

# Dumani Mail

Published simultaneously from Bhubaneswar (Odisha), Keonjhar (Odisha) and New Delhi.



## Indian airlines welcome 10,000 crore ATF Price Stabilisation Fund



New Delhi: Indian airlines have welcomed the Government's decision to approve a ten-thousand-crore-rupee Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) Price Stabilisation Fund, saying it will provide much-needed support to the Indian aviation ecosystem. The Union Cabinet had yesterday approved one-time budgetary support of ten thousand crore rupees for Oil Marketing Companies to provide ATF price stabilisation support to Indian Airlines for their domestic and international operations. The support will be provided to companies to facilitate stable ATF pricing for airlines during the ongoing period of exceptional fuel price volatility arising from the West Asia crisis.

In a statement, Air India appreciated the Government's decision to introduce Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) price stabilisation support. It said that this progressive measure provides much-needed support to the Indian aviation ecosystem. Air India said the decision reinforces the Government's commitment to strengthening connectivity for the people of India while enabling airlines to serve passengers more effectively. Indigo has also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for this important initiative. It said that a stable ATF pricing environment is a significant step towards making air travel more accessible, strengthening regional connectivity, and accelerating the growth of India's aviation sector.

## Couple Found Embracing in Final Moments as Delhi Hotel Fire Claims 21 Lives

New Delhi: Amid the devastation caused by the deadly fire at Flourish Stay BnB in central Delhi, one heartbreaking scene has come to symbolize the human tragedy behind the disaster.

Rescuers discovered a man and a woman dead inside a locked washroom on the ground floor of the hotel. The couple appeared to have sought refuge there from the rapidly spreading flames and thick smoke. When the door was forced open, they were found embracing each other in their final moments.

According to Mohammad Shoaib, one of the volunteers who joined the rescue operation, the woman was seated on a toilet seat while the man sat beside her on a chair, holding her tightly. Investigators believe the couple may have locked themselves inside the washroom in an attempt to escape the fire.

"They did not die from burns. They most likely died from smoke inhalation," Shoaib said. "When we entered, they were still holding each other. It was one of the most emotional scenes we witnessed."

Rescuers attempted

cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on both victims, hoping to revive them, but their efforts were unsuccessful. Their bodies had turned black due to prolonged exposure to dense smoke.

The massive fire that broke out on Wednesday morning claimed 21 lives, including 12 foreign nationals. Local residents and volunteers joined police and firefighters in rescuing trapped guests from the burning building.

In another room, rescuers found a couple sitting on the edge of a bed. Both had succumbed to severe burn injuries.

Ashraf Khan, a healthcare worker who participated in the operation, described the scenes inside the hotel as horrific. Entering through the basement after cutting open a shutter, rescuers encountered multiple victims, including a young woman found near the reception and a wheelchair-bound man who had been burned to death.

The basement and ground floor suffered the most

extensive damage, with several bodies recovered from those areas. Volunteers also rescued unconscious guests, administering CPR before they were rushed to hospitals.

Rescuers alleged that the hotel lacked an emergency exit, making evacuation difficult as thick smoke quickly filled the building. Despite having no protective equipment, volunteers entered the structure once the fire was brought under control.

Outside the hotel, local residents carried out their own rescue efforts. Riyazuddin Mansuri and his son Armaan placed more than 20 mattresses on the ground below the building, creating a cushion that allowed trapped guests to jump from windows to safety.

Although many lives were saved through the combined efforts of firefighters, police personnel and local residents, the tragic images left behind—including that of a couple holding each other until the very end—have become a poignant reminder of the human cost of the disaster.

## Malviya Nagar Fire: Investigation reveals locked roof exit; 5 teams dedicated to nab hotel manager

New Delhi [India], June 4 (ANI): Investigators probing the Malviya Nagar hotel fire tragedy have found that the roof exit of the building was closed at the time of the blaze, potentially cutting off a crucial escape route for occupants, sources said.

As the investigation intensifies, Delhi Police has formed a total of 10 teams, including five dedicated to tracing and apprehending absconding hotel manager Jai Mishra, while the remaining teams are handling various aspects of the probe.

According to sources, ahead of hotel owner Lavkesh Sharma's arrest on Wednesday, the police had also initiated a Look Out Circular (LOC) against him and his wife as a precautionary measure to prevent them from leaving the country. Investigators believed Bajaj had the option of fleeing abroad, as both of his children are settled overseas. Sources further said that Bajaj is the sole owner of the building.

During the investigation, it emerged that the owner had initially started operations with a two-floor structure and later expanded the building by adding another two-and-a-half floors. A team from the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) is scheduled to revisit the site on Thursday for further examination. The forensic team was able to inspect only one floor during its previous visit.

Investigators have also recovered cooking heaters and other appliances from multiple rooms. Sources said these were reportedly being used by foreign nationals staying at the hotel for extended periods.

The fire tragedy claimed multiple lives, with casualties reported among people present on the third floor and in the basement of the building. According to sources, a majority of the deaths were caused by suffocation. Police are also searching for a key eyewitness, Kesar Singh, whose testimony is considered crucial in establishing the exact origin and sequence of events leading to the fire.

Meanwhile, out of the 12 foreign nationals who died in the Malviya Nagar fire incident, the Delhi Police has identified 9 of them.

The Delhi Police has sent the list of all these foreign nationals to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to facilitate the repatriation of their bodies back to their respective countries. The identification of the foreign nationals was conducted on the basis of passports recovered from the spot. The police have completed the DNA profiling of all the foreign nationals. The DNA profiling was carried out after obtaining permission from the embassies of the respective countries.

The post-mortem examination of the bodies of all the foreign nationals was also conducted after receiving permission from their embassies.

## Forest team seized illegal sized Sal wood



Keonjhar: Keonjhar Forest Division team on Thursday conducts raid in a house and seized illegal Sal Timber worth more than one lakh and fifty thousand in Patna Range, area.

Acting on reliable information regarding illegal storage of forest produce, a raid was conducted by the staff of Patana Range under Keonjhar Forest Division and mobile team Keonjhar at the residence of Jaimani Mahanta in Village Nuapada.

During the search operation, illegally stored sawn sal timber was detected and seized total

sixty pieces of different sizes from the premises.

The volume of the wood is 0.62022 Cubic meter and worth more than Rs 1.5 lakh.

"The seized timber has been taken into custody and a forest offence case has been registered under the relevant provisions of the Odisha Forest Act and applicable forest laws. Further investigation is underway to ascertain the source of the timber and identify any other persons involved in the illegal extraction, transportation, or storage of forest produce" said Dhanaraj HD, DFO Keonjhar.

## 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. He underlined that this initiative goes beyond organising a pilgrimage, reflecting a broader commitment to strengthening citizens'

faith, dignity, and cultural bonds. He expressed hope that the journey would be safe, auspicious, and successful, and that the wishes devotees carry, for their families and for the prosperity of the nation, would be fulfilled.

The special train will travel from Safdarjung Railway Station to Veraval in Gujarat, from where pilgrims will proceed to the Somnath Temple and other religious sites. All passengers are scheduled to return to Delhi on May 5. A total of 19 AC 3-tier coaches have been deployed, with special attention to passenger comfort. Each coach has two dedicated team leaders to assist pilgrims throughout the journey. A team of doctors is onboard, along with housekeeping staff and Railway Protection Force personnel, ensuring health support, cleanliness, and security.

The flag-off ceremony also featured cultural performances, with folk traditions from Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, and Punjab creating a vibrant and devotional atmosphere.

## Rooms In Basement, No Exit: Inside Another Property Of Delhi Hotel Owner

New Delhi: A day after a fire killed 21 people at a hotel in Delhi's Malviya Nagar, NDTV visited another hotel of the same owner on Thursday. During the visit, NDTV found out that Flourish Inn, owned by Lavkesh Bajaj, had also been allegedly violating some safety norms. The hotel in the Hauz Rani area is about 400 metres from Bajaj's Flourish Stay, where a deadly fire broke out Wednesday morning, killing nine Indians and 12 foreigners. Flourish Inn operated five rooms in the basement, in violation of safety norms. A kitchen was also built adjacent to the rooms in the basement. Just like Flourish Stay, it also had one entry-exit point, and even a gate on the roof was locked. The hotel was allegedly vacated after a blaze ripped through Flourish Stay.

On online websites, the hotel has been touted as a property that "provides an ideal stay for medical visitors, corporate guests, and tourists seeking a hassle-free experience in Delhi".

Safety Lapses At Flourish Stay

In a tragedy that was

perhaps waiting to happen, Flourish Stay, a bed-and-breakfast, was operating without a fire no objection certificate (NOC).

It also violated the bed and breakfast policy. The hotel had permission for only six rooms, granted under the Delhi government's bed and breakfast policy, but was operating more than 20. Rooms had also come up in the basement.

Investigators said the blocked roof access may have also denied occupants a crucial escape route. Lavkesh Bajaj, who has now been arrested, owned another hotel, the Green Residency. During interrogation, he told police that he had handed over the hotel's management to the manager, Jai Mishra, who is currently on the run.

Bajaj said that all related licenses were issued in Mishra's name. Authorities have now announced a citywide enforcement drive targeting hotels, lodges, nursing homes, coaching centres, restaurants and other commercial establishments.

Officials said premises found violating safety norms could face closure, sealing and legal action.

## President Droupadi Murmu addresses tribal beneficiaries of scholarship schemes

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu has said that education is a powerful means of empowerment, as it enables individuals to become self-reliant, aware and capable.

Addressing the tribal beneficiaries of scholarship scheme in New Delhi today, the President said that true development can only be achieved when all sections of society progress

socially, economically, and educationally. She highlighted that the government scholarship schemes have transformed the lives of tribals by enabling access to higher education and new opportunities. President Murmu emphasised that India has no shortage of talent and stressed the need to identify, nurture, and provide the right platform for it to flourish.

The President said that the Central government is making continuous efforts, through various schemes, to empower and uplift the youth belonging to tribal communities. She added that scholarship schemes are not merely means of financial assistance but it serve as vehicles to give wings to the dreams of youth. President Murmu said scholarships open

doors to new possibilities in the lives of youth who possess immense talent but are held back from progressing due to a lack of resources.

The President said that the youth represent the strength, hope, and bright future of the nation. She urged the young people, especially those from tribal communities, not to forget their roots and their people.

## ED conducts searches at 20 locations in trans-national narcotics trafficking case

New Delhi: Enforcement Directorate (ED) is conducting massive search operations at 20 locations across Mumbai, Surat, Ankleshwar and Rajkot against a transnational organised narcotics trafficking syndicate operated by Salim Ismail Dola and his associates.

The investigation is being conducted in connection with the provisions of the Prevention



of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) 2002. According to ED, the investigation so far has revealed the existence of a highly organised trans-national criminal network

engaged in the procurement of precursor chemicals, clandestine manufacture of Mephedrone (MD), interstate transportation and distribution of narcotic drugs, international trafficking of narcotic substances, collection and layering of proceeds of crime through hawala channels, and acquisition of movable and immovable assets in the names of associates and other

persons. The PMLA investigation was initiated in the matter on the basis of multiple FIRs registered across Mumbai against Salim Dola and others for offences relating to illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The Government extradited Salim Dola last Month from Turkey. He is a close aide of Dawood and operates a transnational network of drugs.

## India-U.S. Agricultural Cooperation Gains New Momentum Through Key Dialogue Led by IFFCO Chairman Dileep Sanghani

New Delhi/Paradip, (DMC) :- An important dialogue aimed at strengthening India-U.S. agricultural cooperation was held under the leadership of IFFCO Chairman Dileep Sanghani.

The U.S-India Business Council (USIBC) highlighted in its message that the discussions led by Shri Dileep Sanghani would provide renewed momentum to agricultural cooperation between India and the United States.

The meeting reflects IFFCO's growing international stature and Shri Sanghani's effective representation of Indian farmers' interests on global platforms.

The U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC), based in Washington, D.C., hosted a PHDCCI delegation led by IFFCO Chairman Shri Dileep Sanghani, underscoring the significance and impact of the engagement.



Following the meeting, USIBC highlighted the dialogue on its official social media platforms as an important initiative toward strengthening India-U.S. agricultural cooperation.

In its message, USIBC noted

that the discussions led by Shri Dileep Sanghani paved the way for enhanced collaboration between the two countries in the agricultural sector, helping identify solutions to shared challenges and explore emerging

opportunities. The Council emphasized the importance of a stronger partnership between India and the United States in areas such as innovation-driven agricultural policies, sustainable agricultural development, food security, and farmer prosperity.

It is noteworthy that USIBC, one of America's leading business and industry organizations, publicly accorded prominence to this meeting. This recognition reflects the growing global acceptance of India's cooperative movement, IFFCO's international reputation, and Shri Dileep Sanghani's leadership in effectively presenting the interests of Indian farmers on global platforms.

The meeting included extensive discussions on enhancing agricultural productivity, promoting the

adoption of advanced agricultural technologies, improving soil health, providing technical support to farmers, developing innovation-based agricultural solutions, and strengthening food and nutritional security. Agricultural experts, policymakers, and industry representatives from both countries agreed that expanding India-U.S. cooperation would open new avenues in the agricultural sector and deliver long-term benefits to farmers.

The dialogue led by Shri Dileep Sanghani is being viewed as a significant step toward advancing India-U.S. agricultural partnership, promoting cooperative-led agricultural development at the global level, and strengthening farmers' income, productivity, and agricultural security.

## Chief Minister attends his elder brother's last rites

Keonjhar : The sudden demise of the elder cousin brother of the Chief Minister Mohan Majhi has spread grief all over the area in Keonjhar district. He is identified as Dinabandhu Majhi (54) and working as an employee in a local plant since last many years. He left behind his widow wife and two minor daughters.

Chief Minister Mohan Majhi was deeply saddened to hear the news of his demise and reached Raikala village in the afternoon to attend the last rites. Upon reaching the village, he attended his funeral. This has cast a shadow of mourning in Raikala and the surrounding areas. A large crowd of party and local dignitaries and workers attended his funeral.

According to the sources Dinabandhu, was staying at the government quarter in Lower PMG in Bhubaneswar.

"Suddenly he felt pain in his chest at around 1 am last night. Then he was taken to the hospital for treatment. There the doctor declared him dead. His condition was good during the day, his aide Jagannath Mudi said, expressing deep sorrow. Sources said at around 1 am, he was taken to the Capital Hospital in an ambulance due to chest pain. There the doctor declared him dead. After this, Dinabandhu's mortal remains were brought to his Raikala village his native place under Sadar Block.

Friends and villagers gathered to pay their last respects to him. Later body was cremated in the village crematory ground in the afternoon.

## Balasure Collector Flags Off Awareness Rath for Special Intensive Revision (SIR)

### Focus on Enhancing Public Awareness

Balasure, June 3 (Krushna Kumar Mohanty): With the objective of creating widespread awareness among the public and disseminating essential information regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), an awareness campaign vehicle (Rath) was flagged off from the premises of the Balasure Collectorate on Wednesday at 9:30 a.m.

The programme was inaugurated by Collector Shri Suryabanshi Mayur Vikas in the presence of Additional District Magistrate Shri Tapan Kumar Khuntia, Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad, Shri Sanjay Kumar Rout, Additional Executive Officer Dr. Madhusmita Samantaray, and Deputy Collector (Election) Ms. Sameekshya Behura, along with several senior district administration officials and officers from various departments.

The dignitaries ceremonially flagged off the awareness vehicle, which will travel across different parts of the district to educate citizens about the process, significance, and public role in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR). Members of various Self-Help Groups (SHGs) also participated in the programme and extended their support to the awareness campaign. The district administration emphasized the importance of active public participation to ensure the success of the initiative.

## Climate Change a Looming Catastrophe for the Future; World Environment Protection Week Observed in Nimapada



Puri : World Environment Protection Week was observed at Maa Sarala Mandap in Nimapada under the joint auspices of Puri Suraksha Parishad, Lata Charitable Trust and Self Empowerment Parivar. A discussion on the theme of climate change was held on the occasion.

The meeting was chaired by executive president Lakshminarayan Pattnaik. Among those present were Parishad president Binay Nrusingha Mahapatra, adviser Dayanidhi Tripathy, historian Madan Mohan Mahapatra, trust founder Lata Das, senior journalist Prashanta Kumar Sahu, Odisha Freedom Fighters' Forum president Arttabandhu Senapati, senior citizens' forum member Chitta Ranjan Senapati, social worker Brajabandhu Mishra and Dibakar Nayak.

Speakers expressed concern over the accelerating impact of climate change, warning that it could trigger severe social and environmental crises in the future. While acknowledging the Centre and the State government's planned coastal protection initiatives under the Sagarmala Project as a significant

step towards safeguarding the coastline from sea erosion and tidal ingress, participants criticised the slow pace of implementation.

The discussion also highlighted that afforestation programmes largely remain confined to official records, with limited impact on the ground. Participants suggested the formation of an environmental protection "Mahapanchayat" involving local voluntary organisations to ensure effective implementation of government schemes and strengthen grassroots environmental conservation efforts.

There was a collective call for dedicated government action to address water and air pollution, which the speakers described as an urgent need of the hour.

Among those who participated in the discussion were Lalatendu Mishra, Sujata Satpathy, Nrusingha Charan Mahanti, Jyotirmayi Ray Pritam and Seema Das. The programme was conducted by Niranjana Palta, who also delivered the welcome address. The vote of thanks was proposed by Gopinath Patra.

## 3 arrested in connection with attacks on the residence of Paradip Municipality Chairman

Paradip, (DMC) June 3: - The crude petrol bomb attack on the residence of Paradip Municipality Chairman Basant Biswal has been successfully solved by Paradip Police today, while the attack was allegedly masterminded by dreaded criminal Jyotikanta alias Bapu Parida, who, along with his associates, targeted Biswal over rivalry related to so-called municipal work allocation and political matters.

During the investigation, Paradip Police apprehended one accused, Trilochan alias Tulu Pradhan (23) of Brundaban Colony under Paradip police limits. His interrogation, along with technical and other corroborative evidence, led to the identification of two co-accused, Soumyaranjan alias Happy Palai (24) and Siddhant alias Hanua Biswal (28), both residents of Paradip town.

Multiple police teams led by Additional Superintendent of Police, Paradip, Ajinkya Baburao Mane, were constituted to trace the absconding accused. Acting on technical inputs, both accused were apprehended from the Paradip area, where they had allegedly taken shelter at relatives' houses after briefly moving to Puri following the incident.



Further investigation revealed the alleged involvement of Jyotikanta alias Bapu Parida (38). Evidence collected during the investigation, including statements of the accused and other corroborative materials, indicates that rivalry existed between Basant Biswal and Bapu Parida regarding political issues.

According to the evidence collected so far, Parida allegedly instructed his close associate Trilochan alias Tulu Pradhan to carry out a deadly attack with the intention of creating fear and intimidation in the mind of Biswal. The incident was allegedly a pre-planned act executed under his directions. During interrogation, Trilochan stated that he informed

the co-accused that Parida had directed them to throw bombs at the residence of the Municipality Chairman and assured them that he would manage the consequences thereafter.

The accused allegedly arranged a motorcycle, petrol, empty liquor bottles and helmets, prepared crude petrol bombs, and proceeded to the residence of the Municipality Chairman. The bombs were allegedly hurled at the house before the accused fled from the spot.

After the incident, Trilochan allegedly contacted Parida over the phone and informed him that the assigned task had been completed. Parida allegedly responded that there was no need

to worry and that he would manage the matter. The evidence collected during the investigation points towards the alleged role of Parida as the principal conspirator behind the offence. Since the date of occurrence, he has remained absconding and is evading arrest. Multiple police teams have been constituted and intensive efforts are underway to apprehend him and ascertain the involvement of any other persons connected with the conspiracy. Parida is involved in several criminal cases, including murder, extortion and other serious offences. It is noted that Parida is a close associate of so-called labour and political leader Arindum @ Bapi Sarkhel.

## Puri BRICS Disaster Risk Reduction Meeting Opens; Odisha CM Calls for Stronger Global Cooperation

Puri: Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi on Thursday inaugurated the technical meeting of the BRICS Disaster Risk Reduction Group (DRRG) in Puri, stressing the need for stronger international and inter-state cooperation to address the growing challenges posed by climate change and natural disasters.

Addressing delegates, experts and officials from BRICS member countries, Majhi said the Puri meeting would play a significant role in shaping a global framework for disaster risk reduction. He described the conference theme — "Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Preparedness for Sustainable Development" — as a reflection of the most pressing needs of the present time.

The Chief Minister said disaster risk reduction was no longer merely an administrative concern but had become a cornerstone of sustainable development, economic stability and public safety. With climate change, rapid urbanisation and environmental degradation increasing both the frequency and intensity of disasters worldwide, he said there was an urgent need for stronger preparedness and coordinated action.



Highlighting Odisha's internationally recognised disaster management model, Majhi said the state's approach is guided by a "zero casualty" objective. He noted that evidence-based planning, advanced early warning systems, disaster-resilient infrastructure, institutional capacity building and inclusive governance have helped strengthen Odisha's preparedness over the years.

He said cyclones, heatwaves, lightning strikes, coastal erosion and climate-related urban challenges continue to pose significant risks to the state, underlining the need for greater innovation and resilience-

building measures.

Praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Majhi said disaster risk reduction occupies a central place in India's development agenda. He described the Prime Minister's 10-point programme on disaster risk reduction as a comprehensive and forward-looking roadmap.

The Chief Minister also referred to the recently approved Rameswar-Paradip Greenfield Coastal Highway project, a 160-km corridor estimated to cost around ₹8,301 crore. He said the project would significantly strengthen Odisha's disaster preparedness

and emergency response capabilities by facilitating faster evacuations, uninterrupted supply chains and efficient relief operations during disasters such as cyclones.

Expressing gratitude to the Prime Minister and the Union government, Majhi said the project would serve as a milestone in Odisha's development and the creation of disaster-resilient infrastructure.

He further emphasised the need for climate-sensitive urban planning, sustainable land-use policies and comprehensive heatwave management strategies in the face of rising temperatures, extreme weather

events and rapid urbanisation. He called for wider adoption of advanced scientific technologies, public awareness campaigns and preventive measures.

Majhi said the BRICS platform offers an important opportunity for developing countries to strengthen cooperation in disaster risk reduction, climate-resilient infrastructure and institutional capacity building. He urged member nations to move beyond discussions and focus on concrete partnerships and result-oriented action.

Concluding his address, the Chief Minister expressed confidence that the "Puri session" would make a historic contribution to global disaster risk reduction efforts and help guide the international community towards a safer, more resilient and sustainable future.

Speaking on the occasion, Odisha Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari said the lessons learnt from the devastating 1999 Odisha Cyclone had enabled the state to develop a world-class disaster management model. He said strong early warning systems and active community participation had made Odisha a benchmark in disaster preparedness and response.

## Clashes between two villages over government land, police force deployed, SDPO at the scene



Keonjhar : Many villagers injured after clash broke out between villagers of Tentulinanda village under Soso police station in Keonjhar district and Shankhana village under Nandipada police station over government land.

The villagers of both the villages threw stones at each other? Out of them four injuries were hospitalised after the incident, sources said. Immediately after receiving the information, police Nandioada and Soso reached the spot and brought the situation under control.

Anandpur SDPO Kamal Kumar Panda who went to suggested a peaceful meeting to restore peace between the two villages. SDPO Panda said that the situation is stable after the police intervention. We have informed the Hatadihi Tehsildar for demarcation of the disputed government land. After the incident Police patrolling is going on.

No complaint so far received from any side. If any written report comes in the future, a case will be registered said the police. Nandipada Police Station Officer Dharmendra Shanti said that 2 platoons of police force and other personnel are deployed at the spot to maintain peace and order. According to information, there is government land in Tentulinanda village. A villager of Shankhana village has encroached on some part of that land and built a house to park vehicle. Seeing this, the people of Tentulinanda village decided to bury the vehicle with earth and tried to do so due to this such dispute arose.

## Boipariguda Police Public Relations Camp



Boipariguda : After a long hiatus, the Boipariguda Police have launched a Public Relations Camp program in remote and hilly regions, creating an atmosphere of joy among the villagers. Although Maoist activities have gradually declined in this area—historically known as a Maoist stronghold—cordial relations continue to prevail between the police and the local residents. Under the leadership of Boipariguda Police Station Officer Dambaru dhara Batri, a Public Relations Camp was organized at Petguda village within the Katpada Panchayat, falling under the

jurisdiction of the police station. Bataria stated that these Public Relations Camps serve as a vital medium for fostering better relationships between the police and the public. The guests present at the event assured the gathering that if the public seeks police assistance, full cooperation will be extended to them. Blankets, lungis, gamchas (traditional towels), bedsheets, and umbrellas were distributed to the elderly and students, while notebooks, pens, school bags, and erasers were also handed out. A volleyball tournament was also organized to mark the occasion.

## Model Police nabs chain looter gang.

Khordha -4/6- Complainant Lokanath Ram along with his wife was returning from Godipokhari to khordha town in a scooty two unknown persons riding a white colour motorcycle suddenly approach them and snatched gold chain weighing approximately 20 grams from the complainants neck. The accused persons then fled towards new Bus Stand Khordha. In a press meet at DPO, SP, Khordha, Parmar Smit Parshottamdas (IPS) said the media person, that as per the instructions of DGP, Odisha Y.B.Khurania and IG,CR, Dr.Satyajit Nayak continuous crack down on criminals is going on in khordha district. On 3.6.2026 at about 7 pm while a patrolling party of model police khordha was conducting vehicle checking at Batamangala Chhaka one maruti swift car coming from Bhubaneswar side was intercepted. With the help of Facial Recognition System (FRS) an AI-driven technology that identifies or verifies a persons identity by analyzing facial features from digital images or video it flagged history of crimes. During the search cash amounting to ? 5.5 lakhs was recovered from the car. During interrogation the driver Kali Prasad Roul and another occupant Ashish Das disclosed that they had committed several gold chain snatching incidents in the areas under khordha model PS, Industrial and khordha sadar police stations and the stolen gold ornaments sold to Santosh Kumar Sahu of Gurujanga, Khordha, Niranjana Sahoo and Jayadev Pal of Cuttack. The accused persons revealed that they had sold the stolen gold ornaments to the above receiver. Based on their disclosures three other co-accused persons were apprehended during the investigation. The apprehended persons were Kapil Prasad Roul(29) Ashish Das(18) Gudul Behera (32) Santosh Kumar Sahoo(35) Niranjana Sahoo(43) and Jayadev Pal (44) and seized one maruti swift car, melted gold weighing 135 grams, cash amounting to ? 8,80,000/- from their possession. Revealing the past criminal records of the accused and their involvement in multiple pending cases, he added .SDPO, Khordha, Pankaj Kumar Majhi, IIC, Model PS Sanjaya Nayak, IIC .IEPS, Khordha, Umesh Kumar Sahu and other senior police officials were present.

# From Vision to Victory : How SUP Free Nuapada Became a Model in the Fight Against Single-Use Plastic

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD, June 4 (T.Dewangan) : A year ago, Nuapada embarked on an ambitious journey—to create a cleaner, greener, and plastic-free district. What began as an administrative initiative has today evolved into a people's movement, setting a benchmark for environmental governance and community participation in Odisha.

Launched on June 5, 2025, the Single Use Plastic (SUP) Free Nuapada Campaign has completed one year of impactful implementation, emerging as one of the district's most successful environmental initiatives. Driven by strong leadership, sustained public engagement, and coordinated grassroots action, the campaign has demonstrated that meaningful environmental change is possible when administration and citizens work together with a shared purpose.

The campaign's achievements over the past year reflect both its scale and effectiveness. Across all blocks and NACs, a total of 3,595 sensitization programmes and 7,419

cleanliness drives were conducted, creating widespread awareness about the harmful effects of single-use plastic. As a result of these efforts, 30,449 kilograms of plastic waste were collected and properly managed.

Enforcement formed another critical pillar of the campaign. Dedicated teams seized 4,005.4 kilograms of banned single-use plastic materials and imposed penalties amounting to Rs. 4,36,050 on violators. These actions reinforced the district administration's commitment to ensuring compliance while encouraging behavioural change.

Recognizing that sustainable alternatives are key to long-term success, the administration organized 170 coordination meetings with Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs). These meetings encouraged the production and use of eco-friendly substitutes, creating both livelihood opportunities and environmental benefits. To further strengthen community ownership of the initiative, 131 Swachhata Doots and 14 Swachhata Mitras were identified across

the district and entrusted with the responsibility of promoting and monitoring the SUP Free Nuapada Campaign at the grassroots level. Their contributions have been periodically recognized and felicitated, motivating them to continue serving as champions of environmental stewardship within their communities.

The district administration also strengthened its waste management infrastructure by engaging 309 sanitation workers across rural areas, maintaining a ratio of one sanitation worker for every 500 households. Their regular efforts in waste collection, segregation, and cleanliness management have significantly enhanced the effectiveness of the campaign and ensured sustained sanitation outcomes at the village level.

Collector Madhusudan Dash, who conceptualized and closely monitored the campaign, described it as a dream initiative aimed at transforming Nuapada into a clean and green district.

"This campaign is not merely an enforcement drive; it is a people's movement. The wholehearted

acceptance and participation of the citizens of Nuapada have been the foundation of its success," he remarked.

The campaign remained among the top priorities of the district administration throughout the year. Continuous monitoring, regular reviews, and active involvement of district-level officers, block officials, urban local body functionaries, and frontline workers ensured effective implementation across the district.

To strengthen accountability and field-level supervision, eight district-level Swachh Teams were constituted. Every Saturday, these teams visited different blocks and NACs to review progress, provide guidance, and address implementation challenges. Their consistent field presence helped maintain momentum and ensured that the campaign remained action-oriented.

At the grassroots level, Swachhata Doots and Swachhata Mitras emerged as the true ambassadors of change. Through door-to-door outreach, awareness campaigns, and community mobilization, they inspired households, institutions, and

business establishments to reduce dependence on single-use plastic. Their dedication transformed environmental responsibility from a government agenda into a community-driven movement.

A major innovation introduced under the campaign was the establishment of Bartan Banks in all 131 Gram Panchayats and 41 NAC wards. These Bartan Banks provide reusable utensils and serving materials for social gatherings, community events, and celebrations, offering a practical and sustainable alternative to single-use plastic items. By making eco-friendly options easily accessible, the initiative has significantly reduced the use of disposable plastic products during public and private functions while encouraging responsible consumption practices.

In another landmark achievement, Nuapada became the first district in Odisha to implement the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Act, 2016 comprehensively across the district. This pioneering step has strengthened

institutional mechanisms for waste management, promoted scientific waste processing and disposal practices, and provided a strong legal and administrative framework for sustaining the gains achieved under the SUP Free Nuapada Campaign.

Perhaps the campaign's most significant achievement lies beyond the statistics. It is reflected in the growing environmental consciousness among citizens, the increasing adoption of sustainable alternatives, and the collective commitment to keeping public spaces clean and plastic-free.

The overwhelming public response has made SUP Free Nuapada more than just a campaign—it has become a model of sustainable environmental governance. As the initiative completes its first year, Nuapada stands as a compelling example of how vision, leadership, and community participation can come together to create lasting environmental change.

With continued public support and unwavering administrative commitment, the district now looks ahead to an even cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable future.

## Corruption in CMK scheme Collector ordered an inquiry

Keonjhar : Keonjhar district's Saharpada block, where many beneficiaries of the Chief Minister's Kamdhenu scheme were provided with cows, buffaloes and goats, but funds allegedly misappropriated from some beneficiaries without providing any cattle. This came to light when a beneficiary lodged a complaint at the Collector's grievance cell on Monday. The collector Vishal Singh has ordered Chief District Veterinary Officer (CDVO) for an investigation.

After this, the CDVO, Keonjhar, ordered an investigation and a team will go to the said block on June 5th for the investigation.

However, after the District Magistrate's investigation order, panic has spread among the officials, especially the field staff. Therefore, it is alleged that some field staff are visiting the complainants' residences and pressuring them to withdraw the complaint. Then, if the truth is verified by visiting the beneficiaries' homes and checking where the cows, buffaloes or goats purchased were purchased, where they were purchased, etc. the scam will come to

***It is worth noting that beneficiaries will keep their cattle and buffaloes under the department's supervision for a minimum of one year. If anyone sells the items after receiving the subsidy, action will be taken against them and recover the subsidy money. On the other hand, CDVO Chandra Shekhar Ratha, who was ordered to investigate, denied such allegations. If the beneficiaries sell the cattle and buffaloes after taking the subsidy, then the department cannot do anything. Therefore, the whole truth will be revealed after the investigation, he said.***

light, a local source said.

Therefore, the incident where an employee visited the beneficiary's house, brought cattle home, and asked them to present the cattle during the investigation has become a topic of discussion. After the complaint, an audio clip of one employee saying he did it under the direction of the senior officials and would not do such further a thing again went viral, raising questions about the functioning of the department.

Therefore, instead of buying cattle, Daktar Kumar Behera from the block area complained to the District Magistrate's Office that the money was misappropriated by falsely showing it was brought from another place and then

returned. This led to a large-scale misappropriation of funds. However, a departmental investigation would not be a solution. He is now alleging that the beneficiary was sent to bring cattle from the Ruruan area today for the investigation. Therefore, Mr. Behera has demanded an investigation by the senior rank administrative officers like BDO or Tehsildar. Following this complaint, there has been a stir in the Veterinary Department. However, it is alleged that the beneficiaries who collected money for the subsidy and distributed it at the instigation of corrupt department employees are now afraid and are trying to evade the investigation by bringing cattle and buffaloes from

other places and claiming them as their own. After the beneficiaries inflate the price of cattle and buffaloes, they receive the subsidy money. It is alleged that the subsidy money under the government scheme is being misappropriated by bringing cattle from different parts of Mayurbhanj district, showing they were bought locally, and then returning them after taking photos. Therefore, if this is true, it is a major corruption. It is necessary to investigate this in the entire district, said social activist Gulab Muktar Ahmed.

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## Aditya Aluminium and Fives Support Water Cooler Inauguration in Rengali Schools.

Sambalpur-(DMS) : Under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative of Aditya Aluminium, Lapanga, and with the support of Fives, Swadhin Ekta Sangathan, Rengali, successfully inaugurated water coolers at Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir, Rengali and Adarsha Vidyalaya, Rengali on Tuesday. The initiative aims to provide students with access to clean and cool drinking water, especially during the

summer season. The inauguration ceremony was graced by representatives from Fives, Mr David ,Mr Olivier , and Subhasis Nayak, who attended as chief guests and appreciated the effort towards improving student welfare and promoting a healthy learning environment. Among the distinguished guests present were Manoranjan Behera, CSR from Aditya Aluminium, along with team members Antaryami



Karjee and Nandini Kumari. Also present were Rajib Kumar Mishra, President of Swadhin Ekta Sangathan,

Karunakar Patra, Principal of Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir, and Ramanikanta Sahu, Principal of Adarsha

Vidyalaya, along with teachers, Saroj Kumar Bishoi, Amit Kumar Sahu, Prafulla Kumar gahir staff members, and other dignitaries.

Speaking on the occasion, the guests highlighted the importance of providing basic amenities in educational institutions and commended the collaborative efforts of Aditya Aluminium, Fives, and Swadhin Ekta Sangathan in supporting

community development through meaningful CSR initiatives.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks to all guests, partners, and stakeholders who contributed to the successful implementation of the project. The initiative was widely appreciated by students, teachers, and local residents, reflecting a shared commitment to education, health, and community welfare.

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER  
BHUBANESWAR (R&B) DIVISION NO-II  
BHUBANESWAR

eebz2\_bbsr@yahoo.com

INVITATIONS FOR BIDS THROUGH e-Procurement

Bid Identification No.- C.C. (R&B) - 02  
e-Procurement Notice No. 02 of 2026-27

The Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No-II, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for Two Number Electrical works to be received in online bidding. Single cover system as detailed in: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from 08.06.2026 to 5.00 P.M of 17.06.2026. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened at 11.00 A.M. of 18.06.2026 in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Bhubaneswar (R&B) Division No-II, Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](https://tendersodisha.gov.in). Addendum / Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website.

32001/324/2627

Sd/-  
Superintending Engineer,  
BBSR (R&B) Division No. II, BBSR

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES  
Office of the Addl. Chief Engineer, Mechanical Circle, Bhubaneswar

Email Address: [semehcircle04@gmail.com](mailto:semehcircle04@gmail.com)  
e-Procurement Notice- Bid Identification No.- ACEM/MDC-06/2026-27

- Name of the Work : Mechanical Gate Works
- No. of Works : 01 (One)
- Category of executors : SSI Units registered under DIC/ NSIC/ MSME for Irrigation Shutters / Hydro mechanical gates.
- Bid Identification No. : ACEM/MDC-06/2026-27
- Estimated Cost : Rs. 10,38,629/-
- Period of Completion : 01 (One) calendar month.
- Date & time of availability of bid : From dt.06.06.2026(10.00 AM) to dt.19.06.2026(5.30 PM) documents in the Portal
- Last date/ time for receipt of bid : dt.19.06.2026 (up to 5.30 PM) In the Portal
- Date and Place of opening of Bid : dt.20.06.2026(11.00 AM onwards in the Olo the undersigned)
- Name of the Officer inviting bid : Addl. Chief Engineer, Mechanical Circle, Bhubaneswar

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any further issue of Addendum/ Corrigendum/ Cancellation Notice shall be uploaded in the aforesaid website only.

Addl. Chief Engineer,  
Mechanical Circle Bhubaneswar

32001/324/2627

## Regulating AI

It may be a watered-down version of an earlier draft, but US President Donald Trump's executive order marks his administration's biggest step toward regulating artificial intelligence. It's a reversal of the anything-goes approach that was designed to help American tech companies beat China. Under the new order, tech companies would voluntarily give the government a window of up to 30 days to review their new AI models before releasing them to the public. A clearing house would also review security vulnerabilities discovered by the AI models. On the face of it, the light-touch scrutiny falls short of what was on the table — bringing leading models under government control, and a mandatory vetting process as tech companies could not be trusted to police themselves. Amid strong



counter-arguments of how this could dull America's technological edge, Trump is taking a more cautious line on AI. It is imperfect, but still a step in the right direction.

The urgent need for a formal oversight process to balance AI safety and innovation has become a global talking point ever since Anthropic's announcement of its new AI model. Mythos, the company said in April, is capable of identifying and exploiting cybersecurity vulnerabilities and this could lead to a 'reckoning'. As governments and businesses clamour to secure software systems and inject guardrails, the mounting fears over how AI would affect jobs and its all-pervasive misuse are slowly changing public perception. The powerful technology is increasingly being viewed as a force of harm rather than good, articulated resolutely by no less than the Pope himself.

For India, a big lesson from the US strategy is to similarly hire more cybersecurity and AI professionals. Ensuring stronger digital systems in institutions running key infrastructure is of paramount importance.

## CBSE AFFAIRS

THE Union government has set the ball rolling to clean the mess in the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). It has replaced the board chairman and secretary and ordered an inquiry into the procurement of services for the On-Screen Marking (OSM) system. This is a rare admission that something did go wrong on a large scale. It's worrisome that the digital evaluation system malfunctioned. What's worse, repeated warnings were ignored — and students ended up paying the price. Initially, the CBSE projected the OSM controversy as a matter of technical glitches, cyberattacks and isolated complaints. However, it has now come to light that the board's own dry run in January reportedly highlighted serious flaws: marks being altered erroneously, evaluation schemes not matching the software interface, frequent system freezes, unsaved progress and even the possibility of assigning marks to blank answers. Participants allegedly warned that the system required at least a year of further testing before nationwide implementation. Those red flags appear to have been brushed aside.

The adverse consequences were borne not by administrators or vendors, but by students who had appeared in the high-stakes Class-12 exams. Allegations of unchecked answers, blurred scans, mismatched answer sheets and inconsistent evaluation have dented public trust in India's examination system. When students cannot be certain that the answer sheets being evaluated are their own, the credibility of the entire process comes under a cloud.

The remarkable role played by Sarthak Sidhant, a 17-year-old student who presented his findings before a parliamentary committee, must be commended. He pointed out anomalies in the CBSE's tendering process for online marking. This is a wake-up call for the beleaguered board. The probe must go beyond procurement procedures to fix responsibility for the premature use of a flawed system.

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# Heat Waves, Monsoon, and the Indian Economy

Suresh Chandra Sarangi

The current spell of heat waves across the globe signifies one thing: climate change is real, and we, Homo sapiens, are the worst casualties, along with flora and fauna. This year, the climate scientists' attention is drawn to the subject of El Niño, the villain behind the continuing dry spell and unbelievable heat waves that grip the world, leaving gasping individuals. The Paris Agreement of 2015 set a standard, aiming to reduce global warming to well below 2 degrees Celsius and, preferably, keep the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above the preindustrial age by the year 2100. But again it was cited that the year 2030 has to be a point of "no return" for climate change, because it represents the critical deadline to halve global Carbon dioxide emissions, to keep the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement's 1.5-degree Celsius within reach. This was done to stop the irreversible changes that the world may face.

The climate models indicate that the adverse effect shall trigger near-total elimination of coral reefs, massive coastal flooding affecting tens of millions, prolonged extreme drought, and a drastic increase in deadly heatwaves, making life not liveable and unleashing miseries so far unheard in human history. Even some weather specialists say we are near and almost approaching that deadline. Due to abnormal temperature rise, there is a massive change in the Sea Surface that causes changes in the climate, trade winds, wind and weather patterns, and rain. The Eastern Pacific region is warming up, generating El Niño, triggering a change in the weather pattern completely. India seems to be sizzling in the heat. The deadly heat wave has increased the temperature across India to 45 degrees (113 degrees Fahrenheit), inching towards 50 and at places, has touched above 46.9. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and London are experiencing soaring mercury, and temperatures are well above the normal seasonal averages. That speaks about the vulnerability of the countries and their people. Although in the pre\_monsoon period temperature rises in the subcontinent, the recent disruption of the weather pattern is worrisome. The scientists say that this year, the intensity, duration, and

*El Nino now confirmed. There is a 100km wide El Nino build up. A massive wall of warm water is seen in the Pacific Ocean. The story of an intense El Niño event this year is growing more credible. What the satellite marked this time is known as a Kevin wave, which is a massive underwater swell of warm water that is travelling eastwards along the equator. This confirms that hot days and warm nights will be a recurrent phenomenon. Water security has to remain the prime agenda, in the age of radical climate change, says Sunita Narayan of CSE. First to increase the ability of Earth to hold water, to recharge the water bodies, minimise water use, to recycle and reuse every drop. Catch where it falls" is the new slogan.*

geographical spread are alarming. This is unusual.

It is said by the scientists that High-pressure systems dominate, trapping hot air near the surface, preventing it from rising and cooling. This sinking air compresses, warms, and blocks clouds, allowing solar heating. As a result of the same, the Air conditioners are working overtime with a significant rise in energy expenditure. The same appears to be more gruesome, as the world, so also India, is confronting the worst energy crisis of the decade. Weak pre\_monsoon rains and lingering El Niño further suppressed cooling. Humans and animals feel excruciating pain. Nearly 380 millions work force of India are exposed to the heat. Ultraviolet radiation. The psychological effect is unbearable and unspeakable. The health hazards on heart kidney are gruelling. Schools have been closed much earlier, and education is affected as well. No one can fathom the correct amount of rainfall. Initially, it was believed that the rainfall would be 92% of the long-term average rainfall, now revised to 90%. That would be dangerous for Indian Agriculture with erratic rain patterns. As the mercury rises, survival becomes more important than safety. The blazing Sun is merciless. People are afraid that the heat, combined with humidity, makes the body give up. Heat waves are approaching the phase of "human tolerability".

Monsoon brings a rainy season that sustains life. This renews the agricultural cycle. Monsoon provides the much-needed relief to the people in India. Normally, it appears in the 1st week of June, but of late, there are aberrations, and a failure of monsoon means widespread drought and suffering for millions. For centuries, the monsoon has had a profound effect on agriculture, trade, and commerce.

During Summer, land temperature rises more rapidly than the Sea. The cooler, moist air of the Ocean moves inland to replace the rising warm air. Evaporated water vapour from Sea air then condenses and falls all over the world. Eminent Sanskrit poet Kalidas speaks about the monsoon, described by him in "MEGHADUTAM", where the rain clouds carry the love letter, an elegant and touching poem. The South West Monsoon blowing over Srilanka, lands over Kerala and thereafter, proceeds to the northern peninsula of India. The rain pattern is uneven, which divides India into dry, wheat-eating West and the rice-eating East. Monsoon rain is influenced by rising temperatures in the equatorial Pacific Ocean in an El Niño year, altering atmospheric pressure, reducing moisture content in the air currents as they move to India. When the monsoon fails for two years, it is drought, famine, death, bringing in both hope and frustration, triumphs or tribulations.

It goes without saying that Monsoon brings life, activity, and energy to the people of the subcontinent, and most importantly, it rejuvenates rural India and, with good cultivation, brings prosperity and economic growth. In the nineteenth century, India remained extremely vulnerable to the vagaries of nature and the monsoon. Crop failure was common due to erratic rains, causing famine and death. In Independent India, the first Prime Minister, Nehru's strategic initiatives of going for multipurpose river valley dams salvaged the situation with assured irrigation. Thus, in the long run, the story of dependence on foodgrains that were imported has nosedived, assuring food security and surpluses for export. That is the contribution of Monsoon. As global warming has worsened, heat

waves are on the rise, monsoon patterns have become more erratic and uncertain. Less rain, less water in rivers, less water for human consumption, and still less for Agriculture and industry. Higher exploitation of groundwater means the aquifers are shrinking rapidly, with irrigation becoming a casualty. The seasonal nature of Monsoon winds decides the lives, culture, and economy of the subcontinent. The rhythm of life goes on with a good Monsoon that results in good Agriculture. With good Agriculture and allied activities, life becomes bountiful and colourful; there are seamless economic activities, stoking rural prosperity, cooling inflation. Flood and famine are two sides of the monsoon. Of late, extraordinary achievements have been made in storage, distribution, and supply of water for Agriculture. In the present context, water, the elixir of life, is making people hopeless. With El Niño confirmed, and that to a super El Niño, expectedly rising after 150 years, the world is on its toes. Both the IMF and India have pruned down the GDP figure for FY 26-27.

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A massive step to be initiated for rainwater harvesting. The story should not be like Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot"; rather, it has to be action. It is reported that almost 150 years ago, in 1877, there was a massive El Niño, resulting in drought and wiping out 4 percent of humanity. Time has changed. We are in the AI age, and mankind shall definitely find a solution for effective disaster management, and India's preparedness has to be total.

## Is the public representative above the law?

-Dr. Satyawan Saurabh

Democracy is not merely a means of winning elections and gaining power; it is also a continuous process of improving conduct, dignity, and respect for institutions. The true strength of a democratic system lies in its constitution, laws, and institutions. Democracy is strengthened when public representatives and administrative officials perform their duties with respect. However, when conflict between these two becomes public, it becomes more than just a personal dispute but raises serious questions about democratic values, administrative autonomy, and political culture. The recent altercation between Indian National Lok Dal MLA Arjun Chautala and Superintendent of Police Gaurav Rajpurohit in Rohtak, Haryana, has sparked such a debate. The viral video on social media and the subsequent reactions have not only confined this incident to a political controversy, but have also linked it to questions of democratic decorum and institutional respect.

Indian democracy empowers public representatives to raise the voice of the people. Protests, sit-ins, memorandums, and movements are integral to the democratic system. Opposing the policies of any government is not only the opposition's right but also its responsibility. Political parties raising voices on issues related to inflation, unemployment, education, health, and public interest is part of the democratic process. However, democracy also requires that dissent be expressed with decency and within constitutional limits. When public representatives themselves begin to overstep the boundaries they expect others

to uphold, democratic culture is undermined. In the Rohtak incident, based on available video and public reports, it is clear that a heated exchange occurred between the MLA and the Superintendent of Police during the protest. The language and tone of the conversation in the video generated widespread public discussion. The Haryana IPS Association's public outreach and statement in support of the police officer following the controversy adds further significance to the matter. Generally, administrative organizations rarely comment publicly on political controversies. When a professional organization openly supports its officer, it indicates that the matter is not being viewed as limited to a mere personal disagreement.

It is true that the final assessment of any incident should be made only after an impartial investigation of the facts. In a democratic system, it is not appropriate to blame anyone solely on the basis of a viral video or social media. Any party has the right to present its side. The MLA also stated in his defense that he did not intend to insult any official and that the dispute arose due to circumstances. From the perspective of democratic justice, this side should also be heard. But equally important is the question: can any circumstance grant a public representative the moral right to publicly use abusive language against an official? Disagreement is natural in democratic politics, but there is a clear line between disagreement and indecency.

India's administrative system is governed by the Constitution. Police officers and other administrative officials are not elected, but they are a vital part of the state's institutional structure. Their job is to ensure the impartial implementation of the law. On the other hand, public

representatives are elected by the people and are responsible for conveying issues of public interest to the government and administration. Cooperation and dialogue between these two roles are the cornerstone of democratic governance. If public representatives begin to view administrative officials as mere subordinates, or if administrative officials begin to view public representatives as unimportant, the balance in governance will be lost. Therefore, respectful behavior between both parties is essential.

It must also be understood that public representatives in a democracy enjoy privileges, but they are not above the law. The Constitution does not grant any elected representative the right to behave disrespectfully toward any official holding a public office. The position of a public representative is honorable, but this honor is accompanied by responsibility. The public expects not only political struggle from their representatives, but also restraint, decency, and exemplary behavior. When a public representative loses control of their language and behavior on a public platform, the impact is not limited to that incident alone. It also sends a message to society that decorum can be circumvented based on power and influence.

Unfortunately, such incidents are not new to Indian politics. From time to time, reports of conflicts between public representatives and officials have surfaced in various states. Sometimes, allegations of intimidation of an official surface, sometimes cases of mistreatment of an employee arise, and sometimes controversies arise over political interference in administrative decisions. The biggest harm of these incidents is that public trust in institutions begins to weaken. When people see those in power publicly insulting

officials, respect for the law is also affected.

An important aspect of this phenomenon is administrative autonomy. There has long been a debate in India that the police and administration should be free from political pressure. Various commissions and courts have also emphasized the need for police reforms. If officers feel they may face political pressure or public humiliation at any time, their impartial performance may be affected. On the other hand, if officers become uncooperative or insensitive toward public representatives, democratic accountability may be weakened. Therefore, both balance and dialogue are essential.

Social media turned this entire controversy into a national topic of discussion. Today, videos of any incident reach millions of people within minutes. This is a positive aspect of transparency, as it increases accountability for both the government and the administration. However, there is a downside. Incomplete information, edited videos, and emotional reactions often overshadow the actual facts. On social media, people often pass judgment first and then seek facts later. Therefore, it is essential to adopt a restrained approach in such matters.

The role of the media is also crucial in this context. The purpose of journalism is not to promote any side but to present the facts. If the media focuses solely on sensationalism and abandons objectivity, it can lead to confusion in society. In a democracy, the media is called the fourth pillar because it is expected to ensure accountability for all — power, politics, and administration. In reporting this incident, the media should give equal importance to facts, context, and the perspectives of all parties.

(Dr. Satyawan Saurabh, PhD (Political Science), is a poet and social thinker.)

## West Bengal: Day After Firhad Hakim's Exit, Bidhannagar Mayor Resigns

Kolkata, 4/6: Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Mayor Krishna Chakraborty resigned from her post on Thursday, citing personal reasons. The development comes a day after Trinamool Congress MLA Firhad Hakim resigned as Kolkata Mayor. Trinamool Congress has now lost control of both civic bodies in the city. Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation is located in the Salt Lake area of Kolkata. Krishna Chakraborty submitted her resignation letter to the Commissioner of Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation on Thursday afternoon. It is learnt that Krishna has also sent a copy of her resignation letter to the state's Municipal and Urban Development Minister Agnimitra Paul and the Secretary of the department. Krishna had about eight months left in her term as Bidhannagar Mayor. She served as the Mayor of Bidhannagar for two terms, from 2019 to 2022 and then from 2022 until June 4, 2026. Before 2019, Sabyasachi Dutta was the Mayor of Bidhannagar. Thereafter, Trinamool removed Sabyasachi and brought Krishna in as Mayor. Sabyasachi is currently the Chairperson of Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation. While leaving her office on Thursday, Krishna said, "I am resigning for purely personal reasons." Later, however, she said, "I could not work the way I wanted to. Board meetings were not being held, councillors were not coming. Officers were also busy. I cannot cheat people." However, Krishna said that she would continue to work as a councillor, as she has been doing for the past 16 years. She also thanked the people of Bidhannagar for their love and support. While getting into her car, she became a little emotional and said, "Mamata Banerjee is like a mother." However, Bidhannagar BJP MLA and state minister Sharadwat Mukherjee took a dig at Krishna Chakraborty over her resignation. He said, "She was sitting on a cushion of money. I came to know about Madam's 18-19 properties in Bidhannagar. Before revealing them, she went into hiding in shame."

## PM Modi, Venezuela's Acting President Rodriguez Discussed Forging Energy Partnership: MEA



New Delhi, 4/6: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Venezuela's Acting President, Delcy Rodriguez, on Thursday held discussions on forging energy partnership, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) stated. Addressing a special briefing on Rodriguez's visit, MEA's Secretary (East), Rudendra Tandon, stated that the discussions between two leaders were "very substantive and businesslike." He said that Venezuela sees India as a stable demander for energy for many years. "President Delcy Rodriguez of Venezuela is paying a working visit to India from June 3 to 6. She is accompanied by a very large ministerial delegation that includes ministers of foreign affairs, communication and information, economy and finance, science and technology, and the Minister of transportation. Today morning, she met Prime Minister Modi for official talks which went over a working lunch as well. Earlier,

External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr S Jaishankar also called on her and later in the day, the Minister of Petroleum will be calling on her," said Tandon. "Venezuela possesses one of the largest oil reserves in the world. The Indian economy is a large and growing consumer of oil and will have a stable demand growth for many years to come. Thus in the energy sector we see a perfect complementarity. In fact, in our spot purchases, Venezuela has already emerged as the third largest supplier this month, so quite

naturally, today's discussions focussed on forging an energy partnership. While not going into details of the conversation, what did emerge from the interaction of the two leaders was that Venezuelan energy sector is undergoing a fundamental transformation. They see India as a stable demander for many years to come, and therefore there exists a perfect complementarity for India and Venezuela to work together in the energy sector, both upstream as well as downstream," he

added. Earlier in the day, PM Modi and Rodriguez held a meeting at the Hyderabad House in New Delhi. EAM Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri and other officials were also present during the meeting. Tandon stated that, during the meeting, the Venezuelan side acknowledged that India has stood with them during the good and the bad times. He mentioned that Venezuela sees India as a preferred partner in the future. "The discussions also went into broadening the economic partnership to other areas. Venezuela is a very large country which is resource rich, has talented, hardworking people that is now showing the first signs of moving on to a path of sustained growth. So, there are huge opportunities, not just in the energy sector, but also in areas like mining, in areas like animal husbandry, transportation, agricultural equipment, automotive sector, and

pharmaceuticals. These too were discussed, and the whole idea was to try and work out ways in which Indian commercial entities can enter the Venezuelan market successfully and a new partnership in these sectors can be forged." "Overall, I would say that the conversation was very businesslike, very substantive. There was genuine warmth between the two delegations and an acknowledgement by the Venezuelan side that India has stood with Venezuela in bad times as well as in good times. It is a long relationship and we are a preferred partner for them going into the future," he added. Rodriguez arrived in New Delhi on Wednesday for a five-day visit to India aimed at further deepening ties between the two nations. This is Rodriguez's sixth visit to India as she has earlier visited India in her capacity as Venezuela's Foreign Minister in 2015 and as Vice President in 2019, 2023, 2024, and 2025.

## Centre Eyes Revival Of Delimitation Bill, Aims For Rollout Before 2029 Polls

New Delhi, 4/6: The Centre is actively exploring the revival of the Delimitation Bill and is considering completing the long-pending constituency redrawing exercise ahead of the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, according to sources familiar with the matter. Sources said the government has initiated consultations with several regional political parties and is continuing efforts to build a broad political consensus on the issue. Among the parties engaged in discussions are the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the Trinamool Congress (TMC), and other regional stakeholders. The consultations are focused on addressing concerns over the potential impact of delimitation on parliamentary representation and ensuring wider political acceptance before any formal legislative initiative is undertaken. Government sources indicated that while the Centre is keen to move forward with the exercise, it is mindful of the



political sensitivities involved and is seeking to avoid a confrontational approach. Efforts are therefore being directed towards evolving a framework that can secure support across party lines. According to sources, once discussions with key stakeholders are completed and a broad consensus emerges, the

government is likely to reintroduce the Delimitation Bill in Parliament. The timing of such a move will depend on the progress of the ongoing consultations and the extent of agreement reached among political parties. Delimitation involves the redrawing of parliamentary and

assembly constituency boundaries based on demographic changes reflected in population data. The issue has gained renewed prominence in recent years, with several states expressing concerns over how a fresh delimitation exercise could alter their representation in the Lok Sabha. The Centre is also holding consultations on the proposal for simultaneous elections, known as "One Nation, One Election." Sources said both issues are being discussed with political parties as part of a broader effort to build consensus on key electoral reforms. If the government succeeds in securing sufficient political support, the revival of the Delimitation Bill could pave the way for a major restructuring of electoral representation before the next general election. However, officials stressed that consultations are still underway and no final decision has been taken regarding the timing of the Bill's introduction in Parliament.

## MP: Morena Dy Collector arrested after woman alleges sexual exploitation

Morena (Madhya Pradesh), 4/6: A Deputy Collector posted in Madhya Pradesh's Morena district has been arrested after a woman accused him of sexually exploiting her on the pretext of marriage, a top police officer said on Thursday. Morena Superintendent of Police (SP) Dharmaraj Meena said that the victim submitted a complaint at Civil Lines Police Station in the district on Wednesday, alleging that the accused established physical relations with her after promising to marry her. Following the verification of the allegations, a case was registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) against the accused. "Yesterday, a woman submitted a written complaint at the Civil Lines Police Station in Morena. In her application, she alleged that a government employee had raped her on the pretext of marriage. Following which, the officer in charge of the women's police station spoke with the complainant and verified the

facts of the case. After finding the complaint to be prima facie genuine, a case was registered at Civil Lines Police Station under Sections 69, 351(1), 351(3), and 225 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS)," SP Meena told ANI. Following the registration of the complaint, the woman was immediately sent for a medical examination. Later, the accused was also rounded up, and his medical examination was conducted as well. Thereafter, he was being produced before the district court on Thursday, he added. Additionally, Civil Line police station in charge, Udaybhan Yadav said, "A complainant alleged that about a year ago, the accused had promised to marry her and, on the pretext of marriage, established a physical relationship with her. He continued to assure her of marriage, but has now backed out and is refusing to marry her. Based on the woman's complaint, we have registered an FIR under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). The accused

was arrested and is being produced before the court." Meanwhile, Deputy Collector Arvind Mahour denied the allegations, claiming that the case was an attempt to blackmail him because of his position. He further claimed that the woman had first contacted him through social media and proposed friendship, and that there was never any commitment to marriage. "This entire case has been fabricated with the intention of blackmailing me because of the position I hold. The woman herself contacted me through social media and proposed friendship. At no point was there any commitment to marriage or any such obligation. After we became friends, she started chatting with me. She also visited my residence two or three times and is now using those chats as evidence. Her entire plan was to trap me and use the alleged evidence to pressure me into marriage," Mahour said when being taken for medical examination.

## Delhi Govt Announces Rs 10 Lakh Ex-Gratia For Families Of Malviya Nagar Fire Victims

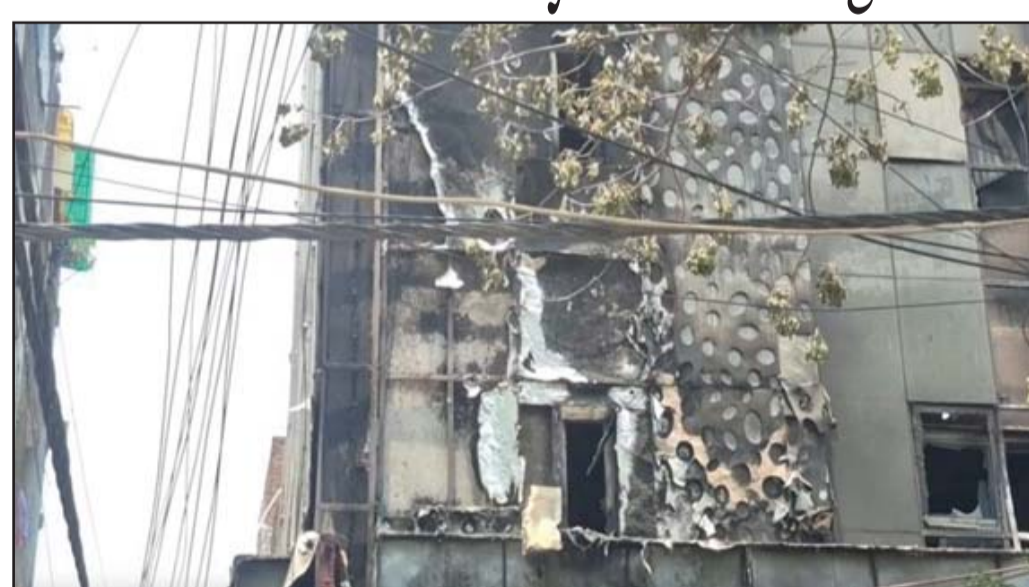
New Delhi, 4/6: The Delhi government on Thursday announced financial assistance of Rs 10 lakh to the families of the people killed in the tragic Malviya Nagar fire incident and said that arrangements are being made to transport the mortal remains of the deceased back to their homes. This came as Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta visited Max Hospital in Saket on Thursday and met the victims injured in the Malviya Nagar fire tragedy, in which 21 people lost their lives. A massive blaze engulfed the hotel, allegedly operating without a valid Fire No Objection Certificate (NoC) in a congested lane of Malviya Nagar area. Twenty-one people died in the tragic fire at the Hotel Flourish Stays in Malviya Nagar. Of these 21, nine were Indians while 12 were foreigners from countries such as Bangladesh, Liberia, Nigeria, and Mozambique. CM Gupta interacted with the injured and their family members and reviewed the ongoing treatment with the attending doctors. She directed officials to extend all necessary assistance, according to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO). The CMO statement further stated that the medical expenses of the injured will be

facilitated in coordination with the hospital authorities to ensure that every patient receives the best possible care. "An ex gratia of Rs 10 lakh will be provided to the next of kin of each deceased, and those who have been seriously injured will receive Rs 5 lakh in assistance. Arrangements are being facilitated to transport the mortal remains of the deceased to their native homes," the CMO said. "The Delhi Government stands firmly with every affected family. We pray for the speedy recovery of the injured and for strength to the bereaved families during this difficult time," the statement added. The blaze affected the basement, ground floor, and the other 5 floors of the building, with heat and smoke damage, while an investigation into the incident is ongoing, according to the Delhi Fire Services. The fire erupted during the early morning hours and quickly spread through several levels of the multi-storey building. Rescue teams managed to evacuate 47 people from the building, while 26 injured individuals continue to receive treatment at various hospitals across the city. Meanwhile, the Delhi Police have arrested

Lavkesh Bajaj, the owner of the hotel building where the fatal fire broke out on Wednesday. Bajaj was taken into custody hours after authorities launched a search operation to trace him and his wife, against whom a Look Out Circular (LOC) had earlier been issued. The arrest comes as investigators probe alleged safety violations, regulatory lapses, and possible negligence that may have contributed to the scale of the tragedy. Authorities are examining whether mandatory fire safety measures were in place and whether the property was operating in accordance with legal requirements. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), currently governed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has also assured strict action against those found responsible. According to officials, action against those found guilty is expected within a week of the report's submission. Police have registered a case under provisions related to culpable homicide and other relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Investigators are focusing on allegations that serious negligence and violations of safety regulations may have played a role in the high casualty count.

## FSL Team To Revisit Malviya Nagar Fire Site; Delhi Police Writes To MCD For Structural Survey Of Building

New Delhi, 4/6: A team of experts from the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) is scheduled to revisit the hotel in Malviya Nagar on Thursday to conduct a detailed forensic examination in connection with the devastating fire incident that claimed 21 lives, according to Delhi Police sources. Sources said that the FSL team was able to inspect only one floor of the hotel on Wednesday and will continue its examination of the remaining sections of the building. The victims of the fire were reportedly located on the third floor and in the basement of the hotel. During the inspection, officials from the Fire Department discovered electric stoves and other electrical appliances in several rooms. Preliminary findings suggest that some of the guests who had been residing at the hotel for extended periods were using these appliances to prepare their meals. According to sources, the majority of the deaths occurred due to asphyxiation caused by smoke inhalation rather than burn injuries. Investigators



have also learnt that building owner Lavkesh Bajaj did not have any partners associated with the hotel business. Delhi Police has intensified its investigation into the tragedy, with nearly 10 teams currently engaged in the probe and searching for the absconding hotel manager, Jai Mishra. As part of the ongoing investigation, Delhi Police has written to multiple agencies, including the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), BSES, and the South District

Magistrate. Police have requested the MCD to conduct a structural survey of the building to assess its condition and identify any violations. BSES has been asked to provide details related to the hotel's electricity connection and to carry out an inspection of the existing electrical infrastructure. A separate letter has been sent to the South District Magistrate seeking a building inspection and scrutiny of documents related to the hotel's

registration and operational permissions. Meanwhile, post-mortem examinations of the deceased are being conducted at the AIIMS mortuary in Delhi. A total of 13 bodies have been brought to the facility. Of these, six post-mortems were conducted on Thursday, while the remaining examinations are scheduled to be completed on Friday. The bodies were shifted to AIIMS following the tragic fire that engulfed the hotel in Malviya Nagar.

## NDC Delegation From India Discusses Defence Ties With Canadian Counterparts

Ottawa, 4/6: A delegation from National Defence College (NDC) of India met counterparts in the Department of National Defence and Global Affairs Canada to identify ways to enhance defence ties between the two nations. A 16-member delegation from National Defence College from India is currently on a five-day visit to Canada. In a statement on X, the Indian High Commission in Canada stated, "The delegation, which includes officers from Indian Armed Forces, Civil Services and five officers from Friendly Foreign Countries, interacted with counterparts in the Department of National Defence and Global Affairs Canada with a view to identify avenues to enhance India-Canada defence ties. They will also meet academia and visit key defence related institutions in Canada during their visit." Earlier in May, India and Canada discussed ways to strengthen defence cooperation while exploring opportunities for deeper collaboration across several other sectors. The discussions were held during a



meeting between Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh and Canada's Senior Associate Deputy Minister of National Defence Kelvin Brosseau on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. In a post on X, Ministry of Defence's Directorate of Public Relations stated, "Both sides discussed ways to strengthen India-Canada defence cooperation and explored opportunities for deeper collaboration across key domains, reflecting the growing convergence of strategic interests between the two nations." In March, Union

Minister of State (MoS) for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh held a meeting with Parliamentary Secretary to Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs Rob Oliphant on the sidelines of Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (CFAMM) in the UK. The two sides discussed strengthening bilateral engagement and advancing cooperation in areas of mutual interest. "On the sidelines of CFAMM26, held a bilateral meeting with Rob Oliphant, Parliamentary Secretary to

Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs. Building on the recent renewed momentum in India-Canada ties and Prime Minister Mark Carney's visit to India, the discussions focussed on strengthening bilateral engagement and advancing cooperation in areas of mutual interest," he wrote on X. In November last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Canadian counterpart Mark Carney held a meeting on the sidelines of the G20 Leaders' Summit in Johannesburg to review progress in bilateral ties.

## BAPS Hindu Mandir Abu Dhabi Honoured With Prestigious Tolerance Award 2026

Abu Dhabi, 4/6: The BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi has been honoured with the prestigious 'Tolerance Award 2026'. The honour recognises BAPS' commitment to global peace and its contributions to the promotion of tolerance, mutual respect, harmony, and human unity across the globe. The honour was conferred during the International Dialogue of Civilisations and Tolerance Conference (IDCT 2026), an event that recognises institutions promoting tolerance, dialogue, and peaceful co-existence on the world stage. The award is not merely an honour for an institution, but a recognition of the universal values that the BAPS Hindu Mandir continuously strives to establish within society — humanity, compassion, unity, and mutual respect. Through initiatives such as the 'Festival of Harmony', 'Omsiyat', and various humanitarian aid campaigns, the temple has brought together people of diverse religions, cultures, and nationalities on a single platform, thereby presenting a remarkable example of global brotherhood. Pujya



Brahmavihari Swami, the head of BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi, while accepting the award, shared inspiring insights regarding the future of family, spirituality, and Artificial Intelligence (AI). "Today, the most critical question is not what AI can do, but rather what kind of human beings we are becoming under the influence of AI," he stated. Citing the eternal ideals of Indian culture — Matru devo Bhava (Mother is God), Pitru devo Bhava (Father is God), and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (The World is One Family) — he emphasised that strong families serve

as the bedrock of a strong society and a prosperous nation. He further described the tradition of 'Ghar Sabha' (Home Assembly), inspired by His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj as an effective social necessity for the modern era, wherein family members sit together daily to experience moments of prayer, dialogue, and deep bonding. Concluding his deeply inspiring message, he said, "The future will not be built solely upon more intelligent machines; it will be forged from stronger families, more sensitive hearts, and more compassionate communities."

## NASA Ends Decade-Long Mars Mission After Spacecraft Loss

Los Angeles, 4/6: The Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution (MAVEN), NASA's first mission devoted to observing the Martian atmosphere and its evolution, has officially come to an end after losing contact with its spacecraft last December, the agency has announced. Blasting off on November 18, 2013, the spacecraft entered Mars' orbit on September 21, 2014. Originally designed for a one-year primary mission, the spacecraft operated at the Red Planet for more than 11 years and exceeded its planned mission life by more than a decade, according to NASA. The spacecraft was last heard on December 6, 2025, when it experienced an unexpected loss of signal after it passed behind Mars, reports Xinhua news agency. NASA convened an anomaly review board in February to evaluate recovery efforts and assess the spacecraft's condition. The review board has determined that the MAVEN spacecraft is not recoverable, and



it is no longer capable of performing its science and data relay mission, which is consistent with the mission team's findings, NASA said on Wednesday (Local time). Preliminary findings suggest the spacecraft entered a high-rate rotation after passing behind Mars, disrupting its orbit trajectory and eventually draining its batteries. The resulting loss of power to the communications system left MAVEN unable to contact Earth. The agency noted that the root cause of the anomaly remains under investigation, and

a final report is expected later this year. NASA has begun the formal process of decommissioning the mission, following standard procedures to archive the full mission dataset for the science and exploration communities. "The science MAVEN has given us is key to informing what kind of radiation protection and safety measures we must take before sending humans to Mars," said Louise Prockter, director of the Planetary Science Division at NASA Headquarters in Washington.

## North Korea's Kim Inspects New Nuclear Facility, Vows To 'Exponentially' Bolster Arsenal

Seoul, 4/6: North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has visited a newly launched nuclear material production facility, vowing to "exponentially" strengthen the country's nuclear arsenal, state media reported on Thursday. Kim made the visit the previous day, accompanied by key party officials, reports Yonhap, quoting the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), without disclosing the facility's location or other details. Seoul's defence ministry said in a press briefing that it assessed the newly revealed facility as a uranium enrichment site. Currently, North Korea is believed to house uranium enrichment facilities in three sites — Yongbyon, Kangson and Kusong. It remains unclear whether the report suggests the existence of a fourth location. Kim said the country's "weapons-grade nuclear material production capacity more than doubled" over the past five years, attributing the gains to the country's nuclear scientists, according to the report. "Potential threats and



unpredictable long-term crises further highlight the urgency" of expanding the nuclear deterrent "both in quality and quantity and in a sustained and accelerated way," Kim said, signalling that Pyongyang has no intention of stepping back from its nuclear ambitions. North Korea also said it held an "important consultative meeting for bolstering up the nuclear forces" on the same day during which Kim issued "action guidelines for rapidly accelerating the qualitative and quantitative" buildup of Pyongyang's nuclear

forces. "Today we have updated the digits that are critical for our nuclear activities," Kim said at the meeting, adding Pyongyang had "confirmed the order of priority" for a plan to "beef up our state's nuclear forces at an exponential rate." He called it a "historic event that has set up an epochal milestone in rapidly upgrading our nuclear capabilities." Photos released by the KCNA show rows of cylindrical centrifuges used for uranium enrichment inside the facility. In another photo,

documents believed to be related to Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program are blurred on a table where Kim is seated. At a key party congress in February, Pyongyang reaffirmed its status as an "irreversible" nuclear-armed state and pledged to further strengthen its nuclear deterrent under a five-year military modernisation plan. In September 2024, North Korea disclosed its uranium enrichment facility for the first time and called for increasing the number of centrifuges for uranium enrichment. Unification Minister Chung Dong-yong at that time said North Korea had been operating four nuclear enrichment sites and was estimated to possess up to 2,000 kg of highly enriched uranium at 90 per cent purity or higher. Approximately 10 to 12 kg of uranium is enough to produce one bomb, he added. The latest KCNA report marked the third such account of Kim visiting a nuclear facility, following trips in September 2024 and January 2025, a unification ministry official said Thursday.

## India-US Ties In Stabilisation Phase, Not Reset, Says Ex-White House

Washington: India-US relations are undergoing a period of "tactical stabilisation" but remain constrained by lingering strategic mistrust despite recent progress on trade and civil nuclear cooperation, former White House and State Department India expert Basant Sanghera has said. Speaking to IANS after Secretary of State Marco Rubio's first visit to India, Sanghera said the trip was important symbolically but unlikely to produce a major long-term shift in the relationship. "I think it's good that the secretary visited India. It was his first visit as Secretary of State. It's important he did a Quad foreign ministers meeting, particularly given there has been no leader-level summit," Sanghera said. "In terms of long-term impact, I think it'll be very minimal. We're sort of in a period of tactical stabilisation in US-India, but there's also a level of strategic mistrust. That sort of fundamental paradigm hasn't changed." Sanghera, now Managing



Principal at The Asia Group, previously served on the India Desk at the State Department and as Director for India and the Indian Ocean at the White House National Security Council. He said the absence of a Quad leaders' summit has slowed momentum within the grouping. "I think it has," he said when asked whether the Quad had been affected during the past year and a half. "If you don't have that action-forcing function, that impacts tangible cooperation." While the Quad would continue, he added that "the level of ambition will be lower absent that sort of leader-level attention." Asked

whether a Quad summit could take place during the remainder of President Donald Trump's term, Sanghera said there was still a possibility. "There's a chance," he said, noting that Ambassador Sergio Gor "has been a strong proponent for the relationship" and has "a keen interest in making that happen." "Despite concerns over the broader trajectory of ties, Sanghera credited both governments for securing some notable gains. "The fact that in the last six months we've had an initial joint statement on a trade deal has been finalised, but that is significant," he said. He also highlighted India's

passage of the Shanti Act, which he said marked a breakthrough in long-running efforts to operationalise elements of the US-India civil nuclear partnership. "In any sort of normal period of time, those two accomplishments would be seen as major milestones for the US-India relationship," Sanghera said. "So I give the administration credit where it's due. Those were significant." At the same time, he said a range of disputes and disagreements had created headwinds. "There has also been sort of this perfect storm of irritants, whether it's trade, whether it's tariffs, whether it's some of the regional issues, particularly related to Pakistan. All those have created a drag on the relationship." According to Sanghera, domestic political debate in India has also become a factor. "I haven't seen domestically in India the US-India ties this politicised since the Bush era during the civil nuclear deal around circa 2006." On Pakistan, Sanghera said many in India had initially expected the Trump

administration to devote less attention to Islamabad because it was the first US administration in nearly 25 years not to inherit a war in Afghanistan. "There was an expectation that this would create less policy compulsions on the US side vis-a-vis Pakistan," he said. However, he rejected suggestions that recent US engagement with Pakistan signalled a broader strategic realignment. "Does this portend some sort of wider reset in the US-Pakistan relationship? I don't think so," Sanghera said. "There are still a lot of structural irritants in that relationship." Among those concerns, he cited Pakistan's strategic missile programme and longstanding US worries about its development of long-range missile capabilities. India and the United States have steadily deepened cooperation over the past two decades in defence, technology, energy and the Indo-Pacific. The relationship has enjoyed broad bipartisan support in Washington and has become a central pillar of US engagement in Asia.

## US Seeking Third-Country Options For Afghans In Pakistan

Washington, 4/6: Secretary of State Marco Rubio has said that the United States is working to find third-country resettlement options for Afghan allies stranded abroad, including many currently in Pakistan, as the Trump administration continues to review relocation policies for those who assisted American forces during the Afghanistan war. The issue emerged during a House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on Wednesday (local time) when Representative Julie Johnson criticised the administration's handling of Afghan refugees and former allies who worked alongside US military personnel and diplomats during the two-decade conflict in Afghanistan. Johnson argued that many Afghans who assisted American operations now face uncertainty despite promises made by Washington. "Under your leadership, US State Department dismantled the Office of Coordinator for Afghan Relocation efforts and halted the visa processing for Afghan allies," she said, describing the situation as damaging to America's credibility among future partners and allies. Responding to concerns about Afghans currently awaiting relocation, Rubio said the administration's immediate objective was to prevent them from being returned to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. "Right now, that's not anyone's plan," Rubio said when asked whether Afghan allies could be sent back. Instead, he said Washington was seeking alternative destinations. "I think the plan is to find a third safe country where they can go to that they're comfortable and choosing voluntarily to go there," Rubio told lawmakers. The Secretary said the administration was actively engaging governments around the world to identify countries willing to accept Afghan applicants. "We're looking for more and more countries to step forward and assume it," he said. Rubio acknowledged that current US policies, including executive actions and broader immigration measures, had complicated efforts to bring additional Afghans directly into the United States. He noted that officials were continuing to process applications and documentation but said Washington was simultaneously exploring resettlement options elsewhere. "We continue to process the folks that are applying so that their paperwork is in order," Rubio said. The Secretary emphasised that the administration did not want Afghan allies left indefinitely in uncertain circumstances.

## India's Crude Steel Production Reaches 14.21 Million Tonnes In May, Up 2.9 Pc: Govt

New Delhi, 4/6: India's steel sector sustained its growth trajectory in May, as crude steel production reached 14.21 million tonnes, up 2.9 per cent year-on-year, the government said on Thursday. Hot metal production grew 2.0 per cent, while pig iron output (0.77 million tonnes) posted a growth of 1.1 per cent. Finished steel production reached 13.94 million tonnes in May, up 7.7 per cent. Finished steel consumption in May was 14.33 million tonnes, registering growth of 9.0 per cent YoY. According to the steel ministry, crude steel production was 28.04 million tonnes during April-May, up 2.7 per cent over the corresponding period last year (CPLY), compared with 27.30 million tonnes in April-May 2025. Hot metal production grew 2.7 per cent CPLY, while pig iron output (1.50 million tonnes) posted a growth of 0.2 per cent CPLY. Moreover, finished steel production reached 27.36 million tonnes, up 6.4 per cent CPLY. Finished steel consumption in April-May 2026 was 27.36 million tonnes, registering growth of 8.7 per cent CPLY, driven by



sustained demand from construction, infrastructure, and manufacturing end-use segments, said the ministry statement. Steel imports stood at 0.69 million tonnes in May, registering year-on-year growth of 62.5 per cent and 29.9 per cent over May 2025 levels of 0.42 million tonnes and 0.39 million tonnes, respectively. Imports were 1.37 million tonnes and exports at 0.98 million tonnes during April-May

2026, making India a net importer during the period. India's total crude steelmaking capacity reached at approximately 220 MTPA in FY2025-26, keeping the industry on track to achieve the National Steel Policy target of 300 MTPA by 2030. SAIL has approved the expansion of its Bhilai Steel Plant from the present crude steel capacity of 6.8 MTPA to 10.2 MTPA. Further, JSW Steel commenced construction of its integrated steel plant at Paradip,

Odisha in May 2026 — a phased development with a planned capacity of 13.2 MTPA. Under the 'Green Steel Initiative', green steel certificates had been issued to 94 producers across 15 states (as on May 31, 2026), with a majority of certified products achieving the highest 5-star rating — reflecting strong uptake of the initiative across secondary and mid-size steel producers. Raw material prices strengthened further in May 2026 compared to April 2026.

## Govt To Roll Out Up To 5,000 E85 Fuel Stations By 2027: Hardeep Puri

New Delhi, 4/6: India will begin rolling out up to 100 E85 fuel dispensing stations across key urban corridors, including the National Capital Region, Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur, as part of a phased expansion plan to promote flex-fuel adoption in the country, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Thursday. Speaking at the launch of the Maruti Suzuki WagonR Flex Fuel here, Puri said that E85, a fuel blend containing up to 85 per cent ethanol, has been identified as the mono-fuel standard for flex-fuel vehicles under Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) specifications. He also said that E85 is being positioned as one of the cleanest fuel options, even when compared to electric vehicles, as part of India's broader transition towards alternative energy sources. "The rollout of flex-fuel infrastructure will be expanded in phases, with the number of E85 dispensing stations set to increase to 500 by December 2026 and further scale up to 5,000 outlets across major cities by the end of 2027," he mentioned. Highlighting the shift in India's mobility landscape, Puri said the adoption of flex-fuel



technology has now moved beyond two-wheelers to four-wheelers, marking a significant expansion in the ecosystem. He also noted that if 50 per cent of new two-wheeler and four-wheeler sales transition to flex-fuel vehicles, it could unlock an additional ethanol demand of 311.8 crore litres, generate nearly Rs 12,403 crore in additional income for farmers, and reduce carbon emissions by about 66.4 lakh metric tonnes. "This not only helps lower our energy import bill but also empowers our farmers with an additional and sustainable source of income, transforming them from the nation's Annadatas into Urjadatas

as well," he explained. Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari, who was also present at the event, said he expects more automobile manufacturers to enter the flex-fuel segment as India accelerates its shift towards cleaner mobility solutions. The push for E85 fuel comes amid elevated global crude oil prices, driven by ongoing geopolitical tensions, which have impacted oil marketing companies and led to fuel price hikes across the country. Puri noted that India experienced relatively lower price increases compared to Japan, even as the domestic fuel market continues to absorb global shocks.

## Gold, Silver Trade Higher Amid Weaker Dollar, Geopolitical Uncertainty



New Delhi, 4/6: Gold and silver traded higher in morning trade on Thursday, supported by a weaker dollar and geopolitical uncertainty in West Asia, as investors continued to track developments surrounding a possible diplomatic breakthrough between the US and Iran. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures for August delivery were trading 0.35 per cent or Rs 533 higher at Rs 1,59,052 per 10 grams as of 11:28 am. The yellow metal rose as much as 0.61 per cent or Rs 981 to touch an intraday high of Rs 1,59,500. It also hit an intraday low of Rs 1,58,701, up 0.11 per cent or Rs 182 from the previous close. On the other hand, silver

futures for July delivery rose up to 0.51 per cent or Rs 1,366 to touch an intraday high of Rs 2,64,324 per kg. However, the white metal was trading at Rs 2,62,317, down Rs 641 or 0.24 per cent during the session. It recorded an intraday low of Rs 2,62,081, down 0.33 per cent or Rs 877. Earlier in the day, gold and silver opened on the MCX at Rs 1,59,366 per 10 grams and Rs 2,63,146 per kg, respectively. Analysts said safe-haven demand and geopolitical uncertainty continue to support precious metals, although a sustained breakout above key resistance levels would be required to strengthen the

bullish outlook. They see resistance for MCX gold around Rs 1,57,300-1,57,400, while silver faces resistance near Rs 2,66,000-2,67,000. Recent military developments kept investor sentiment cautious after the US military said Iranian missile attacks targeting Bahrain, Kuwait and other regional locations were either intercepted or failed. Meanwhile, crude oil prices declined over 1 per cent, with international benchmark Brent crude trading at \$96.50 per barrel. Similarly, US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was trading at \$94.76 per barrel.

## Crude Oil Prices Fall Over 1 PC As Ceasefire Hopes Ease West Asia Concerns

New Delhi, 4/6: Global crude oil prices declined more than 1 per cent on Thursday after Israel and Lebanon agreed to implement a ceasefire, raising hopes of a broader diplomatic breakthrough that could ease tensions surrounding the ongoing Iran conflict. International oil benchmark Brent crude fell 1.33 per cent to \$96.50 per barrel. Similarly, US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude declined over 1 per cent to \$94.76 per barrel. The decline in oil prices came after both benchmarks had gained nearly 2 per cent in the previous session amid renewed hostilities in West Asia, including Iranian attacks on Kuwait and US military strikes near the strategic Strait of Hormuz. In the US, the Republican-controlled House of Representatives approved a resolution seeking to limit President Donald Trump's authority to continue military operations against Iran. Trump said progress in negotiations with Iran could emerge as early as this weekend. Iranian



Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said contacts with Washington had not been severed, although he added that negotiations had yet to produce meaningful progress, with both sides continuing to review exchanged proposals. However, Gulf tensions escalated further as Iranian drones targeted Kuwait International Airport following a fresh exchange of strikes between the United

States and Iran, injuring several people and damaging airport infrastructure. The Kuwaiti military said the attack caused significant material damage, forcing authorities to suspend air traffic operations. Weak sentiment persisted across global equities, with major Asian indices including Japan's Nikkei, Hong Kong's Hang Seng, South Korea's KOSPI and Indonesia's

Jakarta Composite declining by as much as 3 per cent. US markets also closed lower overnight, with the S&P 500 falling 0.74 per cent and the Nasdaq ending 0.9 per cent lower. In addition, domestic equity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty opened lower on Thursday, with falling around 0.5 per cent amid selling pressure in IT, realty, pharma and healthcare stocks.

## Indian Markets Open Lower On Weak Global Cues, West Asia Tensions Weigh

Mumbai, 4/6: Domestic equity markets opened lower on Thursday, tracking weak global cues amid geopolitical uncertainty in West Asia and selling pressure across the US and Asian equities. Sensex opened at 73,935.83, down 0.55 per cent or 410 points, while Nifty fell over 100 points or 0.5 per cent. Sectoral indices, Nifty Realty declined 0.67 per cent, Nifty IT was down 0.53 per cent. Similarly, pharma and healthcare indices decreased by up to 0.5 per cent. In contrast, Nifty Consumer Durables, Nifty Oil & Gas, Nifty Cement and Nifty Chemicals were trading marginally higher. Meanwhile, Trent, Eicher Motors, Cipla, Infosys and HDFC Bank were top losers of the Nifty index, declining up to 1 per cent. According to analysts, near-term headwinds continue to outweigh tailwinds, with ongoing uncertainty in West Asia and sustained foreign portfolio



investor (FPI) selling remaining key pressure points. "In the absence of any resolution to the West Asia crisis, there is little scope for a meaningful rally. The strong momentum in US, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan markets suggests continued FPI outflows from India," market experts said. They added that trading in the current volatile environment remains risky, advising investors

to adopt a "wait and watch" approach. However, analysts said further weakness could offer accumulation opportunities in quality stocks under temporary pressure from foreign flows. Moreover, Israel and Lebanon have agreed to implement a ceasefire to end hostilities, the US administration said on Wednesday, raising hopes of a broader diplomatic

breakthrough aimed at easing tensions in the Iran conflict. Tehran, which had earlier linked any potential agreement with the United States to an end to fighting between Israel and Lebanon, struck Kuwait earlier in the day, damaging its airport and injuring dozens of people. In response, the US military carried out strikes near the strategic Strait of Hormuz. Meanwhile, crude oil prices declined, with Brent crude falling 1.33 per cent to \$96.50 per barrel and US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) slipping 1.31 per cent to \$94.76 per barrel. In Asia, markets remained under pressure, with Japan's Nikkei, Hong Kong's Hang Seng, South Korea's KOSPI and Indonesia's Jakarta Composite falling up to 3 per cent. On Wall Street overnight, equities also ended lower, with the S&P 500 declining 0.74 per cent and the Nasdaq closing 0.9 per cent lower.

## SEBI Bars Rajesh Exports CMD Rajesh Mehta, Alleges Rs 15.15 Lakh Crore Revenue Misrepresentation

Mumbai, 4/6: Market regulator SEBI on Wednesday passed an interim ex-parte order against Rajesh Exports Limited (REL) and its Chairman and Managing Director Rajesh Mehta, alleging large-scale financial misrepresentation, fund-routing irregularities and failures in corporate governance during an ongoing investigation. In its 109-page interim order, SEBI Whole Time Member Kamlesh Chandra Varshney said the regulator had prima facie found evidence of a multi-year pattern involving non-genuine transactions, improper accounting practices, diversion of company funds through promoter-linked entities and inadequate disclosures to investors. The regulator alleged that Rajesh Exports misrepresented consolidated revenues aggregating approximately Rs 15.15 lakh crore between FY2020-21 and FY2024-25, accounting for nearly 99.8 per cent of the company's

total reported consolidated revenue during the period. According to the order, the company's financial statements and books of accounts for FY21 to FY25 appeared to have been manipulated through non-genuine and unverifiable transactions, incorrect consolidation of accounts, unexplained investments, non-disclosure of related-party transactions and routing of funds through entities linked to promoters. SEBI said these actions created a misleading picture of the company's operational scale, financial position and overall business health before investors and the securities market. The regulator further alleged that Rajesh Exports misrepresented standalone revenues worth Rs 12,557 crore during FY21-FY24. It claimed that derivative transactions undertaken by Rajesh Mehta in his personal capacity were recorded as company sales and purchases

amounting to more than Rs 11,400 crore each. The order also alleged that exchange fluctuation gains and losses amounting to hundreds of crores were incorrectly classified as revenue and purchases, while interest income earned from mutual funds and fixed deposits was booked as revenue from operations. SEBI additionally questioned the company's claim regarding investments in gold mines in Africa. The regulator said it was unable to corroborate the disclosures made by the company regarding "Other Non-Current Investments" allegedly representing investments in African gold mines. The market regulator also raised concerns over the routing of company funds through the personal bank accounts of Rajesh Mehta and Siddharth Mehta. According to SEBI, these transactions were not disclosed as related-party dealings and lacked approval from the board of directors and audit committee.

## Aishwarya Rai Bachchan named Global Brand Ambassador for JW Marriott

Bollywood icon and former Miss World Aishwarya Rai Bachchan has taken on a new global role, becoming the Global Brand Ambassador for JW Marriott. The partnership will see the actress front the luxury hotel brand's "Stay in the Moment" platform, which promotes mindfulness, presence, and meaningful travel experiences. Part of the global hospitality giant Marriott Bonvoy, JW Marriott announced the collaboration as it continues to strengthen its position in the luxury travel segment. Through the partnership, Aishwarya will help amplify the brand's message of intentional and experience-led travel, encouraging guests to embrace the present moment during their journeys. The collaboration comes at a time when India has emerged as one of JW Marriott's key growth markets. With more than 130 properties worldwide, the brand is witnessing increasing demand from Indian travellers seeking immersive and luxury travel experiences, both within the country and abroad. As the face of the campaign, Aishwarya will feature in JW Marriott's global marketing and storytelling initiatives across digital, print, and experiential platforms. Her role will also include participation in curated brand experiences in select markets, further promoting the "Stay in the Moment" philosophy centered on calm, mindfulness, and authentic travel. Speaking about the association, Aishwarya said the concept of being fully present resonates deeply with her personal outlook on life and travel, where simplicity, awareness, and meaningful experiences hold significant value. Aishwarya Rai Bachchan, one of India's most celebrated actresses, rose to international prominence after winning the Miss World title in 1994. Over the years, she has built a distinguished career in Hindi and Tamil cinema, earning widespread acclaim and numerous accolades, including two Filmfare Awards. Her enduring global appeal across entertainment, fashion, and public life makes her a natural fit for JW Marriott's vision of contemporary luxury and mindful travel.



## Anupam Kher announces 'AntarAkt', a life coaching initiative inspired by his journey

Veteran actor Anupam Kher is set to embark on a new chapter beyond cinema with the launch of 'AntarAkt', a life coaching initiative that he says is rooted in the lessons he has learned throughout his life and career. Kher revealed that he has been working on the concept for more than a decade. Describing it as "The Alignment Project: From Chaos to Clarity," he said the programme aims to help individuals navigate personal and professional challenges through practical life lessons and self-awareness. "I am announcing it for the first time. I am starting a life coaching concept called 'AntarAkt'. It will also include physical classes. I have been working on it for the last 12 to 13 years. Whatever I have learned from life, I have tried to incorporate into this project," Kher said, adding that the initiative will be launched soon. Known for his inspiring life story and remarkable journey in Indian cinema, Kher said the project reflects his experiences, struggles, achievements, and personal growth over the years. Meanwhile, the actor recently took a nostalgic trip down memory lane as he marked the anniversary of his debut film, Saarang, which was released on May 25, 1984. In an emotional post on Instagram, Kher described the film as the most defining chapter of his life. Reflecting on his four-decade-long career, he recalled the struggles, successes, failures, friendships, and memories that shaped his journey in the entertainment industry. The actor expressed gratitude to filmmakers, producers, writers, technicians, co-stars, and audiences who supported him throughout his career. He also thanked Rajshri Productions for giving a newcomer like him an opportunity and acknowledged filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt for casting him in a role that transformed his life. Crediting 'Saarang' for his success, Kher said the film helped him realize his dreams, taking him from a small-town boy from Shimla to one of India's most respected actors. "Whatever I am today is because of 'Saarang'. From a small-town boy from Shimla to a man who got to live his dream. I can only say God is kind," he wrote.



## Bollywood star Aamir Khan locks July 5 for his intimate wedding with partner Gauri Spratt



## SPORTS

### Sabalenka Crashes Out of French Open Quarter-Finals

World number one Aryna Sabalenka suffered a stunning defeat to Russian 25th seed Diana Shnaider in the French Open quarter-finals, ending her bid for a maiden Roland Garros crown. Sabalenka started strongly, taking the first set 6-3 and racing to a double-break lead in the second. However, her game collapsed under blustery conditions on Court Philippe Chatrier. Shnaider fought back to claim the second set 7-5 and dominated the decider 6-0. Sabalenka committed 57 unforced errors, a tally that proved decisive. The Belarusian, who was the only Grand Slam champion left in either singles draw, failed to capitalise on her advantage and exited in dramatic fashion. Shnaider, a left-hander playing her first major quarter-final, now advances to face Polish



qualifier Maja Chwalinska in the semi-finals. With this victory, she emerges as a strong contender for a place in the final. Sabalenka's

defeat echoed her collapse in last year's final against Coco Gauff. She was aiming to become the first woman since

Serena Williams to reach seven consecutive Grand Slam semi-finals, but fell short in her 14th straight quarter-final appearance.

### Virat Kohli Ruled Out of India's ODI Series Against Afghanistan

Star batter Virat Kohli will miss India's three-match ODI series against Afghanistan starting June 13 due to a hamstring injury, according to a BCCI source. The Board of Control for Cricket in India confirmed that Kohli sustained the injury recently, ruling him out of the upcoming series. His absence compounds India's fitness worries, as Rohit Sharma's availability remains uncertain following his IPL 2026 injury. Kohli's setback comes just days after his match-winning performance in the IPL 2026 final, where he scored an unbeaten 75 to guide Royal Challengers Bengaluru to their second consecutive title. He finished the season with 675



runs in 16 matches at a strike rate of 166, showcasing remarkable form at 37.

The BCCI source stated, "He is out of the ODI series due to a hamstring injury." The timing of the injury remains unclear, though it may have occurred during the IPL final in Ahmedabad. Kohli's absence opens opportunities for young players to step up ahead of the ICC 2027 World Cup preparations. Team management will look to test new combinations while monitoring the recovery of senior players. Despite the setback, Kohli's recent comments reflected his determination: "I take pride in getting better and figuring out areas to improve."

Bollywood icon Aamir Khan is ready to exchange wedding vows with his partner Gauri Spratt during an intimate ceremony scheduled for July 5. Internal sources confirmed the upcoming nuptials, marking a new chapter for the veteran actor. He publicly introduced his partner during his landmark birthday celebration last year, ending months of speculation about his relationship status. The couple managed to stay out of the spotlight for nearly a year and a half before revealing their connection to public eyes. His bride-to-be comes from Bengaluru and possesses a strong background in the styling industry. She pursued higher studies in fashion photography and styling at the University of the Arts London before establishing her professional footprint. Currently, she manages a branch of the prominent salon chain BBLunt in Mumbai and looks after her young child from a previous relationship. The pair deliberately avoided media attention during the early stages of their courtship. The actor frequently traveled to Bengaluru to meet her, using the geographical distance from Mumbai to shield their bond from intense celebrity tracking. She has since integrated into his professional circle, collaborating

directly with his film production company on recent creative ventures. This marriage represents a significant personal milestone for the acclaimed actor. He previously shared a sixteen-year marriage with Reena Dutta, which concluded in 2002. Later, he married filmmaker Kiran Rao in 2005, a relationship that ended in mutual separation four years ago. He recently shared that his current relationship brings immense personal peace, stating that he feels entirely whole since she entered his daily life. The upcoming celebration will remain a closely guarded family event, away from the typical grandeur of industry gatherings.

