola and COVID-19 crises. Remaining passengers will undergo a rigorous assessment at a national quarantine facility to monitor for potential



onset. Understanding the Andes Strain Health authorities are particularly concerned because this outbreak involves the Andes strain of hantavirus. Unlike most variants that only spread through rodent contact, this specific South American strain is known for rare but documented person-to-person transmission. While the overall risk to the public remains low, the virus carries a high fatality rate, often progressing to severe respiratory distress or lung failure within days of the first symptoms appearing. Global Response and Context International coordination has been swift, involving the World Health

Organization and multiple European governments. Historically, hantavirus is often associated with rural exposure to rodent waste; however, this maritime cluster highlights how modern travel can complicate the management of zoonotic diseases. Reports indicate that nine cases are now linked to the ship, including seven confirmed infections and three deaths. Most travelers started showing signs of fever and muscle aches between one and eight weeks after the initial exposure. Experts continue to investigate whether the initial infection occurred during the ship's stops in South Georgia or the Antarctic peninsula.

# EAM Jaishankar Calls To Move Beyond 'Uni-Dimensional' Science Narrative, Urges Recognition Of India's Contributions

United Nations, 12/5: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has called for moving away from the "uni-dimensional narrative" about mathematics and the sciences to one based on a "democratisation of history" that recognises India's foundational contributions. Inaugurating an exhibition on India's contribution to mathematics here on Monday, he cited the example of the binary system developed in India in the third century, on the foundation of which rest the digital age and the world's journey into AI. "These truths will increasingly become apparent as we embark on the journey of AI, where our grasp of the past will profit from the tools of the future," he said. "This exhibition is a reminder that mathematics is a universal language, and its spread has served and continues to serve a global good," he said. The AI Impact Summit in India in February "sent a strong message that creativity and innovation cannot be limited to a few," he added. "It is only by righting the distortions of the past



that we can accurately address issues of the future", he said. This matters to the UN, he said, "because a diverse and democratic collective cannot be built on a unidimensional narrative". "We need to appreciate that democratisation of technology, indeed, democratisation of the world, requires a democratisation of history", he added. "Scientific progress has, for far too long, been viewed through a narrow lens, limited in time and in geography", he said. But "as geopolitical churn ushers in a political and economic rebalancing, it is inevitably paving the way for a cultural rebalancing

too, and that will be done by making space for diverse narratives", he said. The interactive exhibition, "Global Diffusion of Mathematics", was created under the India International Centre's SAMHITA programme to project "India's learned inheritance (that) spans fields including medicine, mathematics, architecture, philosophy, aesthetics and literature". A series of digital panels shows India's ancient mathematical progress, from the basic binary numerical system to algebra and calculus. On display were the mathematical landmarks

which Jaishankar referred to: The binary system that has its roots in Pingala's third century Chanda Sutra; the rhythm of ancient verses that was actually algorithmic; the infinite series for Pi, and the principles of what is now called the Pythagorean theorem. The exhibition, located prominently at the delegates' entrance, the gateway for the top envoys of the 193 UN members, Jaishankar said, "will also help cast aside prejudices and assumptions about the embrace of technology in the current era". Permanent Representative P Harish said, "The exhibition traces our foundational concepts such as zero, the decimal system, algebra, trigonometry, and early notions of infinity (that) travel from India across cultures, through centres of learning like Baghdad and Toledo into the wider world." "India always made available its knowledge to the entire world — open source in today's language, was an Indian mantra since time immemorial", he said.

# Trump Unveils New Fertility Benefit Option, Maternal Healthcare Initiative

Washington: President Donald Trump on Monday announced a new fertility benefit option for employers and launched a maternal healthcare initiative aimed at expanding access to IVF, childcare and rural maternal care across the United States. Speaking at a White House event, Trump said the Department of Labor would formally create a fertility benefit option that employers could offer outside traditional health insurance plans. "Most healthcare plans do not cover these benefits," Trump said. "This will be a supplemental option available to those who need it." The President said the initiative would help millions of American families struggling with fertility treatment costs and broader maternal healthcare challenges. "By offering coverage for care at every step, the fertility journey is a very interesting one, very complex it was, and we're making it much simpler," Trump

said. He credited Senator Katie Britt with drawing his attention to the issue of IVF access after an Alabama court ruling created uncertainty around fertility treatment. "She said, sir, we have to do something," Trump said. "And I became the father of fertility." Trump said the administration was also launching Moms.gov, a new federal website designed to centralise resources for mothers and families. "Moms.gov is online right now," he said. "I encourage every mom to visit this new page where they will find helpful information about clinical care, pregnancy resources, nutrition tips, Trump Rx and Trump accounts." Officials said the website would include information on prenatal and postpartum care, childcare support and fertility resources. The administration also highlighted TrumpRx.gov, a prescription drug pricing

programme that Trump claimed had sharply reduced fertility medication costs. "One drug commonly used in IVF has gone from \$966 to \$168," Trump said. Dr Mehmet Oz said rural maternal healthcare remained a major concern, noting that maternal mortality rates were significantly higher in rural America. "Your zip code should not determine your mortality rate if you're having a baby," Oz said. He pointed to a \$50 billion rural healthcare investment included in the administration's tax package and said states were using telehealth and expanded local care systems to improve maternal outcomes. Olivia Walton, speaking on behalf of the "Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies America" campaign, described the funding as "a transformative opportunity to invest in maternal healthcare". "We want to cut the US maternal death rate in half in

five years," Walton said. Trump also announced childcare reforms aimed at reducing costs and expanding parental choice. Dr Alex Adams said the reforms would "bring faith-based providers back to the table" and reduce federal mandates that increased childcare costs. "We're restoring parental choice," Adams said. Trump repeatedly framed the policies as part of a broader "pro-family agenda" focused on encouraging childbirth and supporting young families. "We've done more for young parents than any administration ever in history," he said. The event also featured remarks from Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., who warned that declining fertility rates represented "an existential crisis" for the country. "We now have a president who is trying to encourage childbirth and motherhood in this country," Kennedy said.

# Israel Rejects Arbitrary EU Sanctions Targeting Citizens and Entities In West Bank

Israel, 12/5: Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar issued a stern condemnation on Monday following the European Union's decision to impose sanctions on Israeli citizens and organizations. Sa'ar described the move as an arbitrary and political action lacking any legal or factual basis. He specifically criticized the bloc for creating a distorted moral equivalence by announcing these measures alongside new sanctions against Hamas leaders. European Union foreign ministers reached a unanimous agreement in Brussels to blacklist seven individuals and entities linked to violence in the West Bank. This decision follows months of internal deadlock within the 27-nation group. EU High Representative Kaja Kallas noted that extremism and violence must carry consequences, signaling a shift from political stalemate to active enforcement. Sa'ar responded by affirming that Israel will continue to support the



right of Jews to reside in their historical homeland. He argued that no other nation possesses such a documented and long-standing connection to its land. The Foreign Ministry views the attempt to dictate political perceptions through financial and travel restrictions as an unacceptable interference in

sovereign affairs. Historically, the European Union has remained one of the largest donors to Palestinian authorities while maintaining complex trade ties with Israel, often leading to these recurring diplomatic flashpoints over territory. The current escalation reflects growing international pressure regarding West Bank stability.

## India Remains Fastest Growing Major Economy, Performs Better Amid Global Uncertainties: Assocham

New Delhi, 12/5: India's economy continues to show resilience despite rising global uncertainty and the impact of the ongoing West Asia conflict, remaining the fastest-growing major economy in the world, an Assocham 'Global Economic Outlook' said on Tuesday. Despite global challenges, India's economic fundamentals continue to remain resilient, with GDP growth expected to stay around 7 per cent in 2026-27. India entered this period with strong macroeconomic fundamentals, supported by steady growth, controlled inflation, healthy financial conditions and robust domestic demand. Several economic indicators have shown positive trends in recent months. GST collections reached a record high, bank credit growth remained robust, exports continued to expand, and IIP remains in a steady zone. According to the report, inflation remained under control, and government spending on infrastructure and development projects supported economic activity. Major investments in roads, renewable energy, digital infrastructure, semiconductors, and technology during recent months reflect a focus on a long-



term growth trajectory. Most of the states also reported progress in industrial development, investment, clean energy, and the technology sector. "New policy measures on exports, start-ups, transport, and finance improve the ease of doing business and further strengthen the economy. However, the global economic outlook remains uncertain due to the ongoing tensions between the US and Iran, with no clear

resolution emerging so far despite ongoing discussions," the outlook mentioned. At this stage, financial and commodity markets may remain volatile, keeping investor sentiment cautious, it added. "Any positive progress towards peace talks between the US and Iran would bolster investor confidence and business sentiment with a strong rebound in financial markets," according to the Global Economic

Outlook. The RBI has projected India's real GDP growth at 6.9 per cent for F27, with Q1 at 6.8 per cent; Q2 at 6.7 per cent; Q3 at 7.0 per cent; and Q4 at 7.2 per cent. While risks remain because of the global situation and possible weather-related disturbances, India's economy is considered to be in a stronger position compared to previous crisis periods, the report added.

## April Inflation Reflects Relatively Stable Price Conditions, Monsoon A Key Factor

New Delhi, 12/5: The moderate jump in inflation in April reflects relatively stable price conditions across several core consumption categories, particularly transport, industry leaders said on Tuesday. However, food price pressures remain elevated in select commodities, indicating the continued importance of supply-side monitoring, said PHDCCI. "Among major commodity groups, transport inflation remained subdued at near-zero levels as Government has not increased retail pump prices despite Brent crude oil prices remaining above \$100 per barrel in the international markets since the East Asia Crisis," said Rajeev Juneja, President, PHDCCI. India's retail inflation (CPI) stood at 3.48 per cent in April on a year-on-year basis, according to provisional estimates. Food inflation rose to 4.20 per cent compared with 3.87 per cent in March 2026. Rural food inflation at 4.26 per cent was higher than urban food inflation which stood at 4.10 per cent. However, precious metal prices recorded comparatively higher inflation rates due to jump in international metal prices and



depreciating INR compared to US dollar, Juneja added. On the other hand, at the food item level, potatoes, onions, motor cars and jeeps, peas and chickpeas, and air conditioners recorded the lowest inflation rates during April. "In India, recently, a deviation between food and non-food inflation trends continues to impact the inflation outlook. Volatility in agricultural commodities, barring seasonal commodities, and precious metals may continue to influence household inflation expectations in the near term," said Dr. Ranjeet Mehta, SG and CEO, PHDCCI. Rajeev Sharan, Head of Research, Brickwork Ratings,

said with the monsoon forecast still uncertain, the outlook hinges on whether early rains stabilise vegetable and cereal supplies or amplify existing stresses in perishables. Core inflation at 3.3 per cent remains relatively contained, with categories such as housing (2.15 per cent), health (1.64 per cent), household goods (1.61 per cent), and several non-food categories showing moderate price momentum. "Overall, inflation is within a manageable range, but the monsoon will determine whether India sustains this benign core trend or faces renewed, broad-based price pressures," said Sharan.

## Sensex, Nifty Open Lower Amid Crude Spike, Geopolitical Tensions

Mumbai, 12/5: Indian equity benchmarks traded sharply lower on Tuesday for the second consecutive day in morning trade, with both indices declining around 0.5 per cent amid geopolitical tensions. Sensex declined as much as 0.62 per cent or 474 points to trade at an intraday low of 75,541 in early trade, while Nifty was seen trading at 23,689, down 0.53 per cent or 126 points from the previous close. Sector-wise, IT, chemicals, realty, cement and financial indices were among the top losers, declining by over 2 per cent. Meanwhile, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, TCS, HCL Tech, Wipro, SBI Life, HDFC Life, Maruti Suzuki, ICICI Bank, Asian Paints, Dr Reddy's Laboratories and Bajaj Finance were among the top laggards. In contrast, Nifty Metal, Nifty Oil & Gas and Nifty PSU Bank were the only sectors trading in the green. Earlier in the day, the Sensex opened at 75,688.39, down 0.43 per cent or 326 points, while the 50-scrip basket began the session at 23,722.60, lower by 0.4 per cent or 93 points. According to a market expert, sectors that are unlikely to be impacted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's austerity appeal are expected to



remain resilient. "Pharmaceuticals is one segment that is unlikely to be impacted at all since the sector has inelastic demand," the expert said, adding that the sector also benefits from rupee depreciation. "FMCG, too, is expected to remain largely unaffected. One sector to watch out for is capital goods. There are clear signs of recovery in capital formation, as reflected in the 67 per cent surge in private capex in September last year," the analyst said. "This positive development has been overshadowed by a flood of negative news. If the private capex cycle sustains, capital goods stocks are likely to perform well. Demand in sectors such as

automobiles and renewable energy continues to remain buoyant, supporting capex growth in these segments," the expert added. In commodities, international oil benchmark Brent crude rose 1.09 per cent to \$105.35 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude gained 1.23 per cent to \$99.28 per barrel. Among global equities, Asian markets showed a mixed trend. Japan's Nikkei traded 0.48 per cent higher, Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 0.31 per cent, while South Korea's KOSPI declined more than 2 per cent. Overnight in the US, the S&P 500 closed 0.19 per cent higher, while the Nasdaq settled 0.10 per cent up.

## Indian Economy Has Shown Resilience In Times Of Global Crisis: Piyush Goyal

New Delhi, 12/5: Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said that the Indian economy has continued to show resilience amid global geopolitical and economic challenges, with strong fundamentals and growing global confidence in India. Speaking at the CII Annual Business Summit 2026 here, Goyal said India has consistently emerged stronger from global crises and stressed that closer collaboration between the government, businesses and citizens would be critical to safeguard the country's economic resilience. He called on Indian companies to prioritise domestic suppliers and strengthen industrial cooperation within the country, saying the current geopolitical and economic environment demands a shift away from "business as usual": "What we need today is a wake-up call," Goyal said, referring to recent appeals by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for economic discipline and self-



reliance. "It cannot be the government versus the industry, it is the government and business and industry and the people of India," he added. The minister framed his remarks around what he described as the "India spirit", saying the country possesses the ability "to defend and fortify ourselves against any challenges" despite rising geopolitical, technological and economic pressures globally. In a strong

message to corporate India, Goyal urged companies to back domestic producers and suppliers rather than depending excessively on overseas sourcing. Drawing comparisons with industrial coordination models followed in countries like Japan and South Korea, he said Indian businesses must develop stronger domestic linkages for long-term national and corporate benefit. "Indian

industry must learn to support each other. Look at the Korean and Japanese style of working," he said. "How long are we going to be myopic in our views that we don't recognise that the common good of Indian industry will help our individual futures also," Goyal mentioned. Calling it an "imperative" rather than merely a suggestion, Goyal said industry itself must take responsibility for strengthening India's economic ecosystem instead of relying solely on government intervention. "It doesn't need governments to stop Indian steel from going to Korea and Japan. Industry make sure they support each other," he said. The minister's remarks come at a time when countries across the world are increasingly focusing on supply-chain resilience, domestic manufacturing and strategic trade dependencies amid continuing geopolitical tensions and volatility in global energy markets.

## India's retail Inflation rises to 3.48% in April 2026, food prices edge higher

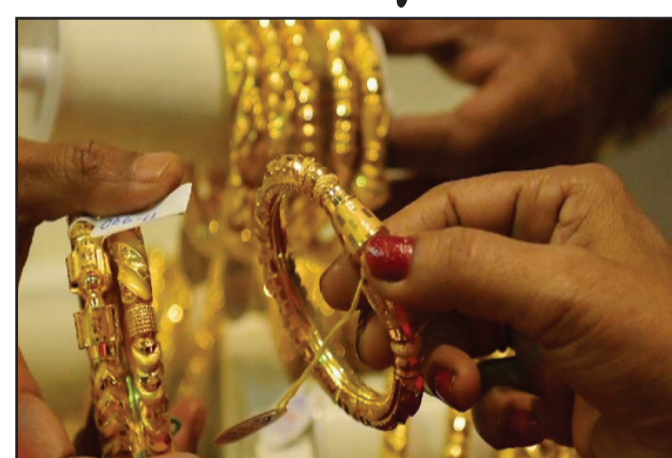
New Delhi, 12/5: India's retail inflation rose to 3.48 per cent in April 2026 on a month-on-month basis from 3.40 per cent in March 2026, according to the provisional Consumer Price Index (CPI) data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on Tuesday. The increase, was driven by higher food inflation even as prices of key vegetables like potato and onion declined sharply. Rural inflation for April stood at 3.74 per cent, up from 3.63 per cent in March, while urban inflation edged up to 3.16 per cent from 3.11 per cent. The overall CPI index for April was recorded at 105.12 at the combined national level, compared to 104.84 in March. Food inflation, as measured by the Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI), accelerated to 4.20 per cent year-on-year in April from 3.87 per cent in March. The rise was more pronounced in rural

areas at 4.26 per cent compared to 4.10 per cent in urban areas. The CFPI index for April stood at 104.39, up from 104.14 in the previous month. The uptick in food inflation was largely attributed to elevated prices of tomato, jewellery and coconut copra. Tomato inflation remained high at 35.28 per cent in April, though slightly lower than April, though slightly lower than March. Silver jewellery recorded the sharpest increase at 144.34 per cent, followed by coconut copra at 44.55 per cent and gold, diamond and platinum jewellery at 40.72 per cent. Cauliflower also saw a notable rise of 25.58 per cent during the month. Offsetting this pressure was a significant fall in vegetable prices. Potato inflation plunged to -23.69 per cent in April from -19.03 per cent in March, while onion inflation eased to -17.67 per cent from -27.78 per cent. Other items with low inflation included motor cars and

jeeps at -7.12 per cent, peas and chickpeas at -6.75 per cent, and air conditioners at -5.06 per cent. Housing inflation remained moderate at 2.15 per cent nationally in April 2026. Rural housing inflation was recorded at 2.65 per cent, while urban housing inflation was lower at 1.96 per cent. The March 2026 final figures showed CPI inflation at 3.40 per cent and CFPI at 3.87 per cent. The rural and urban CPI for March was 3.63 per cent and 3.11 per cent respectively, while the CFPI stood at 3.95 per cent for rural and 3.71 per cent for urban areas. The April data collection saw a 100 per cent response rate across both rural and urban markets. Price data was collected from 1,407 urban markets, including online platforms, and 1,465 villages across all States and Union Territories by the Field Operations Division of the National Statistical Office.

## Gold And Silver Prices Gain Up To 1 Pc As Geopolitical Concerns Intensify

Mumbai, 12/5: Gold and silver prices traded higher on Tuesday, with both precious metals witnessing gains of up to 1 per cent amid rising global uncertainty. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures (June 5) opened at Rs 1,53,999 per 10 grams, up Rs 336 or 0.22 per cent from the previous close of Rs 1,53,663. At around 10:25 am, gold was trading at Rs 1,53,808, higher by Rs 145 or 0.09 per cent. The yellow metal touched an intraday high of Rs 1,54,243, up Rs 580 or 0.37 per cent, while the intraday low stood at Rs 1,53,771, higher by Rs 108 or 0.07 per cent. On the other hand, silver futures (July 3) opened at Rs 2,80,229 per kg on MCX, rising Rs 1,988 or 0.70 per cent from the previous close of Rs 2,78,311. The white metal touched an intraday high of Rs 2,82,755, up Rs 4,444 or 1.6 per cent. It also touched an intraday low of Rs 2,79,244, higher by Rs 933 or 0.33 per cent. According to commodity market experts, precious metals' near-term bias remains cautiously bullish amid



ongoing geopolitical tensions. The experts added that immediate resistance for gold stands in the Rs 1,54,750-Rs 1,55,000 range, and a sustained move above this level could extend the rally towards Rs 1,55,500-Rs 1,56,000. "On the downside, Rs 1,53,000 acts as immediate support, while a failure to hold above this level could drag prices back into the Rs 1,51,500-Rs 1,53,500 consolidation zone," they said. For silver, immediate resistance stands at Rs 2,84,000-Rs 2,85,000, and a sustained

move above this level could extend the rally towards Rs 2,87,000, with a possible test of Rs 2,90,000 if bullish momentum persists, they added. "On the downside, Rs 2,77,000 acts as immediate support, with Rs 2,75,000 and Rs 2,71,000 serving as stronger bases if momentum weakens," the experts noted. In the international market as well, precious metals traded in the green. COMEX gold was trading at \$4,733 per ounce, up 0.08 per cent, while COMEX silver gained 1.05 per cent to \$86 per ounce.

## Stable SIP inflows indicate continued strength in equity market participation

Mumbai, 12/5: Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) inflows remained resilient in April 2026 despite market volatility, according to a report by Nuvama. The report stated that active equity inflows remained strong during the month, supported by steady SIP contributions and a recovery in lump sum investments. According to the report, SIP inflows stood at Rs 31,100 crore in April 2026, remaining close to all-time highs despite a 3 per cent month-on-month decline. It stated, "Active Apr-26 equity inflows of Rs 46,900 crore (+3.8 per cent MoM) were strong, as lumpsum recovery (+20.6 per cent MoM to Rs 15,800 crore) layered on top of a structurally resilient SIP base (Rs 31,100 crore, near all-time high despite a -3.0 per cent MoM dip) signals flow durability". The report noted that the strong SIP base reflects continued investor confidence and durability in retail participation. Active equity inflows in April stood at Rs 46,900 crore, registering a 3.8 per cent month-on-month increase.

## Shekhar Suman Returns with Shekhar Tonite to Reclaim Late Night Talk Show Throne.

Shekhar Suman is making a highly anticipated return to the conversational spotlight with his latest venture, 'Shekhar Tonite,' which officially launched in Mumbai this Monday. Breaking away from traditional broadcasting constraints, the veteran actor chose a digital-first approach for his new talk show. The program is scheduled to premiere on May 15, 2026, and will stream exclusively on his official YouTube channel every Friday. During the launch event, Suman expressed a strong desire for creative autonomy, noting that traditional television and streaming platforms often impose rigid regulations. He emphasized that YouTube offers the independence required to host raw, unscripted dialogues without interference from industry gatekeepers. His son, Adhyayan Suman, serves as the creator of the show, marking a significant professional collaboration for the family. The first episode is set to feature Union Minister Nitin Gadkari, signaling a mix of political and entertainment heavyweights. This new format aims to move past rehearsed celebrity PR and focus on genuine human moments. Suman highlighted that the most impactful exchanges happen when guests forget the cameras are rolling. The show plans to feature a diverse lineup of personalities from the worlds of cinema, politics, sports, and business. Unlike the satirical bite of his previous work, this iteration promises a blend of humor, spontaneity, and deep emotional resonance. Shekhar Suman essentially pioneered the late-night talk show genre in India during the late 1990s with 'Movers & Shakers,' a show that became a cultural phenomenon for its sharp wit and bold commentary. Produced by Dharmesh Sanghani of Sangani Brothers and Cobble Street, the show represents a modern take on the classic talk show structure.



## Mira Nair Brings Amrita Sher-Gil to Life with Priyanka Chopra and Jaideep Ahlawat

Filmmaker Mira Nair has officially revealed the stellar ensemble for her upcoming biographical feature, 'Amri,' which centers on the vibrant life of legendary painter Amrita Sher-Gil. International star Priyanka Chopra Jonas, acclaimed actor Jaideep Ahlawat, and Jim Sarbh are set to feature in this production, which explores the dual cultural identity of one of India's most significant artistic figures. While Anjali Sivaraman takes on the lead role of Sher-Gil, Chopra Jonas serves both as an executive producer and an actor in the project. Nair shared that Sher-Gil's work has been a constant source of visual guidance throughout her career, influencing the framing and color palettes of her previous cinematic works. The film aims to capture the artist's evolution from her early years in Hungary to her creative peak in India and France. This biographical drama seeks to portray her defiance of social norms and her relentless pursuit of a unique visual language that eventually redefined Indian modernism. Historically, Sher-Gil is often called India's Frida Kahlo, and her connection to the Sikh aristocracy through her father, Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, provides a rich cultural backdrop for the narrative. Jaideep Ahlawat portrays Umrao Singh Sher-Gil, while Jim Sarbh steps into the role of art critic Karl Khandalavala. British actress Emily Watson also joins the cast as Marie-Antoinette Gottesman, the artist's mother. Filming has reportedly commenced across diverse locations, including Amritsar, Hungary, and France, to authentically recreate the environments that shaped Sher-Gil's imagination.



## SPORTS

## Shabnim Ismail Returns As South Africa Name Squad For Women's T20 WC 2026

Johannesburg, 12/5: Veteran fast bowler Shabnim Ismail has reversed her retirement and returned to the South African women's side as the Proteas announced their 15-member squad for the Women's T20 World Cup 2026, scheduled to be held in England and Wales from June 12 to July 5. The 37-year-old, who last represented South Africa in the 2023 Women's T20 World Cup final in Cape Town, adds vast experience to the Laura Wolvaardt-led squad with 113 T20I appearances and a national record 123 wickets to her name. South Africa have also welcomed back experienced all-rounders Marizanne Kapp and Dané van Niekerk after recovering from illness and a calf injury, respectively, while wicketkeeper-batter Karabo Meso returns from the wrist injury that ruled her out of the recent T20I series against India. Young all-rounder Kayla Reyneke earned her maiden senior World Cup call-up following a breakthrough international season. The former South Africa U19 captain impressed during the 2025/26 campaign, averaging 53 with the bat and claiming five wickets in her first nine T20 internationals. The



remainder of the squad includes Tazmin Brits, Suné Luus, Annerie Dercksen, Nadine de Klerk, and Chloé Tryon. Meanwhile, the bowling attack features seamers Ayabonga Khaka and Tumi Sekhukhune, as well as spin queen

Nonkululeko Mlaba. Proteas Women head coach Mandla Mashimbyi said, "We're excited for the big show ahead, and I think the players have really put in the work over the last few months. The 4-1 series win against India gave us a lot

of confidence, but there are still final touch-ups we need to make before the World Cup starts." Having someone like Shabnim back adds a lot of value to the group. We had good conversations and you could see the hunger she still has to represent South Africa and help this team achieve something special. We're also pleased to have players like Marizanne, Dané and Karabo available again. "Every team goes to a World Cup wanting to win it, and we are no different, but for us it's about staying in love with the process, taking it one game at a time and continuing to improve as the tournament advances," she added. South Africa will leave for England on May 25 for a preparatory camp in Arundel, where they will play Australia in three training matches before opening their World Cup campaign against the same opponents in Manchester on June 13. South Africa Squad: Laura Wolvaardt (captain), Tazmin Brits, Nadine de Klerk, Annerie Dercksen, Shabnim Ismail, Sinalo Jafta, Marizanne Kapp, Ayabonga Khaka, Suné Luus, Karabo Meso, Nonkululeko Mlaba, Kayla Reyneke, Tumi Sekhukhune, Chloé Tryon and Dané van Niekerk.

## IPL 2026: Arya, Iyer Fifties Guide PBKS To 201/5 Against DC

Dharamsala, 12/5: Punjab Kings got off to a quick start with Priyansh Arya, followed by a steady effort from Shreyas Iyer and a late burst from Suryansh Shedge, which helped them reach 210/5 in 20 overs against Delhi Capitals in Match 55 of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium, Dharamsala, on Monday. Arya set the pace from the very first

ball, hitting Mitchell Starc over cover-point for six. This marked just the second time Starc had been hit for a first-ball six in a T20 match. The last time it happened was in IPL 2026 against Yashasvi Jaiswal in Jaipur. Starc's opening over fell apart quickly as he gave up 22 runs, his highest ever in the first over of a T20 innings, exceeding his previous worst of 15 runs against DC in 2024 while playing

for Kolkata Knight Riders. Arya continued to attack without missing a beat. He targeted Azmatullah Nabi and welcomed Lungi Ngidi with back-to-back sixes, one pulled over midwicket and the other launched over extra cover. This brought his total to five sixes in his first 13 balls. PBKS raced to 50 runs in just four overs when Arya sliced Ngidi over backward point for four off a slower ball. Even when DC regained some control

with the replacement ball moving, Arya reached a 24-ball fifty in the sixth over, which felt rather calm after his explosive start of 39 off 15 balls. PBKS ended the powerplay at 72/0. DC finally made a breakthrough when Prabhsimran Singh, who struggled to find his rhythm despite a few fortunate boundaries, misplayed a delivery from Mukesh Kumar to deep backward square leg, where Nabi took a tumbling catch.

## Sonakshi Sinha & Jyotika Star in courtroom drama 'System'; trailer released ahead of May 22 premiere



Mumbai: The trailer for the upcoming courtroom drama System, starring Sonakshi Sinha and Jyotika, was released on Tuesday afternoon. Directed by Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari and produced under the Baweja Studios banner by Pammi Baweja, Harman Baweja, and Smitha Baliga, the film promises a gripping legal narrative. System follows Neha (Sonakshi Sinha), a determined young lawyer tasked by her father (Ashutosh Gowariker) with a challenging mission to prove herself worthy of a partnership in his firm. To achieve this, she enlists the help of Sarika (Jyotika), a savvy courtroom stenographer with her own hidden motives. The trailer offers a fast-paced glimpse into intense courtroom battles,

complex relationships, and powerful dramatic moments, according to the official press note. Sonakshi Sinha, who portrays the ambitious public prosecutor Neha, shared, "Playing this character has been deeply rewarding. I'm drawn to stories that challenge me as an actor, and Prime Video has given me the opportunity to explore diverse genres—from Dahaad to now System. This film is more than just a legal drama; it reflects a society where justice is sometimes as divided as the social structures around us. Ashwiny's vision helped me bring out my best, and I'm excited to see how audiences respond when System premieres." Jyotika, who plays the layered Sarika, added,

"Portraying such a complex character in System was both exciting and challenging. The film explores the contrasts of modern India, where privilege and inequality coexist. Ashwiny brings a clear and engaging vision, from well-developed characters to realistic settings. Being part of a Prime Original movie has been a fantastic experience, and I'm confident System will resonate with audiences both in India and globally." Alongside Sinha, Jyotika, and Ashutosh Gowariker, the film also features Preeti Agarwal, Addinath Kothare, Aashriya Mishra, Gaurav Pandey, and Sayandeep Sengupta in pivotal roles. System is scheduled for release on May 22 on Prime Video.

## Cannes 2026 Begins With Alia Bhatt and Aishwarya Rai Leading Indian Star Power

Cannes Film Festival 2026 officially opens tonight at the iconic Palais des Festivals et des Congrès, marking a significant chapter for Indian representation on the global stage. Leading the Indian contingent are seasoned veterans and exciting new faces, ready to showcase the country's diverse cinematic landscape and fashion prowess. Alia Bhatt, returning for her second year as a

global ambassador, was recently spotted departing Mumbai in a sharp black blazer and denim look, signaling her arrival for the festivities. She joins a prestigious international lineup, including Hollywood legends like Jane Fonda and Viola Davis. Meanwhile, Aishwarya Rai Bachchan continues her long-standing association with the festival, expected to deliver

her signature red-carpet moments that traditionally capture worldwide attention. Beyond the Bollywood glamour, the 79th edition of the festival highlights a shift toward regional storytelling. Punjabi actor-singer Ammy Virk is set to make his first appearance alongside co-star Roopi Gill for their film 'Chardikala'.