

# Dumani Mail

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## Delhi restaurant fire: At least 21 killed in blaze at Malviya Nagar eatery

New Delhi: At least 21 people were killed after a fire broke out at the Lemon Green Restaurant in south Delhi's Malviya Nagar area on Wednesday, prompting a major rescue operation by the Delhi Fire Services (DFS), according to Delhi Police.

The blaze erupted at the restaurant during the morning hours, with several people reported trapped inside the building. Firefighters rushed to the spot and launched rescue efforts to evacuate those caught in the fire.

According to officials, the Delhi Fire Services received a distress call in the morning and immediately dispatched multiple firefighting units, including two water tenders, two water bowzers, a quick response vehicle and other emergency equipment.

Rekha Gupta offers condolences

Reacting to the tragedy, Delhi chief minister Rekha Gupta expressed grief over the loss of lives and said the



Delhi government was closely monitoring the situation. In a post on X, Gupta said emergency response teams from the Delhi Fire Services, Delhi Police, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), and CATS Ambulance Services were mobilised immediately after information about the incident was received. She said their swift response

helped rescue and evacuate several people from the affected premises.

The chief minister also conveyed her condolences to the families of those killed and said all necessary medical assistance and support were being extended to the affected families. "In this hour of grief, Delhi Government stands firmly with the affected families. We remain committed to

providing every possible support to those impacted by this tragedy," she said.

Earlier in the day, DFS officials said 11 people had been rescued from the building and shifted to hospitals by Centralised Accident and Trauma Services (CATS) ambulances. However, Delhi Police later confirmed that at least 10 people had died in the incident.

During the operation, firefighters entered the basement of the restaurant and rescued people trapped inside. Divisional Officer Ravinder from the Nehru Place fire station was present at the spot and supervised the rescue efforts.

"A fire broke out at a restaurant in Malviya Nagar. Delhi Fire Services received a call and immediately dispatched firefighting units to the scene. Rescue operations were carried out and the injured were shifted to hospitals," an official said.

The exact number of people present inside the restaurant when the fire broke out was not immediately known. Authorities are continuing search and rescue operations while assessing the extent of the damage.

The cause of the fire has not yet been established. Police and fire department officials have launched an investigation to determine how the blaze started and whether any fire safety violations or lapses contributed to the tragedy.

## Heavy Rain Alert Issued for 16 Tamil Nadu Districts as Downpour Disrupts Normal Life

New Delhi: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a heavy rainfall alert for 16 districts of Tamil Nadu for Wednesday and Thursday, following widespread showers that caused flooding, power outages, property damage and injuries in several parts of the state.

According to the IMD, heavy rainfall is likely in Coimbatore, The Nilgiris, Theni, Tiruppur, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Dindigul, Kanniyakumari, Erode, Salem, Dharmapuri, Krishnagiri, Tirupattur, Vellore, Ranipet and Tiruvannamalai districts over the next two days.

The weather department also said conditions remain favourable for the onset of the southwest monsoon over Kerala on Thursday.

The alert comes after heavy rain lashed multiple districts across Tamil Nadu on Tuesday, disrupting normal life in several areas.

In Namakkal district, rainwater entered the government hospital near the old bus stand in Rasipuram, forcing patients and attendants to move through knee-deep water.



Waterlogging was also reported in the new bus stand market area, affecting business activity.

In Tirupattur district, hailstorms were reported in Ambur, Alanguppam and Periyankuppam. Strong winds accompanying the rain uprooted trees at several locations. A Poovarasu tree fell on a house near the Nagalamman Temple in Vinnamangalam, while a large banyan tree collapsed onto the Dandu Mariamman Temple.

Tiruvannamalai district witnessed more than three hours of continuous rainfall in Arani, Savur, Kunnathur and Kamakkur, leading to power disruptions and affecting daily life. In Melnagar village, a tamarind tree fell on a moving mini-bus, injuring more than 10 passengers, including the

driver.

Heavy showers were also recorded in Tiruppur, Erode, Karur, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Sivaganga and Dindigul districts. Several roads were inundated, while power supply was disrupted in parts of Madurai, including Mattuthavani, Periyar Bus Stand, Simmakal, Melur, Thirumangalam and the airport area.

In the hill station of Kodaikanal, dense fog accompanied by light rain reduced visibility sharply across the town and major hill roads, creating near-nighttime conditions during daylight hours.

For Chennai, the IMD has forecast partly cloudy skies with the possibility of moderate rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms in isolated areas.

## President Droupadi Murmu inaugurates national conclave on tribal development agencies

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu today inaugurated the National Conclave on Strengthening of Integrated Tribal Development Agencies and Integrated Tribal Development Projects in New Delhi.

Addressing the occasion, the President said that tribal society living across the country is culturally very rich, and efforts must be made to bring the tribal community forward. She said development must reach the last home and the last village. Ms Murmu expressed concern that there are still some sections of tribals who are unaware of the various schemes of the government.

The President called upon all the agencies and stakeholders to ensure the development of every aspect of Tribal welfare including dignified job for youth and school for every tribal child. She stressed that



tribal youths must be encouraged to participate in sports activities. She underlined that the tribal population is talented and the responsibility lies with everyone to identify and nurture their potential.

President Murmu also inaugurated the Training Fab established at the Centre for Nano Science and Engineering at Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. President Murmu will also inaugurate 75 Space Labs established across Eklavya Model Residential Schools in different parts of

the country. The facility has been developed with the support of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The event is being held as part of the ongoing Janjatiya Garima Utsav 2026. The conclave will focus on strengthening the institutional systems responsible for tribal development delivery across the country, including governance reforms, convergence mechanisms and technology-enabled service delivery. Representatives from 26 States and 4 Union Territories are participating in the conclave.

## Delhi Hotel Fire: President Droupadi Murmu On 'Heartbreaking' Incident

President Droupadi Murmu expressed grief over the tragic Malviya Nagar fire incident, in which 21 people have lost their lives so far. She offered condolences to the families of the victims and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

"The news of the loss of lives in the fire incident in Malviya Nagar, Delhi, is extremely heartbreaking. I express my deepest condolences to the bereaved families and pray for the swift recovery of those injured," President Murmu said in a statement.

## Foreigners Killed In Delhi Hotel Fire Were Staying For Medical Treatment

Most foreigners who had travelled to India for medical treatment were staying at the Flourish Inn in Delhi's Malviya Nagar - which caught fire, killing 21 people.

The hotel, located in the narrow streets of the Hauz Rani area, is close to one of Delhi's top medical centres, Max Super Speciality Hospital. Most of the guests at the hotel were either seeking treatment or attendants of the patients admitted at the Max Hospital, sources said.

## Chef Recounts Horrific Fire Incident

Kesar Singh, a chef working at the hotel's restaurant, narrated the terrifying ordeal and said that it was around 8 am when tried to switch on an electric stove, causing flames to suddenly flare up. He soon realised that a fire had already engulfed the hotel. "I immediately alerted my assistant that the hotel was on fire," he said. "When I stepped outside, I saw that the entire hotel was on fire. I somehow managed to escape."

## Vice President C P Radhakrishnan condoles loss of lives in Delhi hotel fire incident

Vice President C P Radhakrishnan has extended condolences over the loss of lives due to a tragic fire incident that broke out at a hotel in Malviya Nagar, Delhi, this morning. In social media post, the Vice President prayed for the well-being and speedy recovery of those who have been injured. He also wished for the strength and courage of the bereaved families in this hour of grief.

## Union minister and Delhi CM send off train with 1,400 pilgrims for Somnath Swabhimaan Parv

New Delhi: The Union Culture Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta jointly flagged off the 'Somnath Swabhimaan Parv - Somnath Yatra' on Thursday, inaugurating the spiritual journey by dispatching a special train carrying approximately 1,400 pilgrims from Safdarjung Railway Station.

The Chief Minister stated that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the entire country is observing Somnath Swabhimaan Parv. She described the Yatra as a historic and cultural initiative dedicated to '1,000 years of unbroken faith', designed to reconnect the people of Delhi with their spiritual heritage.

Launched under Gupta's leadership, the initiative marks Delhi as the first state or Union Territory to send nearly 1,400 pilgrims together on such a large-scale and well-organised Somnath Yatra. During the journey, devotees will visit the

Somnath Temple and other prominent religious sites. The Delhi government has covered the entire cost of rail travel and meals, while the Gujarat government is responsible for accommodation, local transport, and temple visits. Close coordination between the two governments aims to ensure a safe, seamless, and well-managed experience.

Addressing the gathering, Shekhawat described the flag-off from Safdarjung Railway Station as a 'Shivmay Shubharambh', an auspicious and spiritually significant beginning. Alongside CM Gupta and Cabinet Minister Kapil Mishra, he interacted with the pilgrims and extended his best wishes for the journey. He said the Yatra aims to showcase India's cultural heritage and national pride through the timeless legacy of the Somnath Temple, adding, "Indian faith is rooted in a spirit of harmonious unity." Welcoming the pilgrims,

Rekha Gupta said the Yatra reflects India's rich cultural heritage, deep-rooted faith, and civilisational pride. She emphasised, "It is not merely a religious event, but a celebration of the country's thousands of years of cultural consciousness and enduring faith." Referring to landmark initiatives such as the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor, Mahakal Lok, and the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, she said these transformative efforts have given Indian culture a renewed identity and fresh energy. The Somnath Yatra, she added, carries forward the same spirit. She reiterated that the Delhi government remains committed to strengthening citizens' religious faith and cultural identity and will continue such initiatives in the future.

Kapil Mishra said that under the Chief Minister's leadership, the Delhi government remains dedicated to serving senior citizens, mothers, sisters, daughters, and all devotees.

## Hotel Had Permission For 6 Rooms: Sources

According to sources, the hotel had been granted a licence by the Delhi government under a Bed and Breakfast (B&B) concept. Under this, the hotel was allowed to have only six rooms. The hotel was reportedly operating 25 rooms, including rooms in the basement.

## 39 Patients Admitted At Max Hospital

Following the fire incident, 39 patients were admitted to the Emergency Department of Max Hospital, Saket Complex. The patients presented with asphyxiation and varying degrees of minor burn injuries and fractures, the hospital said in a statement. "Of the 39 patients received, 18 were brought dead, 15 are admitted in ICU, including eight patients on ventilator and in critical condition. Five patients with minor injuries were treated and discharged following primary medical care. A patient has been shifted to Safdarjung Hospital due to excessive burns," the Max Hospital said in a statement. The victims include both local and foreign nationals.

## Supreme Court forms expert committee to review Centre's report on Aravalli hill range definition

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has constituted a high-powered expert committee to conduct an independent review of the Centre's report on the definition and delineation of the Aravalli hill range. The committee will be headed by Kanchan Devi, Director General of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education. The panel has been asked to submit its report by August 31 this year.

The apex court said an impartial and scientific assessment is needed to address key issues related to the protection of the Aravalli ecosystem. The court had earlier stayed the implementation of an Environment Ministry report submitted in October last year and called for a fresh



review by independent experts.

The committee will examine whether the proposed criteria for identifying Aravalli hills could significantly reduce the area under environmental protection and allow mining or other activities in ecologically

sensitive regions.

It will also assess the scientific basis of the elevation criteria used in the report and evaluate whether existing regulatory mechanisms are adequate for protecting the Aravalli range. The panel includes experts from forestry, geology, environment and ecology.

## CBSE says around 40,000 students submit re-evaluation applications successfully

New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has said that nearly 40 thousand students have successfully submitted their re-evaluation applications and completed the application process

without facing any issues. CBSE had yesterday opened the online portal for verification of issues observed in scanned copies of answer books and re-evaluation of answers for Class 12th students. The facility is

available only to those students who have obtained scanned copies of their evaluated answer books.

In a social media post, CBSE informed that payment gateways of SBI, Canara Bank, Bank of Baroda and

Indian Bank are available on the Verification and Re-evaluation portal for students applying for post-result services. CBSE has clarified that students are not required to hold accounts with any of these banks to complete the

payment process. The board informed that the Candidates can make payments through any of the available gateways using online payment options such as UPI, net banking, credit cards and debit cards.

## BJD to hold protest meeting on June 5th

Khordha: Violence is increasing every day in the state. Women and girls are not feeling safe. Starting from daily necessities, bus fares have increased due to shortage of petrol and diesel. Apart from this, the BJD party has alleged that the BJP government in the state has failed in all fields in the last two years. On the instructions of state BJD president and leader of the opposition Naveen Pattnaik, protest meetings are being held in various constituencies across the state. In this regard, a protest meeting and rally will be held on June 5th under the leadership of

khordha district BJD president Rajendra Kumar Sahu. State BJD Senior Vice President Devi Ranjan Mishra, Pratap Kumar Jena, Rajya Sabha ,MP,Manas Ranjan Mangaraj, Khordha district BJD Working President Manmath Kumar Rautray, BCJD, President Ipishita Sahu, BYJD President Chinmay Sahu, Vice-President Abyakta Harihar Khadanga, Biju Mahila Janata Dal President, Snehangini Chhuria, Senior BJD Women's Leader Pramila Mallick, Begunia MLA, Pradeep Kumar Sahu, State General Secretary Suvakanta Kant Mohapatra, Youth Leader Amiya Kumar

Mohanty, Biranchi Jena and other BJD leaders are scheduled to attend the event. The BJP government has increased unnecessary hardship in the state, along with anarchy and violence. The state government has failed in all sectors. No development work has been done in the Khordha constituency in the last two years. PC transactions are going on while passing bills for various projects approved by the previous BJD government. Illegal work is going on in the Khordha Municipal Office. Cabins have been demolished to make the city beautiful. Many

poor patients are not getting medical facilities due to the Ayushman card not being properly implemented in various hospitals in Khordha. A protest rally will be held on the 5th June at 8 am from the Gita Bhawan, through the main road of the town, to reach the Collector's office and present a memorandum to the Collector address to the President of India. Apart from khordha, BJD leaders Begunia, Bolagarh, Janti, Chilika, Jayadev constituencies and a large number of BJD workers will participate in this program, informed Mr.Sahu in a press conference held at Eagle Club, Khordha.

## BRICS DRRG Meeting Begins in Puri; Focus on Disaster Resilience and Global Cooperation

Puri: Under India's BRICS 2026 Chairship, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is hosting the Second Meeting of the BRICS Disaster Risk Reduction Group (DRRG) in Puri from June 3 to 5, 2026.

The three-day meeting, themed "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability," has brought together senior officials and technical experts from BRICS member nations — Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates — to strengthen collaboration in disaster risk reduction and resilience-building.

Key discussions during the meeting will focus on community-based disaster risk reduction, financing mechanisms for disaster management, multi-hazard early warning systems, resilient infrastructure, nature-based solutions, and the application of science, technology and innovation in reducing disaster risks. Officials said the deliberations are expected to deepen cooperation among BRICS countries through the exchange of best practices, shared learning and collaborative approaches to addressing common disaster challenges. The initiative aims to support the development of resilient societies and sustainable disaster risk



reduction frameworks across member nations.

Odisha has been chosen as the host state in recognition of its internationally acclaimed disaster management model, particularly its achievements in cyclone preparedness, early warning dissemination, large-scale evacuations and community-led response systems, which have significantly reduced loss of life during natural disasters.

As part of the programme, delegates will witness a water rescue preparedness and response demonstration by the Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) at Ramchandi. They will also interact with trained community volunteers during a programme organised by the Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) to gain first-hand

insights into the state's coastal disaster resilience and community preparedness initiatives.

The delegates are also scheduled to visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Konark Sun Temple, to experience Odisha's rich cultural heritage.

The inaugural session and key events will be attended by Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari, NDMA Member and Head of Department Dr Krishna Swaroop Vatsa, along with senior officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of External Affairs.

The meeting is expected to further reinforce BRICS cooperation in disaster risk reduction and contribute to building a more resilient and sustainable future for member countries.

## BRICS DRR meet in Puri under tight security cover; 10 platoons of police deployed

Puri: Odisha Police has put in place elaborate security arrangements for the BRICS Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Working Group Meeting being held in Puri, with delegates from BRICS member and partner countries participating in the international event.

Director General of Police (DGP) Yogesh Bahadur Khurania on Wednesday reviewed the security preparedness during a visit to Puri. He inspected the conference venue, accommodation facilities for delegates, designated movement routes and other key locations, and held discussions with senior police and district administration officials.

According to police officials, 10 platoons of armed police force have been deployed across the city. The security setup also includes four Additional Superintendents of Police (ASPs), six Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs), eight Inspectors-in-Charge (IICs) and 45 Sub-Inspectors (SIs), besides personnel from intelligence, traffic, marine and special operations units.

A multi-layered security system has been established at the



conference venue, hotels and other sensitive locations. Access control measures, anti-sabotage checks, area domination exercises and round-the-clock surveillance are being carried out. CCTV monitoring and technical

surveillance systems have also been activated to ensure real-time situational awareness.

Special route security arrangements have been made for the movement of delegates and dignitaries. Designated routes are

being regularly sanitised and monitored, while Quick Reaction Teams (QRTs), escort vehicles and emergency response units have been stationed at strategic points.

Given Puri's coastal location, marine and coastal security has been intensified. The Coastal Security Wing and Marine Police are conducting regular patrols along the coastline, with enhanced surveillance to prevent any potential threat through sea routes.

Police have also strengthened coordination with central intelligence agencies, the district administration, fire services, health authorities and disaster response teams to ensure seamless event management and emergency preparedness.

Inspector General of Police (Central Range) Dr Satyajit Naik said Odisha Police was fully committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all delegates and participants. He added that comprehensive planning and coordinated deployment of resources had been undertaken to ensure the smooth and incident-free conduct of the meeting.

## Kan-hei-lal Das Memorial Forum to Celebrate Birth Anniversary in Balasore; Story Writer Ranjan Pradhan to Receive Kan-hei Katha Award

Balasore, June 2 (Krishna Kumar Mohanty): As in previous years, the Kan-hei-lal Das Memorial Forum will celebrate the Kan-hei Birth Anniversary Festival on June 27 at Atithya Bhavan in Balasore town. In this connection, a preparatory meeting was held this evening at the premises of Sanketa in Balasore.

The meeting was presided over by the Forum's President, Subas Chandra Patra. MLA of Bhograi and Convener of the Forum, Gautam Buddha Das, attended the meeting and moved a resolution condemning the controversial remarks made against Fakir Mohan Senapati.

The participants also held detailed discussions regarding the programme and arrangements for the forthcoming celebration.

For the Kan-hei Katha Award 2026, Executive President and Chairman of the Award Committee, Krishna Kumar Mohanty, placed a list of prospective nominees before the meeting. Following deliberations, young fiction writer Dr. Ranjan Pradhan was unanimously selected as the recipient of this year's award.

Born in 1979 in Niginipur village of Kendrapara district, Dr. Pradhan pursued higher studies and earned a Ph.D. degree. To

date, he has authored 24 books, including three poetry collections, eight short story collections, three novels, and thirteen research and essay volumes. Through his stories, he has vividly portrayed the lives and struggles of tribal communities and has established himself as a noted humanist storyteller.

For his literary contributions, he has received more than thirty awards and honours, including the Kalinga Book Fair Award, Kishori Charan Award, National Youth Award, Haji Asraf Ali Udaya Pratibha Award, Tapasya Srujana Award, and Akshaya Novel Award.

Noted fiction writer Paresh Kumar Pattnaik and literary personality Chirashree Indrasingh have graciously consented to attend the Kan-hei Birth Anniversary Festival as distinguished guests.

Among others present at the meeting were poet Sridev, Editor Utpal Mohanty, Treasurer Byomanath Rath, Joint Secretary Shubendu Das, fiction writers Gangadhar Biswal and Nibaran Jena, Sanjay Panda, and Yadabesh Mishra, who actively participated in the discussions. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Forum member Rajesh Giri.

## Zilla Parishad member tries self-immolation in khordha

Khordha:--3/6- 27 no zone Bolagarh zilla parishad member Pradepta Kishore Chhotray attempted self-immolation protest during zilla parishad meeting in khordha. This action was reportedly taken to protest the transfer of Bolagarh BDO, Suman Sudha Kundu reflecting significant friction between local elected representatives and district administration. The 6th Zilla Parishad meeting was held in the conference hall of zilla parishad khordha under the chairmanship of zilla parishad President Rupashree Rani Gumansingh. In the meeting, khordha zilla parishad 27 no zone (Bolagarh) member Pradepta Kishore Chhotray, who expressed his displeasure against the

arbitrary actions of Bolgarh BDO and disrespect for local representatives, also came to the meeting and attempted self-immolation by pouring petrol in his body. The other members present there requested him to refrain from this, but he did not listen to anyone. MLA, Khordha Prasanta Kumar Jagdev and MLA, Begunia, Pradeep Kumar Sahu tried to calm him down. During the celebration of Independence Day 2025, Bolagarh BDO, Suman Sudha Kundu was invited Begunia MLA, Pradeep Kumar Sahu as the chief guest to hoist the national flag, but she himself did not go to the parade ground despite being present at the Bolgarh Panchayat Samiti office.

This caused intense resentment. MLA, Mr. Sahu strongly condemned such behavior of BDO and all the local elected representatives drew the attention of the collector khordha in writing in this regard, but no action was taken against BDO. As a result of which all the elected representatives of panchayat raj institutions sits in front of panchayat samiti office Bolagarh, which finally took a violent turn. The members sitting were forcibly entered the and cause damage. As a result, intense agitation was expressed in the local area and police arrested some people involved in the incident. Later, the situation calmed down, but today, the reflection of that dissatisfaction was seen.

## Moon Communication Celebrates World Bicycle Day

Balasore, June 3 (Krishna Kumar Mohanty): World Bicycle Day was observed at Tapaswi through the joint initiative of Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat), Balasore, under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, and the social organization Moon Communication.

Retired teacher Mr. Sushanta Kumar Nayak, attending as the chief guest, emphasized the importance of cycling for good health, national development, and reducing dependence on fossil

fuels. Social activist Mr. Shyama Sundar Mallik highlighted the role of bicycles in protecting the environment.

Another guest, Mr. Prashanta Kumar Das, urged everyone to adopt cycling as a means of reducing oil imports and combating climate change. Under the leadership of Mr. Abani Kumar Jena, Editor of Moon, and with the support of Ms. Pankajini Das, a women's bicycle rally was organized with the message, "Cycle for a Greener Future." The

rally passed through Ranasahi and the Hidigaon Gram Panchayat area, spreading awareness about environmental conservation. The participants also took a pledge for a greener environment and planted saplings as part of the programme. The event was supported by Mrs. Mallik, Mamata Das, Sulochana Mallik, Pushpita Mallik, Soumya Shobhana Nayak, Nandini Mallik, Shradha Das, Susmita Singh, Nirupama Behera, Smrutirekha Mallik, and Pramila Patra, among others.

## Vedanta Aluminium deepens water and irrigation impact across Kalahandi and Rayagada

Bhubaneswar, June 3, 2026: Ahead of World Environment Day, Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, highlighted its expanding water stewardship and watershed development efforts in Odisha's Kalahandi and Rayagada districts around its Lanjigarh refinery. The company has created over 18 lakh cubic metres of water storage and groundwater recharge capacity, strengthening irrigation access and improving water security for rural households.

Through its integrated watershed and community water management initiatives, the company has revitalised over 73 water bodies across 26 villages, while enabling irrigation across more than 1600 acres of farmland, benefiting over 4,000 people. These efforts are helping address long-standing water scarcity challenges in one of Odisha's most climate-vulnerable regions.

Karbi Majhi, a community member from Banigaon village, said, "Water used to be a daily struggle, especially during the dry months when sources would run low. Now, with the restoration of water bodies in our village, water is available closer to home and throughout the year. It has reduced our hardship and improved our quality of life."

In largely agrarian Kalahandi, now among Odisha's leading paddy-producing districts, supported by irrigation expansion, improved water availability is directly supporting farm productivity, crop diversification, and farmer incomes. The region's heavy dependence on monsoon rainfall and irrigation makes such interventions critical to sustaining agricultural growth and livelihoods.

Vedanta Aluminium's watershed initiatives focus on scientific rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, and

revival of traditional water systems, enabling year-round water availability for both irrigation and household needs. The interventions include development of water harvesting structures, farm ponds, check dams, and community-led water management systems that improve soil moisture and reduce runoff losses.

Dhananjaya Patra, a farmer from Batelima village, said, "Earlier, farming here depended entirely on rainfall. With the water bodies restored and irrigation now available, we are able to cultivate more confidently and even grow an additional crop. It has brought stability to our income and hope for our families."

Building on these on-ground interventions, Vedanta Aluminium has now developed a hydrogeological blueprint for the Sijimali region, aimed at further strengthening water security. Scientific studies

indicate the potential to increase local water availability by up to 200%, by improving runoff capture and groundwater recharge through a network of soil and water conservation measures.

The plan includes interventions such as contour bunding, check dams, settling ponds, slope stabilisation structures, and a 7,500-metre drainage network, designed to channel rainwater more effectively into local catchments and water bodies.

Importantly, the project has been designed with safeguards to protect groundwater resources. Studies indicate that groundwater occurs at depths of approximately 350m-550m below ground-level, while proposed activities are planned at significantly shallower levels, ensuring no direct interaction with aquifers.

Complementing these

efforts is a large-scale ecological restoration programme, including the plantation of over 2.2 million trees across Kalahandi and Rayagada districts. This afforestation effort is expected to further improve soil stability, enhance moisture retention, and strengthen biodiversity and ecological resilience.

Vedanta Aluminium has consistently prioritised water stewardship across its operations and has implemented several initiatives focused on water conservation, recycling, groundwater recharge and ecosystem restoration. Through the Sijimali hydrogeological plan, the company aims to demonstrate how scientific planning and responsible resource management can contribute to sustainable development and improved environmental outcomes.



## Review Meeting of Hon'ble Revenue Minister on Smart Surveillance System in Registration Offices

Middlemen to be identified and penalized through the Smart Surveillance System

Bhubaneswar : A high-level review meeting on the surveillance system under the Inspector General of Registration (IGR) was held today at Lok Seva Bhawan under the chairmanship of the Hon'ble Minister for Revenue and Disaster Management, Shri Suresh Pujari. The meeting discussed in detail the implementation of a Smart Surveillance System through advanced CCTV cameras in all registration offices across Odisha, along with its operation and maintenance. The Hon'ble Minister emphasized strengthening the security infrastructure of all registration offices in the



State through an integrated surveillance and monitoring mechanism. During the review, Shri Pujari stated that the possibility of corruption in registration offices largely arises due to the activities of middlemen who frequently visit these offices without any official purpose, unlike officers and staff. To address this issue, a Smart Surveillance System using

CCTV cameras will be introduced to identify such middlemen. The system will be further strengthened through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance its effectiveness in identifying and tracking these individuals, who will also face appropriate penalties. The Minister reiterated that the land transaction and registration process would be

kept completely free from the influence of middlemen and that corruption would not be tolerated under any circumstances. Ensuring a transparent, corruption-free and accountable revenue administration remains a top priority of the Government and efforts will begin with making the registration system free from middlemen. The

Minister further informed that the Smart Surveillance System will gradually be extended to all Revenue Department offices, including Tahasil offices and Revenue Inspector(RI) offices. The system will monitor the attendance and working hours of officers and staff and will also facilitate tracking during field visits. Periodic monitoring of the system will be carried out at the State Headquarters level under the supervision of the Hon'ble Minister and the Additional Chief Secretary of the Department. The Smart Surveillance System will maintain a close watch on the attendance and functioning of officials. Fire safety measures will also be strengthened through enhanced alert mechanisms. The capacity of the Smart Surveillance System's Control Room will be upgraded and

modern technologies such as real-time monitoring will be adopted to make revenue administration more transparent, efficient and citizen-centric. The Hon'ble Minister also directed that security arrangements in all registration offices be further strengthened and that Registration Officers be granted additional powers, wherever necessary, by empowering them to function as Executive Magistrates. Among those present at the meeting were Dr. Arabinda Padhee, Additional Chief Secretary, Revenue and Disaster Management Department; Ms. P. Anvesha Reddy, Inspector General of Registration; Shri Prakash Mishra, Principal Secretary, Revenue Department; Shri Diganta Rautaray, Additional Secretary; and other senior officials of the Department.

## Govt.Lands under encroachment by private parties in Jagatsinghpur

Jagatsinghpur : As per statistical data total area of Jagatsinghpur district is 1668 sq. Km. Out of total area 40 percentage of different Govt.Land exist in the district. But it is unfortunate that almost 60 percentage of Govt.Lands were encroached by private parties. Even some places the Govt.Land recorded in favour of private parties avoiding all rule and regulation of Revenue department. As per a private survey report Forest Land, Dead River land, Gochar, Drainage cut are under private possession. Though Govt. instructed all revenue heads to take possession of Govt.Land and funds allotter to all Tahasildar for chelk and measurement and barricade Govt.Lands after taking possession. But revenue department in a hesitant mood to execute Govt.order. Particularly in

Jagatsinghpur district Saline Forest, Social Forest and even Village forest area under the possession of private parties. At Siali sea beach private hotel and Farm house running by private parties upon Govt.Land. Similarly at Tirtol Tahasil one revenue village, one Collage, one School running upon proposed Reserve Forest. Besides that major land of Dead River Alaka is in possession of private parties. Even some coming and powerful people converted Govt.Land to Private land by taking the help of revenue Officers. Even other types of Govt land under possession of private parties and causing problem for development of district. Revenue department should take district action against unauthorised occupant of Govt.Land as alleged by general people.

## Family of 4 saved from fire at Ghaziabad building; 3 pet dogs found dead

Noida: A family of four was rescued in the early hours of Tuesday after a fire erupted at the top floor of a residential building in Ghaziabad's Avantika. However, the bodies of their three dogs — two German Shepherds and a Husky — were found after the blaze, which gutted the flat, was doused.

Fire department officials said they received a call regarding a fire at SK Homes at 3:09am. The fire had erupted on the third floor which is occupied by a 52-year-old man, his wife (46), and their two children, (20) and (18). The other families on the other two floor were not affected. According to chief fire officer (CFO) Rahul Pal, the fire started in the drawing room while the family was sleeping in one of the other rooms and quickly engulfed the flat, leaving them no safe way to leave. "One of our fire officers was on call with them, and he asked them to come to the balcony and take shelter along the walls," he said, adding that the officers made sure they didn't jump off the five-feet wide balcony in

panic. After fire tenders reached the spot, they used ladders to rescue the family. "The firemen then broke the gates of the flat and doused the fire within an hour," the CFO said. That is when the bodies of the dogs were found. "They probably died due to suffocation and could not find a way out. Their bodies were taken out and handed over to the family," the CFO added. A short-circuit is suspected to have caused the fire, however, this would only be confirmed after an official investigation. Their

entire flat was gutted, according to the CFO and neighbours. "They went away to their relatives as nothing was left in their flat. All household item were damaged in the fire," Pushendra Singh, one of the neighbours told to media. "The family loved their pets too much, and these pets were friendly to everyone in the building. Two were German Shepherds and one a Husky. Their bodies were taken out and buried by the family. They were very pained to see them dead," Singh added.

## Law student held over Noida workers' protest

New Delhi: Police arrested one more activist, a first-year law student, from Delhi in connection with the April 13 Noida workers' protest last Saturday (May 30), officials said on Tuesday. The suspect, originally from Jaipur, resides in Delhi, said police. Gautam Budh Nagar, additional commissioner of police (Law and Order), Rajiv Narayan Mishra confirmed the arrest. "During the investigation his involvement was found in the Noida workers' protest," he said. An official, part of the investigation, requesting

anonymity, told HT, "On May 20, when a suspect, a driver, was arrested following allegations that he was a government employee and attached to a DCP office in Gautam Budh Nagar, he revealed that he was in contact with this suspect." "We have found evidence that both suspects were in contact on the morning of April 13. The suspect (held from Delhi), who was part of the workers' activist group, also sent instigating messages to the workers' group in Noida. Police said he was arrested in connection with the Noida, Phase 2 case of

violence after informing the Delhi police on Saturday and was produced before the court. "Court sent him to judicial custody," the official added. Meanwhile, the Campaign for Release of Workers and Activists of Noida (CaRWANs) condemned the arrest, and said, "UP Police personnel picked him up outside a college in Delhi and sent him to jail. He is the eighth activist to be falsely implicated." Police said the suspect arrested on Saturday is part of the activist organisation. He also contested an election from

a university in Delhi last year. On Monday, a group of students staged a protest in Delhi on Monday against the latest arrest. Meanwhile, the city court on Monday rejected the bail plea of four accused, citing that the charges are "grievous" against them. The factory workers' protest began on April 10 in Noida's Phase 2 industrial area after the Haryana government increased the wages of unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled workers by 35 percent. The protest remained largely peaceful from April 10 to 12 but turned violent on April 13.

## Noida Court acquits two men in woman's suicide in 2018

New Delhi: A city court has acquitted a man and his brother, giving them the "benefit of doubt" in the death of his wife at his home in Greater Noida's Beta-2 area on April 4, 2018 — four years after her marriage. Citing the Supreme Court's 2018 judgment in Major Singh & Others vs State of Punjab, the court said the prosecution must prove the woman was subjected to cruelty or harassment linked to dowry before her death. "There must be a link between the death of the deceased and the demand for dowry and the alleged cruelty," it observed. In this case, the court said, the prosecution failed to establish any dowry

demand or cruelty before her death. The victim's father had filed an FIR at Beta-2 police station on April 8, 2018, under IPC sections 498A and 304B, and provisions of the Dowry Prohibition Act. He alleged his daughter married a native of Bulandshahr, in February 2014, and he spent ₹50 lakh on the wedding. A fortnight later, the husband demanded ₹25,000, but he refused due to wedding expenses. Thereafter, he alleged, they began torturing his daughter and demanded ₹25 lakh in dowry, threatening to kill her. On April 2, 2018, he received a call from her in-laws informing him of her death. The prosecution

examined six witnesses, including the victim's parents, brother, uncle, a relative, and a doctor. The defence produced one acquaintance as a witness. During testimony, the victim's parents and brother said she had undergone two abortions. The court noted that the post-mortem report recorded no injuries and concluded the cause of death as suicide. A suicide note recovered from the spot referred to differences between the woman and her husband. Additional district and sessions judge Somprabha Mishra, also special judge under the SC/ST Act, observed: "There were no

statements before court regarding any demand for dowry or harassment... It was stated that there was a demand for ₹25,000, but such financial assistance was not provided. According to the suicide note... the woman was emotionally distressed; she did not mention dowry or any form of harassment." The court acquitted the man and his brother, giving them the benefit of doubt. "The accused are already on bail. Their bail bonds are cancelled," the May 30 order said. The court directed them to furnish personal bonds with one surety of the same amount under CrPC section 437A, valid for six months.

## CPI(M) alleges custodial assault, false cases against Noida workers

Noida: Workers arrested during the April labourers unrest in Noida allege they were physically assaulted in police custody, framed with fabricated evidence and booked under multiple charges to crush their movement, the CPI claimed on Wednesday after a party delegation met those recently released on bail after spending nearly a month in jail. The delegation, led by CPI general secretary MA Baby, met some workers involved in the movement, many of whom have also been dismissed from their jobs following the protests. The workers narrated their experiences to the delegation, which also included CPI Polit Bureau members R Arun Kumar and Tapan Sen, Rajya Sabha member V Sivadasan and other party leaders. The delegation also interacted with workers from Fabtract Clothing, where around 50 employees reportedly joined the trade union movement following protests in April. Representatives of workers from Vibracoustic India also met the CPI leaders and alleged that managements routinely attempt to prevent workers from forming unions,

while employees who assume leadership roles in such efforts are often dismissed. Speaking after the meetings, Baby criticised the Uttar Pradesh government for what he described as police violence against workers and filing of false cases. He also alleged that authorities denied permission to the delegation to visit workers who remain in jail. "For the last few days we have been trying to get permission through our Member of Parliament V Sivadasan to visit the workers in jail, but the authorities informed us that higher officials had rejected the request," Baby said. He alleged that some jailed workers were unable to effectively pursue bail applications or secure adequate legal assistance, amounting to a denial of their fundamental rights. The CPI said it would continue to provide legal assistance and political support to the workers. The party maintained that the arrests, dismissals and restrictions faced by workers reflected continuing attacks on labour rights, while asserting that workers' unity and collective resistance remained the strongest response to such actions.

## Noida admin to act over 'lapses' in Census duty

NOIDA: While the Census 2027 house-listing exercise has crossed the halfway mark in Noida, work is pending in nearly half of the designated House Listing Blocks (HLBs), officials said on Tuesday, adding that the Noida authority has initiated action against personnel for negligence. Officials said that suspension proceedings have been initiated against two regular employees, and proceedings have begun to terminate services of five contractual employees for alleged negligence in census-related duties. Similar action would be taken against other personnel found lax in carrying out assigned responsibilities, they added. Authorities have also written to concerned departments seeking action against employees who have not yet commenced census work assigned to them. Additionally, Noida authority has sought legal action against certain personnel appointed as enumerators for allegedly failing to assume charge despite being assigned duties under the Census 2027. The Authority has requested the Gautam Nagar police to register cases under Sections 5 and 11 (related to status of census officials and the penalties for failing to execute census duties) of the Census Act, 1948 against these personnel who "adopted a non-cooperative approach towards the exercise".

## Father-Son Duo Booked for Allegedly Selling Land to Another Buyer After Taking Payment

Faridabad: The Chhainsa Police in Faridabad have registered a cheating case against a father and son for allegedly selling a piece of land to another person after accepting lakhs of rupees from the original buyer. According to the complaint filed by Ram Kumar, a resident of Machghar village, he had entered into an agreement in 2025 to purchase a plot of land located in Jawan village from Dinesh Malik and his

son, Sandesh Malik, for ₹94 lakh. Ram Kumar alleged that he initially paid a token amount of ₹50,000 and later transferred ₹30 lakh through RTGS, along with an additional payment of ₹10 lakh. A written agreement regarding the land deal was executed on August 18, 2025. The accused had reportedly assured the complainant that the land would be partitioned and the registry of the agreed

portion would be transferred in his name after the completion of the necessary formalities. However, in March 2026, when Ram Kumar checked the revenue records, he discovered that the land had already been registered in the name of a woman identified as Vidhu on February 13. During the investigation, police examined records obtained from the Mohna Sub-Tehsil, including land

records, mutation documents, and bank transaction details. The inquiry confirmed financial transactions between the complainant and the accused and revealed that the disputed land had been sold to another person. Police spokesperson Yashpal said that Chhainsa Police registered an FIR against the father and son on Monday and have launched a further investigation into the matter.

## Greater Noida kicks off 11-day Big Cricket League

New Delhi: Greater Noida will host the second season of the Big Cricket League (BCL) from June 3 to 13 at the Shaheed Vijay Singh Pathik Stadium, the Greater Noida authority said on Tuesday. The T20 cricket tournament will feature former international cricketers alongside amateur players selected through nationwide trials, officials said. The second edition of the 11-day tournament will feature cricketers such as India's Shikhar Dhawan and Harbhajan Singh, West Indies' Chris Gayle, New

Zealand's Ross Taylor, and Sri Lanka's Thisara Perera and Tillakaratne Dilshan, among others, the authority said. At a meeting on Tuesday, Greater Noida authority chief executive officer NG Ravi Kumar directed all departments concerned to complete the

preparations. "We will support the event organiser. Entry to the stadium for all matches will be free so that the public, particularly cricket lovers, can enjoy the matches," Kumar said. BCL chief patron Puneet Singh said the tournament will feature six franchise teams competing in 18 T20 matches. "A unique aspect of the league is that 60 amateur cricketers, selected from across the country, will get an opportunity to play alongside legendary players," Singh said.

The tournament is being promoted as the country's first professional-amateur cricket league, the authority said. The inaugural season was held in December 2024 in Surat, Gujarat, where Mumbai Marines defeated Southern Spartans to win the title, officials said. Officials said the matches will be broadcast live on Eurosport, while digital streaming will be available on FanCode. The tournament will also be telecast in more than 25 countries through the league's broadcast partners, they added.

## Custodial Death

THE death of a daily-wage labourer in police custody is a blot on the image of Odisha, a state renowned for good governance. The victim, Sushant Sahu, was detained on the charge of being part of a group which attacked a police team during a raid on an illegal stone quarry in Ganjam district. He was allegedly tortured to death by cops; as per his family, they thrashed him and poured boiling water on his body. Last week, an inspector was suspended after a woman and her son claimed that they were tortured at a police station in Odisha's Kendrapara district. Both incidents raise serious questions about custodial violence and the



accountability of law enforcement officials.

Similar allegations have surfaced recently in Haryana, Assam and even within Central agencies such as the Narcotics Control Bureau. These cases reveal a troubling pattern: individuals in custody have accused officials of physical abuse and violation of human rights. The Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to life and personal liberty under Article 21. Custodial torture is a direct assault on these guarantees and undermines public faith in the justice delivery system. Police custody should facilitate lawful interrogation and investigation, not become a space where constitutional protections are suspended.

The Haryana Human Rights Commission's emphasis on preserving CCTV footage of police stations and enforcing the Supreme Court's directives is an important step forward. In a 2021 verdict, the Court ordered the installation of CCTV cameras with audio and video recording facilities in police stations, lock-ups, interrogation rooms and all custodial areas to ensure transparency, accountability and protection of human rights. However, technology alone cannot solve the problem. Respect for human dignity must be inculcated in law enforcement officials. When the protectors of the law become violators of rights, the very foundation of the rule of law is endangered. A democratic society must not tolerate custodial excesses at any cost.

## T20 Pool

T20 sensation Vaibhav Sooryavanshi — all of 15 — was the brightest star of the 2026 Indian Premier League (IPL), even as the old warhorse Virat Kohli made his presence felt with typical panache. The 37-year-old batting legend powered Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) to their second successive trophy with a quickfire fifty in the final. Such was Kohli's form and fitness during the two-month-long tournament that his participation in the 2027 ODI World Cup is now



within the realm of possibility. Kohli admitted that he needed a change in mindset and a bit of pushing from "super young" players to reinvent his T20 game. This candid acknowledgment offers a glimpse of the healthy competition that is shaping Indian cricket. The just-concluded IPL season showed that cricketers from two generations can complement each other admirably. Kohli remains a dominant force, while players like Sooryavanshi are ensuring that the game continues to evolve.

Sooryavanshi, the Rajasthan Royals prodigy, walked away with most of the awards: Most Valuable Player, Emerging Player of the Season, Super Striker of the Season, Orange Cap winner and Super Sixes of the Season. His fearless batting and remarkable consistency represent the new generation's bold approach to the shortest format of cricket. Yet, what stands out is not merely his talent but his maturity at such a young age. Sooryavanshi's ability to perform under pressure mirrors the very quality that has defined Kohli's success over the years.

The vast pool of talent showcased by the IPL augurs well for India, the reigning T20 world champions. The inclusion of this sport in the 2028 Olympics and the 2030 Commonwealth Games implies that the cricket-crazy nation can expect more laurels in the years to come.

# Bridging Odisha's Intra-Regional Disparities

Tejeswar Patnaik

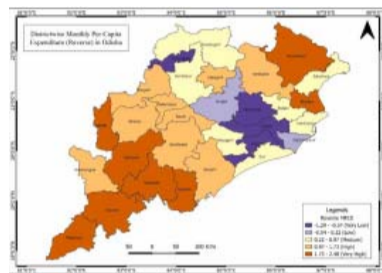
Odisha's development story over the past two decades has been one of remarkable economic transformation. Yet behind the state's impressive growth figures lies a persistent challenge—the widening disparities between its developed and backward regions.

Odisha is endowed with abundant natural resources, including vast reserves of iron ore, bauxite, nickel, and coal, extensive forest wealth, and a long coastline. Four decades ago, the state frequently attracted national and international attention for starvation deaths and chronic poverty in the erstwhile Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput (KKB) region. However, over the last two and a half decades, Odisha has made significant progress in agriculture, industry, infrastructure, and services, emerging as one of India's fastest-growing states.

The state has performed remarkably well in reducing poverty and has received appreciation from NITI Aayog. According to its latest estimates, Odisha's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) stood at 14.96% in 2023, ranking 19th among states and Union Territories. Odisha has recorded one of the fastest reductions in poverty over the past two decades.

In line with the Global MPI framework, NITI Aayog measures poverty across three dimensions—education, health, and standard of living—covering twelve socio-economic indicators. While Odisha's overall progress is commendable, the data reveal substantial intra-regional disparities. Multidimensional deprivation remains alarmingly high in tribal-dominated districts such as Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Koraput, Rayagada, and Nuapada. In districts where the Scheduled Tribe population exceeds 55 per cent, nearly 30 to 40 per cent of households continue to face deprivation in health, nutrition, education, and access to basic amenities. Malkangiri and Nuapada record MPI levels of around 45 per cent and 33 per cent respectively. Even mineral-rich districts such as Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj continue to report relatively high levels of deprivation despite their substantial contribution

*One of the most critical concerns in tribal districts is the low literacy rate. While Odisha's literacy rate is around 79 per cent, several tribal districts lag far behind. Nabarangpur records the lowest literacy rate in the state at 46.4 per cent, followed by Malkangiri and Rayagada. School dropout rates remain high, particularly at the secondary level. Boys often assist their families in agricultural work, while girls are engaged in household responsibilities and sibling care. Poverty and inadequate income frequently compel families to prioritise immediate survival over long-term educational investments. Enhancing household incomes is therefore essential for improving educational outcomes.*



to the state's mining economy. These disparities continue to affect Odisha's overall development performance.

One of the most critical concerns in tribal districts is the low literacy rate. While Odisha's literacy rate is around 79 per cent, several tribal districts lag far behind. Nabarangpur records the lowest literacy rate in the state at 46.4 per cent, followed by Malkangiri and Rayagada. School dropout rates remain high, particularly at the secondary level. Boys often assist their families in agricultural work, while girls are engaged in household responsibilities and sibling care. Poverty and inadequate income frequently compel families to prioritise immediate survival over long-term educational investments. Enhancing household incomes is therefore essential for improving educational outcomes.

The progress made in literacy, education, and health indicators in these districts must be reviewed regularly at every level of administration, and corrective measures should be taken wherever necessary. Public representatives also have a vital role in ensuring the effective implementation of welfare programmes.

Most tribal families are marginal farmers, sharecroppers, tenant cultivators, or agricultural labourers. Agricultural income is often insufficient to sustain households throughout the

year, forcing many to migrate seasonally to urban centres and other states in search of work. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), nearly 75 to 80 per cent of the rural workforce remains dependent on agriculture and earns relatively low wages.

The challenge, therefore, is how to ensure inclusive growth and bridge regional income disparities. There is an urgent need to promote labour-intensive industries in backward districts by leveraging local resources and skills. Agro-processing units, forest-based industries, food processing enterprises, handloom activities, and MSME clusters can generate employment and enhance rural incomes. Such initiatives would not only create jobs but also reduce migration and strengthen local economies.

Infrastructure development must also receive greater attention. Better roads, irrigation facilities, digital connectivity, healthcare infrastructure, and reliable power supply are essential for accelerating development in remote and tribal areas. Easier access to land, hassle-free approvals, improved logistics, and greater availability of credit for small entrepreneurs can further stimulate economic activity. Skill development programmes should be aligned with local industrial requirements so that tribal youth can secure meaningful employment.

The income gap between tribal-dominated districts and developed regions remains stark. The average annual income of a rural household in many backward districts is around Rs 32,000. The condition of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), especially the Dongria Kondhs and

Kutia Kondhs, remains distressing. Monthly household earnings among these communities often range between Rs 2,100 and Rs 4,300, reflecting severe economic hardship.

Odisha is among India's fastest-growing economies, with a projected GDP growth rate of 7.9 per cent in FY 2025-26, surpassing the national average. However, the state's per capita income of approximately Rs 1.87 lakh remains below that of several developed states and continues to lag behind the national average. While Odisha's growth performance is impressive, equal emphasis must be placed on raising per capita income and reducing multidimensional poverty in tribal and backward districts.

The state has attracted substantial private investment in steel, aluminium, mining, renewable energy, and other industrial sectors, particularly in districts such as Keonjhar and Rayagada. However, local youth often struggle to secure employment in these industries due to inadequate technical and vocational skills. Many tribal students who drop out of school are unable to access skilled jobs and instead work as labourers in construction, security services, and logistics.

This often generates local discontent, as tribal communities bear the burden of displacement, environmental degradation, and loss of traditional livelihoods without receiving proportionate economic benefits. The absence of sustainable employment opportunities continues to drive migration from districts such as Bolangir, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Rayagada, and Koraput.

To realise the vision of Viksit Odisha 2036, the state government must move beyond impressive growth figures and focus on balanced and inclusive development. Bridging regional disparities through better education, healthcare, livelihoods, skill development, and infrastructure will be crucial to ensuring that the benefits of growth reach every section of society. Odisha's economic success will be truly meaningful only when its tribal and backward districts share equally in the state's prosperity.

(The Writer is a former Dy General Manager, Bank of India)

## Change is nothing but a shadow, don't fight it

Badal Bhuyan

We live in an ever-changing world. Some people, and they are very few, understand this change as the nature of the world, accept it and flow with it, while others complain about it, resist it, try to swim upstream and transform life into a struggle. Those who know that the change is inevitable, they also know that the change is always happening on the periphery, the circumference, and within them they have a centre which is never changing. At that centre there is total restfulness, while on the periphery, life may appear to be very tiring and stressful. Real meditation means moving from the periphery to the innermost centre and settling into being.

There is a Zen saying: Don't just do something and sit there. This statement describes the famous Zazen meditation discipline. Osho, the modern Zen master, explains: Zazen means just sitting and doing nothing. The first thing to do is learn sitting, a deep restfulness. Become a pool of rest, not even ripples of desire, going nowhere, no ambition — not even for God, not even for nirvana. Sit. . . not only physically — psychologically, spiritually too.

Learn to sit; that is Zazen. And rest — and fall into a deep rest, so the breathing becomes natural, the body becomes cool, all the fever of constant desire and turmoil disappears, evaporates. And then, work. That work will have a totally different quality. It won't be out of desire; it will be your creativity. It will be because you have so

much energy available that you would like to share your energy with the world, that you would like to create something, that you would like to make the world a little more beautiful, a little more blissful, a little more human.

This, indeed, is the real art of meditation — the real secret. It helps us find a centre within our own being and relax into it. And just an hour of such relaxation rejuvenates us and fills us with a tremendous amount of energy. Just one hour or even less than half an hour or 15 minutes, can refresh our being and unleash so much creativity. Those who meditate know this secret. Osho suggests: Don't fight with shadows! And the whole life is a shadow because change is nothing but a shadow. The unchanging is the real; the changing is unreal. So don't ask whether the peripheral change and movement has to be forced to cease in order to realise the centre. There is no need, and you cannot force it. It cannot cease!

The world goes on; only it will not go on in you. You can remain in the world, and there is no need for the world to be in you. The world is not a disturbance. When you get involved in it, when you become the change, when you feel that you have become the change, then it creates problems.

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## Stay cool, we live in a troubled world

Prof. Dr. Jyotiranjana Champatiray

When we encounter problems in life, we must not allow them to overwhelm us. Behind each problem, there is a means to surmount it, too. Understanding this, we must continue striving. We must regard the obstacles as consequences of actions done in a past life. Or, we could empower the mind to accept whatever happens as God's will. Only then can we move ahead. If not, we won't find even one trouble-free moment in life. Often, the most trivial matter can make us dejected. We must gather enough strength to overcome it and move ahead. While taking the path to success, we must face the obstacles we encounter with a smile and forge ahead. We must never give in to despair. If we do so, we won't succeed.

A man started his own business and incurred a huge loss. In order to offset the loss, he borrowed money and continued his business. Even then, he failed. Deep in debt, the man decided to end his life, and walked to the beach. Having decided to jump into the sea after dark, he sat down on a boulder. He then noticed some children playing. They were building temples and castles using wet sand. They fashioned various forms according to their fancy. After they had finished building their temples, castles and other edifices, they would stand back to admire their own handiwork. From time to time, their creations would be washed away by waves. Seeing this, the children would clap gleefully and laugh joyfully. When the waves retreated, the children would once again run forward to create new sculptures. The very next moment, waves would wipe clean all their work. Seeing this, the children would squeal in joy and flee the waves. And then, they would return and begin their work yet again.

In a second or two, the waves would wash away what had taken them considerable time to make. The children would enjoy watching the undoing of all their efforts with the same attitude with which they had admired their creations earlier. The man watched all this with great wonder. He saw how much the children appreciated each sculpture they erected, and at the same time, how they did not lose heart when the sculptures were washed away. Actually, every loss inspired the children to create their next sculpture. The man, who had earlier decided to end his life, thought, "After facing just one setback,

## 29 census enumerators face FIR for refusing duties in Greater Noida

Noida, 3/6: Authorities in Greater Noida have sought registration of FIRs against 29 enumerators who allegedly failed to accept their Census 2027 assignments despite repeated communication, officials said on Tuesday. According to a statement issued by the Greater Noida Authority, the charge officer for the census operation has written to the Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP),

Noida, seeking legal action against the employees for non-cooperation in official duties related to the nationwide exercise. "Around 3,000 employees have been assigned duties as enumerators for Census 2027 in the Greater Noida area. However, 29 of them have not taken charge of their assignments even after the prescribed deadline had expired," the statement said.

## 24-year-old dies in a hit-and-run incident in Gr Noida

Noida, 3/6: A body of a 24-year-old auto-rickshaw driver was found beside a nullah in Greater Noida's Ecotech 3 area on Monday morning after an unidentified vehicle hit his auto from behind and fled the scene, said police officials. The deceased, identified as Pradeep Kumar, 24, was originally from Etah who resided with family in Greater Noida. According to police, when Kumar did not return home from work on Monday morning, his family went out to search for him. "While searching on his way back home, they found his body lying next to a nullah beside his damaged auto-rickshaw, a few meters before the Yamaha Cut in Greater Noida," said a police officer, requesting anonymity. "After we were alerted via the emergency helpline number 112 by his family, a team from Ecotech 3 police station rushed to the spot and sent his body for a post-mortem

examination," the officer added. Based on a preliminary investigation, police suspect that on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday, Kumar was probably returning home in his auto when an unidentified heavy vehicle rear-ended it, causing it to crash into a tree. "Following the incident, Kumar, who sustained severe injuries, got out of the damaged vehicle and walked near a nullah, where he later succumbed to his injuries," the officer added. Police said as the incident took place late at night and there was no commotion near the spot, the accident was not reported immediately. Also, no CCTV cameras are installed in the area. Following a complaint from Kumar's family, a case of rash driving and causing death by negligence under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita sections has been registered at Ecotech 3 police station against unknown person, and efforts are on to identify the vehicle involved, the police added.

## Malviya Nagar Fire: Search On For Hotel Owner; Delhi Police Conduct Raids

New Delhi, 3/6: After fire broke out at a multi-storied Lemon Green Restaurant in Delhi's Malviya Nagar in which 21 people lost their lives, the Delhi Police on Wednesday formed several teams to apprehend the hotel owner. Officials said that police teams are conducting coordinated raids at various locations across the national capital in an effort to trace and arrest the suspect. According to sources, the hotel owner has been identified as one Lokesh Bajaj. Earlier, Delhi Police registered a case under the culpable homicide section and other relevant sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) in the Malviya Nagar fire incident. Sources also said that three partners are involved in the hotel's operations, and they also own several other hotels and guest houses across the city. The police and other investigative agencies are examining aspects related to the hotel's ownership, operations, and safety standards. Meanwhile, police have confirmed that out of the 21 people killed in the blaze, 17 were foreign nationals. Most of the deceased are from Liberia, Nigeria, Mozambique and Bangladesh, officials said. Earlier, Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) (South Delhi) Jitender Kumar had confirmed that 21 people have lost their lives in the tragedy on Wednesday morning. He also said that of the 47 rescued, 26 people are currently undergoing treatment. Speaking to IANS, SDM Kumar said, "Our search and rescue operation was completed at 12:12 p.m. A total of 47 people were rescued, of which 21 have died, and 26 are undergoing treatment." According to the information shared by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi, the hospital has received 13 patients. It mentioned that three of the patients suffered injuries after falling from a height. They had reportedly jumped to save themselves.

## CM Saini flags off 312 emergency vehicles for Haryana Police

Gurugram, 3/6: Haryana chief minister Nayab Singh Saini on Monday flagged off 312 Emergency Response Vehicles (ERVs) for the Haryana Police at Leisure Valley Ground in Gurugram, saying the addition of the new fleet would strengthen public safety and improve emergency response capabilities across the state. The fleet comprises 310 motorcycles and two Honda Elevate vehicles provided by an automobile company under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative at a cost of nearly 5

crore. Addressing the gathering, Saini said a modern and technology-driven police force is essential for strengthening public confidence and ensuring citizen safety. "The induction of these emergency response vehicles will further enhance the reach of Haryana Police and ensure that citizens receive assistance more quickly during emergencies. The state government remains committed to equipping the police force with modern infrastructure and technology to improve policing and public service delivery," he said. The

chief minister also lauded Haryana Police for achieving one of the fastest response times in the country. He said that while the national average police response time is around 18 minutes, Haryana Police has reduced its response time to 7 minutes and 3 seconds. "This achievement reflects the commitment, professionalism and efficient management of Haryana Police. Timely assistance to citizens is the true essence of good governance," Saini said. Officials said Gurugram has been allotted 60 motorcycles and one Honda

Elevate vehicle, while Faridabad received 40 motorcycles and one Honda Elevate vehicle. The remaining 210 motorcycles have been distributed among other districts across Haryana. The vehicles will be deployed at strategic and sensitive locations to ensure rapid response during emergencies and law-and-order situations. Director general of police Ajay Singhal said the new ERVs would further strengthen the state's emergency response system and help police personnel reach incident sites more quickly. "The vehicles will enhance our

ability to provide timely assistance to citizens and improve operational efficiency across districts," Singhal told HT. Police commissioner Shibas Kabiraj said the motorcycle-based ERVs would be particularly effective in congested urban areas and narrow lanes where larger vehicles often face movement challenges. "These vehicles will improve mobility and enable police teams to reach emergency situations faster, especially in densely populated areas and traffic-prone locations," Kabiraj told to Media.

## 20 Arrested in Gambling Racket Operating from Noida Hotel; Cash, Vehicles Seized

Noida, 3/6: The Sector-49 Police Station in Noida has busted an alleged gambling racket operating from a hotel in Sector-51 and arrested 20 individuals involved in illegal betting activities. Police recovered cash worth ₹1.62 lakh, 160 playing cards, seven two-wheelers, one four-wheeler, and 22 mobile phones from the accused. According to Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (ADCP) Manisha Singh, the police conducted a raid at the hotel on Monday following a tip-off. During the operation, officers found several individuals inside a room placing bets through card games. All those present were detained and questioned, during which they admitted to participating in gambling activities by mutual consent. The arrested individuals have been identified as Pushkar Porwal, Ajmeri Khan, Amit, Sachin Gupta, Manoj Kumar, Mohammad Shamim, Chandan, Kapil Sharma, Rahul, Mohammad Zafarul, Pawan, Mukesh, Shubham, Rakesh Kumar, Vikram Singh, Gajendra, Pawan Munda, Nadeem, Nitin, and Suraj. Most of the accused are residents of Noida, Greater Noida, Gurugram, and other parts of the National Capital Region (NCR). During interrogation, the accused reportedly revealed that the hotel was part of a larger gambling network where rooms were rented periodically to organize betting sessions. Police officials said that Devesh, Satendra, and Sachin are believed to be the masterminds behind the operation. The trio allegedly managed the hotel-based gambling network, invited participants, and facilitated betting activities. Once the gambling sessions began, the hotel room was reportedly locked from the inside to avoid detection. Further investigation revealed that several arrested individuals have prior criminal records.

## Jacqueline Fernandez Pleads Innocence, Opts To Face Trial In Money Laundering Case

New Delhi, 3/6: Bollywood actor Jacqueline Fernandez on Wednesday pleaded not guilty in the Rs 200 crore money laundering case linked to alleged conman Sukesh Chandrashekar and expressed her willingness to face trial before a Delhi court. Appearing before the Patiala House Court, Jacqueline denied the charges framed against her under the

Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and opted to contest the case on merits. The court also framed charges of money laundering against Sukesh Chandrashekar, his wife Leena Maria Paul, and 14 others, with all accused pleading not guilty and seeking trial. The matter has now been listed for further hearing on July 16. The

development comes weeks after Jacqueline withdrew her application seeking to be made an approver in the case before the Patiala House Court. The move followed strong opposition from the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which had argued before the court that the actor's conduct during the investigation was "not satisfactory" and that she

had failed to make a "full and true disclosure" in her statements recorded under Section 50 of the PMLA. The federal anti-money laundering agency had contended that Jacqueline did not fully cooperate with the investigation and consistently failed to make complete and truthful disclosures regarding the alleged proceeds of crime

generated by Chandrashekar. Opposing her plea to become a prosecution witness, the ED had further alleged that Jacqueline remained in regular contact with Chandrashekar even after learning about his criminal antecedents. According to the probe agency, Chandrashekar arranged luxury gifts, valuables, and other benefits for Jacqueline

accused, Asad, on Monday. A government notice was pasted on the property, declaring the approximately 50-square-yard, two-storey building illegal. The occupants have been directed to vacate the premises by June 15. Officials said the property was reportedly sold around six months ago, but ownership transfer formalities have not yet been completed. The main accused in the Surya Pratap murder case, 19-year-old Asad, was killed in a police encounter late Saturday night on the Vasundhara-Khoda road. According to police, Asad opened fire on officers after being cornered while allegedly attempting to flee Ghaziabad. He was injured in the exchange of fire and later declared dead at a hospital. Investigators believe he was trying to arrange money from friends to escape the area.

## Two held for murder of Ghaziabad para athlete

Ghaziabad, 3/6: The Ghaziabad police on Monday arrested two people in connection with the murder of a 24-year-old promising para athlete who was on the verge of representing India at this year's Asian Para Games but was shot dead on May 30 afternoon at Sai Upvan area in Ghaziabad. Police officials said they arrested the prime suspect, a 22-year-old para-athlete and close friend of the deceased, Chirag Tyagi, and second suspect, a 23-year-old, who helped the prime suspect get access to an illegal pistol. According to the police, the two arrested suspects

are residents of Muradnagar. "The prime suspect was a close friend of Tyagi and also had access to his bank account. He withdrew money from Tyagi's bank account and purchased the illegal pistol for ₹62,000 from it. He used the same pistol to shoot Tyagi under a plan at Sai Upvan on May 30 and fled. The second suspect, the 23 year-old, had helped the prime suspect procure the illegal weapon from a supplier who is absconding. He will be traced soon," deputy commissioner of police (DCP) Dhawal Jaiswal told to media on Monday. The police said that

Tyagi's autopsy report has confirmed two gunshots. "The autopsy indicated that he sustained two gunshots. One shot hit his head, and the second shot was fired on his back," Sachin Kumar, station house officer (SHO) of Kotwali police station, told HT. The deceased Tyagi, a resident of Basantpur Saithli village in Muradnagar, had won the T12 400m event at the Indian Open in Bengaluru, which served as a selection trial for this year's Asian Para Games in Japan, and had also secured a silver medal in the T13 1,500m event in Bengaluru earlier. Both categories

are meant for athletes with partial visual impairment. "The prime suspect was annoyed with Tyagi, as he believed that his complaints led to his disqualification in March. So, he had been planning the murder for the past couple of months. Since Tyagi was doing well in his career, the prime suspect felt offended as a result. On May 29, Tyagi arrived in Delhi from Bengaluru after giving a trial. On May 30, both started in a cab from Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Delhi and arrived in Ghaziabad and disembarked near New Bus Adda Metro station," the DCP added.

## President Murmu condoles loss of lives in Malviya Nagar hotel fire

New Delhi, 3/6: President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday expressed grief over the loss of lives in the fire incident at a hotel in South Delhi's Malviya Nagar area, describing the tragedy as "extremely heartbreaking" and extending condolences to the bereaved families. Taking to the social media platform X, the President also prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the incident. "The news of the loss of lives in the fire incident in Malviya Nagar, Delhi, is extremely heartbreaking. I express my deepest condolences to the bereaved families and pray for the swift recovery of those injured," the President posted on X. According to officials, at least 21 people lost their lives and more than 40 others were rescued after a massive fire broke out at Flourish Stay B&B in Malviya Nagar at around 8:48 am on Wednesday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also expressed grief over the loss of lives and announced ex-gratia assistance for the victims and their families. In a post on X, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) stated that an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) would be provided to the next of kin of each deceased, while those injured in the incident would receive Rs 50,000.

"The loss of lives due to a fire incident in Malviya Nagar, Delhi, is tragic. My condolences to those who have lost their loved ones. Wishing a speedy recovery to the injured. Authorities are providing all possible assistance to those affected. An ex-gratia of Rs. 2 lakh from PMNRF would be given to the next of kin of each deceased. The injured would be given Rs. 50,000," the post read. Eyewitnesses described scenes of panic and chaos as flames rapidly engulfed parts of the building. Several people reportedly jumped from upper floors in an attempt to escape the blaze, while rescue personnel worked to evacuate those trapped inside and bring the fire under control.

court, however, observed that the available material did not clearly establish the basis on which the witnesses had identified him. "Considering the facts and circumstances of the case, there are sufficient grounds for granting bail to the accused," the court said in its May 29 order. Mahendra was released on a personal bond of ₹50,000 and two sureties of the same amount. The violence erupted on April 13 during a workers' agitation in Noida's Phase 2 industrial area. The protest had begun on April 10 after the Haryana government announced a 35% increase in wages for unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers. More than 100 factories were allegedly vandalised and several vehicles set on fire during the unrest. Meanwhile, the court on May 29 rejected the bail pleas of 10 other accused arrested in connection with the violence.

## Man accused of rioting in workers' stir gets bail

Noida, 3/6: A Gautam Budh Nagar court has granted bail to a man arrested in connection with the workers' protest in Noida that turned violent on April 13, observing that the prosecution failed to place on record any material establishing his "active and identifiable role" in the unrest. The order was passed by additional sessions judge Somprabha Mishra, special judge under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, while hearing the bail plea of Mahendra, who was arrested on April 16 and booked on charges including attempt to murder, rioting, various provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), and Section 7 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. In its order, the court noted that the prosecution had not placed on record any CCTV footage, video recordings, photographs or other material linking the accused to the

violence. "It does not appear that the identification of the accused was made through any CCTV footage, video recording, or photographs of the incident. No such material has been produced on record that specifically demonstrates an active and identifiable role of the accused in the commission of the alleged offence," the court observed. Mahendra's counsel argued that he was innocent, was not named in the FIR and had been falsely implicated. According to the defence, he was arrested while on his way to work at a grocery store where he is employed as a daily-wage labourer. The government counsel opposed the plea, contending that witness statements in the case diary indicated Mahendra's involvement in the violence. The prosecution relied on statements made by an e-rickshaw driver and sub-inspector Mohit Kumar. The

Man accused of rioting in workers' stir gets bail

## Indian National Killed In Kuwait Airport Attack, Embassy Assisting Bereaved Family

Kuwait City, 3/6: The Embassy of India in Kuwait has confirmed the death of an Indian national in the attack carried out on Kuwait International Airport, earlier on Wednesday. "Embassy of India in Kuwait expresses its deepest condolences at the tragic demise of an Indian national due to an attack on the airport in Kuwait today," the Indian Embassy posted on X. "The Embassy is in touch with the bereaved family and is closely coordinating with the Kuwaiti authorities to render all possible support and assistance to the bereaved family as well as those injured in the incident," it added. Dozens of people were injured, many of them critically, when drones and missiles targeted

the passenger building (T1) at Kuwait International Airport at dawn on Wednesday. In a statement, Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed the country's condemnation and denunciation "in the strongest terms" of the "brutal and ongoing Iranian attacks" using ballistic missiles and drones, targeting once again civilian and vital facilities, including Kuwait International Airport, resulting in the death of one individual, injuries to others, and damage to vital facilities, including diplomatic missions. "The Ministry affirms the State of Kuwait's categorical rejection of Iran's overt aggressive attacks, which lead to increased escalation, heightened tension, and undermine the security and stability

of the region, constituting a flagrant violation of the rules of international law, the United Nations Charter, and Security Council Resolution 2817 of 2026," read a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to the official spokesperson for Kuwait's Ministry of Health, a comprehensive health mobilization has been in place since the first hours of the "brutal Iranian aggression" against the State of Kuwait, with 63 injury cases received and seven major emergency surgeries performed. "The health system continues to enhance its readiness around the clock," it stated. Brigadier General Saud Abdulaziz Al-Otaibi,

spokesperson for Kuwait's Ministry of Defence, stated that the armed forces are monitoring the situation in coordination with the relevant authorities and expressed readiness to deal with any developments. "The Official Spokesman for the Ministry of Defence, Brigadier General Saud Abdulaziz Al-Otaibi, stated that a number of hostile drones targeted today the passenger building (T1) at Kuwait International Airport as a result of the criminal Iranian aggression, which resulted in significant material damage to the building and injuries to a number of individuals, who received the necessary medical care," Kuwait Army stated on X.

## Several Injured After 'Iranian Drones' Target Kuwait International Airport

Kuwait City, 3/6: Several Iranian drones targeted the passenger building (T1) at Kuwait International Airport on Wednesday, leaving dozens injured and causing damage to the building, the Kuwait Army said. In a statement, Kuwait's Ministry of Defence official spokesman Brigadier General Saud Abdulaziz Al-Otaibi stated that armed forces are monitoring the situation in coordination with the relevant authorities and expressed readiness to deal with any developments. In a statement posted on X, Kuwait Army stated, "The Official Spokesman for the Ministry of Defence, Brigadier General Saud Abdulaziz Al-Otaibi, stated that a number of hostile drones targeted today the passenger building (T1) at Kuwait International Airport as a result of the criminal Iranian aggression, which resulted in significant

material damage to the building and injuries to a number of individuals, who received the necessary medical care." "He affirmed that the armed forces are monitoring the situation in coordination with the relevant authorities, and they are in a state of complete readiness to deal with any developments, and to take all necessary measures to preserve the security of the country and its stability," it added. Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) announced that Kuwait suspended air traffic on Wednesday after Iranian drones hit Terminal 1 of Kuwait International Airport. DGCA spokesperson Abdullah Al-Rajhi said that the authority activated the emergency plan after the Iranian drone was found at Kuwait International Airport, Kuwait Times reported. He said that air traffic was suspended and

flights were diverted to the nearby airport until further notice. He added that the suspension would remain in effect while authorities assessed the damage and conducted the necessary repairs to restore operations, Kuwait Times reported, citing Kuwait News Agency (KUNA). The attack in Kuwait took place amid ongoing tensions in West Asia that erupted after the US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28, which killed Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and top military officials. In response, Iran launched drone and missile attacks targeting the US and Israeli facilities, regional capitals and allied forces in West Asia. Iran, the US and Israel reached a ceasefire on April 8 after 40 days of fighting. Following the truce, Iranian and US delegations held one round of peace talks in Islamabad on April 11 and 12, which failed to yield an agreement.

## Afghan Teenager Injured In Unexploded Device Blast

Kabul, 3/6: A teenager was seriously injured after an unexploded device left over from the past wars went off in eastern Afghanistan's Ghazni province on Tuesday, said a statement of the provincial police office on Wednesday. The gruesome incident occurred in Gilan district when the ill-fated boy found a toy-like object and began playing with it, but the device exploded, the statement added. Xinhua News Agency reported. Afghanistan has been regarded as one of the most mine-contaminated countries in the world. On May 5, one person was killed and three others injured in a blast involving unexploded ordnance in Afghanistan's Parwan province, local media reported citing a Taliban police statement. The incident took place in Bagram district when a 20-year-old man tried to open a piece of unexploded ammunition, local Taliban authorities said in a statement. The man died in the blast while two girls and a boy were injured and taken to a hospital in Parwan, Afghanistan's leading news agency Khaama Press reported. At least 96 people were killed and 328 others were injured in Afghanistan in the past year due to explosions caused by mines and unexploded munitions, according to the data released by Taliban disaster management authorities. According to the agency, 225 such incidents were reported between April 2025-March 2026, causing 474 casualties, which included 321 children and 153 adults, Khaama Press reported. Unexploded ordnance poses a humanitarian risk in Afghanistan, particularly in rural and previously contested areas where remnants of war remain buried or undiscovered. Afghanistan's provinces like Herat, Kunar, Farah, Nangarhar and Kandahar have reported some of the highest numbers of such incidents. In February, two people were killed after an unexploded shell detonated in a house in Afghanistan's Farah province, according to a statement released by the provincial police office. The incident took place in Pusht-e-Koh district when an unexploded munition reportedly exploded after being struck in the residence. According to the statement, both victims died at the site of the incident. Officials urged residents to exercise caution when encountering unexploded ordnance or other suspicious objects.

## Pakistan Poised To Sink Deeper Into Chinese Debt Trap: Report

New Delhi, 3/6: Pakistan is facing an acute energy crisis-cum-financial crunch that is getting worse and is likely to deteriorate further if the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor's (CPEC) second phase is carried out as proposed, according to an article in Asia Times. Pakistan's power sector circular debt stood at 1.89 trillion rupees (\$6.7 billion) as of February, up nearly 200 billion rupees in just two months. Of that total, 543 billion rupees trace directly to CPEC power projects, marking an all-time high, the article points out. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has closely monitored Islamabad's payments to Chinese power producers, and bluntly said that the debt poses a serious threat to economic stability. The circular debt, which requires Pakistan to pay for Chinese-built capacity on a take-or-pay basis, works like a slow drain on national coffers. Before CPEC's power plants came online, annual power capacity charges were around 384 billion rupees. They are now 2.1 trillion rupees because Pakistan signed contracts guaranteeing payments to Chinese independent



power producers, whether the electricity was used or not. That means the country pays whether the lights are on or off, the article laments. Three of the flagship coal plants at Sahiwal, Port Qasim and Hub burn coal shipped in from Indonesia, South Africa and Australia. So when global coal prices spike, Pakistani electricity tariffs do as well. Industries that can't absorb those costs shut down production lines.

Consumers who can't afford the bills don't pay. And the unpaid bills pile up, creating a debt trap from the inside, the article observes. Islamabad has tried to negotiate a way out with Beijing. The government raised 1.23 trillion rupees and earmarked 565 billion rupees to clear overdue payments to seven Chinese coal plants and 49 renewable projects. It has asked Chinese operators to waive 170 billion rupees in late-payment

charges, the same deal that domestic power producers had accepted, writing off 377 billion rupees between them. However, the Chinese IPPs refused to do so. Their position was that any concession to Pakistan would open the door to renegotiations across the entire Belt and Road infrastructure network worldwide. Meanwhile, the IMF objected when Pakistan tried to quietly funnel 50 billion rupees

to Chinese power producers without renegotiating first. Islamabad is thus caught between two creditors pulling in opposite directions. Meanwhile, a \$23.5 billion trade deficit in the first nine months of this fiscal year has left Islamabad with almost no bargaining power. CPEC 2.0 is supposed to change the narrative. While Phase One allocated nearly 75 per cent of its energy investment to coal, the new Phase Two framework will pivot toward greener solar, wind, hydropower and storage. The completed projects have added 9,504 megawatts to the national power grid. Meanwhile, BYD is set to assemble electric vehicles (EVs) in Pakistan by mid-2026, a sign that Chinese capital allocated to Pakistan is, at least on paper, moving beyond concrete and coal. But the credibility of these ambitions runs into Phase One's unlearned lessons. Pakistan sidelined the Diamer-Bhasha, Dasu and Bunji hydropower projects, which could have delivered over 15,000 megawatts of cheap, domestic energy, and opted for imported coal instead.

## Lamichhane's Meeting With PM Modi Signals Push For Stronger Nepal-India Ties

Kathmandu, 3/6: President of Nepal's ruling Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), Rabi Lamichhane, on Wednesday said Nepal and India could build a partnership defined by progress and mutual trust by focusing on shared civilisational bonds, digital corridors, and seamless connectivity. Following the hour-long meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi, Lamichhane, who is on a five-day tour of the southern neighbour starting June 1, wrote on X that the RSP looks forward to translating these possibilities into reality for the people of Nepal and India for their shared prosperity. "I share your vision for a future where Nepal and India transcend past constraints to embrace a new era of development diplomacy," he said after meeting PM Modi. Lamichhane, who leads the largest party in Nepal's House of Representatives, is on an India tour at the invitation of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President Nitin Nabin. Besides Nabin, he has met top Indian leaders from both the government and the BJP. Following his meeting with PM Modi on Wednesday, the Nepali leader



wrote on X: "I welcome and fully share his desire to work closely together for a shared and prosperous future." PM Modi highlighted that Nepal is a priority partner under India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy, and

New Delhi looks forward to collaborating with the new government to elevate the special and multifaceted relationship between two countries to greater heights. At a time when the proposed visit of Nepali Prime

Minister Balendra Shah to India remains uncertain, the ruling RSP president visited the southern neighbour as the BJP sought to establish party-to-party relations with Nepal's newly largest

party. Lamichhane also received a grand welcome in India, underscoring the importance the ruling BJP has attached to his visit, with several top BJP leaders and government ministers holding meetings with him. On Tuesday, Lamichhane held meetings with Home Minister Amit Shah, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar, and BJP chief Nabin, among other BJP leaders. During those meetings, both sides highlighted the deep-rooted civilisational relations and cultural bonds, while stressing development partnership and people-to-people ties. Prem Raj Khanal, an Assistant Professor at the Central Department of International Relations and Diplomacy at Tribhuvan University, told IANS that Lamichhane's visit to New Delhi was important in establishing leader-to-leader personal relations, which could be crucial in unlocking some of the pressing issues in bilateral relations. "This visit should now usher in engagement between the two sides to address pending issues, including border disputes," he said.

## Rubio Warns Against China's Grip On Critical Minerals

Washington, 3/6: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned that China's dominance of global critical mineral supply chains poses a growing threat to economic and national security, saying the United States is expanding partnerships worldwide to reduce dependence on Beijing for resources vital to advanced technologies, defence systems and industrial production. Speaking before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on National Security, Department of State and Related Programs, Rubio said the concentration of critical minerals and processing capacity in a single country had become a major strategic vulnerability not only for the United States but also for allies across Europe and Asia. "It is not healthy for the global economy and frankly, it is dangerous for national security and the security of the world to depend on any single country for 90 per cent of anything that's critical to your industrial base, your defence base, your technology base," Rubio told lawmakers. The remarks came as the Trump administration continues to place critical minerals at the centre of its economic and foreign policy agenda amid intensifying competition with China. Critical minerals, including lithium, cobalt, rare earth elements and graphite, are essential for electric vehicles, semiconductors, batteries, telecommunications equipment, renewable energy technologies and advanced military systems. Rubio said Washington is working with dozens of countries to diversify supply chains and build alternative sources of both raw materials and processing capacity. "We had three dozen or more countries attend the Critical Minerals Ministerial," he said, describing the issue as a priority across the diplomatic network. According to Rubio, critical minerals have become "a key component of our diplomacy" and are now a focus at virtually every US embassy around the world. He argued that excessive dependence on a single supplier leaves countries vulnerable to economic coercion during crises. "We simply have a hyper concentration of whether it's critical minerals or you could add pharmaceuticals to that concentrated in the hands of one country," Rubio said. "It leaves us dangerously dependent."

## WMO Says El Nino Increases Risk Of Extreme Weather

Geneva, 3/6: Fueled by unusually warm ocean waters in the tropical Pacific, El Nino conditions are developing and are set to influence global temperature and rainfall patterns, increasing the risk of extreme weather over the coming months, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) said on Tuesday. "We need to prepare for a potentially strong El Nino

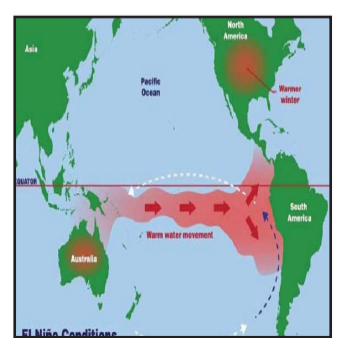
event, which will exacerbate drought and heavy rainfall and increase the risk of heatwaves both on land and in the ocean," WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo said at a press conference in Geneva. The most recent El Nino, in 2023-2024, was one of the five strongest on record, and it played a role in the record global temperatures in 2024, Saulo noted

as reported by Xinhua news agency. The WMO community will be carefully monitoring conditions in the coming months to inform governments, humanitarian agencies and climate-sensitive sectors, Saulo said, adding that advance seasonal forecasts and early warnings are vital to save lives and cushion the impact of El Nino. Meanwhile,

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in a video statement at the conference, said that El Nino conditions "will pour fuel on the fire of a warming world". "The only effective response is climate action equal to the crisis — ending the addiction to fossil fuels, accelerating the shift to renewables, protecting the most vulnerable, and delivering early

warning systems for all," Guterres added. Last week, WMO said Global average temperatures are likely to continue at or near record levels in the next five years, with Arctic temperature anomalies expected to continue to be higher than the global mean. The conclusion was drawn from the WMO report 'Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update 2026-

2035', produced by Britain's Met Office and the WMO Lead Centre for Annual to Decadal Climate Prediction, which synthesised predictions contributed by 13 institutes. The update report also takes a look at the observed climate over the past five years and gives regional predictions for temperatures and precipitation over the next five years.



# Sensex, Nifty End Lower As IT Stocks Drag Markets

Mumbai,3/6: Indian equity benchmark indices ended lower on Wednesday, although they recovered a significant portion of intra-day losses supported by gains in PSU bank and financial stocks. Markets witnessed sharp volatility during the session, with heavy selling pressure in information technology stocks weighing on investor sentiment. However, buying in PSU banks, private banks, and healthcare stocks helped the indices trim losses from the day's low. The Nifty closed 77.95 points or 0.33 per cent lower at 23,405.60, while the Sensex declined 303.67 points or 0.41 per cent to settle at 74,346.17. "23,500 remains the key level to watch. A sustained move above this zone could improve sentiment and trigger a recovery towards 23,600 and subsequently 23,800, where significant call-based resistance remains visible," an analyst stated. "On the downside, 23,300-23,350 remains the immediate support band, followed by the crucial 23,150-23,200 demand zone that has held multiple times over the past few sessions," as per the market expert. Among



Nifty stocks, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise, Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, InterGlobe Aviation, and Max Healthcare Institute emerged as the top gainers. Shares of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Tech Mahindra, and HCLTech were among the top laggards on the Sensex, contributing significantly to the decline in the headline index. Sectorally, the Nifty IT index emerged as the worst performer, falling more than 5 per cent during the session

amid broad-based weakness in technology counters. On the other hand, the Nifty PSU Bank index rose the most among sectoral indices, while the Nifty Bank, Nifty Private Bank, and Nifty Healthcare indices also outperformed the broader market. In the broader markets, the Nifty MidCap index ended 0.42 per cent lower, while the Nifty SmallCap index closed down 0.11 per cent. Market participants remained cautious amid continued pressure in IT stocks,

though gains in financial and healthcare counters helped prevent a sharper decline in the benchmark indices. Meanwhile, the Indian rupee fell for a second consecutive session, weighed down by capital outflows and mounting concerns over US President Donald Trump's latest tariff proposals. "Technical Outlook: Spot USDINR faces immediate resistance at 96.50, with key support holding at 95.10," an analyst stated.

# RBI Compounds FEMA Violations In Rs 18.5 Crore Jusda India Supply Chain Case

New Delhi,3/6: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued a compounding order under Section 15 of the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA), in the case of Jusda India Supply Chain Management Private Limited with a one-time payment of Rs 12,52,984. This has resulted in the termination of proceedings against the company for compounded contraventions of provisions of FEMA, 1999, according to a statement issued by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday. The order has been passed by the RBI after issuance of "no objection" by the ED, the statement said. Section 15 provides a mechanism for individuals or companies to voluntarily admit to a violation of FEMA regulations, pay a penalty, and regularise the contravention without undergoing lengthy litigation or legal proceedings. In this case, based on the credible information received, investigation was taken up by the ED under the provisions of FEMA. "After completion of



investigation, the ED filed a complaint under Section 6 of FEMA before the Adjudicating Authority pointing out contraventions under the Foreign Exchange Management Act by Jusda India Supply Chain Management Private Limited involving the issuing shares, valued at Rs 18.5 crore, to entities from a country sharing land border with India without obtaining prior government approval," the statement noted. The company, later on, filed an application before the RBI for compounding of the contraventions under FEMA as

per the provisions of Section 15 of the Act. On reference from RBI, the ED issued no objection for the compounding in line with the true spirit of the Act. "Accordingly, the RBI, on the basis of no objection issued by ED, has compounded the said contraventions vide compounding order dated April 8 with a fine of Rs 12, 52,984. This has resulted into termination of adjudication proceedings under the provisions of FEMA against the company with regard to the contravention as well as further litigation," the statement said.

# OECD Predicts India To Register 6.3 Pc Growth In FY27, 6.4 Pc In FY28 Amid Global Shocks

New Delhi,3/6: As global economic growth slows down amid the West Asia crisis, India is projected to register 6.3 per cent growth in 2026-27 (FY27) and 6.4 per cent in 2027-28 (FY28), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said on Wednesday. In the emerging-market economies, China's growth is projected to ease from 5.0 per cent in 2025 to 4.5 per cent in 2026 and 4.3 per cent in 2027, as energy-related vulnerabilities and real estate sector adjustments weigh on activity despite mitigating factors such as the increasing share of renewables in the energy mix, adequate oil reserves and gasoline price caps, said the report. "The conflict in the Middle East has become the dominant force shaping the global economic outlook. Energy prices and the prices of other key agricultural and industrial inputs produced in the Persian Gulf economies have soared since February as production and exports have been curtailed. This has been pushing up inflation, putting pressure on real incomes and economic growth. GDP

growth projections have been revised down, while inflation has been revised up," the report mentioned. The Reserve Bank of India reduced the monetary policy rate from 6.5 per cent in January 2025 to a broadly neutral level of 5.25 per cent in February 2026 and average lending rates have fallen. Non-food bank credit (bank credit net of food procurement-related lending) expanded by 15.9 per cent year-on-year in March. However, recent developments point to a re-emergence of inflationary pressures. Headline inflation has begun to rise, driven primarily by higher food prices as favourable base effects fade. "In this context, a temporary increase in the policy rate of around 25 basis points is projected by the end of the first quarter of FY2026-27 to help maintain inflation within the 4 per cent target band and anchor expectations. As inflationary pressures recede over the projection horizon, monetary policy is expected to ease in FY2027-28," the OECD report



stated. Fiscal policy is projected to become expansionary in FY2026-27 to cushion the impact of higher energy prices. The FY2026-27 budget envisaged a reduction in the fiscal deficit from 4.4 per cent of GDP in FY2025-26 to 4.3 per cent of GDP. However, measures adopted to mitigate the energy price shock are expected to widen the deficit by around 0.4 per cent of GDP relative to the budgeted path. These measures will provide near-term support to household real incomes and limit the impact on consumption but will also slow the pace of public debt reduction, which is expected to reach 54.7 per cent in FY2027-28. Fiscal policy is expected to return to a moderate consolidation path in FY2027-28 as energy prices stabilise and temporary support measures are phased out.

# India's Blue Economy Emerging As Powerful Engine Of Growth: Piyush Goyal

New Delhi,3/6: India's Blue Economy is emerging as a powerful engine of growth, driven by expanding seafood exports and rising global demand for Indian marine products, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Wednesday. The minister said India's fisherfolk are benefiting from wider market access and growing export opportunities, with seafood exports touching an all-time high during FY 2025-26. Highlighting the sector's rapid growth, Goyal said seafood exports have recorded a nearly 145 per cent jump since FY 2013-14. "Our fisherfolk are benefiting from expanded markets and rising exports, with seafood exports reaching an all-time high in FY 2025-26. With nearly 145 per cent jump in exports since FY 2013-14, India's Blue Economy is emerging as a powerful engine of growth," the minister said. Meanwhile, India's seafood exports touched an all-time high in both volume and value during 2025-26, underlining the sector's resilience amid uncertain global trade conditions and



strengthening the country's position as a major supplier to international markets. India exported 19.72 lakh metric tonnes of seafood during the fiscal year, valued at Rs 73,890 crore (\$8.46 billion), the highest ever achieved by the sector, the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) said on June 1. Announcing the figures, MPEDA Chairman P. Jawahar said the record performance was

achieved despite multiple global challenges, including volatile demand patterns and market uncertainties. Frozen shrimp continued to dominate India's seafood export basket, accounting for more than two-thirds of total export earnings. Shrimp exports generated Rs 49,038 crore (\$5.62 billion), contributing 66.5 per cent of total foreign exchange earnings from seafood exports. Export volumes of frozen shrimp rose to

7.93 lakh metric tonnes, with the United States remaining the largest buyer, followed by China and the European Union. The United States retained its position as India's largest seafood market by value, importing seafood worth \$2.33 billion. However, exports to the US registered a decline in value and volume compared with the previous year, reflecting changing market dynamics and pricing pressures.

# Physical Gold Stock Remains Unchanged At 880.52 Tonnes: RBI

Mumbai,3/6: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday clarified that its physical stock of gold remains unchanged at 880.52 tonnes, dismissing media reports that suggested the central bank had sold part of its gold reserves. In a statement, the RBI said it had come across reports in certain sections of the media regarding the sale of gold by the central bank, and emphasised that such reports were incorrect. "The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has come across reports in certain sections of the media about RBI's sale of gold. The RBI emphasises that these reports are not correct," the central bank stated. "In this context, it is clarified that the physical stock of gold is disclosed by RBI in its Monthly Bulletin. The latest edition is available on the RBI website and the physical stock of gold remains unchanged at 880.52 tonnes as on date," it added. The central bank further added that details regarding its gold holdings are regularly disclosed in its Monthly Bulletin published on the central bank's official website. The RBI also advised



members of the public to rely only on official information released by the central bank from time to time in such matters. "Members of public are, therefore, advised to rely on official information published by RBI from time to time in such matters," the central bank explained.

The clarification came after a Bloomberg report claimed that the RBI may have reduced part of its gold holdings to protect its foreign-currency reserves from the impact of the ongoing conflict in West Asia. According to the report, the RBI likely sold gold reserves worth around \$12 billion during the two weeks ending

May 22, while purchasing \$7.5 billion in foreign-currency assets. The report further stated that the RBI's interventions in the foreign exchange market appeared to have supported the rupee, helping the Indian currency perform better than most Asian peers since May 20, when it touched a record low.

# PIB Fact Check Dismisses Claims Of RBI Selling \$12 Billion Gold Reserves As Fake

New Delhi,3/6: The government on Wednesday dismissed claims that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) sold gold worth around \$12 billion, calling a media report fake. In a post on X, the Press Information Bureau (PIB) Fact Check unit rejected claims that the RBI had offloaded a significant portion of its gold reserves, citing official data released by the central bank. "According to RBI, the share of gold in India's foreign exchange reserves rose from 13.92 per cent at the end of September 2025 to 16.70 per cent on March 31, 2026, and further to 16.85 per cent as of May 22, 2026," PIB Fact Check said. The clarification came after claims surfaced suggesting that the central bank may have sold gold worth nearly \$12 billion. PIB further noted that the RBI regularly discloses its physical gold holdings through its Monthly Bulletin and said the status of the central bank's gold stock remains unchanged. According



to RBI data released on May 22, the share of gold in overall foreign exchange reserves continued to increase, contradicting claims of any large-scale sale. The data showed that India's physical gold reserves stood at around 880 metric tonnes as of April 24, 2026, largely unchanged from previous disclosures. According to RBI data, the value of gold reserves increased significantly over the past year, rising from \$81.82 billion in early May 2025 to around \$120.24 billion by late

April 2026. The share of gold within India's overall foreign exchange reserves has also increased steadily during the period, reflecting both valuation gains and changes in reserve composition. India's total foreign exchange reserves stood at around \$698.49 billion as of April 24, according to the latest RBI data. PIB urged users to rely on official RBI communication channels for authentic information regarding the country's reserves and monetary data.

## 'Maa Behen': Madhuri dixit calls her character Rekha an "antithesis of the mother"

Ahead of the release of Netflix's upcoming crime-comedy 'Maa Behen', producer-director Suresh Triveni and cast members Madhuri Dixit, Tripti Dimri and Dharna Durgaa shared insights into the film's unconventional story, characters and family dynamics. Produced by Abundantia Entertainment in association with Opening Image Films and directed by Suresh Triveni, 'Maa Behen' follows a dysfunctional mother-daughter trio who find themselves trying to hide a dead body while navigating unpredictable chaos, nosy neighbours and their unconventional family relationships. Speaking about the film's title and central theme, Triveni said the story originated from the relationship between a mother and her daughters. "The story is about a mother and her two daughters. So, it started from there. And of course, a title matters a lot," he said in an interview with ANI. "And we have treated it with seriousness. And at the same time, with entertainment. So, you will enjoy it, but you will be forced to think a little. So, if there is a title, it has been kept responsibly. And that's what I want to say. I think a title is very important in a film. So that the public gets that curiosity." Madhuri Dixit described her character as a far cry from the conventional mothers often portrayed on screen. "The mother is very naughty. Like, she is not a typical mother. Like they show in films. They keep the mother on a pedestal. She is not like that," Madhuri said. "She is a very different mother. There is chaos in her life. She is basically a human. She is a human. We keep her on a pedestal a lot. She also has feelings. She also has some desires in life. She also has some emotions of her own," Madhuri said. Calling the character an "antithesis of the mother," the actor added that audiences can expect plenty of entertainment. "She is not the usual mother. She is very naughty. The audience they will be very entertained. They will laugh a lot. We made this film so that we can entertain people," Madhuri said. Dharna Durgaa, who is making her Netflix debut with the film, said the streaming platform's reach makes the release especially exciting. "It's a very good experience. They spread the film so well everywhere. It's a very good feeling to debut with Netflix. It will reach a wider audience on such a good platform," she said. Dharna also highlighted the relatable nature of the story and its characters. "There are a lot of things in it that everyone will relate to. The characters are making mistakes. They are confused and emotional at the same time. Like us," she said, adding, "When there is a stressful situation at home, someone overreacts. Someone takes it lightly. Someone cries. Someone does nothing. It happens in everyone's home." Reflecting on her preparation for the role, Tripti Dimri revealed that Triveni encouraged her to shed inhibitions and embrace the messy dynamics of the family. "Sir gave me a very simple brief. Just let go. No matter how many inhibitions you have. As a human being, you are always in control of your emotions. Sir told me to be shameless," she said.

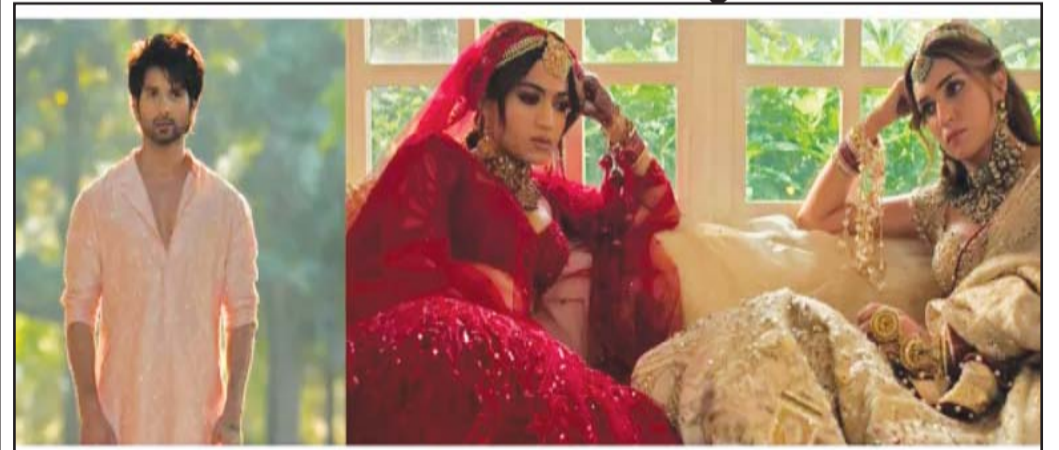


## Ranveer Singh ban withdrawn by trade body to resolve Don 3 payment issue peacefully

Bollywood star Ranveer Singh can resume his film projects after a powerful trade association officially cancelled an industry-wide work ban against him. The executive committee decided to scrap the restrictive order to settle a financial disagreement peacefully. This sudden u-turn brings a major relief to multiple film producers who faced severe delays on their upcoming projects. Industry insiders state that the initial disciplinary action started from a steep 45 crore financial disagreement linked to the highly anticipated action movie Don 3. The trade group had initially ordered all technicians, directors, and production houses to stop working with the actor until the matter concluded. Film associations in India hold significant power, and such directives can completely halt multi-billion rupee movie productions overnight. Peaceful Resolution Planned. The association has now altered its stance, sending an official letter to invite the actor for a formal discussion. Representatives believe that sitting down for a direct talk will help solve the contractual problem without hurting the wider film ecosystem. Sources close to Excel Entertainment confirm that this development allows pre-production work to resume without immediate legal hurdles. The actor will now present his version of the contract details to the committee to sign a final settlement.



## 'Cocktail 2' to feature Shahid, Rashmika, Kriti Sanon's chaotic love triangle; Trailer out



Shahid Kapoor, Rashmika Mandanna and Kriti Sanon are set to bring a chaotic love story to the big screens with their upcoming film 'Cocktail 2'. The much-awaited trailer of the movie is finally out. The almost three-minute trailer of the film features a tale of chaos, confusion and heartbreak between three friends, Kunal (Shahid Kapoor), Diya (Rashmika Mandanna) and Ally (Kriti Sanon). In the trailer, the lead cast were seen travelling, where the trio explore their friendship and different aspects of their relationship, including a possibility of a threesome. In some sequences of the trailer, Kriti Sanon was seen flirting with Shahid Kapoor while the actor appears to be in a relationship with Rashmika Mandanna. The situation takes a downturn when the lady duo starts fighting over Shahid Kapoor. The movie is directed by Homi Adajania and is written by Tarun Jain and Luv Ranjan. The music of the film is composed by Pritam. Maddock Film shared the trailer on their YouTube handle on Tuesday. Prior to the trailer, the makers have already released the chartbuster songs from the film. Recently, they released the romantic track 'Tujhko', unveiling a soulful duet that brings together celebrated singers Arijit Singh and Sunidhi Chauhan in a deeply emotional musical collaboration. Composed by acclaimed music director Pritam, with lyrics by Amitabh Bhattacharya, 'Tujhko' is positioned as a soft, comforting love ballad that leans into classic Bollywood romance while highlighting the fresh on-screen pairing of Shahid Kapoor and Rashmika Mandanna. 'Tujhko' is a gentle, slow-flowing romantic track. Arijit Singh leads the song with his signature emotive style, supported by Sunidhi Chauhan's powerful vocals, creating a layered duet that enhances the track's romantic tone. The visuals of the song feature Shahid Kapoor and Rashmika Mandanna in warm, sunlit frames, with summer-inspired aesthetics and flowing silhouettes. The music video focuses on quiet, affectionate moments between the characters. The other tracks from the movie include 'Mashooqa' and 'Jab Talak'. The movie is slated to release in theatres on June 19.

## SPORTS

### Satwik's Shoulder Injury Ends Indonesia Open Campaign

NEWDELHI, 3/6: India's top men's doubles pair, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, retired midway through their first-round match at the Indonesia Open 2026 after Satwik suffered a right shoulder injury. The duo trailed Malaysia's Kang Khai Xing and Aaron Tai 6-11 when Satwik signalled discomfort and stopped play. The setback came just days after the pair ended a two-year title drought by winning the Singapore Open, defeating Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Sobihul Fikri in a tense three-set final lasting 73 minutes. The Badminton Association of India confirmed their withdrawal, stating that the pair will focus on recovery and rehabilitation ahead of the World Championships in Delhi and the Asian Games. Satwik recently spoke about respecting his body and managing injuries,



acknowledging that his attacking style demands careful recovery. He emphasised the importance of peaking at major tournaments and maintaining long-term

fitness. Meanwhile, Rohan Kapoor and Shivani Ruthvika Gadde stunned World No. 20 Yang Po-Hsuan and Hu Ling Fang of Chinese Taipei in mixed

doubles, winning 21-14, 21-14 to advance to the second round. PV Sindhu also progressed, while Lakshya Sen and Kidambi Srikanth exited early.

### Purti Bags Hat-Trick As India Hammer Chinese Taipei 13-1 To Advance To Semis

Kakamigahara (Japan): The Indian U-18 men's hockey team produced a clinical display against Chinese Taipei, registering a commanding 13-1 victory in its last Pool A match of the U-18 Asia Cup 2026 in Kakamigahara, Japan, on Wednesday. The emphatic win ensured India sealed their place in the semifinals. India ended their pool engagements with wins against Kazakhstan, Korea, and Chinese Taipei, while losing to hosts Japan. It gave them nine points from four matches. The team's attacking prowess was on full display against Chinese Taipei, with Ashish Tani Purti (27', 35', 42') as the standout performer with his hat-trick, while Gaze Khan (40', 44'), Siddharth Ben (30', 52'), and Rahul Yadav (20', 54') each struck twice. Meanwhile, Karan Gautam (7'), Premchand Soy (11'), captain Ketan Kushwaha (13'), and Varinder Singh (50') also contributed to the tally. India made their intentions clear from the outset, dictating the tempo with incisive play that constantly troubled the Chinese Taipei defence. They broke the deadlock in the seventh minute as Karan converted India's first penalty corner of the match. Premchand (11') then doubled the lead with a field goal, while skipper Kushwaha (13') added a third in quick succession to put his side firmly in control by the end of the first quarter. India continued their dominance in the second quarter. Yadav (20') added a fourth before Purti (27') converted a penalty corner to make it 5-0. Siddharth (30') rounded off a prolific second quarter for India with another field goal right at the stroke of half-time.

### Praggnanandhaa Beats Carlsen Twice at Norway Chess

NEWDELHI, 3/6: R Praggnanandhaa shocked the chess world once more by defeating Magnus Carlsen in classical play for the second time at Norway Chess 2026, boosting his chances of becoming the first Indian champion of the prestigious tournament. The 20-year-old Grandmaster lifted his tally to 12 points and climbed to third place, while Carlsen's hopes of securing an eighth Norway Chess crown suffered a major setback. Praggnanandhaa became the only player this year to beat Carlsen twice in classical games, underlining his rise among the elite. Carlsen endured a turbulent campaign, losing four classical encounters, including two against the Indian star. His title defence now hangs in the balance with only two rounds left. At the top, Wesley So extended his lead to 14 points after defeating Vincent Keymer in Armageddon. Alireza Firouzja followed closely with 13 points after outplaying reigning world champion D Gukesh, whose defeat ended his title hopes. Gukesh, stuck on eight points, cannot surpass 14 even with wins in his remaining games.



### Virat Kohli, Anushka Sharma meet spiritual guru Premanand Maharaj in Vrindavan

Star couple Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma on Tuesday were spotted arriving in Vrindavan to seek the blessings of spiritual guru Premanand Maharaj. Several videos and photographs that surfaced online captured Virat Kohli and Anushka Sharma leaving the ashram after meeting Premanand Maharaj. The couple has been visiting him regularly over the last two to three years. This time their visit comes two days after Virat and his IPL team, RCB, registered a clinical victory in the 19th edition of the popular cricket tournament. RCB became only the third side after Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Mumbai Indians (MI) to defend their IPL crown successfully. The Rajat Patidar-led side, after restricting GT to 155/8 in the first innings, chased the target with five wickets and two overs remaining. A day after winning the final, Virat Kohli reflected on Bengaluru's triumphs, saying the team challenged themselves after last year's glory by asking whether they could repeat the feat. RCB clinched IPL 2026 glory, riding on a stunning 75\* off 42 by Virat Kohli, to beat Gujarat Titans (GT) in the IPL 2026 final in Ahmedabad on Sunday. RCB gunned down a tricky 156 runs to join five-time champions Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Mumbai Indians (MI) in the elite list of clubs to have won back-to-back IPL titles. "We asked ourselves a question last year - can we go back to back? Here we are again," Kohli wrote in an Instagram post. Star footballer Harry Kane praised Virat Kohli for his match-winning performance in the final and congratulated Royal Challengers Bengaluru on securing consecutive IPL titles. "What a player and what a knock @virat.kohli. Congrats @royalchallengers.