

Dumani Mail

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Temperature below minimum normal in Delhi; strong winds forecast for next few days

New Delhi: The capital saw a slight decrease in minimum temperature on Saturday, with a forecast of strong gusts over the city for the next few days. Safdarjung, the city's base weather station, recorded a minimum of 24.8 degrees Celsius, 1.7 degrees below normal. The minimum temperature was 26.2 degrees Celsius the day before. Other stations also recorded below-normal minimum temperatures. Palam recorded a minimum of 24.6

degrees Celsius, 2.5 degrees below normal, while the Ridge recorded 24.6 degrees Celsius, 2.1 degrees below normal. "The drop in minimum happens when skies are clear, leading to more loss of heat from the earth's surface. Mostly clear skies are expected to persist through Saturday," an IMD official said. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast, there is a "possibility of thundery development towards

afternoon/evening" on Sunday, along with strong winds at 20-30 kmph, and occasional gusts at 40 kmph. "Strong surface winds are expected to continue on Monday and Tuesday as well," the official added. IMD has forecast a maximum temperature of 40-42 degrees Celsius on Saturday. Meanwhile, the city's air quality index (AQI) remained in 'moderate' category at 173 at 9 am on Saturday, as compared to the 24-hour average AQI of 152,



also 'moderate', recorded at 4 pm on Friday, according to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data. As per CPCB standards, an AQI of 0-50 is considered 'good', 51-100 'satisfactory', 101-200 'moderate', 201-300 'poor', 301-400 'very poor', and 401-500 'severe'. The Air Quality Early Warning System (AQEWS) for Delhi has forecast AQI to remain 'moderate' over the weekend and then subsequently deteriorate to 'poor' category on Monday.

"The drop in minimum happens when skies are clear, leading to more loss of heat from the earth's surface. Mostly clear skies are expected to persist through Saturday," an IMD official said.

Four arrested in Delhi for extortion via fake dating profiles, police say

New Delhi: Four people were arrested by the Delhi Police for allegedly running an organised extortion racket using fake dating profiles on apps such as Tinder and QuackQuack to lure men, impersonating police officers, and extorting money by threatening victims with false rape cases, police said on Saturday, adding that two gang members are absconding. The arrests followed a complaint filed by a man at the Crime Branch police station who alleged that the accused had extorted him a



certain amount last week and were again asking for money.

Police said the accused created fake female profiles on dating platforms and social media to target victims. Once contact was established, women associated with the gang allegedly called the victims to public places before taking them to rented flats or isolated locations, where other gang members staged fake police raids.

"One accused would impersonate a police officer by wearing a fake police uniform to create fear and legitimacy. The gang would then threaten victims with false criminal cases, including rape allegations, and extort huge amounts as settlement money," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Pankaj Kumar said.

Acting on the information, a team laid a trap near a jewellery store in Rajouri Garden on Tuesday.

Police said Sushil Kumar, 53, a resident of Najafgarh, was apprehended at the spot along with the victim and was allegedly found wearing a fake police uniform. However, three of the gang members fled, an officer said.

Based on his interrogation and the victim's complaint, police later arrested three more accused — Deepak alias Sajan, a resident of Sonapat in Haryana, Vinod Pandit of Uttam Nagar, and Neeraj of Tilak Nagar.

"In the present case, the complainant said that he came in contact with a woman named Kirti through Tinder. She called him to meet at a restaurant in Janakpuri and later took him to a flat, where four persons, including one in fake police uniform, threatened to implicate him in a false rape case and demanded ₹15 lakh," Kumar said.

Police said the complainant was allegedly confined in his own car and driven around while being pressured to arrange money and withdraw cash from ATMs.

Investigators found that Deepak allegedly posed as a woman named "Kirti" online and managed communication with targets through fake profiles on dating applications.

Police said three of the arrested accused — Neeraj, Vinod and Deepak — were previously involved in a similar case registered at Bindapur police station in 2024, while Sushil had allegedly been arrested in a similar case in 2017.

Efforts are underway to trace two remaining accused, identified as Gagan and Pooja alias Kirti, police added.

CBSE announces window for re-evaluation of answer sheets for Class 12th students

New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education has issued a notice outlining post-result declaration facilities for Class 12 students, reaffirming its commitment to a fair and transparent evaluation process. In the notice, the Board said that students dissatisfied with their results can avail a two-stage review system. In the first stage, students may apply online for scanned copies of their evaluated answer books, which can be downloaded for review.

In the second stage, students can seek verification of discrepancies or request re-evaluation of specific answers based on the marking scheme. CBSE said applications for scanned copies can be submitted online from the 19th to the 22nd of this month at a fee of 700 rupees per subject. Applications for verification and re-evaluation can be submitted between the 26th and 29th of this month.

Bhalswa, Okhla landfills to be flattened this year; Ghazipur site to be cleared by 2027-end: Delhi Mayor

New Delhi: Delhi Mayor Praveesh Wahi on Saturday said the MCD aims to clear the Bhalswa and Okhla landfill sites by end of this year, while complete remediation of the Ghazipur landfill will conclude by end of 2027.

In an interview with PTI, the mayor elaborated on flattening Delhi's garbage mounds, while also outlining plans on sanitation, stray animal management, desilting works and revenue generation.

Wahi said the Municipal Corporation of Delhi is working continuously on biomining and remediation

of the three legacy waste sites.

"Our target is to finish Bhalswa and Okhla by the end of this year. Work on Ghazipur is also progressing and our target is to complete it by end of 2027," he said.

He said machinery was being installed for the process and work would be expedited once installation is complete.

On the issue of stray animals, including dogs and monkeys, Wahi said the civic body was acting in accordance with Supreme Court directions and was focusing on sterilisation drives and anti-rabies

vaccination.

"Sterilisation is being carried out every day. The situation has already improved a lot and we hope there will be more control in the coming days," he said.

He said free anti-rabies vaccination was available in several MCD hospitals, citing arrangements at Swami Dayanand Hospital, and added that work on modern dog shelters, including the proposed kennel in Dwarka, was underway.

On monsoon preparedness, the mayor said around 70 per cent desilting of drains under the civic body had been completed.

"Lakhs of tonnes of silt have been removed from drains across Delhi. Modern machines are being used, and the corporation is working hard to completely clean smaller drains," he said.

Wahi also referred to a cow dung-based biogas plant that is expected to begin operations by July.

"We have issued strict instructions for the plant to start within July. This plant will process 200 tonnes of cow dung to generate gas," he said, adding that such projects would help reduce waste entering drains and ease desilting efforts.

Addressing concerns

over delayed textbook distribution in MCD schools, Wahi said books would reach all students before the summer vacation ends.

"There were some complaints regarding classes 4 and 5 textbooks, which were delayed. Instructions have been issued and books will reach all students before the holidays end," he said.

He added that uniform assistance funds had already been transferred directly to parents' accounts.

"In one click, crores have reached the accounts of parents of lakhs of children," he said.

Noida administration orders crackdown on sale of intoxicants near schools, colleges

Noida: Concerned over the sale of tobacco products and other intoxicants near educational institutions, the Gautam Budh Nagar administration has directed departments to intensify inspections and enforcement drives around schools and colleges as part of a wider anti-narcotics campaign in the district, officials said on Friday.

Officials said awareness programmes would also be expanded in schools, colleges and public places to sensitise young people about substance abuse and the risks associated with illegal narcotics.

The directions were issued during a review meeting of the Narco Coordination Centre, chaired by additional district magistrate (finance and revenue) Atul Kumar on Thursday.

Officials said all departments concerned would need to work in coordination to make the anti-drug campaign more effective in the district. "Strict action should be ensured against those involved in the illegal trade of liquor and narcotics. Officials have been directed to intensify enforcement

operations and maintain surveillance on suspicious activities," the ADM said. Officials reviewed action taken by departments over the past month against the illegal sale and smuggling of narcotic substances, including enforcement drives and awareness campaigns conducted across the district.

"The excise department, in coordination with the police, has been carrying out regular enforcement drives and special checking campaigns in different parts of the district. Action is continuously being taken against

persons involved in the illegal intoxicants trade, and suspicious activities are being monitored regularly," district excise officer Subodh Kumar said. The administration also directed officials to submit detailed reports on enforcement action and awareness programmes carried out in April. Officials said the anti-drug campaign would be expanded further in the coming weeks, particularly to create awareness among youth about the harmful effects of substance abuse. "Departments have been instructed to organise outreach programmes in educational

institutions and public spaces while ensuring regular inspections near schools and colleges to check the sale of tobacco, cigarettes and other intoxicants around campuses," the ADM said. "As parents, we are increasingly concerned about the growing use of intoxicants among senior secondary and college students. Strict monitoring and strong enforcement are necessary to prevent students from falling into harmful habits," said Manoj Kataria, founder of the Gautam Budh Nagar Parents Welfare Society.

Centre will continue supporting Sikkim's growth trajectory: PM Modi

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday greeted the people of Sikkim on the occasion of the State's 50th Statehood Day and reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to supporting its development and growth.

In a post on X, the Prime Minister extended his wishes to the people of the Himalayan State and said Sikkim's contribution to India's development was deeply valued.

"Greetings to my sisters and brothers on their Statehood Day. The contribution of Sikkim to India's development is deeply valued. Wishing the people of the State good health and prosperity," PM Modi said.

Noting that Sikkim was

celebrating its 50th Statehood Day this year, the Prime Minister recalled his recent visit to the State and said the warmth shown by the people would remain memorable for him.

"A few days ago, I had the good fortune of being among the people of Sikkim for the celebrations. The warmth I received in Sikkim will remain a part of my memory. The Central Government will keep supporting Sikkim's growth trajectory in the times to come," he added.

Sikkim Statehood Day is observed every year on May 16 to commemorate the State's merger with the Indian Union in 1975.

The former Himalayan kingdom became India's 22nd



State following a referendum in April 1975, in which an overwhelming majority voted in favour of abolishing the monarchy and integrating with India. The transition was formalised on May 16, 1975, through the 36th Constitutional

Amendment.

Before joining India, Sikkim was ruled by the Namgyal dynasty and later functioned as an Indian protectorate under the Indo-Sikkim Treaty of 1950.

Meanwhile, Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia is attending

the Statehood Day celebrations during his official visit to Sikkim.

During the visit, Scindia is scheduled to lay the foundation stone for several projects under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region and launch the USP Organic Farming Project aimed at promoting sustainable agriculture in the State.

The Union Minister is also reviewing tourism, infrastructure and connectivity projects across Sikkim. His itinerary includes visits to the Temi Tea Garden, the Bhaleydungpa Skywalk, Nathula Pass and other locations linked to tourism and pilgrimage infrastructure.

Scindia is expected to attend the Statehood Day celebrations in Gangtok as the Guest of Honour.

CEC hosts vibrant cultural program CAPCREST-2K26.



Khordha-16/5- Capital engineering college (CEC) in Mahatapalla, Khordha hosts vibrant cultural program primarily highlighted during its annual combined sports and cultural meets known as the capital "CAPCREST" 2k26. These events typically feature celebrity guest performance, departmental competition and grand star night for the students. The cultural festival serves as a platform for students to showcase their talents across various disciplines. The 2026 edition "CAPCREST" -2026 is a major two day extravaganza featuring electrifying star night dance floors and technical meets. Principal of CEC, Dr. Chinmaya Ranjan Pattnaik in his welcome address, highlighting academic and co-curricular achievements and emphasising personal growth, resilience and a partnership with parents to ensure a successful supportive environment. Director academics, CEC

Dr. Soumya Darshan Mohanty, highlights the achievements of the past year, mention pass percentage, top

performing students and prestigious awards of scholarship. Chief speaker, former director of Mahanadi Coalfield Limited (MCL) Dr. Purna Chandra Panigrahi, in his inspiring speech highlights how engineering transforms abstract science into reality driving societal progress, building modern infrastructure and solving global challenges. The chief guest Padma Shri recipient and eminent neurosurgeon Dr. Ashok Kumar Mohapatra in his speech he emphasizes the need to balance cutting-edge medical technology with compassionate, patient-first care. He advocates for expanding healthcare access to underserved populations and consistently highlights the importance of lifelong learning and surgical precision. He stresses that doctors must prioritize patient survival and comfort over monetary gain. In his discussion he advocates for medical institutes and hospitals- especially in growing healthcare hubs like Bhubaneswar to maintain a balance between adopting modern technology and

performing students and prestigious awards of scholarship. Chief speaker, former director of Mahanadi Coalfield Limited (MCL) Dr. Purna Chandra Panigrahi, in his inspiring speech highlights how engineering transforms abstract science into reality driving societal progress, building modern infrastructure and solving global challenges. The chief guest Padma Shri recipient and eminent neurosurgeon Dr. Ashok Kumar Mohapatra in his speech he emphasizes the need to balance cutting-edge medical technology with compassionate, patient-first care. He advocates for expanding healthcare access to underserved populations and consistently highlights the importance of lifelong learning and surgical precision. He stresses that doctors must prioritize patient survival and comfort over monetary gain. In his discussion he advocates for medical institutes and hospitals- especially in growing healthcare hubs like Bhubaneswar to maintain a balance between adopting modern technology and

Gambling Den Busted, 7 Apprehended

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD, 14/05 : Jonk Police on Wednesday night busted a gambling den near Khariar Road under Jonk police limits of Nuapada district and apprehended seven persons in this connection.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Police conducted a raid and apprehended seven persons in this connection. During Evening Patrolling and gambling raid duty in Khariar Road area, they apprehended accused namely Binod Jal (50) of L.D. Pada Ward No-06, Iswar Yadav (29) of Kurumunda Ward No-07, Amit Tandi (32) of L.D. Pada Ward No-06, Ratha Bag (27) of Bazarpada Ward No-04, Deepak Sagar (30) of Bazarpada Ward No-04, Gobind Singh (24) of Ganesh Nagar Ward No-19, Suraj Thomre (28) of Punjabipada Ward No-11 and Dharmendra Singh Bagga (30) of Punjabipada Ward No-11 all are of PS-Jonk, Dist-Nuapada. Rohit Jal & Mandeep Singh Gurudutta both are of Khariar Road, are managed to fled away from the spot. As they failed to produce any license or authority towards playing of gambling by betting the money. Hence they seized Rs.18,560/- in different denomination, 03 new packets of playing cards, 150 nos of playing cards, 11 numbers of smart phones of different company, 01 key pad phone, 01 locked steel box and 04 numbers of vehicle key from the spot. On this report Jonk PS Case No-145, Dtd. 13.05.2026, U/s 03 OPG Act registered and the case is under investigation said IIC Jonk Police Station Pradeep Kumar Dharua.

BJD Gheraos SP Office Over Law and Order Situation

Puri: Alleging a deteriorating law-and-order situation in the state, the district unit of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) staged a protest demonstration today.

A massive protest rally organized by the BJD began from Subash Bose Square and marched to the office of the Superintendent of Police (SP), where party workers and leaders staged a gherao and demonstration. A memorandum of demands was also submitted to the SP.

BJD leaders alleged that common people are feeling



increasingly unsafe. They claimed that incidents of violence against women, robbery, murder, and other

crimes have risen sharply, raising serious concerns about the state's governance and law-and-order machinery.

The leaders stated that ensuring public safety is the government's primary responsibility. They demanded that the government immediately take steps to restore public security, justice, social stability, and people's trust and confidence. The protest programme was attended by Rajya Sabha MP Subhasish Khuntia, former minister Sanjay Das Burma, former MLA Rudra Pratap Maharathy, along with several male and female leaders and workers of the district BJD unit.

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GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
JHARSUGUDA (R&B) DIVISION, JHARSUGUDA
"e"-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No-SE-R&B-JSG-04 OF 2026-27.

1.	The Superintending Engineer, Jharsuguda (R&B) Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in Single cover system on ON-LINE mode from eligible contractors for Construction of Electrical Works as detailed in DTCN .	
2.	Nature of Work	:- Electrical Works
3.	Estimated cost	:- Rs. 16.11 Lakhs to Rs.38.00 Lakhs
4.	No. of work.	:- 04 (Four) Nos
5.	Tender Cost	:- Rs.6000.00 (as per DTCN)
6.	Class of Contractor	:- SI No- 1 to 4 - HT
7.	Availability of bid document in the website	:- 10.00 A.M. of 18.05.2026 to 05.00 P.M. of 26.05.2026
8.	Date of opening of Technical Bid (Cover-I)	:- 11.00 AM on Dt. 27.05.2026
9.	The bidders have to participate in ON-LINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website https://tendersodisha.gov.in . Any addendum /corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website .	

34001/212/2627

Superintending Engineer
Jharsuguda (R&B) Division

Rayagada Police Crack High-Profile Firing and Murder Case; Three Prime Accused Arrested in Bihar

Rayagada, May 16 : In a major breakthrough in the sensational firing and murder case of Nikhil Hadappa that rocked Rayagada town earlier this month, Rayagada Police have arrested three prime accused from Bihar following an extensive interstate manhunt.

The incident took place on May 10, 2026, in the Indra Colony area of Rayagada Town, triggering widespread concern and panic among local residents. Acting swiftly after the crime, Rayagada Police formed six special teams under the direct supervision of Superintendent of Police Swathy S Kumar to trace and apprehend those involved in the murder.

The technical and



operational coordination of the investigation was led by Additional SP Ramendra Prasad, who monitored the movement of the accused and supervised the interstate operation.

According to police sources, the accused managed to evade arrest several times despite multiple close pursuits by the investigating teams. However, after

sustained surveillance and intelligence gathering, police successfully tracked down and arrested the three prime accused — Umesh Hial, Raj Seemli, and Akshaya Samal alias Tinkulu — from the jurisdiction of Madanpur Police Station in Bihar's Aurangabad district.

Police officials stated that all legal formalities, including transit remand

procedures, were completed before bringing the accused back to Rayagada for detailed interrogation and further investigation.

The successful operation is being viewed as a significant achievement for Rayagada Police in solving a case that had created shockwaves across the district. Senior officials said investigations and raids are continuing at multiple locations to identify and arrest other persons linked to the crime.

Police have indicated that more arrests are likely in the coming days, though further details have been withheld to avoid affecting the ongoing investigation.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Unveils Poetry Collection 'Kabita Kusumanjali' in Puri

Puri: Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday unveiled 'Kabita Kusumanjali', a new poetry collection authored by noted Odia poet and columnist Krishna Chandra Jagadev, at a literary function held on the premises of Gopabandhu Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya.

Addressing the gathering as chief guest, Pradhan said the book is "not merely a compilation of words, but a reflection of devotion, social consciousness and patriotism." He congratulated the poet and the publishers, expressing hope that the collection would be widely appreciated by readers across all sections of society. He also offered prayers to Lord Jagannath for the book's success. Praising the author, the Union minister described Jagadev as a



multi-faceted personality deeply influenced by the ideals of Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das and the cultural ethos of Puri. He said the poems beautifully blend spiritual surrender with social sensitivity.

Pradhan also referred to an interesting anecdote mentioned in the opening poem of the collection, linked to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's earlier visit to Odisha during the

Emergency period. Recalling the incident, he said Modi had once travelled to Jagadev's village on the latter's scooter after finding a local office in Puri closed. Even after becoming Prime Minister, Modi's continued association with Jagadev reflects his warmth and respect for old friendships, Pradhan added.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice-Chancellor of Odia University Prof. Satya Narayan Acharya highlighted the cultural

significance of Odisha and Puri in preserving Odia identity and Jagannath culture. He observed that the year 2026 carries immense cultural importance in the broader context of India's civilisational resurgence.

Among others present at the event were Basanta Kumar Panda, poet Rakshak Nayak and several literary personalities. The programme proceedings were coordinated by Shyam Prakash Senapati.

Rare sand dog breed is growing in Debrigad Sanctuary.

Sambalpur-16/05 (DMS) : Debrigah Sanctuary emerges as a new breeding ground in India for the rare & endangered "Indian Dholes" (Asiatic Wild Dogs or Balua Kukura in Odia) -

Debrigah Wildlife Sanctuary has recorded a significant conservation gain with successful breeding of Dholes and the sighting of a litter with two pups. Breeding has been observed in the pair that has gradually established movement within the Sanctuary over the past two years. The birth of the pups indicates favourable habitat conditions, ensured protection, adequate prey availability and ecological security within the landscape. Sanctuary authorities are closely monitoring the movement of the mother with the pups while ensuring minimal

disturbance.

In Debrigah Sanctuary, a lone Indian Dhole was first camera trapped moving inside the Sanctuary during October 2023, a rare and significant observation for the landscape. Sometime later, another wild dog was seen accompanying the first, and gradually the pair began moving together across the grasslands & hills of the Sanctuary covering more than 100 Sq.km area for more than two years until beginning of 2026 when their movement gradually became confined to a smaller area of the Core during female's advanced stage of gestation. During third week of May the mother was first time recorded moving with a pair of litter (approx. 3 to 4 months old), pups were camera trapped while moving on the footpaths. Following

the sighting of the Dhole pair with two pups, 26 Camera traps have been strategically placed to record their movement. A deer kill was also recorded within their resting area indicating active hunting ability. These observations may mark the early foundation of a future pack and signals the ecological suitability of Debrigah for the return of this endangered carnivore.

Interestingly, the Dhole pair in Debrigah Sanctuary was observed breeding even without the presence of a larger pack, slightly uncommon but remarkable sign of adaptation and survival. The pair has now been seen with a litter of two pups, indicating successful breeding within the sanctuary, protection and monitoring measures have been strengthened in &



around the Sanctuary to zero down disturbance around the breeding area. Movement near waterbodies, saltlick is being carefully regulated, while frontline staff are maintaining regular

surveillance to ensure the safety of the mother and pups. Efforts are also focused on maintaining a healthy prey base and reducing potential threats from feral dogs, disease transmission, or

human interference in the bordering areas to secure the Core. Such precautionary measures are crucial during the early stages of pup rearing, when the survival of the litter is most vulnerable

as they are yet to learn survival skills in the forest with other predators.

The mother Dhole is observed to care of the pups. It appears from CT pics that the pups are until now dependent on mother for warmth and milk, and moving with the mother mostly. Breeding & birth of a litter with two pups is a hopeful sign for the continuity of this highly endangered predator. The arrival of pups not only reflects successful breeding but also indicates a healthy prey base and secure habitat, both essential for the survival of these remarkable hunters.

Where the first one dispersed from, and from where the second eventually joined it, still remains one of the forest's intriguing mysteries. Dholes are known to travel long distances in search of territory, mates,

and prey, often silently reconnecting fragmented landscapes through their movement.

During the year 2022 & 2023, two new Checkgates were strategically placed (total 12 anti-poaching checkgates) at Debrigah Sanctuary to further strengthen protection measures and secure an effective inviolate habitat of approximately 300 sq.km within the Sanctuary, providing a disturbance-free breeding landscape for wildlife. All border checkgates are under CCTV surveillance 24/7 with manned protection to ensure continuous monitoring & effective enforcement. India is known to have around 1000 to 2500 Wild Dogs mostly occupying Western Ghats, Central Indian Forests & Northeast India.

Enduring Symbol of Indian Civilization

Bhaskar Parichha

In *Flower of India*, celebrated mythologist Devdutt Pattanaik turns his attention to one of the most enduring symbols of Indian civilization—the lotus. What emerges is not merely a cultural history of a flower, but an exploration of India itself through a symbol that has quietly shaped its imagination for centuries. Compact in size yet ambitious in scope, the book combines mythology, history, art, philosophy, and everyday cultural practices into an engaging and thought-provoking narrative.

Pattanaik approaches the lotus not simply as a botanical entity but as a civilizational metaphor. From

temple iconography and sacred texts to cuisine, poetry, erotica, architecture, and politics, the lotus appears repeatedly as a marker of purity, beauty, fertility, transcendence, and divine order. The author demonstrates how this flower has travelled across religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism—and across regions and eras, acquiring layered meanings while remaining deeply rooted in the Indian psyche.

One of the strengths of the book lies in Pattanaik's ability to make complex cultural ideas accessible without oversimplifying them. His prose is lucid and conversational, allowing readers unfamiliar with mythology or Indian aesthetics to engage comfortably with the subject. At the same time, the book offers

enough historical and symbolic depth to interest serious readers of culture and religion. His characteristic style—mixing anecdote, interpretation, and visual illustration—adds warmth and immediacy to the narrative.

The book also succeeds because it resists presenting the lotus as a static or purely sacred symbol. Pattanaik reveals its practical and material dimensions as a source of food, medicine, ornamentation, and artistic inspiration. In doing so, he bridges the gap between mythology and lived experience, showing how symbols survive because they remain embedded in daily life.

If the book has a limitation, it is perhaps its brevity. Some themes—

particularly the political appropriation of symbols in modern India—could have been explored in greater depth. Yet the concise format also contributes to its charm, making it an inviting introduction rather than an exhaustive academic study. *Flower of India* is an elegant meditation on how a single symbol can illuminate the cultural history of an entire civilization. Insightful, accessible, and richly evocative, the book reminds readers that myths and symbols are not relics of the past but living forces that continue to shape collective identity and imagination.

Flower of India: Ways of Seeing the Lotus
Devdutt Pattanaik
Aleph Books
New Delhi

Of Shared Humanity, Peace, and Hope

Bhaskar Parichha

In *Wild Winds*, edited by Mitali Chakravarty, poetry becomes more than an artistic exercise—it emerges as a moral and emotional response to a fractured world. Bringing together twenty-four poets from different countries, generations, and lived experiences, the anthology celebrates the enduring possibility of human connection in an age marked by conflict, alienation, and uncertainty. The collection's introductory reflections set the tone for a work deeply invested in hope, compassion, and the dream of a borderless humanity.

The central idea of the anthology is both simple and ambitious: despite divisions of nation, ideology, race, and religion, human beings remain united by shared emotions and aspirations. The opening meditation imagines a future where peace and harmony replace violence and division, arguing that what once seemed impossible—travelling to space, transcending geographical limits—has already become reality through human imagination and perseverance. Why then, the anthology asks, should a more compassionate world be dismissed as utopian fantasy? This idealistic yet earnest philosophical grounding gives the collection its emotional



coherence.

One of the strengths of *Wild Winds* lies in the diversity of its contributors. The anthology includes acclaimed voices alongside emerging poets, immigrants alongside retirees, and working mothers beside literary award winners. Such variety enriches the collection, allowing readers to encounter multiple poetic styles, tones, and cultural perspectives. Some poems are introspective and melancholic, while others radiate resilience, humour, or quiet optimism. Yet together they create a collective voice that speaks of survival, empathy, memory, and belonging.

The metaphor of “wild winds” is particularly effective. Like winds that travel freely across borders, the poems move

through landscapes of longing, displacement, love, grief, and hope without being confined by nationality or ideology. The anthology repeatedly emphasizes the need to embrace diversity not as a threat but as something akin to the colours of a rainbow—distinct yet harmonious. This metaphorical framework gives the collection both poetic beauty and philosophical clarity.

If the anthology remains accessible without sacrificing emotional depth, many poems favour direct language and vivid imagery over abstraction, making the collection inviting even for readers who may not regularly engage with contemporary poetry. The recurring atmosphere of compassion and humanity ensures that the work never descends into cynicism despite addressing difficult realities. *Wild Winds* is a timely and uplifting collection that reminds readers of poetry's power to nurture empathy across borders. In a world increasingly divided by fear and intolerance, this anthology offers a gentle but persuasive argument for shared humanity, peace, and hope.

Wild Winds: the Borderless anthology of poems
Ed. Mitali Chakravarty
Hawalak Publishers
New Delhi/Kolkata

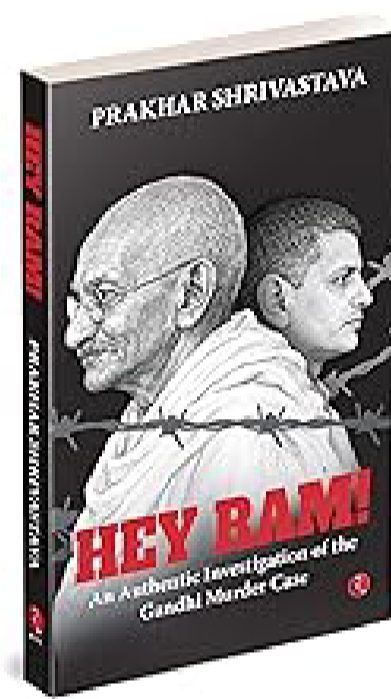
A Methodological Rigor

Dharma Raj

The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi remains one of the most emotionally charged and politically contested events in modern Indian history. *Hey Ram! An Authentic Investigation of the Gandhi Murder Case* by Prakhar Shrivastava attempts to move beyond the familiar narrative of a lone assassin firing three bullets on 30 January 1948 and instead situates the event within the turbulent political and social upheavals of the time. By examining the broader context of Partition, communal violence, refugee displacement, ideological conflict, and political rivalries within the Congress leadership, the work offers a detailed and provocative reappraisal of Gandhi's final days and the forces that culminated in his assassination.

The major strength of this book is its reliance on primary sources. Drawing extensively from police investigation reports, witness statements, court proceedings, and case diaries, the author constructs an evidence-based narrative that seeks to separate historical inquiry from political mythmaking. This methodological rigor lends credibility to the work, especially in a subject often clouded by ideological interpretations and emotional reactions. Rather than sensationalizing the assassination, the book focuses on reconstructing the atmosphere of fear, anger, and uncertainty that prevailed in post-Partition India.

The study pays particular attention to the refugee crisis and the growing



resentment among sections of Hindus who viewed Gandhi's politics as excessively conciliatory towards Muslims during a period of unprecedented communal trauma. The controversy surrounding the transfer of fifty-five crore rupees to Pakistan is explored not merely as an isolated policy issue but as a symbolic moment that intensified public discontent. The author also examines the rise of extremist sentiment within certain nationalist circles, presenting the assassination as emerging from a wider climate of ideological polarization rather

than from personal hatred alone.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the book is its willingness to ask difficult questions often absent from mainstream discussions. It interrogates why Gandhi, despite publicly opposing Partition, did not launch a fast unto death or a nationwide movement against it. These questions are not framed as accusations but as historical inquiries into the limits of Gandhi's political choices during the final phase of the freedom struggle. Whether readers agree with the interpretations or not, the book succeeds in encouraging critical engagement with accepted historical narratives.

The work is serious, analytical, and deeply researched. It avoids rhetorical excess and instead relies on documentation and contextual interpretation. However, given the sensitivity of the subject, some readers may find certain arguments uncomfortable or politically challenging. Yet that discomfort also reflects the book's importance: it refuses to reduce history to moral simplicity.

This is a significant and thought-provoking contribution to the study of Gandhi's assassination and the politics of Partition-era India. By placing the event within its larger historical framework, the book invites readers to confront the complexities, contradictions, and unresolved tensions that shaped the birth of independent India.

Hey Ram!
Prakhar Shrivastava
Rupa Publications
New Delhi

Cricket's Enduring Power

Arun Mishra

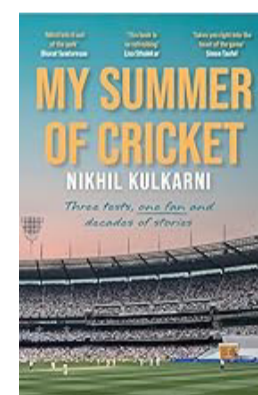
In *Howzat! My Summer of Cricket*, Nikhil Kulkarni transforms the experience of being a cricket fan into a deeply personal and emotionally resonant journey across memory, geography, and culture. Part memoir, part travel narrative, and part love letter to the game, the book captures how cricket becomes woven into the rhythms of everyday life, shaping identity and human connection across generations and national borders.

Kulkarni begins with his childhood in North Karnataka, where cricket first entered his imagination through radio commentaries and community conversations. These early experiences are narrated with warmth and nostalgia, evoking an era when cricket was not merely watched but collectively lived. The author effectively captures the emotional intensity of fandom—the anticipation before matches, the heartbreak of defeat, and the almost spiritual joy of witnessing moments of greatness. His recollections of following Indian cricket through the decades, culminating in watching Sachin Tendulkar's farewell Test match, give the narrative an authentic emotional core.

The book reaches its fullest expression during the 2024–25 Border-Gavaskar Trophy tour of Australia, where Kulkarni undertakes

what he describes as a personal pilgrimage. Travelling across Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney, he attends every match day of the series, immersing himself completely in the atmosphere surrounding one of cricket's fiercest rivalries. Yet the book is never limited to match reports or statistics. Instead, cricket becomes the lens through which the author encounters cities, strangers, friendships, and moments of reflection. The travel writing adds richness to the narrative, allowing readers to experience the excitement and unpredictability of following a major sporting event across continents.

One of the book's greatest strengths lies in its understanding of cricket as a cultural force rather than just a sport. Kulkarni repeatedly emphasizes how cricket creates shared emotional spaces between people from different countries and backgrounds. Conversations with fellow fans, chance meetings during travel, and collective celebrations inside stadiums reveal how the game transcends nationality while



simultaneously intensifying it. The book also touches on supporting social causes and preserving intergenerational bonds, suggesting that fandom itself can become a form of community.

The prose is conversational, energetic, and accessible. Kulkarni writes with the enthusiasm of a lifelong devotee rather than the detachment of a sports journalist, and this sincerity gives the book its charm. Even readers who are not ardent cricket followers may find themselves drawn into the emotional landscape he creates.

Howzat! My Summer of Cricket is an affectionate and engaging celebration of cricket's enduring power to connect people, places, and memories. More than a sports memoir, it is a reflection on passion, belonging, and the extraordinary emotional worlds that games can create.

My Summer of Cricket
Nikhil Kulkarni
Notion Press

An Artistic Self-portrait

Bhaskar Parichha

In *Light and Thread*, Nobel laureate Han Kang offers a luminous meditation on love, language, memory, and artistic connection. Deeply personal yet philosophically expansive, the book gathers essays, poems, diary fragments, and photographs into a reflective mosaic that explores the invisible bonds linking human beings to one another and to the world around them. More than a conventional memoir or literary essay collection, this work feels like an intimate conversation between writer and reader, conducted through silence, light, and carefully chosen words.

At the heart of the book lies the metaphor of the “gold thread,” first imagined by Han Kang in a poem she wrote as a child. This thread becomes the central symbol through which she contemplates love—not merely romantic affection, but the profound emotional and linguistic connections that allow one consciousness to reach another. For Han Kang, language itself is an act of reaching across solitude, an “electric current” that binds writer and reader in shared emotional experience. This idea gives the book both its intellectual depth and emotional tenderness.

One of the most striking elements of *Light and Thread* is its structure. Rather than



following a linear narrative, the book unfolds organically through fragments and reflections, mirroring the delicate movements of thought and memory. The recurring image of the author's north-facing courtyard garden—sustained entirely through reflected sunlight redirected by mirrors she adjusts throughout the day—becomes a powerful metaphor for artistic creation itself. Just as the garden survives through borrowed light, human beings survive through reflected acts of care, understanding, and imagination.

Han Kang's prose remains as restrained and evocative as in her fiction. She writes with extraordinary attentiveness to silence, fragility, and the emotional textures of ordinary

life. Even the smallest observations acquire meditative significance. Readers familiar with her earlier works will recognize her recurring preoccupations with pain, empathy, violence, and transcendence, yet this book feels gentler and more openly intimate than much of her fiction. The inclusion of photographs and diary-like passages further dissolves the boundary between art and lived experience.

The book's reflective pace may not appeal to readers seeking narrative momentum or argumentative clarity. It asks instead for contemplation and emotional openness. Yet for those willing to enter its quiet world, the rewards are considerable. The text gradually accumulates emotional resonance, revealing how deeply interconnected memory, creativity, and love truly are.

Light and Thread is a deeply moving and exquisitely crafted work that explores what it means to remain connected in an often fractured world. Intimate, philosophical, and beautifully restrained, it stands as both an artistic self-portrait and a meditation on the enduring human need for empathy, language, and light.

Light and Thread
Han Kang / e. yaewon / Maya West / Paige Aniyah Morriss
Oenguin Random House

Fierce, Sensual, and Compassionate

Bhaskar Parichha

The story of Peero is as extraordinary as the poetry attributed to her. Widely regarded as the first female mystic-poet of Punjab and a spiritual force within the Gulabdas sect, Peero emerges in this remarkable collection not merely as a literary figure but as a radical challenge to the social, religious, and gender hierarchies of her age. Through sensitive translations of over a hundred of her verses, the book restores to contemporary readers a voice that is at once mystical, rebellious,

sensual, and profoundly human.

Born into a deeply patriarchal society, Peero's life defied nearly every convention imposed upon women. Orphaned in childhood and pushed into the world of the tawaf in Lahore's Heera Mandi, she later escaped that existence and found spiritual refuge at Chathianwal, transforming herself from “Peero the prostitute” into Mata Peero, revered spiritual guide and poet. This dramatic personal journey forms the emotional and philosophical foundation of her

poetry. Her verses repeatedly reject narrow definitions of purity, piety, and respectability, insisting instead on a spirituality rooted in direct experience, emotional truth, and personal freedom.

One of the most compelling aspects of the collection is the way Peero's poetry dissolves rigid boundaries between traditions. Her work represents a striking confluence of Bhakti and Sufi thought, blending the emotional intensity of Nirguna Bhakti with the ecstatic longing of Sufi mysticism.

Yet her voice never feels derivative or merely doctrinal. It is earthy, witty, and often startlingly bold. She criticizes both the Pandit and the Qazi, challenging institutional religion and exposing the hypocrisies of moral authority. At the same time, she refuses the austere renunciation associated with conventional asceticism. Her spirituality embraces both devotion and sensuality, locating divine experience within the fullness of lived existence.

'...Want To Be Part Of Geography, History Or Not': Army Chief Warns Pakistan

New Delhi, 16/5: Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Upendra Dwivedi on Saturday issued a stern warning to Pakistan, saying that if the neighbouring country keeps harbouring terrorists, then it will have to decide whether it wants to be a part of geography, history or not. COAS Dwivedi's response came during an interaction at Sena Samvad 2026, a premier military-citizen dialogue seminar. The Army Chief was asked if Pakistan gives a chance again for continuation of Operation Sindoor, will we hit them hard or harder and whether he wanted to divulge anything about Operation Sindoor which is not known to anyone so far. Responding to the question, General Dwivedi said: "That's in the domain of classified information, but I think if you have heard me earlier, what I have said is that if Pakistan continues



to harbour terrorists and operate against India, then they have to decide whether they want to be a part of geography, history or not." Lieutenant General Rajiv Ghai, who served as Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) during Operation Sindoor, had said on the first anniversary of the military

operation that Pakistan had been "compelled to negotiate" with India and "requested to stop" strikes against the country during the operation last year. He had described the military operation as possibly a "defining moment" in India's strategic journey. Moreover, Air Marshal Awadhesh Kumar Bharti, who

served as the Director General of Air Operations during last year's military operation against Pakistan, had mentioned at the same event that Indian forces had shot down 13 aircraft and 11 airfields of the rogue nation under the Operation Sindoor. "When our desire for peace is mistaken for weakness, we have no choice but to act. And when we act, there is no room for leniency. It is decisive, lethal and translates into Operation Sindoor," he had said. Meanwhile, at Sena Samvad 2026, Army Chief Dwivedi underlined the "work-life fusion" of the military. He said: "When I joined Sainik School, I saw the uniform and fell in love with it for the discipline, leadership, and sense of purpose it brought. By the time I joined NDA, I was clear that work-life balance had turned into work-life fusion, and that's how it became a passion."

SCTIMST Developing World-Class, Cost-Effective Indigenous Medical Devices: Dr. Jitendra Singh

New Delhi, 16/5: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences Dr. Jitendra Singh on Saturday praised the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) for developing world-class, indigenous and affordable medical devices and successfully transferring innovative technologies to industry every year. Virtually addressing the annual convocation of the 42nd batch of SCTIMST in Thiruvananthapuram, Singh congratulated the graduating students and the institute on its Golden Jubilee celebrations. He highlighted the institute's growing contribution to healthcare innovation, medical research and advanced clinical care. "The institute's unique focus on creating highly effective, indigenous and cost-efficient medical devices has made it one of the leading institutions of its kind," the minister stated. "Several technologies developed at the institute are transferred to industry annually, including seven technologies scheduled for transfer this year," he added. Singh also lauded the approval for the appointment of nearly 800



permanent faculty members, stating that the move would almost double the institute's working capacity. He appreciated the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for establishing the nine-floor Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) block and the four-floor services block, saying the facilities would strengthen SCTIMST into one of the country's largest centres for neurosurgery and cardiac sciences. He congratulated the institute's doctors for treating over 17,000 patients under the Ayushman Bharat scheme since 2020. Referring to the foundation stone laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the Malini Vasundhara Centre, Singh described it as a major step

forward in precision-based and non-invasive treatment for neurological and oncological diseases. Highlighting the institute's collaborative initiatives, Singh referred to the eight-institution MoU initiative as a unique effort that brought together leading national institutions to create a synergistic research ecosystem and strengthen interdisciplinary innovation in healthcare and science. The minister also appreciated the collaboration between the Indian Space Research Organisation and SCTIMST in the field of space medicine, stating that the partnership would open new opportunities for research, innovation and clinical practice in emerging medical science domains.

'Parasites' Remarks Targeted Fake Degree Holders, Not Country's Youth: CJI Surya Kant

New Delhi, 16/5: Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant on Saturday clarified that his oral observations referring to certain elements as "parasites" and his remarks mentioning "youngsters like cockroaches" were being misquoted by a section of the media, asserting that his comments were aimed only at individuals entering professions with fake degrees and not at the youth of the country. In a statement, the CJI said he was "pained" to read reports suggesting that he had criticised the youth of the nation while making oral observations during the hearing of a "frivolous case" before the Supreme Court on Friday. "I am pained to read how a section of



the media has misquoted my oral observations made during the hearing of a frivolous case yesterday," CJI Kant said. Clarifying his remarks, the CJI said that his criticism was specifically aimed at individuals who had entered professions,

including the legal profession, on the basis of "fake and bogus degrees". "What I had specifically criticised were those who have entered professions like the Bar (legal profession) with the aid of fake and bogus degrees. Similar persons have sneaked into the media, social media, and other noble professions as well, and hence, they are like parasites," the statement said. Rejecting suggestions that his comments were directed at young people, the CJI termed such interpretations "totally baseless". "It is totally baseless to suggest that I criticised the youth of our nation. Not only am I proud of our present and future human resource, but every youth of India inspires me," he said. The CJI further said

that Indian youth were the "pillars of a developed India" and enjoyed his deep respect and admiration. "It is not an exaggeration to say that Indian youth have great regard and respect for me, and I too see them as the pillars of a developed India," he added. The clarification came a day after a Bench headed by CJI Kant made strong oral observations while hearing a petition filed by an advocate challenging the Delhi High Court's refusal to consider him for senior designation. During the hearing, the Bench, also comprising Justice Joymalya Bagchi, had orally observed that there were "parasites" in society seeking to attack institutions and cautioned members of the Bar against associating with such elements.

NEET Case: CBI Arrests NTA-Appointed Teacher From Pune For Biology Paper Leak

New Delhi, 16/5: In the NEET UG 2026 exam scandal, the CBI has arrested an NTA-appointed senior Botany teacher from Pune, as she is suspected to be the co-mastermind behind the leak of the Biology question paper, an official said on Saturday. Botany teacher Manisha Gurnath Mandhare is the second Pune teacher - after Chemistry professor P.V. Kulkarni - to be identified and arrested after interrogation, the CBI said in a statement. She was involved in the NEET-UG 2026 Examination process and appointed by the National Testing Agency (NTA) as an expert and had complete access to the Biology question paper, the CBI said. In April 2026, she had mobilised prospective NEET examination candidates through Pune consultant Manisha Waghmare, arrested on May 14, and conducted special coaching classes for these students at her Pune residence, the statement said. During these classes, she explained and disclosed various questions from Biology and made the students note down the same in their notebooks and also mark these in their textbooks, the statement said. A majority of these questions tallied with the actual question paper of the NEET-UG 2026 examination held on May 3 and cancelled later, the probe agency said. In the last 24 hours, the CBI conducted searches



at six locations across the country and seized several incriminating documents, laptops, bank statements and mobile phones. Detailed analysis of the seized items is going on, an official said. It may be recalled that CBI registered this case on May 12 based on the written complaint given by the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India, pertaining to the alleged paper leak of NEET-UG 2026 Examination. Immediately after registration of the case, special teams were formed, and searches were conducted at various locations across the country and several suspects were picked up and interrogated. So far, nine accused have been arrested in this case from Delhi, Jaipur, Gurugram, Nasik, Pune and

Ahliyanagar. Out of these, five accused have already been produced before the court and taken into 7-day police custody remand for detailed interrogation. Two other accused, who were arrested on Friday, were produced before a court in Pune and shifted to Delhi after taking transit remand. Investigation is continuing with the special teams, and the investigation conducted so far has brought out the actual source of the leakage of Chemistry and Biology papers as well as the middlemen, the CBI said. The middlemen were involved in mobilising the students who paid lakhs of rupees to attend the special coaching classes where the questions which would come in the NEET UG-2026 exam were dictated and discussed.

NEET Paper Leak: 'Latur Pattern' Under Scanner, CBI Questions 'Kingpin' Kulkarni On Past Cases

New Delhi: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is probing the massive NEET 2026 paper leak scandal that has impacted the future of nearly 23 lakh students, has intensified its investigation after arresting chemistry professor P.V. Kulkarni, who has been described by officials as the alleged "kingpin" and source of the leak. According to the investigating agency, Kulkarni, a Pune-based chemistry professor originally from Maharashtra's Latur district, had access to the NEET question papers through his role in the examination process on behalf of the National Testing Agency (NTA). Officials alleged that he misused this access to leak the paper to selected students and associates. The CBI on Friday confirmed that Kulkarni was its eighth arrest in the case. However, investigators are now widening the scope of the probe and are reportedly questioning him not only regarding the NEET 2026 leak but also over every examination paper he helped set before his retirement. Senior local police sources indicated that his role is also being examined in connection with the alleged NEET 2024 paper leak and other similar cases. Sources familiar with the investigation said the "Latur pattern" of NEET preparation and coaching has now emerged as a major focus of the inquiry. Prior to the case being handed over to the CBI, senior local police officials had already begun examining possible links between coaching networks, exam setters and agents operating across Maharashtra. Kulkarni allegedly operated

private coaching classes in Pune under the name "Raj Coaching Classes" from his residence. According to investigators, one such class was conducted during the final week of April, just days before the NEET examination. During the session, Kulkarni allegedly dictated questions, answer choices and the correct responses, while students wrote them down in their notebooks. Investigators further suspect that the paper leak operation was run in an organised and systematic manner by Kulkarni and his alleged associate Manisha Waghmare. The duo is accused of approaching students across Pune and multiple districts in Maharashtra through a chain-like network that functioned as a coordinated syndicate. Sources said the network even conducted seminars at various locations to identify potential candidates and establish contact with students. Older students, many of them from engineering backgrounds or other academic streams, were allegedly recruited as agents to expand the network and connect with aspirants. In the early phase of the investigation, Latur was not initially considered a focal point in the case. However, after a complaint was filed by a parent, district police alerted the CBI about the developments uncovered during their local investigation. Senior police officials stated that because of Kulkarni's prominent role in setting NEET papers in earlier years, investigators are now interrogating him about previous examination processes as well, including the alleged 2024 paper leak case.

From Myanmar To Malabar: Kerala Emerges As New Hub In India's Drug War

New Delhi, 16/5: The Narendra Modi government has set a target of making India free from narcotics by 2047. Speaking at the annual R N Kao Memorial Lecture organised by the Research and Analysis Wing, Union Home Minister Amit Shah reiterated the government's commitment to achieving a Drug-Free India by 2047. Security and anti-narcotics agencies say several international and domestic cartels are attempting to push drugs into India. In Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Maharashtra, enforcement agencies have intensified operations to curb the growing menace. An official said that the road ahead is going to be tough with these cartels chasing newer states to further the drug trade. The modus operandi being used by the cartels in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir is established patterns and conventional methods. In most cases, the agencies have managed to get the better of cartels. However, the main concern for the agencies is now Kerala. Almost all cartels that target the Indian market are focusing heavily on Kerala. An official said the smuggling patterns in Kerala differ from those seen in other states, with traffickers constantly changing their methods. Agencies have found that almost every major drug seizure in the state reveals a new modus operandi, making enforcement operations more challenging and keeping investigators on constant alert.

India Dreaming Big, Youth Aspires To Lead In AI, Semiconductors: PM Modi

New Delhi, 16/5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said India is dreaming big and the country's youth now aspire to propel the nation forward in emerging sectors such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and semiconductors. Addressing the Indian diaspora at an event in The Hague, PM Modi said today's India is going through a phase of unprecedented transformation and has emerged as a global leader in technology, innovation and digitalisation. "Today, India is dreaming big. India's youth aspires to propel the country forward in the fields of AI and semiconductors," the Prime

Minister stated. "India is home to the world's third-largest startup ecosystem. Our startups are doing remarkable work in AI, defence and space sector," PM Modi explained. He said India recently hosted the world's largest and most successful AI Summit, following the successful hosting of the G20 Summit, adding that such achievements are no longer isolated events but have become the defining character of modern India. The Prime Minister highlighted that India has carried out the world's largest unique identification programme and also implemented the world's biggest financial inclusion initiative. "The

scale and speed of digitalisation in the country are unprecedented, while India is also operating the world's largest government-funded health insurance scheme," the Prime Minister stated. Referring to India's achievements in science and technology, PM Modi said the country has reached parts of the Moon where no nation had gone before, underlining India's growing capabilities in space exploration and innovation. He noted that India is now home to nearly 125 active unicorns and said Indian startups are doing remarkable work in sectors such as AI, defence and space technology. According to the Prime Minister, the country's

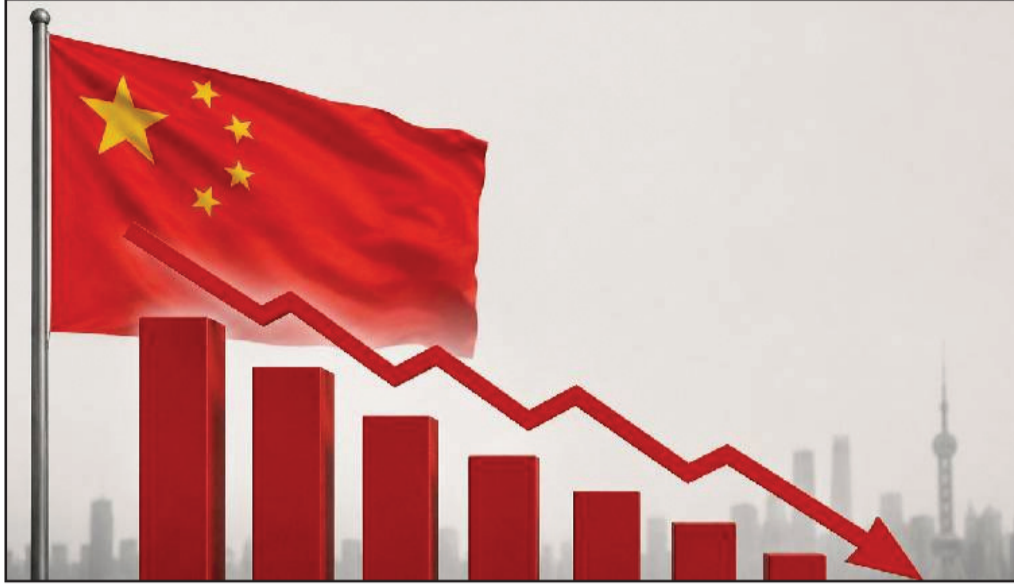


startup ecosystem has become the third-largest in the world, driven largely by the aspirations and innovation of young Indians. "Aspirations in India are

unlimited, so efforts are also becoming limitless," PM Modi said, stressing that the country's youth are playing a central role in shaping India's future growth story.

Iran-US Tensions Impose Rising Economic Costs On China: Report

New Delhi, 16/5: The ongoing US-Iran tensions are imposing rising economic costs on China, exposing Beijing to mounting risks across energy supplies, trade flows and regional investments amid the escalating Gulf crisis, a report has said. The report by Iran International showed that China has expressed growing concern over disruptions to the Strait of Hormuz, a critical energy corridor through which nearly 45 per cent of its oil imports flow, even as it continues to maintain diplomatic support for Iran at the United Nations. The ongoing instability has driven sharp volatility in global oil markets, with Brent crude trading above \$100 per barrel at various points during the crisis, pushing up import costs and inflationary pressures in China's domestic economy, it said. Moreover, China cut oil imports by around 20 per cent in April and raised domestic fuel prices, as elevated global crude prices fed through to producer and consumer inflation. The report highlighted that China's producer prices surged to a 45-month high



in April, while consumer inflation also accelerated, reflecting broader cost pressures from energy and supply chain disruptions linked to the Gulf conflict. Meanwhile, trade flows have also been hit. Chinese exports to Persian Gulf countries plunged sharply, falling to about \$5.7 billion in March from \$13.2 billion in the previous month, a decline of nearly 57 per cent, the report said. It

further outlined that beyond trade and energy, China's wider regional exposure is also under strain. In addition, Chinese firms have invested tens of billions of dollars in Middle East projects, but escalating conflict and attacks in the region have increased uncertainty over project execution and returns. China — which remains Iran's largest non-oil trading partner and a major buyer of Iranian crude

— has also reportedly reduced imports of Iranian oil in recent months, even as it continues to oppose Western-backed UN measures against Tehran. The report noted that Beijing now faces a difficult balancing act, managing its strategic partnership with Iran while absorbing the economic fallout of prolonged instability in a region central to its energy security and trade ambitions.

Trump Claims 'Total Military Victory' Over Iran, Says US Strikes Severely Damaged Tehran's Capabilities

Washington, 16/5: US President Donald Trump defended US military operations linked to Iran and insisted Tehran's military capabilities had been severely damaged. Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One while travelling to Anchorage, Alaska, Trump said, "We had a total military victory," claiming the United States had destroyed Iran's naval and air assets and degraded missile production facilities. Trump also mentioned that he had agreed to the ceasefire despite reservations, describing it as a move requested by other nations, including Pakistan. "We really did the ceasefire at the request of other nations. I wouldn't have really been in favour of it..." Trump said. Speaking on the ceasefire, Trump did not elaborate on the exact nature of Pakistan's involvement, but his comments came during a wide-ranging interaction dominated by discussions on Iran, China, Taiwan and global security issues. At the same time, Trump suggested that diplomatic channels remained open.



He said Chinese President Xi Jinping shared Washington's position that Iran should not possess nuclear weapons. "He feels strongly they can't have a nuclear weapon," Trump said while describing his recent talks with Xi. Trump also said the Strait of Hormuz remained effectively under US control following military operations in the region. "They've done no business — literally, they've done no business in the last two and a half weeks," he said, referring to

Iranian-linked shipping activity through the strategic waterway. During the exchange, Trump indicated he was still considering future military options against Iran if required. "I can say this with very, very strong conviction, Iran will never have a nuclear weapon, not going to happen," he said. The President additionally revealed that discussions with China covered artificial intelligence cooperation, Taiwan tensions, trade and denuclearisation.

UN Agencies Call For Urgent Action To Prevent Famine In Somalia

United Nations 16/5: UN relief agencies have called for an urgent scale-up of life-saving assistance to stave off a rapidly intensifying, critical food insecurity emergency in Somalia. The Food and Agriculture Organization, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the UN Children's Fund and the World Food Programme issued the plea, said Farhan Haq, deputy spokesperson for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, on Friday (local time). Haq said that, according to the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report, critical levels of food insecurity in Somalia affect 6 million people, almost a third of the population, including 1.9 million children, 493,000 of whom face severe malnutrition. The spokesperson said multiple shocks are driving the worsening crisis, including severe drought, insecurity, extremely limited humanitarian assistance and the ripple effects of conflict in the Middle East, reports Xinhua news agency. "This is also the first time since 2022 that Somalia is at risk of famine — in Burhakaba district, in Southwest



State," he said. "In 2022, famine was averted through massively scaled-up and sustained humanitarian interventions in the aftermath of the longest drought on record." Haq said that humanitarian assistance in the

most-at-risk areas is being scaled up, but with severely constrained resources. Coverage remains limited nationwide, with nearly 90 per cent of people receiving little or no support. According to OCHA, George Conway, UN

humanitarian coordinator in Somalia, said there is a narrow but critical window of opportunity in the coming weeks to prevent famine through rapid and expanded humanitarian action.

India Remains Firmly Committed To Further Strengthening Bilateral Ties: PM Modi Congratulates Iraq's New Prime Minister Ali Al-Zaidi

New Delhi, 16/5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday congratulated Ali Falih Kadhim al-Zaidi on assuming office as the new Prime Minister of Iraq, reaffirming India's commitment to deepening bilateral ties and cooperation between the two countries. Posting on X, Prime Minister Modi said, "Heartiest congratulations to Ali Falih Kadhim al-Zaidi on assuming office as Prime Minister of Iraq. India highly values its long-standing and friendly ties with Iraq and remains firmly committed to further strengthening our bilateral ties in all areas. I extend my best wishes to him and look forward to working together for the shared progress and prosperity of our two nations." Ali al-Zaidi was sworn in as Iraq's new Prime Minister after securing parliamentary approval for a partial Cabinet amid ongoing political negotiations over several key ministerial positions. Iraq's Parliament approved 14 members of the new Cabinet, while voting on important portfolios, including



the interior and defence ministries, was postponed due to the absence of political consensus. According to a parliamentary statement, 266 lawmakers voted in favour of the approved ministers during a session chaired by Speaker Haibat al-Halbousi. Among those approved were Fuad Hussein, who retained his position as foreign minister, Bassim Mohammed Khudair as oil minister, and Faleh al-Sari as finance minister. Following the confidence vote, Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi and the 14 approved

ministers took the constitutional oath before Parliament, officially beginning the new administration's tenure. Under Iraq's Constitution, a prime minister-designate is required to secure parliamentary approval for both the Cabinet and the government programme before formally assuming office. On April 27, Iraqi President Nizar Amadi appointed Ali al-Zaidi as prime minister-designate. Al-Zaidi was nominated by the Coordination Framework, the country's largest parliamentary bloc and a coalition of Shiite political parties.

Iran Envoy Says BRICS Can Showcase 'Failure' Of Unipolar Security Model

New Delhi/Tehran, 16/5: Iranian Ambassador to India Mohammad Fathali on Saturday said that the 2026 BRICS Summit presents an important opportunity to underline how a global security framework dependent on guarantees from a "single power" has failed in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world order. The remarks came amid the ongoing conflict involving Iran, the United States and Israel, and reflect Tehran's continued advocacy for multipolarity and collective approaches to global security and prosperity following its inclusion in the expanded BRICS grouping. In a post shared on X, the Iranian envoy stated, "The BRICS Summit in India is an opportunity to highlight a key reality: a security model based on guarantees of security and prosperity by a single power, even a major one, has failed in today's complex and rapidly evolving world." The statement was made shortly after the conclusion of the two-day BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in New



Delhi on Thursday and Friday under India's chairship of the grouping. The high-level gathering was chaired by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and attended by foreign ministers and senior representatives from BRICS member nations as well as partner countries. Earlier on Thursday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the foreign ministers and heads of delegation from BRICS nations in the national capital and reiterated that under India's chairmanship, the

grouping would work towards strengthening multilateralism, promoting sustainable development, enhancing economic resilience and building a more inclusive global order. During the meeting, EAM Jaishankar also expressed confidence that the deliberations among member nations would contribute towards achieving a more stable, equitable and inclusive international system. He stressed the importance of reformed multilateralism and called for

reforms in the United Nations Security Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories. Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also raised the issue of reforming the United Nations Security Council during the BRICS meeting in New Delhi, stating that such reforms were "not a choice, but a necessity for the survival of the United Nations." Araghchi said Iran seeks a Security Council that "truly represents all continents and regions of the world," and added that BRICS nations should utilise their collective strength to reshape global governance and restore trust in multilateral institutions. "What we see today in some international institutions is not multilateralism, but an effort to preserve unilateralism under the cover of international law," he remarked. He further stated that the selective application of international law, the use of unilateral sanctions and disregard for national sovereignty indicate a deepening crisis in the present global governance framework.

Usha Vance Promotes Reading Drive In Florida

Washington, 16/5: As part of her effort to promote childhood literacy, US Second Lady Usha Vance visited a charter school in Florida during which she highlighted her Summer Reading Challenge for students across the country. During her visit to AcadeMir Academy Charter School East in Doral, Florida, the Second Lady read Ada Twist the Scientist by Andrea Beaty to students. She also spoke about the importance of reading and answered questions from children and faculty members. "It was such a joy to meet so many amazing kids in Miami and share the gift of reading with them. I loved telling them about my upcoming Summer Reading Challenge and the fun updates we've made since last year's challenge. I'm excited for children all over the country to learn and grow through stories this summer," Vance said. School officials said the visit focused on literacy, education and student development. "Today's visit is especially meaningful as we unite in support of literacy, learning, and the transformative power of



education through the Second Lady's Summer Reading Initiative. At AcadeMir Charter Schools, we believe reading opens the door to imagination, opportunity, and lifelong success. We are proud to support this important initiative and remain committed to inspiring our students to become lifelong readers, critical thinkers, and future leaders," said Olivia Bernal. The Summer Reading Challenge is part of Vance's broader childhood literacy initiative. The Second Lady recently launched a podcast, Storytime with the Second Lady,

in which guests and celebrities read children's stories aloud. Recent guests have included former NASCAR driver Danica Patrick, actor Cheryl Hines, Inter Miami CF player Ian Fray and Vance's mother, Lakshmi Chilukuri. The White House said additional information about the Summer Reading Challenge is available online. The podcast is also available on Spotify and YouTube. Vance, the wife of Vice President JD Vance, has made literacy and education outreach a visible part of her public role. She is the first Indian American Second Lady of the United States.

MSJK Hospital: Expanding Healthcare Access in Rural Lanjigarh

BHUBANESWAR, (Correspondent) : Kalahandi, a district in Odisha that was once associated with poverty and limited access to basic amenities, has witnessed a steady transformation in how essential medical services reach rural communities. At the centre of this shift is the Maa Santoshi Jankalyan (MSJK) Hospital, which has emerged as an important healthcare support centre for people living in the remote parts of Lanjigarh and surrounding areas. For years, families in this region had to travel long distances to access even basic treatment facilities. Delayed medical care often worsened health conditions, especially for pregnant women, children, elderly people, and those suffering from diseases prevalent in the area, such as malaria and filaria. MSJK Hospital was established in the year 2000 to serve nearly 8,000 people across 70 villages in 4 Gram Panchayats. Its reach, however, expanded significantly after Vedanta partnered with the hospital in 2014. With the company's support, MSJK Hospital now caters to 120 villages across 12 Gram Panchayats, benefiting nearly 20,654 people



annually. The hospital has helped improve access to quality medical care in one of Odisha's remotest regions, offering essential treatment and timely medical support to communities that previously had limited access to healthcare. Located around 25 km from Lanjigarh, it remains a key healthcare centre for the Bankakundru region and beyond. The impact is visible beyond numbers. Pregnant women, who earlier faced serious risks due to limited maternal care, now have access to specialised medical attention at the hospital. Children are able to avail of regular vaccinations and health check-ups. Patients

suffering from malaria, diarrhoea, sickle cell anaemia and other illnesses can receive treatment closer to their homes. "Earlier, it was very difficult for us to access medical care, and many had to rely on traditional remedies or unregistered medical practitioners in the hope of curing our illnesses. The MSJK Hospital has been a true blessing for the region and helps keep us healthy and happy" said, Bharat Majhi, a resident of Lanjigarh. Healthcare access has also moved beyond the hospital premises. Through Vedanta's Mobile Health Units, expert doctors and nurses are able to reach remote villages more easily, helping detect

illnesses early and reducing the need for emergency hospitalisation. This has allowed many families to receive medical attention within their communities, eliminating the need for travelling long distances. Emergency care has also improved through the introduction of ambulance support, helping ensure faster medical intervention in critical cases. Vedanta-supported initiatives linked to maternal and community healthcare have also been recognised under the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matrutwa Abhiyan, underscoring the role such interventions play in rural healthcare. Today, MSJK Hospital stands as a vital healthcare institution for rural Lanjigarh.

Kalahandi's Young Archers Target Promising Futures through Vedanta's Grassroots Sports Push

Bhubaneswar (Correspondent): Archery has historically been embedded in the community life of Odisha's rural and tribal belts, with generations of these communities informally honing the skill through their hunting and gathering traditions before ever stepping onto a competitive field. Today, that inherent familiarity is being transformed into structured opportunity. In districts like Kalahandi, once defined largely by its remoteness and limited avenues for progress, archery is fast emerging as a sport which has become a sure-shot pathway to higher aspirations, discipline, and a deep sense of cultural identity among young people in the region. At the centre of this transformation is Vedanta Aluminium's Grassroots Sports Initiative, aimed at developing Kalahandi as a hub for youth excellence in sports. Designed to mobilise and engage young people through structured training, expert coaching, professional-grade equipment, customised nutritional support, and logistical assistance for competitions across districts and states, the programme aims to build a sustained sporting culture, one that fosters personal growth and creates viable career pathways. For 17-year-old Rachana Majhi from Chanalima village in Kalahandi, a career in sport was once unimaginable. Like many others in her community, her daily routine largely revolved around school and farm work. That changed when she was introduced to archery through Vedanta's community



outreach efforts. "When I first saw the bow at 13, I didn't think I could do this," she recalls. "Now, I feel confident stepping onto a field and competing with others." Her journey has since been marked by rapid progress: state-level medals, selection in national squads, and a growing presence on competitive platforms. Rachana's story is not an outlier; it reflects a broader pipeline of talent being nurtured across Kalahandi. This transformation is rooted in access.

For many children in Kalahandi, opportunities in sport have historically been limited by geography and affordability. Vedanta's programme addresses this gap through a comprehensive ecosystem. Importantly, mentorship is anchored by world-class expertise. Olympian archers such as Rahul Banerjee and Dola Banerjee are helping bring technical rigour and global exposure to the programme, bridging the gap between raw talent and professional performance.

Oil price shock to widen current account deficit, push inflation higher as US-Iran war continues, says economist Santosh Mehrotra

New Delhi, 6/5: With no sign of the US-Iran war ending and global oil prices likely to reach record highs within a quarter, Santosh Mehrotra, former Economic Advisor to the United Nations, warned that India's current account deficit could widen by 0.3 per cent of GDP for every USD 10 rise in oil prices. He expected inflation to rise further as government action on fuel and gold comes "too little, too late," while geopolitical risks and supply disruptions keep pressure on the rupee and household budgets. Mehrotra explained the direct transmission of oil prices to India's economy, "For every USD 10 increase in the international price of oil, it increases our current account deficit by about 0.3 per cent of GDP. And simultaneously, that same USD 10 impact on the consumer price index is about roughly the same." He said the downward revision to GDP and

upward revision to CPI have already been made, but these are based on the "current situation" and do not account for a prolonged conflict. The biggest near-term risk, he said, is the disruption to oil, gas, fertiliser, and helium supplies due to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. "All this is already having an impact on the lives of ordinary people," he noted, pointing to shortages of industrial LPG that have hit ceramics and restaurants. "There has been a significant decline in the number of jobs in the restaurant industry because LPG has simply not been sufficiently available." Mehrotra was critical of the government's recent diesel price hike, arguing it will worsen inflation across the board. "Diesel is an input into transportation costs... that will simply get absorbed by the truckers, but it will finally get passed on to the consumer." He said that the government had a

"windfall gain of roughly 25 to 30 lakh crores" over the last decade when oil prices averaged USD 50-60 per barrel, but fiscal strain persists due to "poor economic policies." He also highlighted the rupee's depreciation, from "under 90 rupees to about 95 plus, nearly 96 to a dollar" in the last three months, as another inflationary trigger. "When the rupee falls against the dollar, inevitably you'll have a situation where the RBI steps in... now the RBI has stopped doing that." Mehrotra believes oil prices could easily touch USD 150 if the war continues, with spot prices for India already near USD 140. He added that Iran is "clearly winning the war" and unlikely to concede on sanctions or uranium enrichment, meaning "the rest of the world will continue to pay the price for the behaviour of Israel on the one hand and the United States on the other."

SEBI Relaxes Borrowing Norms For InvITs Above 49 Pc Leverage Limit

Mumbai, 16/5: Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Friday relaxed borrowing norms for Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) with leverage exceeding 49 per cent of asset value, a move aimed at expanding financing flexibility for infrastructure projects and improving funding access across the sector. In a circular, the market regulator said InvITs will now be allowed to raise fresh borrowings above the 49 per cent leverage threshold for capital expenditure intended to enhance asset performance or expand project capacity. The regulator has also permitted InvITs to use additional debt for major maintenance expenses related to road infrastructure projects. According to the circular, such expenses will include non-



routine maintenance obligations mandated under concession agreements. "Major maintenance expense shall mean expenditure incurred on maintenance of road project which is not routine maintenance and is in accordance with the obligations and requirements specified in the concession agreement," SEBI said. The relaxation is expected to

particularly benefit road-focused InvITs that require significant funding for large-scale repairs and periodic maintenance work. SEBI has also allowed refinancing of existing debt by InvITs, special purpose vehicles and holding companies under specified conditions. The market regulator clarified that refinancing would be restricted only to the principal

amount of the original borrowing, while accumulated interest, penalties, fees or other charges cannot be refinanced. "Only the principal portion of debt is refinanced, that is, any accumulated interest or any charges or fees by whatever name called shall not be refinanced," the regulator said. The revised framework follows amendments introduced to Regulation 20(3)(b)(ii) of the SEBI InvIT Regulations on April 17, 2026, which broadened the permitted use of borrowings beyond the leverage ceiling. SEBI said the new norms have come into force with immediate effect, providing greater operational flexibility to InvITs seeking to strengthen infrastructure assets and undertake expansion projects.

Crude Oil Prices Jump 8 PC This Week As US-Iran Tensions Stoke Hormuz Supply Fears

New Delhi, 16/5: Global oil prices surged sharply this week, with benchmark crude contracts ending Friday's session more than 3 per cent higher, after renewed tensions between the United States and Iran dampened hopes of a near-term breakthrough over the Strait of Hormuz — one of the world's most critical oil shipping routes. Brent crude futures settled at \$109.26 a barrel, gaining \$3.54 or 3.35 per cent on Friday, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude ended at \$105.42 a barrel, up \$4.25 or 4.2 per cent. For the week, Brent advanced 7.84 per cent, while WTI jumped

10.48 per cent, as markets remained nervous over the fragile ceasefire in the Iran conflict and the possibility of disruptions to global energy supplies. Investor sentiment weakened after Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said Tehran has "no trust" in the United States and would participate in negotiations only if Washington demonstrated seriousness. He also stated that Iran remains prepared both for renewed conflict and diplomatic engagement. The remarks came as US President Donald Trump signalled growing frustration with Iran and reiterated that

Tehran cannot be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon. Trump also said Iran must reopen the Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly one-fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas supplies pass. The Strait serves as the primary export route for major Gulf producers including Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Qatar, making any disruption a major concern for global energy markets. Market participants had initially hoped that the ceasefire between Iran and its rivals could pave the way for smoother shipping movement in the region.

Modi lands in Amsterdam to ink major semiconductor and clean energy agreements with Dutch leadership

NEW DELHI, 16/5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi landed in Amsterdam to initiate high-level talks focused on securing advanced semiconductor technology, water management solutions, and green energy investments. This bilateral engagement marks the second destination of his current five-nation global tour. Dutch Prime Minister Rob Jetten welcomed the Indian leader for discussions aimed at elevating the economic ties between both nations into a formalized strategic partnership. Securing Microchip and Energy Pacts High-level interactions on Saturday include a royal audience with King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima at the Huis ten Bosch Palace. Later, corporate leaders from both countries will join a roundtable meeting to seal bilateral agreements.



Security analysts note that New Delhi wants closer cooperation with ASML, the Netherlands-based global leader in advanced semiconductor lithography machines, to boost domestic manufacturing. Historical trade ties between India and the Netherlands date back over four centuries through early maritime routes, and today the European nation stands as India's fourth-largest source of foreign direct investment. Expanding Bilateral Trade Horizons Official data shows that commerce between the two countries reached 27.8 billion dollars over the recent fiscal year. This diplomatic push leverages momentum from the recently finalized India-EU free trade frameworks. Sunday's itinerary focuses entirely on Dutch expertise in flood control and delta governance to address domestic climate challenges.

Tara Sutaria honoured at Cannes' women in cinema gala, gears up for Pan-India action film

Bollywood actress Tara Sutaria reached a significant international milestone at the Cannes Film Festival 2026 when she was honoured at the Red Sea Film Foundation's Women In Cinema Gala. The event celebrated her contribution to global cinema alongside five other accomplished women. Sharing her excitement with fans on Instagram, Sutaria described the evening as "unforgettable." For the gala, she donned an ivory Vivienne Westwood gown with a signature corset silhouette and soft draped neckline, paired with a dramatic matching stole. Styled by celebrity stylist Tanvi Ghavri, the look was elevated with statement diamond-and-emerald jewellery, including the High Jewelry Turaco necklace, matching earrings, and a Concorde pear-shaped diamond ring. Her beauty ensemble, created by hairstylist Amir Naveed and makeup artist Meera Sakhrani, reflected vintage glamour with a sleek bun, winged eyeliner, softly sculpted makeup, and nude lips.

Huma Qureshi brings Banaras weave to the French Riviera at Cannes

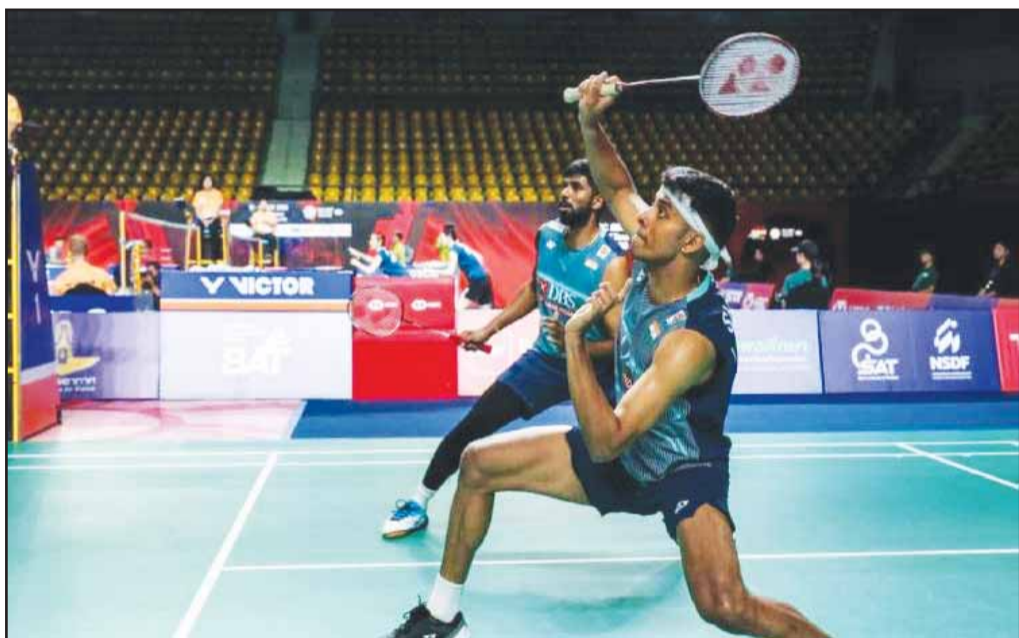
Cannes (France), May 16: Huma Qureshi made a striking appearance at the ongoing Cannes Film Festival, turning heads in a traditional Banarasi saree that celebrated Indian craftsmanship on a global stage. The 39-year-old actor shared a series of photographs on Instagram, showcasing herself in a muted plum-hued saree featuring intricate gold zari work. She completed the look with gold temple jewellery and minimal makeup, blending traditional elegance with contemporary styling. Sharing her thoughts on the ensemble, Qureshi wrote, "From the ghats of Banaras to the French Riviera." Reflecting on the significance of the attire, she added, "There's something incredibly special about wearing a weave that feels like it has lived through time." "What I love most is how it holds two worlds at once," the actor said, referring to the blend of traditional craftsmanship and modern design elements in the saree. Speaking about wearing the ensemble at Cannes, Qureshi noted, "At Cannes, surrounded by cinema and storytelling, it feels surreal to wear something that tells a story of its own." The actor, producer and author used her Cannes appearance to spotlight traditional Indian weaving traditions at the global stage. On the work front, Huma Qureshi will next be seen starring in the highly anticipated pan-India action film 'Toxic: A Fairytale for Grown-Ups'. The first glimpse of the film was unveiled in January earlier this year. The two-minute, fifty-two-second clip offered a striking glimpse into Yash's intense and enigmatic character as Raya. Set against the backdrop of a cemetery, the teaser opened with a blaze of action, with gunfire cutting through the silence, signaling the arrival of Yash as the composed, fearless, and unflinching Raya with a Tommy gun. Huma Qureshi appears as Elizabeth, a sharp and dangerous presence. The film will also star Tara Sutaria, Kiara Advani, and Nayanthara in key roles. Kiara plays Nadia, a character shown as calm but carrying deep emotions. Nayanthara is seen as Ganga, a role that changes the balance of power in the story. Tara Sutaria plays Rebecca, a character shown as charming yet hard to read. Rukmini Vasanth essays Mellisa, a figure with quiet control. 'Toxic: A Fairytale for Grown-Ups' is written by Yash and Geetu Mohandas and directed by Geetu Mohandas. The makers of the movie recently announced that the release date of the movie has been postponed and it will not arrive in theatres on June 4, 2026.



SPORTS

Satwik-Chirag Storm Into First Final Of 2026 At Thailand Open

Patumwan (Thailand), 16/5: India's top men's doubles team, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, reached their first final of the 2026 season after defeating Malaysia's Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin in a thrilling semifinal at the Thailand Open Super 500 in Bangkok on Saturday. The world No. 4 Indian duo, seeded first in the tournament, won a gripping match 19-21, 22-20, 21-16. The contest lasted one hour and 22 minutes, extending their head-to-head record against the Malaysians to 8-2. With PV Sindhu and Lakshya Sen already out of the tournament, Satwik and Chirag carried India's hopes in Bangkok and handled the pressure well in front of a lively crowd that made the semifinal a high-stakes battle. The Indian duo aimed for their first title since winning the Thailand Open in 2024 and their first final appearance since the China Masters in 2025. The Malaysian pair started strong, leading 3-1 in the opening game before Satwik and Chirag tied it at 7-7. However, a few moments of hesitation and miscommunication allowed Goh and Izzuddin to gain an advantage. The Malaysians went into the interval with a three-point lead and later



increased it to 18-12, appearing to be in control. But Satwik and Chirag made a strong comeback, scoring four consecutive points to get back into the match. Each time the Indians closed the gap, the Malaysians held their ground and eventually took the first game 21-19. The second game was even more dramatic. Both teams exchanged leads in a tense battle, but Satwik and Chirag displayed more confidence and composure than in the first game. They resolved their communication issues and went on a four-point

run to lead 11-9 at the break. After the interval, Goh and Izzuddin fought back and briefly regained control. However, the Indian pair responded with aggressive plays and built a three-point lead late in the game. Just when it seemed Satwik and Chirag would win comfortably, the Malaysians saved two game points to tie it at 20-20, leading to the first extra-points finish between the two teams. What followed was one of the tournament's best rallies, filled with fierce defense, sharp net exchanges,

and relentless attacks. Satwik finally scored the crucial point with a perfectly placed shot out of the Malaysians' reach, and the Indians claimed the second game 22-20. Carrying that momentum, Satwik and Chirag dominated the final game, maintaining control for most of the match before clinching a memorable victory 21-16 to secure their spot in the final. The Indian pair will face either Indonesia's Leo Rolly Carnando and Daniel Marthin or China's He Ji Ting and Ren Xiang Yu in Sunday's final.

'We Are Well Prepared To Handle Pressure,' Says Indian Women's Hockey Team Captain Salima Tete Ahead Of Australia Tour

New Delhi, 16/5: As the Indian Women's Hockey Team prepares for its upcoming tour of Australia, Captain Salima Tete emphasized that the squad is leaving no stone unturned at the Sports Authority of India (SAI) centre in Bengaluru. Following a modest outing in Argentina, Tete expressed confidence in the team's preparation and its ability to handle pressure, viewing the upcoming matches against Australia as a crucial stepping stone. Expressing excitement for the tour, the skipper noted that it can strengthen the team's preparations for high-stakes tournaments in the coming months, including the World Cup and the Asian Games. "The Australian team is a really strong opponent, which will ensure high-quality contests. We are

very excited to play against Australia, and we will make sure that we play our best hockey. A big thanks to the coach, who has been working hard with us." "We are improving every day, which is great. Young players are also being given opportunities, and they are doing really well. We need to keep backing them to ensure they continue to perform," she added. Speaking about the rigorous physical regime currently underway at the national camp, Tete highlighted how fitness is at the core of the team's preparation for this crucial tour. "Everybody is working really hard on fitness. As everybody knows, fitness is important to beat any team," Tete said. "Fitness is important for every player, and even the junior team is working hard to maintain it.

Box office Day 1: Ayushmann starrer 'Pati Patni Aur Woh Do' mints Rs 4.38 crore on its opening day



Ayushmann Khurrana starrer Pati Patni Aur Woh Do opened to a collection of Rs 4.38 crore on its opening day after it was released in theatres on Friday. The Film Trade Analyst Taran Adarsh revealed the first-day collection of the movie while describing it as a "poor opening day" for the film. Taking to his Instagram handle, Adarsh wrote, "Pati Patni Aur Woh Do records a poor opening day. While the business witnessed marginal improvement during the evening shows, the overall Day 1 total remains on the lower side. PPAWD now needs miraculous growth on Saturday and Sunday to find its footing at the box office.

Pati Patni Aur Woh Do [Week 1] Fri Rs 4.38 crore. "Directed by Aziz, 'Pati Patni Aur Woh Do' also stars Sara Ali Khan, Wamiqa Gabbi and Rakul Preet Singh in lead roles. The film also features Vijay Raaz, Tigra Manish Dhulia, Ayesha Raza and Durgesh Kumar in pivotal roles. Backed by producers Bhushan Kumar, Renu Ravi Chopra and Krishan Kumar, the film is presented by T-Series Films and BR Studios. He lead cast recently spoke to ANI about the film's take on relationships and shared details about their characters, saying the story balances humour with emotional depth. Mentioning that he has always been a big fan of

Sanjeev Kumar's 1978 classic 'Pati Patni Aur Woh', Ayushmann shared, "In my childhood, I used to sing the song 'Thande thande paani se nahana chahiye'. That song convinced me to do this film. When the first film was made in 2019, and my brother (Aparshakti Khurana) was a part of it, I really loved it. It was an organic transition for me." Speaking about his character, Ayushmann explained how he is shown as a "trapped husband." "The audience will enjoy seeing his problems. There is a comedy of errors in this film. It is situational comedy, and the audience will understand it better when they watch the film," he added.

Sonam Bajwa calls Preity Zinta's IPL journey "truly inspiring"

Actor Sonam Bajwa opened up about meeting Punjab Kings co-owner Preity Zinta while supporting the team during the ongoing IPL season. The 'Border 2' actor, who has frequently been spotted at IPL 2026 matches cheering for Punjab Kings, recently met the actor-turned-entrepreneur during one of the team's matches. And going by her reaction, the meeting clearly left a lasting impression on the Punjabi star. Sonam shared her thoughts while attending the Marks & Spencer summer collection event, where she walked the ramp as the showstopper. The actress looked

stunning in a stylish blue polka-dot fitted top paired with wide-legged beige trousers. Speaking about Preity, Sonam described her as one of the most "stunning" and inspiring women she has come across. Reflecting on following Preity's journey since her very first film, Sonam said she has admired not just the actor in her, but also the entrepreneur she has become today through the IPL. "She is one of the most stunning and beautiful ladies I have ever seen. I have followed her since her first film, and I have seen her journey as an actor. Now, I am also witnessing her journey as an entrepreneur leading

this IPL team. It's truly inspiring," Sonam told ANI. The actress also spoke about how Preity made the right move by investing in the IPL team at the "right time" after enjoying a successful acting career. "Main kal hi kisi se baat kar rahi thi that she had such a wonderful acting career, and at the right time, she invested herself in this IPL team, and it's doing wonders," she added. Sonam further wished the Punjab Kings the best for the rest of the tournament and said the team has been performing well this season. "Unki team kaafi achha kar rahi hai. Punjab ki team bhi kaafi achha kar rahi hai. So, I just wish them all the best," she said.