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Odisha Government Simplifies Apartment Registration for Pre-RERA Projects

BHUBANESWAR : In a significant relief to homebuyers, landowners, and promoters across Odisha, the State Government has issued a Special Order to facilitate the registration of apartment units in projects completed prior to the implementation of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA) on October 5, 2016. "Announcing the decision, Housing & Urban Development Minister Dr. Krushna Chandra Mahapatra said the measure aims to address long-pending registration issues faced by buyers and stakeholders in older apartment projects. The Special Order, published in the Extraordinary Issue of the Odisha Gazette, provides a

clear legal framework to overcome historical documentation and compliance bottlenecks that have prevented the registration of many apartment units. "The Minister stated that while the Odisha Apartment (Ownership and Management) Act, 2023 (OAOM Act) was enacted to bring greater transparency and efficiency in apartment ownership and management, a large number of apartment purchasers in pre-RERA projects continued to face difficulties in registering deeds of transfer. Although a Special Order issued on December 3, 2025 provided relief to individual allottees, apartments retained by promoters and landowners remained outside its

Under the Special Order, the relaxation will apply only to apartments in projects completed before October 5, 2016. The benefit shall be available only where at least 50 per cent of the apartment units in the project had already been transferred through registered sale deeds on or before the RERA cut-off date. In addition, the apartment proposed for registration must form part of the building plan duly approved by the Competent Authority under the Odisha Development Authorities Act, 1982 or the Odisha Town Planning and Improvement Trust Act, 1956. To ensure transparency and safeguard the interests of buyers, promoters or landowners will be required to prominently display the approved building plan within the project premises. Prior to the registration of the first sale deed of any remaining unsold apartment, a No Objection Certificate (NOC) must be obtained from the Association of Allottees certifying the correctness of apartment numbering as reflected in the approved plan.

ambit. "To address this issue, the Government has exercised its powers under Section 35 of the OAOM Act, 2023 and introduced a special exemption mechanism for eligible projects, thereby enabling the registration of such apartments and clearing long-standing legacy cases. Under the Special Order, the relaxation will apply only to

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building plan duly approved by the Competent Authority under the Odisha Development Authorities Act, 1982 or the Odisha Town Planning and Improvement Trust Act, 1956. To ensure transparency and safeguard the interests of buyers, promoters or landowners will be required to prominently display the

approved building plan within the project premises. Prior to the registration of the first sale deed of any remaining unsold apartment, a No Objection Certificate (NOC) must be obtained from the Association of Allottees certifying the correctness of apartment numbering as reflected in the approved plan. An undertaking

confirming compliance with all eligibility conditions must also be furnished before the Registering Authority. "The Order further provides that any apartment association or society constituted under previous laws before the commencement of the OAOM Act, 2023 shall be recognized only after adopting bye-laws in accordance with Section 15 of the Act. "Dr. Mahapatra emphasized that the exemption is intended solely to facilitate the registration of genuine apartments and should not be construed as a regularization of unauthorized constructions. Any violation of building regulations will continue to attract action under the applicable laws. "To protect the rights of

apartment owners and preserve community ownership of shared assets, every sale deed executed under this Special Order must expressly provide for the transfer of the allottee's proportionate undivided interest in the common areas and facilities. The title over such common areas and facilities shall vest in the Association of Allottees in accordance with the provisions of the OAOM Act, 2023. "The Special Order, issued by order of the Governor and notified by Smt. Usha Padhee, Additional Chief Secretary to Government, marks another important step towards resolving long-pending property registration issues and strengthening urban housing governance in Odisha.

The 2/3rd mirage: Can rebel TMC MPs, DMK help the NDA get number arithmetic right in Parliament



New Delhi : A rebellion within the TMC has boosted the NDA's numbers in the Lok Sabha, reshaping parliamentary dynamics ahead of the crucial Monsoon Session.

With the rebellion and rift in the Trinamool Congress (TMC), the national political landscape is witnessing a dramatic realignment. Following the unravelling of the TMC in West Bengal, a powerful faction of 20 rebel TMC Lok Sabha MPs has shifted its allegiance toward the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA), after the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) rebellion of 7 MPs.

Simultaneously, unexpected voting patterns in the Upper House have placed the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) at the center of an evolving Rajya Sabha numbers game. Together, these shifts are altering the mathematical reality of parliamentary voting, directly impacting the passage of landmark constitutional overhauls.

India summons US envoy again over attacks on vessels carrying Indian seafarers, calls use of force 'unacceptable'

New Delhi : The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) summoned US Charge d'Affaires Jason Meeks and conveyed New Delhi's deep concern over the incidents, which have claimed the lives of three Indian sailors.



India on Friday lodged a strong protest with the United States over a series of attacks by US naval forces on commercial vessels carrying Indian seafarers in the Gulf of Oman, describing the use of lethal force against civilian shipping as "unacceptable" and a threat to international maritime security.

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Rajasthan Urban Infrastructure Team Studies Odisha's Urban Transformation Initiatives

Bhubaneswar : A nine-member delegation from the Rajasthan Urban Drinking Water Sewerage and Infrastructure Corporation Ltd. (RUIDP), Jaipur, visited Bhubaneswar and Puri as part of an Asian Development Bank (ADB)-supported exposure visit to study Odisha's pioneering urban development initiatives and best practices in water supply, sanitation, and urban governance. The delegation comprised Shri Mohan Lal Saini, Additional Chief Engineer, Zone Jaipur; Shri Mukesh Kumar Meena, Superintending Engineer, PMU Jaipur; Shri Khemraj Meena, Superintending Engineer, PMU Jaipur; Shri Satyanarayan Verma,

Executive Engineer, PIU Nathdwara; Shri Amit Verma, Executive Engineer, PMU Jaipur; Shri Anil Patidar, Assistant Engineer, PIU Dungarpur; Shri Ashok Kumar Bansiwala, Assistant Engineer, PIU Banswara; Shri Sanju Pooniya, Junior Engineer, PIU Nawalgarh; and Shri Kush Kumar, Junior Engineer, PIU Jodhpur. "As part of the exposure visit, the team undertook extensive field inspections of key urban infrastructure projects in Bhubaneswar and Puri. The delegation also interacted with officials of the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) to gain first-hand insights into Odisha's urban governance

A highlight of the visit was an interaction session held at the Odisha Urban Academy with Smt. Usha Padhee, Additional Chief Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department, Government of Odisha. During the session, Smt. Padhee presented a comprehensive overview of Odisha's urban transformation journey and highlighted several innovative initiatives that have positioned the State as a national leader in urban reforms.

framework, sanitation management systems, service delivery mechanisms, and citizen-centric urban initiatives. A highlight of the visit was an interaction session held at the Odisha Urban Academy with Smt. Usha Padhee, Additional Chief Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department, Government of Odisha. During the session, Smt.

Padhee presented a comprehensive overview of Odisha's urban transformation journey and highlighted several innovative initiatives that have positioned the State as a national leader in urban reforms. "She elaborated on Odisha's acclaimed 24x7 Drink from Tap Mission, which has emerged as a benchmark in urban water supply management by

ensuring safe, equitable, and round-the-clock access to quality drinking water. She also shared insights on the State's achievements in sanitation and waste management, integrated urban planning, public transport modernization, technology-driven governance, and sustainable urban infrastructure development. "The

RUIDP delegation appreciated Odisha's remarkable achievements in urban service delivery and expressed keen interest in replicating several of the State's successful models and best practices in Rajasthan. The visit served as a valuable platform for knowledge sharing, cross-learning, and strengthening inter-state collaboration in the urban development sector. "Among others Addl Secretary cum Director OUA Suvendu Kumar Sahu & other officials of the Housing & Urban Development Department and the Odisha Urban Academy were also present during the interaction.

From hailstorms in Delhi to flood alerts in Kerala: India witnesses extreme weather switch

New Delhi : The sharp change is being driven by two separate weather systems operating simultaneously. While a Western Disturbance is influencing northwestern India, the advancing southwest monsoon and associated cyclonic circulations are bringing heavy rainfall to the south.

India is witnessing a striking weather contrast, with hailstorms and thunderstorms sweeping across Delhi and other parts



of north India, while Kerala braces for flooding rains as the southwest monsoon strengthens its grip over the southern region. The India

Meteorological Department (IMD) has described the development as an "extreme weather switch", a rapid transition from intense

heatwave conditions to widespread rain, thunderstorms and significantly cooler temperatures in several parts of the country.

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Huge money transfers, bigger questions: Rs 503 cr transaction leads Rs 635 cr Bengal 'advertisement scam' linked to Mamata Banerjee

New Delhi : According to the documents issued by the Bengal government, the amount is credited into three bank accounts of the said agency. At least 20 such transactions are being probed, which took the total to Rs 635 cr. A probe has already been ordered in the case.

West Bengal Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari has claimed that the previous Mamata Banerjee government carried out a 'loot of public money' as an advertisement agency close to the former CM received over Rs 635 crore in the last few years. Chief Minister Adhikari said that the case may be handed over to the Enforcement Directorate for suspected money laundering. According to the documents issued by the Bengal government, the amount is credited into three bank accounts of the said agency. At least 20 such transactions are being probed, which took the total to Rs 635 cr. A probe has already been ordered in the case.

Mission Shakti adds festive cheer to Raja with special initiatives for SHG members and Odisha's cultural heritage

Bhubaneswar: Peetha on Wheels' launched to promote Odisha's traditional cuisine and create livelihood opportunities for SHG members "Raja celebrations at Subhadra Shakti Bazaar with mehendi, hair styling, nail art, swings, paan and lac bangles Special 20+10 per cent discount on handloom products at Subhadra Shakti Bazaar Bhubaneswar, June 11: In a unique initiative to celebrate Raja Festival while strengthening women-led enterprises, the Mission Shakti Department has

launched 'Peetha on Wheels', a mobile food venture aimed at promoting Odisha's traditional culinary heritage and creating enhanced market opportunities for Self-Help Group (SHG) members. The initiative was inaugurated today by Deputy Chief Minister Smt. Pravati Parida at the Subhadra Shakti Bazaar in Bhubaneswar. As part of the programme, six specially designed 'Peetha on Wheels' vehicles were flagged off to serve traditional Odia delicacies across key locations in the

city during the Raja festivities. The mobile units will offer a range of traditional pithas, including Arisa, Kakara, Manda, Chakuli and Poda Pitha, along with popular local snacks such as Dahibara, Bara and Alu Chop. The food items are being prepared and marketed by women associated with Self-Help Groups, providing them with a direct platform to connect with consumers and expand their businesses. The initiative reflects the State Government's continued efforts to preserve Odisha's



rich cultural traditions while leveraging festivals as opportunities for women's economic empowerment. By bringing traditional

cuisine closer to citizens, the programme seeks to popularise indigenous food practices among younger generations and create

sustainable livelihood opportunities for women entrepreneurs. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Smt. Parida highlighted the significant role played by Mission Shakti members in strengthening Odisha's rural economy. She stated that innovative marketing initiatives such as 'Peetha on Wheels' not only showcase Odisha's culinary heritage but also help SHG members enhance their incomes through improved market access. Adding to the festive celebrations, the Mission

Shakti Department has announced a special Raja Festival discount at the Subhadra Shakti Bazaar located at the SIRD campus in Bhubaneswar. From June 11 to June 16, visitors can avail a special 20+10 per cent discount on handloom products. The bazaar features an extensive collection of handloom and handicraft products, millet-based food items and organic produce manufactured by SHG members from across the State. To create an immersive Raja experience, various cultural and lifestyle activities

have also been organised at the venue. SHG members trained at the World Skill Centre are offering services such as mehendi application, hair styling and nail art. Traditional attractions including Raja swings, Raja paan and lac bangles have also been arranged for visitors. The initiative is expected to strengthen the market ecosystem for women entrepreneurs while enabling citizens to experience Odisha's traditional Raja festivities and indigenous food culture at a single destination.

Level-II Onsite Disaster Drill conducted by IndianOil Paradip Refinery



Paradip,(DMS)12/6:- IndianOil Paradip Refinery conducted a Level-II Mock Drill (Onsite Disaster Drill) on 12th June 2026 with an aim to check the effectiveness of the emergency response and preparedness of the Refinery. The drill was executed in line with the approved Emergency Response and Disaster Management Plan (ERDMP) of Paradip Refinery.

The mock drill was carried out in presence of ERDMP Auditors. Members of Mutual Aid Industries also participated in the exercise. The scenario envisaged for the drill was propylene leakage from Polypropylene (PP) Unit of Paradip Refinery followed by Fire at the unit.

Response & control measures taken as per the protocols of Emergency Response & Disaster Management Plan was well coordinated and it was appreciated by all the authorities. Mr Kausik Basu, Executive Director & Refinery Head of Paradip Refinery chaired the debriefing session of the exercise.

Paradip Port Conducts Multi-Agency Mock Drill with NDRF to Strengthen Disaster Response Preparedness

Paradip,(DMS)11/6 :- In a significant step towards strengthening disaster preparedness and emergency response capabilities, Paradip Port Authority (PPA), in collaboration with the 3rd Battalion of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Mundali, conducted a Multi-Agency Coordination Mock Drill at the Main Fire Station, Paradip Port.



The exercise brought together emergency response teams from various government agencies, industrial units, and mutual aid partners operating in and around Paradip. The objective was to test preparedness levels, improve coordination among stakeholders, and ensure a swift and effective response during emergencies such as cyclones, industrial accidents, fires, and other disaster situations.

The programme began with a tabletop exercise, during which Ramakanta Dash, Team Commander, NDRF, highlighted the importance of resource

mapping, coordinated planning, and timely decision-making during emergencies. The session provided participants with an opportunity to review response procedures and discuss strategies for handling complex disaster scenarios.

The practical drill that followed simulated a range of emergency situations, including structural collapse and search-and-rescue operations, rope rescue techniques, road clearance

following cyclone-related obstructions, industrial firefighting involving tank fire scenarios, and casualty management with medical evacuation. The exercise demonstrated how different agencies can work together seamlessly to save lives, protect critical infrastructure, and restore normalcy during a crisis.

Speaking on the occasion, Sanat Kumar Patel, Commandant, CISF, appreciated the efforts of

all participating agencies and stressed the importance of regular drills in identifying gaps and enhancing preparedness. He noted that such exercises help build confidence and ensure that response teams remain ready to act effectively when real emergencies occur.

Manoj Kumar Chauhan, Deputy Commandant, CISF, thanked all stakeholders for their active participation and emphasized that disaster management is most effective when institutions work together as a coordinated network. He observed that for a major industrial and maritime hub like Paradip, strong partnerships and continuous preparedness are essential for minimizing risks and ensuring public safety.

The drill witnessed active participation from NDRF, CISF Fire Wing, Odisha State Fire Services, Odisha State Police, Indian Coast Guard, Intelligence Bureau, Dock Safety Department, and emergency response teams

from key industrial establishments including IOCL, IFFCO, Paradeep Phosphates Limited, JSW Steel, Adani Wilmar, BPCL, HPCL, KICT, and PICT.

The exercise was coordinated on-site by Akash Jaiswal, Assistant Commandant, CISF Fire Wing. The programme was attended by the Deputy Conservator & Port Facility Security Officer (DC & PFSO), Assistant Director (Dock Safety), senior officials of Paradip Port Authority, representatives of participating industries, and members of various emergency response agencies.

The successful conduct of the mock drill reflects Paradip Port Authority's continued commitment to safety, preparedness, and resilience. By regularly conducting such collaborative exercises, PPA aims to strengthen emergency response systems and ensure the safety of port personnel, industrial workers, and the surrounding community.

Meeting Marking the Completion of Two Years of the BJP Government



Boipariguda (Bikrant Kumar Beborta): An important meeting was held at the Boipariguda Panchayat Samiti office (BDO Prakostha) to mark the completion of 12 years of the central government and two years of the state government. Following celebrations at the block level (17th-20th) and panchayat level (22nd-25th), BJP workers will visit various villages to inform people about the central and state governments' public welfare schemes and share details regarding the government's achievements over the past two years. It was decided during the meeting that Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi would outline the government's achievements from the

last two years and explain the objectives of the schemes being implemented for the people of the state. Nabarangpur MP Pratinidhi Narendra Kandalia and Koraput MLA Pratinidhi Umesh Patnaik stated that party workers are deliberating on how the government will drive Odisha's development under the slogan "All Odisha." The meeting was attended by BDO Subrat Sahu, ABDO Nivedita Dandasena, Social Security Officer Kartak Padhi, Vice President Purnima Barik, Nabarangpur MP Pratinidhi Narendra Kandalia, Samiti member Manjulata Patnaik, BJP General Secretary Chandrashekhar Rath, Koraput MLA Pratinidhi Umesh Patnaik, Kotpad MLA Pratinidhi Prabhakar Rao, and other BJP workers.

Sixth Death Anniversary of Artist Manisa Das Observed at Balasore Kalakshetra

Balasore, June 12 (Krushna Kumar Mohanty): The sixth death anniversary of artist Manisa Das was observed by Alumni Kalakshetra at the premises of Balasore College of Fine Arts and Crafts.

Among those present were Principal Nikunja Bihari Das, faculty member Ajit Kumar Jena, Dr. Parashuram Panda, and Alumni office-bearer Pradipta Kishore Das. The guests paid floral tributes before a photograph of the late artist and remembered her contributions to the field of art.

Presiding over the programme, Principal Nikunja Bihari Das recalled that Manisa, during her student days, had shown great respect for her teachers and a deep passion for painting. Ajit Kumar Jena spoke about her journey from an ordinary art student to a distinguished scholar who later earned a Gold Medal from the



university in the postgraduate Printmaking Department through dedication and hard work.

In his address, Pradipta Kishore Das noted that Manisa had displayed a keen interest in learning various branches of art from her school days. Though her untimely demise was a tragic loss, her memory and artistic legacy continue to inspire many, he said.

Friends of Manisa, including Daitari Behera and Sushobha Patra, shared their memories of her affectionate nature, close bonds with fellow students, and

her ability to build lasting friendships.

They recalled that after completing her studies, she established an art school in Pune, where she trained young students in fine arts. Despite her battle with cancer and her passing at a young age, they said, she would always remain alive in the hearts and memories of those who knew her.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by artist Kishore Chandra Nayak.

RCIPET PPEC Paradip planted 400 saplings during plantation drive week



Paradip,(DMS) :- On the occasion of World Environment Day 2026 and as part of the Plantation Drive Week observed from June 5 to June 11, 2026, the CIPET Plastic Product Evaluation Centre (PPEC), Paradeep organized a plantation drive within its campus, Paradeep Plastic Park Industrial Area, nearby public places and planted 400 saplings.

The plantation programme was carried out under the guidance of the Centre In-Charge and Training In-Charge, with active participation from students, staff members, and trainees of the centre. The initiative aimed to promote environmental conservation, enhance green cover, and create

awareness about the importance of sustainable development.

Speaking on the occasion, the officials emphasized the need for collective efforts towards environmental protection and encouraged participants to contribute to building a greener and healthier future. The enthusiastic involvement of students and staff reflected their commitment towards preserving the environment.

The plantation drive is a part of CIPET Plastic Product Evaluation Centre, Paradeep's ongoing efforts to support environmental sustainability and foster ecological awareness among the community.

Swami Raghavananda Om distributes tender coconuts among Rath construction servitors in Puri



Puri: Amid the sweltering heat and humidity, Swami Raghavananda Om of Sribadrika Ashram distributed tender coconuts among the Maharana, Bhoi and Kamara

servitors engaged in the construction of the chariots for Lord Jagannath's annual Rath Yatra on Friday.

The Odia saint, currently residing in Himachal Pradesh,

offered the refreshments as a gesture of appreciation for the dedicated service rendered by the chariot construction workers despite the harsh weather conditions.

Development Administrator and Niti Administrator were also present during the distribution programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Swami Raghavananda Om said he felt spiritually fulfilled and blessed to have had the opportunity to serve those engaged in the service of Lord Jagannath. He described the initiative as an expression of gratitude and devotion, attributing the opportunity to the grace of the deity.

With chariot construction work progressing in full swing under intense summer conditions, the gesture was widely appreciated and seen as a mark of respect towards the servitors who continue to carry out their responsibilities with dedication and commitment.

Human Chain to mark World Day against Child labour



Bhubaneswar :In a bid to sensitize the slum dweller to the holistic development of children living in urban poverty a human chain and mass awareness meeting was organised at Sikharachandi Nagar under ward no-1 of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation on the eve of World Day against Child labour organized by ActionAid Association in collaboration with Center for Child & Women Development (CCWD). Attending as guest Sadasiv Swain, Secretary of CCWD highlighted the plight situation

of children and legal laws and also Every parent should aware about children's future he added. Among others Bhaskar Chandra Pradhan and Shiba Sahoo shared the ongoing challenges. The welcome address covered by Kalyani Rout. Lastly Swarnapriya Senapati Proposed a warm vote of thanks to all. More than 60 community people, members of Self-help group, Slum level human rights defenders, Members of Bhubaneswar Young Urban Women Forum and child club members attended.

Vedanta Aluminium Nurtures Resilient Rural Communities in Jharsuguda

Jharsuguda, Odisha, June 12, 2026: Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest aluminium producer, is driving inclusive growth beyond its core operations through Project VedGram, its agriculture-focused development initiative in Jharsuguda. Through a combination of modern farming inputs, water conservation, livestock support, and livelihood diversification, the programme is helping rural communities build resilience by creating new, sustainable pathways for progress.

Over the past year, Project VedGram has positively impacted more than 1,000 farmers and rural households through a range of interventions including Wadi establishment, paddy cultivation, livestock development, poultry micro-enterprises, and pisciculture, contributing to a

significant improvement in farmers' annual income. Reinforcing its commitment to encouraging sustainable agriculture, Vedanta Aluminium recently marked World Agriculture Day by organizing a Soil Awareness Programme and Soil Health Camp for local farmers. The initiative focused on promoting soil conservation, encouraging scientific farming practices, and enhancing awareness about the role of soil health in improving agricultural productivity and long-term farm sustainability.

Commenting on the impact of the initiative, C Chandru, CEO - Vedanta Aluminium, Jharsuguda said "Sustainable development begins with empowering communities to become self-reliant. Through Project VedGram, we are working closely with rural



households to strengthen livelihoods, enhance agricultural productivity, and create opportunities for long-term prosperity. Our commitment extends beyond economic growth, focusing on building resilient communities that can thrive for

generations to come."

Speaking about the initiative Rajesh Marei a farmer from Siriapalivillage said "Before receiving irrigation support, I had to depend on the rains and could grow only one crop each year. Today with the help of Vedanta

and project VedGram, I am able to cultivate multiple crops across different seasons, which has increased my income and reduced farming risks. This support has made a real difference to my family's livelihood and future."

Since inception, Project VedGram has facilitated the establishment of 50 wadis across nearly 25 acres of land in Jharsuguda, transforming previously unproductive land into income-generating orchards. To improve water security, the initiative has also supported the construction of 35 community ponds and 10 farm ponds, enhancing community access to irrigation and water conservation. The project has also improved access to essential services through the installation of solar-powered drinking water systems in Siriapalli and Katikela villages.

In terms of livestock development, more than 100 farmers in Jharsuguda have benefited from the distribution of over 800 kg of mineral mixture and 5,300 kg of Harit Dhara, which are food supplements that provide essential macro and micro minerals to livestock. In addition, over 250 artificial insemination procedures have been conducted to improve cattle breed quality and productivity. Further, 25 poultry houses have been established under the project to support livelihood diversification efforts.

Through Project VedGram, farmer training programmes and field schools have helped equip local farmers with knowledge of improved agricultural practices and sustainable farming techniques. Over 200 solar-

powered insect traps have been distributed to promote environmentally friendly pest management. Farmers have also received horticulture support through the distribution of tomato and brinjal plants, along with technical guidance. Additionally, 150 farmers have been supported through a cash crop initiative promoting potato cultivation.

As Project VedGram continues to expand its reach, it is helping create stronger farming ecosystems by enhancing incomes, improving access to resources, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices. Through such initiatives, Vedanta Aluminium remains committed to fostering inclusive development and creating lasting value for communities in its vicinity.

Anchalik Bikash Mancha Submits Five-Point Charter of Demands, Seeks Priority Employment for Local Youth

Khordha-12/6-A public hearing camp organized by M/s Shri Bajrang Power and Metallics Limited for obtaining environmental clearance for its proposed industrial project in Sahaspur under Bolgarh Tahasil, Khordha turned controversial on Thursday, as members of the Anchalik Bikash Mancha alleged that the hearing was reduced to a mere formality and failed to reflect the genuine opinions of the local people. The public hearing was held at the premises of the Gediapalli Revenue Inspector's Office in the presence of government officials, including the Sub-Collector of Khordha, Tahasildar Bolgarh, local elected representatives and officials from various departments. The company is proposing to establish a large industrial complex comprising 40,000 TPA Titanium Dioxide Pigment Plant, 120,000 TPA Sulphuric Acid Plant, 16,000 NM³/hr Producer Gas Plant, a 40,000 bricks-per-day Bricks Plant, and a 12.75 MW Co-generation Power Plant at Sahaspur village. However, even before the hearing commenced, concerns and opposition from sections of local

residents began surfacing. Members of the Anchalik Bikash Mancha alleged that the company had failed to adequately publicize the public hearing among affected villages. According to them, the notice was published only in a limited number of newspapers, preventing many residents from becoming aware of the event and its significance. Forum leaders claimed that a genuine public hearing should have involved extensive awareness campaigns, public announcements and consultations in all villages likely to be affected by the proposed project. Instead, they alleged, the company merely fulfilled procedural requirements without ensuring meaningful participation from the local community. The situation became more contentious when the forum accused the company of mobilizing people to the venue through local middlemen and brokers. According to the allegations, certain individuals were reportedly tasked with bringing people from different villages by offering various inducements and assurances. Some villagers



were allegedly told that their grievances relating to housing pattas, social security pensions, ration cards and other welfare-related issues would be addressed during the gathering. As a result, many people reportedly attended the meeting without fully understanding that it was an environmental public hearing related to the proposed industrial project. Forum representatives alleged that several attendees were transported to the venue in vehicles arranged by the company. The public hearing witnessed visible dissatisfaction among a section of participants. Members of the Anchalik

Bikash Mancha alleged that ordinary villagers were not given adequate opportunities to express their concerns and opinions, while individuals perceived to be supportive of the project were allowed to dominate the proceedings. This, they said, created resentment among residents who had come hoping to voice their views on the potential environmental and social impact of the proposed industries. Following the hearing, the Forum submitted a detailed five-point memorandum through the Sub-Collector, Khordha highlighting what it described as the genuine concerns and aspirations of the local population. The

foremost demand of the Forum was that local youth should be given priority in employment opportunities arising from the proposed industrial project. They argued that industries established on local land must directly benefit the people of the area by creating sustainable jobs for qualified local candidates. According to the Forum, employment generation remains one of the biggest expectations among villagers, and the company must provide a clear roadmap regarding recruitment policies. The second demand called for giving preference to local residents in transportation contracts, supply chains and other

business activities linked to the project. The Forum maintained that local entrepreneurs, vehicle owners and service providers should be allowed to participate in the economic activities generated by the industry instead of opportunities being monopolized by outside agencies. Another major demand was the formation of village-level committees in every affected village. These committees, the Forum suggested, should work as a bridge between the company and local communities, ensuring that development proposals are discussed transparently and implemented according to the needs and priorities of residents. The memorandum also demanded an impartial inquiry into what the Forum described as attempts by the company to influence public opinion before the hearing. It alleged that several activities undertaken in recent months—including road works, temple-related projects and other development initiatives—were strategically carried out to create favourable public sentiment ahead of the environmental clearance

process. The Forum further alleged that in some villages roads had been dug up and development works had remained incomplete for months, causing inconvenience to residents. It claimed that such activities were projected as welfare measures but ultimately failed to address the real concerns of the people. In another serious allegation, Forum members claimed that certain anti-social elements were being used to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation in the region. They demanded immediate intervention by the administration to ensure that villagers could express their views freely without pressure or influence from any quarter. Speaking to media persons that after the submission of the memorandum, Anchalik Bikash Mancha Convener Biranchi Narayan Samal said that development should not come at the cost of the rights and interests of local communities. He emphasized that while industrialization can contribute to economic growth, it must be accompanied by transparency, environmental safeguards, employment

opportunities for local youth and respect for public opinion. Samal, warned that if the administration and company authorities fail to address the five-point charter of demands and take appropriate corrective measures, the people of the region would be compelled to intensify their movement in the coming days. He asserted that the Forum would continue to mobilize public support to protect the interests of affected villages. The public hearing and the subsequent memorandum have now become a major talking point across the Bolgarh region. While supporters of industrial development argue that the project could bring investment and employment to the area, opponents insist that public concerns must be addressed before any final approvals are granted. With emotions running high and local expectations growing, all eyes are now on the district administration and the company management to see how they respond to the demands raised by the Forum and whether a consensus can be reached between development goals and community interests.

Family Seeks Security for Rakesh Pattnaik Following Allegations Against Bapi Sarkhel



Paradip :- Amid the ongoing controversy surrounding the bomb attack on the residence of Paradip Municipality Chairman Basant Biswal, the family of businessman and labour leader Rakesh Kumar Pattnaik has sought police protection, citing concerns over his safety. Earlier, leaders and supporters from various political parties, along with local residents, had met the Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP), Paradip, demanding that Arindam Sarkhel alias Bapi Sarkhel be brought under the ambit of investigation in connection with the alleged conspiracy behind the attack. The following day, Bapi Sarkhel reportedly addressed the media and claimed that the campaign against him was a conspiracy. He also alleged that Rakesh Pattnaik had played a vital role in mobilising people against him and described him as a criminal.

Responding to these allegations, Rakesh Pattnaik

held a press conference in which he rejected the accusations and made several counter-allegations against Bapi Sarkhel. He claimed that Sarkhel had, in the past, falsely implicated him in criminal cases and attempted to tarnish his reputation. Pattnaik further alleged that due to business rivalry and personal animosity, Bapi Sarkhel and Bapu Parida had subjected him to repeated harassment, including conspiracies and attempts to physically harm him.

Pattnaik also referred to previous criminal cases in which, according to him, both individuals had been arrested and jailed in connection with various incidents in Paradip.

Expressing apprehension over her husband's safety, Advocate Bandita Subhadarshini Pattnaik met Paradip Additional Superintendent of Police Jagatsinghpur, seeking adequate security for Pattnaik. R known in the region as a businessman, labour leader, a comes amid escalating tensions following the exchange

Local appreciated Patna MLA's representative efforts, Helpless woman get help

Keonjhar: Block Development Officer, Champua Smruti Ranjan Sahu went to Uchbali Panchayat and meet helpless widow 71 years old Bijili Karua of Padmapur village Khamanagoda Sahi.

Bijili was deprived from all government benefits and was begging in villages. After witness her and learn about her difficulties, Patna MLA's Champua Block Representative Bhabagrahi Mahanta immediately contacted Champua BDO and informed him about it.

On receiving the information, BDO rushed to her house and met her? The BDO discussed with her and promised that he would provide her with government facilities and put a smile on the old man's face, creating a shining example of service to the poor and helpless. According to the sources he has lost her husband Kaira Karua 11



years back and has become destitute. She does not have a single child or a house to live in. She does not get free rice or pension and other allowance from the government under poverty elevation scheme. Hence she goes door to door begging to meet her hunger, sources said.

Now the block administration has taken up the task to alleviate his sorrow. The administration ordered to provide Aadhaar card and voter card for Bijili.

BDO Smruti Ranjan Sahu said that after getting the Aadhaar card, Bijili will be provided with ration card, other allowance and house under the PMAY svheme.

On this initiative the BDO has been praised the work of Bhabagrahi Mahanta, MLA's representative for Champua block who visiting various villages of the block area and giving priority to solving the personal and collective problems of the people. After this incident local people of that area appreciated the work of Bhabagrahi Mahanta, Patna MLA's representative.

Executive Officer of Unchabali Panchayat Swagatika Prusti, Assistant Executive Engineer Sabyasachi Nayak, Assistant Engineer Sudarshan Hansda were visited the Village and short out the problems.

Irregularities in Birth and Death Certificate - enquiry started

Jagatsinghpur, Irregularities in Birth & Death Certificate has become a major issue in Jagatsinghpur district. Particularly massive irregularities found at CHC, Kujang and special enquiry started by Dr. Ajay Kumar Dalai, Addl Director cum Addl Chief Registrar of HI & VS Odisha on 7 th May 2026. As per letter no. 938/23/4/26 of Director of Health Intelligence & Vital Statistics, Odisha the Registrar Birth & Death cum Medical Officer - in - charge, CHC, Kujang was intimated to provide documents for verification. As per information from Bench clerk of Vital Statistics more than 1000 birth and Death certificate prepared upon fake documents and random irregularities found. Basing upon the report of investigating Officer Dr. Ajay Kumar Dalai Chief District Medical Officer, Jagatsinghpur issued letter no. 436/26/5/26 to Registrar Birth & Death cum Medical Officer, Kujang to provide all documents to



special investigating team on 3rd June 2026. Even Medical Officer directed to present there with accountant and Bench Clerk of Vital Statistics with records of Kujang CHC from 18/7/2025 to 14/1/2026. Though enquiry by higher authorities completed but Kujang CHC authorities and Chief District Medical Officer not providing clear data. As per information of

Kujang CHC staff about 1000 above Birth and Death certificate prepared upon fake data in a irregular manner and more than one crore rupees taken as kick back by the Vital Statistics clerk and Registrar Birth & Death cum Medical Officer, CHC, Kujang. General people demand high level enquiry report should be open up and District Magistrate should take immediate action against the miscreants.

Excise department seizes 52 Kg Ganja in Major Anti-Drug Crackdown

Khordha :- In a significant breakthrough against the illegal narcotics trade, the excise department successfully busted two separate ganja smuggling operations in Khordha, seizing a total of 52 kilograms of contraband cannabis and arresting 6 persons allegedly involved in the interstate drug trafficking network. Two vehicles used for transporting the narcotics and 4 mobile phones were also seized during the operation. The team raids, carried out by teams from the Khordha and Begunia excise stations, are being viewed as one of the major successes of the district administration's ongoing campaign against illegal drug trafficking. Officials estimate the market value of the seized ganja at approximately ₹5.20 lakh. According to official sources, the excise department had recently received reliable



intelligence inputs regarding the transportation of large quantities of ganja from Kandhamal district towards Bhubaneswar through Khordha. Acting on the information, senior officers formulated a detailed strategy and deployed special surveillance teams at key points along national highways and major transit routes. Vehicles passing through the suspected corridors were subjected to rigorous checking in an effort to intercept the illegal consignment. The first breakthrough came near Pitapalli on National

Highway-57. During a routine surveillance operation, excise officials intercepted a suspicious Maruti car bearing registration number OD-02-CC-7356. On conducting a thorough search of the vehicle, officials discovered 30 kilograms of ganja cleverly concealed inside the car. Three mobile phones suspected to have been used for coordinating the transportation and delivery of the narcotics were also seized. The accused identified as Subhen Baghar (20) Salim Hati (25) and Surendra Kanhar (35),

were immediately taken into custody. During preliminary interrogation, investigators reportedly learned that the accused had procured the ganja from Kandhamal and were transporting it to Bhubaneswar for distribution among various dealers and consumers. The seizure provided investigators with crucial leads regarding the movement of narcotics through the district. While the investigation into the first case was underway, the excise department received another tip-off indicating that a second

consignment of ganja was being transported through Daltola Chhak under Khordha Sadar Police Station limits. Without wasting any time, a team from the Begunia excise station rushed to the location and established a checking point to monitor incoming vehicles. After a brief wait, officials intercepted a Maruti Suzuki Alto bearing registration number OD-07-BA-0621. A detailed search of the vehicle led to the recovery of 22 kilograms of ganja hidden inside the car. One mobile phone was also seized from the accused persons. Three individuals, identified as Subrat Digal (30) Sudhir Digal (36) and Sridhar Digal (40) were arrested on the spot. Investigators suspect that the accused were part of a larger supply chain engaged in transporting narcotics from interior districts to urban markets. The manner

in which the contraband was being moved has raised concerns about the existence of an organized trafficking network operating across district boundaries. With the two seizures combined, the excise department confiscated 52 kilograms of ganja, 2 vehicles, and 4 mobile phones. Cases have been registered against all six accused under the provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. The accused have been produced before the court, and further investigation is continuing. Officials are now examining whether the arrested individuals were acting independently or were part of a larger interstate or inter-district drug syndicate. The seized mobile phones are being analyzed to identify possible links with suppliers, transporters, financiers, and buyers connected to the

illegal trade. Investigators believe the digital evidence could help uncover a wider network involved in narcotics trafficking. Addressing a press conference at the District Excise Office in Khordha on Friday, Superintendent of Excise, Khordha, Ms. Sumati Tripathy described the operation as a major achievement in the department's ongoing drive against narcotic substances. She stated that the excise department remains committed to eliminating illegal drug trafficking from the district and will continue conducting intensive raids and surveillance operations. "The department has adopted a zero-tolerance approach towards narcotics-related crimes. Strict legal action will be taken against anyone found involved in the transportation, storage, or sale of illegal drugs. Our efforts will continue with

greater intensity to protect the younger generation from the harmful effects of addiction," she said. The successful operation has been widely appreciated by local residents and social organizations, who have long expressed concern over the increasing circulation of narcotic substances in various parts of the state. The seizure is being viewed as a strong message to drug traffickers that law enforcement agencies are closely monitoring their activities and are prepared to take decisive action against those involved in the illegal trade. The latest crackdown once again highlights the district administration's determination to combat drug abuse and dismantle trafficking networks, reinforcing its commitment to safeguarding public health, maintaining law and order, and ensuring a drug-free future for the youth of the region.

Icons that we look to for Inspiration

Dr. Kanak Hota

Veteran journalist, writer, and critic Bhaskar Parichha's new book, *Icons of Odisha: Lives that Shaped a State* (B K Publications, Bhubaneswar, 2026), historicizes a hundred year, from 1843 to 1943 and looks dispassionately at the lives and achievements of thirty-five extraordinary personalities of Odisha who have contributed immensely in shaping what he calls in the introduction, "the state's distinctive moral and cultural character" in modern times. It records the lives of these men and women, their determination to overcome odds, transform the status quo, and bring about lasting changes in the state's cultural fabric.

Parichha's narrative traces the emergence of statesmanship and nation-building and also records new directions in literature, art, dance, music, cinema, and journalism. It doesn't repeat the glory of Odisha's distant past, but captures the era of awakening and the role these statesmen, reformers, educators, and creatives played as "icons." It chronicles their birth, growth, and flowering into trailblazing personalities instrumental in changing the face of Odisha.

Aptly called the 'icons,' these illustrious men and women, born during the British colonial era, understood subjugation and fought for India's independence. They led the struggle to secure Odisha's formation as a separate state. Though it may sound redundant, one can briefly state that Odisha gained its statehood and political identity in 1936, based on evidence of the use of the Odia language for speaking and writing by a people who were kept separate for political expediency. The fear of losing their identity as Odias brought together thought leaders from various walks of life.

A humble schoolteacher like Fakiramohan Senapati, who stirred the movement, was joined by a maverick, lawyer, and entrepreneur Madhusudan Das, a social reformer and volunteer Gopabandhu Dash, two aristocrats, the king of Paralakhemundi, Maharaja Krishnachandra Gajapati, and the king of Mayurbhanja, Sri Ramchandra Bhanjadeso, a great poet Gangadhar Meher, and many others to realize the dream of having a separate state called Odisha. This watershed moment brought together the Odia-speaking people's land, deliberately dismembered and arbitrarily distributed among three British Presidencies - Calcutta, Madras, and Central.

Parichha says that as a relentless fighter against propaganda that sought to render the Odia language irrelevant, Fakir Mohan worked alongside the British official and linguist John Beams to establish Odia's antiquity and originality and to secure its use in schools, courts, and official documents. A prolific writer, he left behind numerous novels, short stories, and poems that remain timeless classics of Odia literature. His *Cha Mana Atha Guntha* (1902) is a novel depicting the exploitation of a vulnerable peasant by the corrupt local zamindar. It exposes social inequality and the uneven power play between the victim and the victimizer.

Fakiramohan, the father of Odia fiction, opposed feudalism and urged social reform in his writings. His art combines political acumen, wit, sarcasm, subversive parody, and a regard for the morally correct as a prototype for future writers. King Krushna Chandra Gajapati and King Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo were rulers of independent kingdoms who risked their positions by taking an oppositional stance against British rule and prioritizing India's independence and the formation of Odisha as a separate state. Parichha revisits these lives and gently reminds readers of the seminal role these great men played in fighting for a cause that seemed difficult but morally correct and rewarding.

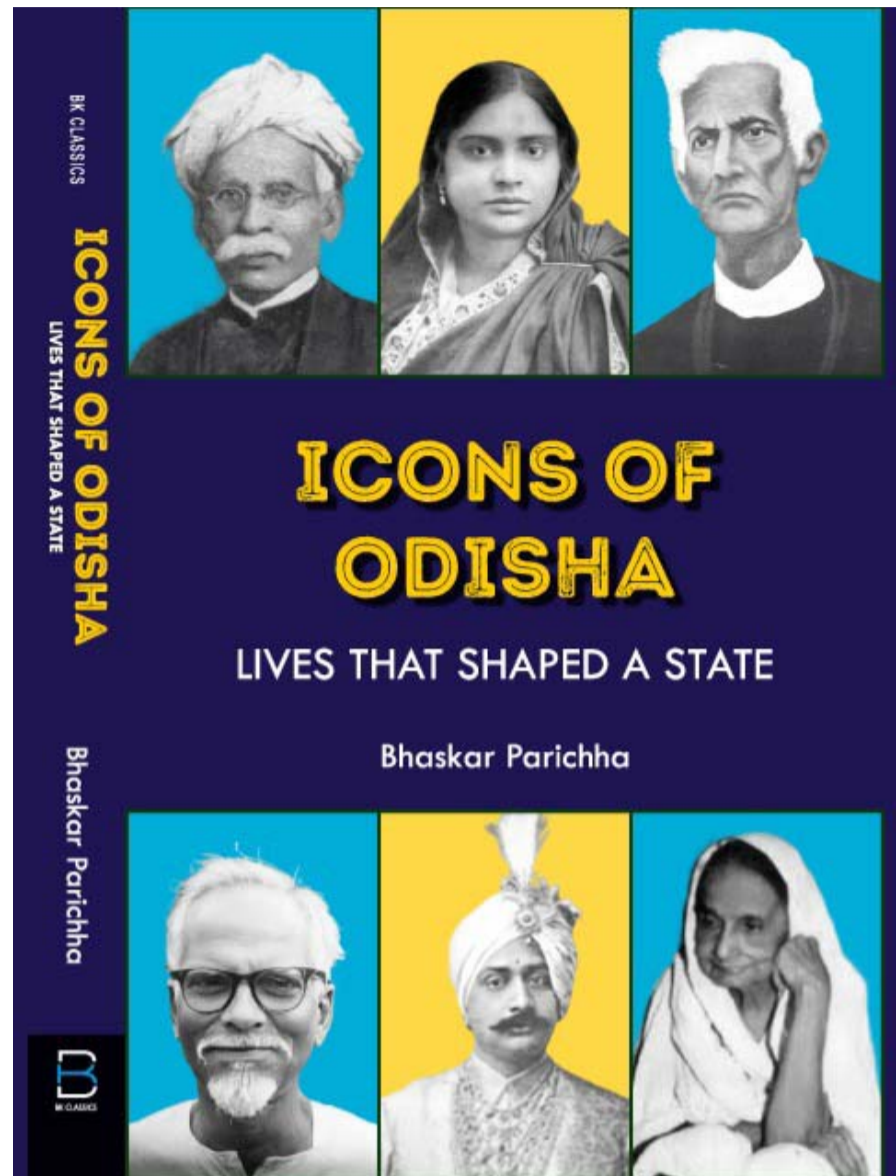
Odisha's identity is inalienable from the sixty-two distinct indigenous tribal communities native to the state. The book celebrates the role of Raghunath Murmu, who created the Santali script, thereby preserving the language of the indigenous Santali people for posterity. The language of a people is not just a tool of communication; it's their identity and voice, without which their culture faces the threat of extinction.

The Icon records the lives and contributions of other Odia leaders, who, following Mahatma Gandhi's call, joined the pan-Indian, non-violent freedom movement against the British. The reader meets Hare Krushna Mahatab, Rama Devi, Nabakrishna Chaudhury, Sarala Devi, and Sarangadhar Das, all of whom joined the National Congress Party with great enthusiasm. But some of them expected the Party to do more to advance social equality and justice for the marginalized and underserved. They questioned the elitist ideals of the National Congress Party and sought alternative routes to socialism through mass movements at the local level. Notable among these iconoclasts were Rama Devi, Sarala Devi, and Sarangadhar Das.

Similarly, going through the lives and times of leaders like Nabakrushna Chaudhury, Hare Krushna Mahatab, Biju Patnaik, Nandini Satpathy, and Janaki Ballav Patnaik, the reader learns more about the distinctive attributes of these change-makers who shaped the course of a nascent democracy, held popular elections, and were committed to serving the masses. As chief ministers of Odisha, they wrestled with the challenges of governance and struggled to maintain their majority in the assembly by their passions discreetly.

Janaki Ballabh Patnaik was a Journalist, editor, and also a renowned scholar of Sanskrit. Nandini Satpathy, called the Iron Lady of Odisha in the book, was the state's only female chief minister. She was also a writer committed to social equality and women's rights. Her creativity was shaped by the ideals she inherited from her father, Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, a distinguished writer, and her uncle, Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi, a staunch believer in Communist ideology.

Biju Patnaik, besides being the state's chief minister, was a multifaceted



personality. He was a fighter pilot during the Second World War, an entrepreneur and industrialist, and one of the architects of modern Odisha. These icons were not just great political leaders but were fascinating, multidimensional personalities. The book highlights their versatility, without being anecdotal or resorting to platitudes.

However, *Icons* is not a book about political leaders alone. It documents the life and works of outstanding personalities across diverse creative fields, shaping the identity of a people. Odisha has been a land of poets, painters, sculptors, weavers, musicians, dancers, and singers from ancient times. Parichha records an unprecedented surge in creativity over the century he examines. The influx of new ideas, the struggle to end colonialism and feudalism, the fervor of patriotism, and optimism in freedom set the tone of this period.

The new directions of Odia literature were shaped by Gopinath Mohanty (fiction), Sachi Routray (Poetry), Surendra Mohanty (fiction), Manoj Das (short story), and Ramakanta Rath (poetry). Gopinath Mohanty delineated the threadbare, uncorrupted lives of the tribal people. His novel *Paraja* (1945), for example, depicts the collapse of the pristine world of the paraja people, a tribe living in a remote corner of Odisha, as the so-called modern

world clashes with the fundamental values of trust, loyalty, honesty, and love governing their lives.

Surendra Mohanty drew inspiration from the history of the Odia race and carefully traces its gradual descent from a successful, warring people into mediocrity in his famous trilogy *Nilashaila*, *Niladri Bijaya*, and *Krishnabenire Sandhya*. He created an inimitable style of storytelling. Manoj Das writes with the insight of a mystic, delving deep into the supernatural and the subconscious. Sachi Routray's poetry laid the foundation for modern poetry in Odia literature through the use of naturalism, symbolism, and free verse. Ramakanta Rath brought the reflective tone and used the associative power of metaphors in his poetry. He contemplated time and reiterated life's transience repeatedly.

The icon doesn't differentiate or categorize the remarkable creative personalities by gender. It calls poets Kuntal Kumari Sabat the nightingale of Odisha and Bidyut Prabha Devi the pioneer of feminist poetry. All these storytellers and poets have stirred the souls of Odia readers with a taste of the new. They have inspired the younger generation to emulate their writing styles without forgetting Odisha's rich poetic and storytelling tradition.

The essay on scientist and educationist

Pranakrushna Parija highlights his role as a pioneer in instilling the scientific spirit of research and exploration in the countless students he guided and inspired. The one on Prof. Chittaranjan Das assesses his philosophical insight and scholarship in the numerous discursive writings he produced. It acknowledges Das's immense contribution towards enriching the Odia intellectual tradition.

Parichha examines the role of inspirational figures in dance, music, cinema, and journalism to complete the essays on the icons. He says that Odissi, the classical dance, originating from the Jagannath temple, gained world recognition through the pioneering work of Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra. The legendary Odissi dancer Sanjukta Panigrahi, with her husband, classical music maestro Raghunath Panigrahi, perfected the dance form, widely celebrated for its lilting grace and postural grandeur. He says Balakrushna Das, the musical genius, was instrumental in keeping up the distinction of Odia classical music, namely, Odissi Chhanda and Chaupadi.

The book celebrates the great Odia pop icon, singer, composer, and lyricist, Akshya Mohanty, for his rendition of soul-stirring songs with inimitable tones of longing and loss. He places actors Sarat Pujari and Jharana Das as icons of Odia cinema, whose careers inspired many artists to enter the world of cinema. It is heartening to see Dinanath Pathy, the muralist, painter, writer, and exponent of classic Odia art, among the great personalities chosen for the book. Pathy had authored more than sixty books and had worked in India and in Germany.

The book reminds readers not to forget the media's role as a watchdog for democracy and individual freedom. It positions Radhanath Rath, the editor of the newspaper *Samaj*, a name synonymous with Odia newspapers to many, as an icon for journalistic integrity. In the age of the internet and social media, *Samaj*, founded by Gopabandhu Dash, still continues to serve as an interface between the masses and the government and as a window to national and international news for rural and urban readers alike. Parichha recounts Radhanath Rath's role in maintaining *Samaj's* standing as an unbiased, apolitical, and fearless newspaper, avoiding unnecessary sensationalism and fearmongering.

Bhaskar Parichha's *Icons of Odisha: Lives that Shaped a State* chronicles the lives and contributions of thirty-five outstanding Odia personalities from different walks of life. The book is non-judgmental. It dispassionately documents the lives and achievements of the chosen personalities and puts their work into perspective, helping the reader understand a bygone era and its challenges. Icons are the personalities we look to for inspiration. The book also gently reminds readers that, as a collective, people must remember their history and the remarkable people who could change and rewrite it.

(Chicago)

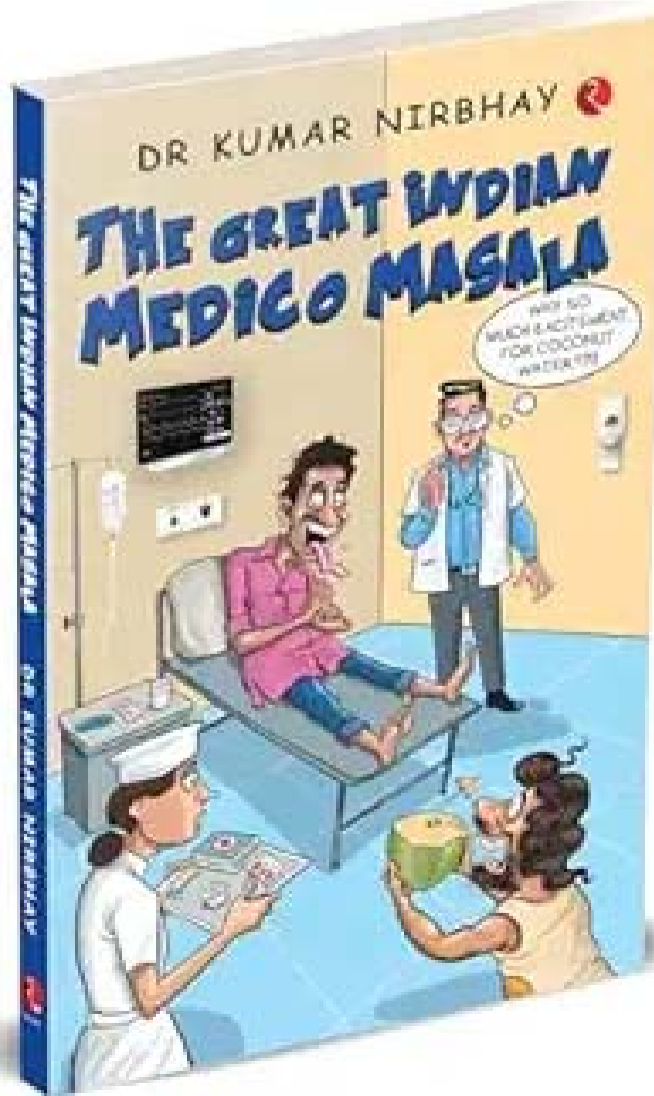
Collection of Medical Anecdotes

Dharma Raj

The Great Indian Medico Masala (Rupa Publications, New Delhi, 2026) is a delightful and refreshingly original collection of stories that peels back the curtain on the often-misunderstood world of Indian healthcare. Written by doctor-turned-writer and social activist Dr Kumar Nirbhay, the book combines humour, humanity, and sharp observation to create a reading experience that is both entertaining and insightful.

At the heart of the book is Dr Arun, a physician whose daily encounters reveal that medicine is as much about understanding people as it is about diagnosing diseases. Through a series of anecdotes inspired by real-life incidents, readers are introduced to a cast of unforgettable characters—patients, families, and colleagues whose actions frequently challenge logic, science, and common sense. Yet it is precisely these eccentricities that make the stories so engaging.

What sets this collection apart is its ability to find laughter in situations that might otherwise seem stressful or overwhelming. Whether it is a miraculous cure hidden inside a green coconut, a mysterious virus that appears only on certain days of the week, or the whimsical invention of a



"chakkarometre" to measure dizziness, the stories celebrate the absurdities that doctors encounter behind hospital walls. The humour is never cruel or dismissive; instead, it emerges from a deep understanding of human nature.

Beyond the comedy, the book offers touching glimpses into the emotional side of medical practice. Dr Nirbhay reminds readers that hospitals are places where hope, fear, resilience, and compassion coexist. The stories capture the unique bond between doctors and patients, highlighting moments of kindness, vulnerability, and unexpected wisdom.

The author's conversational style makes the book accessible to both medical professionals and general readers. His ability to blend satire with empathy ensures that the narrative remains engaging while conveying deeper truths about society and healthcare.

Warm, witty, and deeply human, the book is more than a collection of medical anecdotes—it is a celebration of the extraordinary stories hidden within ordinary hospital corridors. Readers will finish the book with a smile, a renewed appreciation for healthcare workers, and the comforting realization that laughter truly can be the best medicine.

Thoughtful, Inspiring, and Well-researched

Bhaskar Parichha

Historical fiction succeeds when it illuminates the past while speaking to contemporary concerns, and *The Mapmaker* (Niyoghi Books, New Delhi, 2026) accomplishes this with remarkable skill. Based on the life of William Smith, the pioneering geologist who created the world's first geological map, the novel transforms a significant chapter of scientific history into a compelling human drama.

At its core, the book is the story of an outsider challenging established authority. William Smith emerges not merely as a scientist but as a determined individual whose curiosity and perseverance enable him to see what others overlook. As he painstakingly maps England's geological formations, readers witness the birth of a revolutionary way of understanding the Earth. The novel captures both the excitement of discovery and the immense personal sacrifices that often accompany groundbreaking work.

One of the book's greatest strengths is its portrayal of the tension between scientific inquiry and entrenched belief systems. Set during a period when new ideas frequently collided with religious orthodoxy and social hierarchy, the narrative vividly depicts the obstacles faced by those who dared to question accepted truths.

Smith's struggles are not only intellectual but also social, as a man of modest origins confronting institutions dominated by privilege and power.

The author skillfully blends historical detail with engaging storytelling. Geological concepts and scientific developments are woven naturally into the narrative, ensuring that readers remain absorbed in the characters and conflicts rather than overwhelmed by technical information. The period setting is rendered with authenticity, bringing to life the landscapes, social customs, and intellectual atmosphere of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England. Equally impressive is the novel's exploration of themes that remain relevant today: recognition and ownership of knowledge, the value of independent thinking, and the often-unseen costs of innovation.

These broader questions elevate the story beyond a conventional historical biography. The English translation by Chandana Dutta deserves special mention for preserving the richness and emotional depth of the original Bengali work. The prose flows smoothly, allowing the narrative's power and historical significance to shine through. Thoughtful, inspiring, and meticulously researched, *The Mapmaker* is a rewarding read that celebrates the triumph of curiosity, perseverance, and intellectual courage against formidable odds.



India Urges BRICS Nations To Empower Small Farmers, Ensure Food Security

New Delhi, 12/6: India on Friday appealed to BRICS nations for greater collaboration, urging all member countries to work together towards empowering small farmers, ensuring food security and promoting sustainable agricultural development across the world. Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that collective efforts by BRICS nations can provide a new direction to global agriculture and contribute significantly to building a more secure, sustainable and inclusive agricultural future. Addressing a two-day conference of agriculture ministers of BRICS countries in Indore, Chouhan highlighted India's agricultural achievements, cultural values and commitment to global cooperation. Chouhan highlighted India's focus on strengthening international agricultural partnerships under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and stressed the spirit of



'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', which views the entire world as one family. The Minister said the conference was an important platform for collectively addressing challenges faced by small and marginal farmers across the world, particularly those arising from climate change, pressure on natural resources, rising input costs and uncertainties in agricultural markets. He said that ensuring the welfare and empowerment of small farmers was central to

strengthening global food security and sustainable agricultural growth. If small and marginal farmers become economically strong and technologically capable, he said, the world's food security structure would also become stronger and more resilient. Chouhan said the country's agriculture sector had registered an average annual growth of nearly 4.5 per cent over the last decade. He informed delegates that India's total foodgrain production has now

reached nearly 376 million tonnes (MT), reflecting sustained growth in the sector. Wheat production in the country has reached close to 118 million tonnes, while horticulture production has crossed 378 million tonnes. Fish production has also increased significantly and has now exceeded 19 million tonnes, demonstrating broad-based growth across multiple agricultural and allied sectors. He further said that India is implementing the world's largest food security programme, through which food security is ensured for a very large section of the population. Chouhan said approximately 43 per cent of India's workforce is associated with agriculture and allied sectors, making it one of the most important pillars of the country's economy. Emphasising the role of small and marginal farmers in India's agricultural structure, Chouhan said nearly 87 per cent of farmers in the country belong to this category.

Govt Curbs Diesel Hoarding As OMCs Absorb Losses Of Rs 500 Cr Per Day

New Delhi, 12/6: The government on Friday introduced temporary restrictions on diesel sales through retail outlets to curb hoarding and black marketing, as public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs) continue to absorb losses of around Rs 500 crore per day to shield consumers from global fuel price volatility. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said that the 'Motor Spirit and High-Speed Diesel (Temporary Regulation of Supply through Retail Outlets) Order, 2026' introduces temporary measures initially valid for up to 90 days. The move is aimed at ensuring uninterrupted diesel availability for retail consumers and preventing diversion of subsidised retail fuel supplies to bulk users, the ministry said. Under the new rules, retail outlets will dispense diesel only into vehicle tanks or Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO)-approved containers, with a maximum limit of 200 litres per day per customer or vehicle. However, diesel purchased from retail outlets cannot be resold. In addition, industrial, institutional, commercial and direct consumers have been prohibited from sourcing diesel from retail outlets and must instead procure supplies through designated consumer pumps. The restrictions



follow an unusual rise in diesel demand at retail outlets as bulk consumers increasingly shifted purchases to PSU fuel stations to benefit from lower retail prices, according to the government. Moreover, retail diesel is currently around Rs 40 per litre cheaper than bulk diesel, as PSU OMCs continue to provide price support despite elevated global energy prices. According to the government, public sector fuel retailers are currently absorbing losses of nearly Rs 500 crore every day on the sale of petrol, diesel and domestic LPG to protect households, farmers and other end-users amid ongoing disruptions in West Asia. Data for May 2026 showed a sharp rise in diesel sales through PSU retail outlets, with 327 districts reporting growth of more than

10 per cent compared with the year-ago period and 80 districts recording growth above 30 per cent. At the same time, private oil marketing companies witnessed a decline of around 58 per cent in high-speed diesel (HSD) sales during May due to higher pricing. The ministry said instances of procurement of large quantities of diesel in jerry cans and subsequent resale had come to the government's notice, prompting the latest intervention. OMCs and retail outlet dealers will be responsible for enforcing compliance and preventing circumvention of the order, while state governments and Union Territories have been directed to act against black marketing and unauthorised diversion, the government stated.

Delhi-Bound IndiGo Flight Delayed After Bomb Threat Note Found In Lavatory

New Delhi, 12/6: An IndiGo flight carrying around 180 passengers from Lucknow to Delhi was grounded on Friday after a bomb threat was discovered written on a tissue paper inside one of the aircraft's lavatories, triggering a comprehensive security response at the airport. The flight, scheduled to depart from Lucknow at 10:45 a.m., was preparing for take-off when crew members were alerted to a possible security threat on board. The aircraft was immediately halted at the apron and prevented from departing as security agencies initiated standard emergency procedures. The scare began after a tissue paper bearing the word "bomb" was found inside one of the aircraft's toilets. Following the discovery, airport security personnel and other agencies conducted an extensive inspection of the aircraft and its surroundings. Authorities later determined that the threat was a hoax. No explosive device or suspicious material was found during the security sweep. In a statement, an IndiGo spokesperson said that a security threat was noticed shortly before take-off on flight 6E 2111 operating from Lucknow to Delhi. "Shortly before take-off, a security threat was noticed onboard IndiGo flight 6E 2111 scheduled to operate from Lucknow to Delhi on June 12. Following the established protocol, we informed the relevant authorities immediately and are fully cooperating with them in carrying out the necessary security checks," the spokesperson said. "The aircraft will operate its journey to Delhi post securing relevant clearances. We regret the inconvenience caused to our customers and are making all efforts to minimise it including offering them refreshments and timely updates," it added. The airline also expressed regret over the inconvenience caused to passengers and said efforts were being made to minimise disruption by providing refreshments and regular updates. "As always, safety and security of our customers, crew and aircraft are our topmost priorities," the spokesperson added.

Centre Signs Tripartite Agreement With Assam, Nagaland To Step Up Oil And Gas Hunt

New Delhi, 12/6: The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on Friday signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding with the state governments of Nagaland and Assam to increase domestic exploration and production of oil and gas. Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said that since Assam alone accounts for nearly 22 per cent of India's crude oil reserves and around 15 per cent of the country's natural gas reserves, while Nagaland possesses significant hydrocarbon potential in the Naga-Schuppen Belt of the Assam-Arakan Basin, resources where hydrocarbons flow naturally and those which have huge untapped resources, the outlook for E&P (exploration and production) activities in the North East is extremely promising. By creating a framework for cooperation between the concerned Governments, the MoU signed in the presence of Home Minister Amit Shah, provides certainty to investors, facilitates operational continuity, enables regulatory coordination



and creates conditions necessary for long-term investment decisions, the minister said. "The North East gave birth to India's petroleum industry; today, it stands ready to power the next chapter of India's energy journey as Nagaland will produce oil and gas again after 31 years," Puri remarked. "With the signing of a historic tripartite Memorandum of Understanding between Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Nagaland and Assam, India's quest towards increasing domestic exploration and production of hydrocarbons under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi takes a giant leap as a new basin

opens up for fresh wildcat exploration," the minister further stated. He also thanked Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa for "rising above differences" to chart the way forward for the region and the country. The resumption of mineral oil operations will generate direct and indirect employment, stimulate local entrepreneurship, strengthen physical infrastructure, create opportunities for contractors, service providers and small businesses, and contribute significantly to the economic development of surrounding communities and the entire North East Region, the minister added.

Dawood Gang Plotting Targeted Killings In India To Spread Panic, Warn Intelligence Officials

New Delhi, 12/6: The Dawood Ibrahim syndicate is reportedly assembling a fresh network of sharpshooters across northern India and neighboring states to execute targeted killings of high-profile individuals, intelligence agencies have revealed. An Intelligence Bureau official said that, unlike similar networks in the past, this one is not being pieced together to target high-profile politicians or prominent public figures. Instead, its objective is to carry out targeted killings of individuals who are well-known within their localities. "While the attacks may not attract national attention individually, the network is expected to execute a series of such killings," the official claimed. An official said the pattern bears similarities to incidents witnessed in Jammu and Kashmir a few years

ago, when shopkeepers and other influential local figures accused by terror groups of assisting Indian security agencies were selectively targeted. The Dawood gang's objective is to create fear and spread panic among the public. The plan is to foster a sense of anxiety and uncertainty through a sustained campaign of violence. "The targets are likely to be ordinary individuals chosen at random. While the operations would be carefully planned, the final selection of targets would be left to the network," another official said. The key instruction, the official added, is to ensure the killings occur at regular intervals and follow a discernible pattern. The effort to build this network comes at a time when security agencies recently dismantled a Dawood-linked module allegedly

operated by his aide Munna Jhingada from Pakistan. Investigators said the group was planning a series of blasts at key locations and had recruited several individuals, including a Nepali national. The module was busted through coordinated operations carried out by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police, the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) and the National Investigation Agency (NIA). Officials said the dismantling of the module dealt a major setback to the Dawood syndicate. The operation had reportedly been backed by Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Inter Services Intelligence, which had high expectations from the network and was banking on the syndicate's extensive links in India to ensure its success.

Delhi HC refuses to give direction for reopening of CBSE revaluation portal

New Delhi, 12/6: The Delhi High Court vacation bench on Friday refused to give any direction for the reopening of the revaluation portal of CBSE. The matter has been listed before the roster bench in July. Division bench of justices, Neena Bansal Krishna and Madhu Jain refused to pass any direction after hearing the submissions made by Solicitor General (SG) Tushar Mehta. SG Tushar Mehta argued that 1.27 lakhs aggrieved students have approached through the CBSE portal. There are 3.86 copies of these students being looked into. It was also submitted that the revaluation was opened twice, and aggrieved students have approached for the revaluation. "If the direction is passed for reopening of the revaluation portal, it will affect more than 70 lakh students who appeared in the exam, as it will delay their admission process/chances in undergraduate courses," SG Mehta said. The counsel for petitioner NSUI urged the court to direct the reopening of the revaluation portal for 3 days and submitted that not all the students will be affected if the revaluation portal is open, as the only aggrieved students will file their applications. The NSUI had approached the High Court through a public interest Litigation (PIL) seeking direction for compensatory marks and reopening of the revaluation portal for one month. On June 8, the Delhi High Court sought a response from the Central Government and CBSE on the plea highlighting a discrepancy in marking in the CBSE examination through the On-Screen Marking (OSM) mode. The counsel for CBSE had submitted that the petition is not maintainable as the petitioner is a student wing of a political party. Advocate Mohd Ali Khan alongwith Rishav Ranjan, appeared for the petitioner and submitted that NSUI is a student organisation of 55 years, and students are minors, which is why it is raising the issue. The petitioner had said that they would address the objection raised by the CBSE. During the hearing, the counsel for the CBSE submitted that CBSE is addressing the grievances of students, and affected students can write to the CBSE. The petitioner NSUI has sought directions to CBSE to give compensatory marks where OSM copies are not readable, not properly marked, etc. It is praying for keeping the revaluation portal open for the next month. The petitioner has prayed for directing the reopening of the portal for verification and permitting manual rechecking and physical verification of the answer sheets of affected students, pending disposal of the writ petition.

CBSE Tells SC: Formulating Policy To Declare Results Of Class 12 Private Students In Gulf

New Delhi, 12/6: The Central government informed the Supreme Court on Friday that a policy is being discussed for private students of CBSE outside India whose results could not be declared due to the West Asia conflict. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta urged the Supreme Court to put off the hearing till June 22, as the government is currently looking into some of the questions raised in the petition filed by students living in the Gulf. He said that a policy will soon be introduced for private students in West Asia whose CBSE results could not be declared due to the ongoing war. The government is considering formulating a policy for students impacted by similar situations. In March, the CBSE had cancelled the Class 12 board examinations for students



studying in several West Asian countries in view of the regional crisis. In its sixth circular issued since March 1, the board clarified that even the examination papers that had earlier been postponed would stand cancelled. According to the circular released on March

15, the examinations scheduled from March 16 to April 10, 2026, for CBSE-affiliated schools located in Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were cancelled. Overall, more than 4.37 million students had registered for

CBSE board examinations this year. Of these, around 2.51 million students appeared for Class 10 examinations, while nearly 1.86 million candidates were enrolled for the Class 12 board exams. Students living in Gulf countries had filed a petition in the Supreme Court raising the issue of CBSE not declaring Class 12 results, while exams for students in several Gulf countries were cancelled due to the security situation in the region. On June 8, the apex court issued notice to the CBSE and its Regional Officer in Dubai on a plea filed by a Class 12 student from Saudi Arabia seeking the declaration of his result, which continues to remain withheld despite a special assessment scheme framed for students affected by examination cancellations in West Asian countries.

2 Suspects Apprehended Over Stone-Pelting On Train, With Mohan Bhagwat On Board

New Delhi, 12/6: The Railway Protection Force (RPF) swung into action after some miscreants pelted stones on the Shatabdi Express last evening, on which Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief was travelling and apprehended two suspects. The RPF and UP police, in a joint operation zeroed in two suspects, believed to be rag-pickers after scanning the CCTV footage and apprehended them. The stone-pelting incident happened on Thursday evening when Lucknow-New Delhi Swam Shatabdi Express, with RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on board, was passing through Firozabad station of

Prayagraj division. The windowpane of AC first class coach was broken in the pelted incident, however, neither the RSS chief nor any passenger suffered any injury. The train had crossed Makkhanpur station and was moving through Firozabad district when a stone struck the windowpane of the E-1 coach. Railways Additional Director General (ADG) SK Bhagwat briefing the newsmen about stone-pelting incident informed, "When the Swama Shatabdi Express was passing through around 7:15 PM, in which Mohan Bhagwat was also travelling, someone threw a stone, breaking the windowpane of the AC First Class coach.

US Diplomat Summoned Once Again As India Lodges Strong Protest Over Death Of Three Seafarers

New Delhi, 12/6: The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Friday summoned US Charge d'Affaires Jason Meeks once again to lodge New Delhi's protest against continuing attacks on commercial vessels off the coast of Oman which recently claimed the lives of three Indian seafarers. India had on Wednesday lodged a "strong protest" over recent attacks on vessels operating near the Strait of Hormuz, including the commercial ship Settebello off the coast of Oman, where three Indian nationals were killed. "We had summoned the US Cda to register our protest on the attack that happened on this commercial vessel off the coast of Oman Settebello. Three Indian nationals have died in that incident. We conveyed our deepest concerns on these incidents and the string of attacks that are happening. And we hope and expect that these would end, these would come to an immediate halt. Also our deep concerns regarding targeting of



commercial ships, of marine personnel, as also civilian infrastructure. So, we conveyed our concerns to the American side, to the US side on these attacks," MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal had stated during a media briefing on Thursday. The United States said on Thursday that it is in "direct contact" with India on the issue. Responding to India's diplomatic demarche, a US State Department official said Washington remains engaged with the Indian government on the

matter. "The Department of State is in direct contact with the Indian government regarding this matter," the official told IANS. India has repeatedly stressed the importance of keeping the Strait of Hormuz open to international shipping. The MEA said all three vessels involved in the recent incidents were foreign-flagged ships. "As you would have seen in the various reports, as also in what was clarified through our statements and otherwise from this podium, the three ships that have

been involved in the incidents are foreign-flagged. Two of them are Palau-flagged, and the third one, which came under attack today, is Guinea-flagged. They are not Indian owned ships, they are all foreign flagships. I also understand that two of them are OFAC-sanctioned ships and one of them also is in the category of a non-compliant ship," MEA spokesperson Jaiswal said. The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most important energy transit routes, carrying a substantial share of global oil and gas exports. The waterway has become increasingly sensitive as tensions and military activity have escalated across the region. India has one of the world's largest seafaring workforces, with thousands of Indian nationals serving aboard merchant vessels operating in the Gulf and other international waters. New Delhi has routinely raised concerns over maritime security whenever regional conflicts threaten commercial shipping lanes.

India Backs Early Breakthrough In US-Iran Negotiations: EAM Jaishankar

Helsinki, 12/6: External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar has expressed hope that the US-Iran negotiations would yield an early breakthrough, noting that the continuing conflict is creating challenges and leaving much of the world in the position of a "frustrated observer." India backs early breakthrough in US-Iran ties: EAM Jaishankar Speaking during a panel discussion at the Kultaranta Talks with his Finnish counterpart Elina Valtonen and UAE's Assistant Foreign Minister Lana Nusseibeh on "Emerging Powers and the New Geopolitical Competition," in Helsinki, EAM Jaishankar said that many countries, including India, are attempting to contribute to de-escalation efforts amid the rising tensions. When asked whether India is just stuck in the role of kind of a "frustrated observer" or could do more to help address the situation, EAM said, "I think at this time much of the world is stuck in the position

of a frustrated observer. But a lot of countries are trying to do what they can in this situation. So it's not for want of trying. I'm talking about us alone, but I think certainly there are not that many countries that would have decent relations with all the parties involved. So, clearly, we have sort of reasoned with the countries. We have been in touch with them. We hope very much that, you know, the US-Iran negotiation leads to an early outcome. And the continuation of the fighting is creating problems," he said. EAM Jaishankar further underscored the complexity of the situation in West Asia, saying that India enjoys strong relations with all the key stakeholders in the region, including the US, Israel, Iran and the Gulf countries. Describing India as one of the world's leading powers whose role matters on major global issues, the moderator asked EAM Jaishankar how New Delhi assesses the twin challenges posed by the Russia-Ukraine war

and the situation involving Iran and how it is attempting to steer through them. Responding to a question, the EAM said, "Well, you know, mostly countries are committed to wars they fight and are equivocal about ones that they observe as a general proposition. So I can think of a lot of wars close to us where the rest of the world is quite equivocal. In this particular case here's the challenge. You have, for the sake of simplicity, four parties, which are the US, Israel, and Iran. I'm using the Gulf as a party, though I accept they are; they have a very differentiated position, and we have extremely good, extremely strong relations with all of them." When asked whether that assessment also extended to Iran, EAM Jaishankar replied that India maintains "good and substantial relations" with Tehran, while noting that New Delhi's ties with the four key actors involved in the regional dynamics are not identical in nature or scope.

Finnish President Hails India's Growing Global Influence In Talks With EAM Jaishankar

Helsinki, 12/6: Finnish President Alexander Stubb described India as an "influential actor" on the global stage and underscored the importance of hearing New Delhi's perspective during a meeting with External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar on the sidelines of the Kultaranta Talks in Helsinki. Following the meeting, Stubb took to X and posted, "We met today at Kultaranta with India's Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar. We discussed the situation in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, efforts to end Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, and the upcoming G7 summit. India is an influential actor whose views are important to hear." The two leaders exchanged perspectives on the evolving geopolitical situation and underscored the importance of diplomacy in navigating an increasingly uncertain global environment. "India and Finland remain committed to advancing our Strategic Partnership in Digitalization and Sustainability while strengthening coordination in multilateral fora on issues of shared interest," he added. EAM participated in a discussion with Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen and Foreign Minister of State Lana Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 'Emerging Powers and the



evolving geopolitical situation and underscored the importance of diplomacy in navigating an increasingly uncertain global environment. "India and Finland remain committed to advancing our Strategic Partnership in Digitalization and Sustainability while strengthening coordination in multilateral fora on issues of shared interest," he added. EAM participated in a discussion with Finnish Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen and Foreign Minister of State Lana Nusseibeh of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 'Emerging Powers and the

New Geopolitical Competition' at the Kultaranta Talks. During the discussions, EAM Jaishankar noted that ongoing conflicts are imposing costs and triggering changes far beyond the regions and agreed that the international community must continue efforts to mitigate their consequences and create conditions for diplomacy. He emphasised the importance of de-risking and diversifying supply chains to build greater resilience and redundancy in an increasingly volatile world.

South Korea's Ex-President Yoon Sentenced To 30 Yrs In Prison In Drone Infiltration Case

Seoul, 12/6: A Seoul court on Friday sentenced former South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol to 30 years in prison after finding him guilty of ordering drone infiltrations into North Korea in an attempt to heighten cross-border tensions and create a basis for his martial law declaration in December 2024. The Seoul Central District Court convicted the jailed former president on charges of benefiting the enemy and abuse of power in its ruling that matched special counsel Cho Eun-suk's sentencing recommendation. The court recognised that Yoon had ordered the operation in October 2024 to provoke Pyongyang and use the anticipated increase in cross-border tensions as a pretext for his December 3 declaration of martial law, Yonhap News Agency reported. Yoon's legal team appealed the ruling hours later. The court also sentenced South Korea's former Defence Minister Kim Yong-hyun to 30 years in prison for his role in such operations, higher than the 25 years sought by the special



counsel. It sentenced Yeo In-hyung, former head of the Defence Counterintelligence Command, to 15 years in prison for his involvement in the operation, while Kim Yong-dae, former chief of the Drone Operations Command, received a three-year sentence suspended for five years. "In order to create conditions for martial law, the defendants decided to use the military tactic of psychological warfare to incite North Korea and induce a provocation, and use

that to prompt an armed provocation, such as a local conflict, or create a national security crisis situation resulting from heightened military tension," the court said. It said the actions amounted to "betraying" the people's expectation that the president and the defence minister would use military force only for legitimate purposes, adding that there was a personal motivation behind the operation. Yoon's legal team has argued that the

drone deployment was a legitimate military operation in response to North Korea's launches of trash-carrying balloons into South Korea in 2024. The court ruled that the operation undermined South Korea's security interests by exposing its military assets to North Korea and, as a result, strengthening North Korea's military readiness. In October 2024, Pyongyang accused Seoul of drone infiltrations and dropping propaganda leaflets over the North's capital. Then Defence Minister Kim had initially denied the North Korean accusation. The defence ministry later said it could neither confirm nor deny the accusation. Friday's ruling marked the latest conviction for Yoon, who is currently in custody and faces multiple trials linked to his botched martial law bid. In February, he was sentenced to life imprisonment for leading an insurrection through his martial law declaration. He has appealed that ruling.

Trump Signals Political Shift In Iran

Washington, 12/6: US President Donald Trump suggested that recent US military action had reshaped Iran's leadership structure, saying a new group of leaders had emerged in Tehran and was proving more willing to negotiate with Washington. Speaking at the White House, Trump argued that military pressure had fundamentally altered the political landscape inside Iran and created conditions for a breakthrough agreement on Tehran's nuclear programme. "It's a regime change, because I find these people to be much more rational than the people that are no longer with us," Trump told reporters. The remarks came as Trump expressed confidence that the United States and Iran were nearing a formal agreement that would permanently prevent Tehran from



obtaining a nuclear weapon. According to the President, the Iranian leadership currently engaged in negotiations differs significantly from the officials who previously directed the country's policies. "We knocked out the first team of

leadership, the second team of leadership," Trump said. "There's a different group there's a different level and I think it's frankly a smarter level, and it's a level that has reason." Trump said the new leadership had approved the framework agreement and was

committed to completing it. "They've all approved the deal," he said. "Everybody's approved the deal." The President attributed the shift in Tehran's position to the impact of recent military operations. "They've taken a pounding," Trump said. "They want to make the deal a lot more than I do." He painted a bleak picture of Iran's military capabilities following the conflict. Their navy is gone, their air force is gone, their anti-aircraft is gone, everything's gone," Trump said. Despite those losses, Trump said he now viewed the current Iranian leadership as prepared to engage pragmatically with the United States. "We found them to be rational and they're going to make a deal," he said. The President repeatedly stressed that the central purpose of the negotiations remained preventing Iran from

acquiring nuclear weapons. "They will not purchase, develop in any way, any shape, in any way, shape or form a nuclear weapon," Trump said. "They will not have a nuclear weapon." Trump described the proposed arrangement as "a very strong memorandum of understanding" and said it could be signed within days. "It's something that's going to get done," he said. The President also suggested that a successful agreement could create opportunities for Iran to rebuild. "They've got a chance to build a country," Trump said. His comments are likely to attract attention because US administrations have traditionally avoided explicitly endorsing regime change as an objective of American policy toward Iran. Trump's remarks appeared to link recent military operations with broader political changes inside the country.

US Foreign Investment Bill Targets China, Ethics Concerns

Washington, 12/6: Democratic lawmakers introduced legislation that would create a new federal authority to review and monitor large foreign investment commitments in the United States, arguing that Washington needs stronger safeguards to ensure such investments benefit American workers and do not create ethical conflicts for public officials. The proposal, led by Senator Tammy Baldwin and Congressman Ro Khanna, comes as the White House touts hundreds of billions of dollars in investment commitments from countries including Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, while also pursuing broader economic engagement with China. The legislation would establish a new body called the Foreign Investment Review Authority (FIRA), tasked with identifying, tracking and publicly disclosing foreign investment commitments made to the United States. It would also assess whether investments provide what lawmakers describe as a "net economic benefit" to the country through job creation, domestic production and supply-chain integration. "While foreign investments can create jobs and support our local economies, they also can open the door to adversaries undercutting American workers and the President lining his pockets," Baldwin said. "If foreign countries are going to invest in the United States like the President says they are, we need some basic oversight and transparency to make sure its American workers and American communities seeing a return, not our adversaries, the President's family, or the well-connected," she added. Khanna said the measure would help prevent foreign governments from using investment commitments to gain unfair economic advantages. "Establishing the Foreign Investment Review Authority (FIRA) would empower the US government with the tools it needs to ensure investment commitments negotiated by the President benefit working Americans and never our economic adversaries, such as the People's Republic of China (PRC)," he said. "Our bill would ensure foreign countries are unable to leverage FDI to gain unfair access to the US market or make corrupt deals that lack Congressional oversight," Khanna added. The lawmakers said foreign direct investment can create jobs, encourage innovation and strengthen cooperation with allies. However, they argued that economic competitors, particularly China, have at times used investment to expand influence in key industries and gain access to the US market. The bill cites announced investment commitments including \$550 billion from Japan, \$350 billion from South Korea and \$500 billion from Taiwan. It also references anticipated investments linked to a recently announced US-China Board of Investment and Board of Trade.

White House To Host UFC Event In Unprecedented Move

Washington: The South Lawn of the White House has hosted Presidents, foreign leaders, Easter egg rolls and state ceremonies. This weekend, it will host cage fighting as an octagon now stands on the grounds of the White House as the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) prepares for an event unlike any in its history. Thousands of spectators are expected to attend, while millions more are likely to watch

worldwide as the sport stages fights at one of the most recognisable addresses in the world. For longtime observers of both the White House and mixed martial arts, the moment represents an extraordinary collision of sports, politics and popular culture. "It's unprecedented. There's never been anything like this," John Decker of Gray Television told IANS in an interview. Decker, who

has covered the White House for 30 years, said he could not recall a comparable event on the presidential grounds. "I've covered the White House for 30 years. I can't think of any instance in which you've seen a professional sporting match happening on the south lawn of the White House," he said. The event is part of celebrations marking America's 250th anniversary and comes amid

President Donald Trump's longstanding association with the UFC and its president, Dana White. "The President's a big fan of UFC and the President's an investor in UFC," Decker said. "He's good friends with the founder of UFC, Dana White." The sight of a fighting cage outside the White House may appear unusual to many international audiences. Yet for followers of the UFC, it is being

viewed as the culmination of a decades-long rise from sporting outlier to global entertainment powerhouse. Few journalists have witnessed that transformation more closely than Randy Harris, founder of Knockout Radio. Speaking to IANS, Harris recalled covering the UFC from its earliest days. "I've covered the UFC longer than anyone in the world. I started covering the UFC at UFC one," he said.

India's Retail Inflation At 3.93 Pc In May, Sensex Jumps Nearly 1,700 Points Remains Below RBI's 4 Pc Target

New Delhi, 12/6: India's retail inflation stood at 3.93 per cent in May, remaining below the Reserve Bank of India's medium-term target of 4 per cent, according to provisional data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on Friday. However, it slightly inches up from 3.48 per cent recorded in previous month (April). The inflation data cannot be compared with the corresponding period last year due to the rebasing of the CPI basket, which now uses 2024 as the base year. The revised series was introduced in January based on consumption patterns captured in the 2023-24 Household Consumption Expenditure Survey. The continued rise in inflation suggests that price pressures are beginning to emerge after a relatively benign start to the year. Economists have pointed to elevated crude oil prices and ongoing geopolitical tensions in West Asia as key factors contributing to concerns over imported inflation. In its June monetary policy review, the RBI revised its inflation forecast for FY27 to 5.1 per cent from 4.6 per cent earlier, citing risks from a potentially below-normal



monsoon linked to El Nino conditions and higher global energy prices. The central bank kept the benchmark repo rate unchanged at 5.25 per cent on June 5. The six-member Monetary Policy Committee unanimously voted to maintain the status quo and retain a neutral policy stance, signalling a cautious approach as it assesses the impact of rising oil prices and global uncertainties on

the domestic economy. The conflict in West Asia has also added pressure on the Indian economy by affecting currency markets and raising concerns about stagflation. However, India's economic growth has remained resilient, with GDP expanding 7.8 per cent in the fourth quarter and 7.7 per cent for the full FY26. Food prices continue to play a crucial role in

determining headline inflation, given their significant weight in the CPI basket. Since June 2025, food inflation had remained in negative territory, helping drive overall retail inflation to historic lows. In October last year, headline CPI inflation had fallen to a record low of 0.25 per cent, supported by food inflation of minus 5.02 per cent.

Sensex Jumps Nearly 1,700 Points On Hopes Of US-Iran Peace Deal

Mumbai, 12/6: Indian equity benchmarks rallied sharply on Friday, with the Sensex soaring nearly 1,700 points and the Nifty reclaiming the 23,600 mark, as investor sentiment improved on hopes of a potential peace agreement between the United States and Iran. The Sensex closed at 75,527.95, gaining 1,695.40 points, or 2.30 per cent, from its previous close of 73,832.55. The 30-share index opened at 74,709.27 and touched an intraday high of 75,608.02 before settling near the day's peak. The Nifty also ended strongly at 23,622.90, up 461.30 points, or 1.99 per cent. The index opened at 23,412.55 and climbed to an intra-day high of 23,645.35 during the session. Commenting on Nifty technical outlook, experts said that a sustained move above 23,800 could further improve sentiment and pave the way toward the 24,000 psychological mark.

"On the downside, the 23,550-23,500 region is now expected to act as an important immediate support area, having transitioned



from resistance to support following the breakout," an analyst stated. The rally came after US President Donald Trump said that Washington had reached a "great settlement" with Iran and that only the finalisation of the document remained. The comments fuelled optimism in global markets, with investors betting that easing geopolitical tensions could stabilise energy supplies and reduce uncertainty. Among Nifty constituents, Shriram Finance, Bajaj Finance and Larsen & Toubro emerged as the top gainers.

The broader market also witnessed robust gains. The Nifty MidCap index ended 2.43 per cent higher, while the Nifty SmallCap index advanced 2.8 per cent. Sectorally, real estate and financial stocks led the upmove. The Nifty Realty and Nifty Financial Services indices surged more than 3 per cent each, outperforming other sectoral gauges. In contrast, the Nifty IT index lagged the broader market and emerged as the weakest-performing sector during the session.

OpenAI mulls price cuts as it prepares for public market debut: Report

San Francisco [US], 12/6: In what could eventually become a hotly-contested price war, OpenAI is considering slashing prices of the AI offerings as it prepares for its public market debut, according to a WSJ report. The ChatGPT-maker confidentially filed for an IPO earlier this week after archrival Anthropic did the same last week. OpenAI CEO Sam Altman had earlier identified rising costs as a huge problem. "The company is weighing significant cuts to what it charges for tokens, the unit of measurement artificial-intelligence firms use to bill for their products," the WSJ report said. The price cut by OpenAI could be in anticipation of a similar move that Anthropic is likely considering, the report added. Both the companies are fiercely competing with each other to get a larger share of the enterprise AI market.



Anthropic's Claude has made headways for its enterprise AI offerings and the company is looking to double its revenue to USD10.9 billion in second quarter from USD4.8 billion in the first quarter. Both OpenAI and Anthropic are also vying to get a greater share of the coding market and win confidence of

software engineers with their respective offerings Claude Code and Codex respectively. Anthropic recently surpassed OpenAI in terms of valuation as the Claude-maker raised USD65 billion in Series H funding in May at USD965 billion. OpenAI was last valued at USD852 billion in

March. Both companies have raised the stakes in the tough AI battle amid global corporations adopting agentic AI tools to increase productivity. The price cut could further crimp margins for these companies that are already burning dollars for massive compute capacity to train their AI models. Another major AI player SpaceX will list on Nasdaq on Friday. The Elon Musk-owned company has fixed the IPO price at USD135 per share eyeing a valuation of USD1.75 trillion. A blockbuster listing could catapult the Tesla owner to become the world's first trillionaire. Big AI players are pouring in billions of dollars to ramp up capacities anticipating a boom in AI demand. Major hyperscalers like Amazon AWS and Google-parent Alphabet are raising funds to ramp up their compute capacities.

Govt Unveils Draft Rules To Simplify Broadcasting Regulations, Boost Ease Of Business

New Delhi, 12/6: The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting published draft Telecommunications (Television, Radio and Associated Services) Rules, 2026, to consolidate erstwhile television and radio guidelines under the new Telecommunications Act, 2023, and opened them for public consultation, an official statement said on Friday. "With this set of rules, the industry will now have a unified and significantly simplified rule book. These rules are designed to simplify and harmonise the existing regime while promoting ease of doing business in the television and radio broadcasting sector," the ministry said. The draft rules combine a range of earlier policies into a single regulatory framework, including the policy guidelines for uplinking and downlinking of satellite television channels in India, guidelines for obtaining a licence to provide direct to home broadcasting services in India, and guidelines for providing headend in the sky broadcasting services in India. Further policy guidelines on the expansion of FM radio broadcasting services through



private agencies, phase III, and revised policy guidelines for setting up community radio stations in India are also integrated into the new framework. Once notified, the rules will replace various existing guidelines governing broadcasting services, the statement noted. Key features of the draft rules include harmonised terms and conditions of authorisation to facilitate continuity while enabling reforms; a single regulatory framework replacing multiple guidelines, facilitating ease of doing business. Digital implementation

of the authorisation process and simplified authorisation procedures, removal of the requirement for signing the Grant of Permission Agreement (GOPA), and a provision of a transparent adjudication mechanism are some other features. These draft rules have been published on the website of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for public and inter-ministerial consultation, the statement noted, adding that inputs, comments, or suggestions, if any, may be sent to the Under Secretary (BP&L) of the ministry by July 27, 2026.

SpaceX IPO Pricing Lifts Elon Musk's Net Worth To Around \$970 Billion Gold, Silver Gain Up To 2 PC Amid Optimism Over West Asia Peace Talks

New Delhi, 12/6: Space Exploration Technologies Corp. (SpaceX) — the Elon Musk-led rocket and satellite company — has priced its blockbuster initial public offering (IPO), pushing Musk's net worth to nearly \$970 billion and bringing him closer to becoming the world's first trillionaire, as per multiple reports. Reports claim that SpaceX priced its shares at \$135 apiece, raising about \$75 billion in what is being billed as the largest IPO in history and valuing the company at around \$1.77 trillion. The company is expected to begin trading on Nasdaq under the ticker symbol 'SPCX'. The IPO pricing is estimated to add roughly \$275 billion to Musk's wealth, taking his net worth to around \$970 billion. Musk's SpaceX holdings, including options, are valued at approximately \$688 billion at the IPO price. Regulatory filings showed that Musk beneficially owns 849.49 million Class A shares and



5.57 billion Class B shares as of May 1, representing a combined holding of around 6.42 billion shares across both classes. Before completion of the offering, Musk controls about 85 per cent of the company's voting power through SpaceX's dual-class structure, under which Class B shares carry ten votes each compared with one vote for each Class A share. The filing also disclosed major insider holdings across the company's leadership and

board. Founded by Musk in 2002, SpaceX has become one of the world's most prominent aerospace companies through its Falcon 9 and Falcon Heavy reusable rockets, Dragon spacecraft and Starship launch programme. The company has also expanded through its satellite internet business, Starlink. The listing is expected to mark a watershed moment for public markets and could trigger a fresh wave of mega technology IPOs in the coming months.

Mumbai, 12/6: Gold and silver prices traded higher on Friday, with precious metals surging by up to 2 per cent amid hopes of a peace deal in the ongoing West Asia conflict. On the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), gold futures (August) increased as much as 1.11 per cent or Rs 1,668 to hit an intraday high of Rs 1,50,600 as of around 11:30 am. The yellow metal was trading at Rs 1,49,916, up 0.66 per cent or Rs 948. It touched an intraday low of Rs 1,49,569, a gain of 0.42 per cent or Rs 637 from the previous close. Meanwhile, silver futures (July) traded at Rs 2,42,143, higher by Rs 2,490 or 1 per cent. The white metal touched an intraday high of Rs 2,44,817, jumping 2.15 per cent during the session so far. It recorded an intraday low of Rs 2,41,601, up 0.81 per cent or Rs 1,948 from the previous close. Earlier in the day, gold and silver began the session at Rs 1,50,595 and Rs 2,42,776, respectively, on the commodity exchange. According to commodity market experts, bullion remained under pressure overall and was headed for a



second consecutive weekly decline as persistent inflation concerns and growing expectations of a US Federal Reserve rate hike continued to weigh on sentiment. Analysts said precious metals rebounded sharply from six-month lows after US President Donald Trump indicated that the US and Iran could reach a peace agreement as early as this weekend. However, gains remained limited amid continued uncertainty over the

negotiations, with Iranian officials denying that a final agreement had been reached, according to them. Optimism around a potential diplomatic breakthrough eased concerns over global energy supplies, triggering a decline in crude oil prices and improving broader market risk appetite, experts added. Market participants will now track developments in US-Iran negotiations and upcoming commentary from the Federal

Reserve for further direction in precious metal prices. In international markets, COMEX silver traded at \$66.94, up more than 4 per cent, while COMEX gold rose over 2 per cent to \$4,203.70 per ounce. Meanwhile, crude oil prices declined sharply, with US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude falling roughly 3 per cent to \$85 per barrel. International benchmark Brent crude declined 1.59 per cent to \$88.94 per barrel.

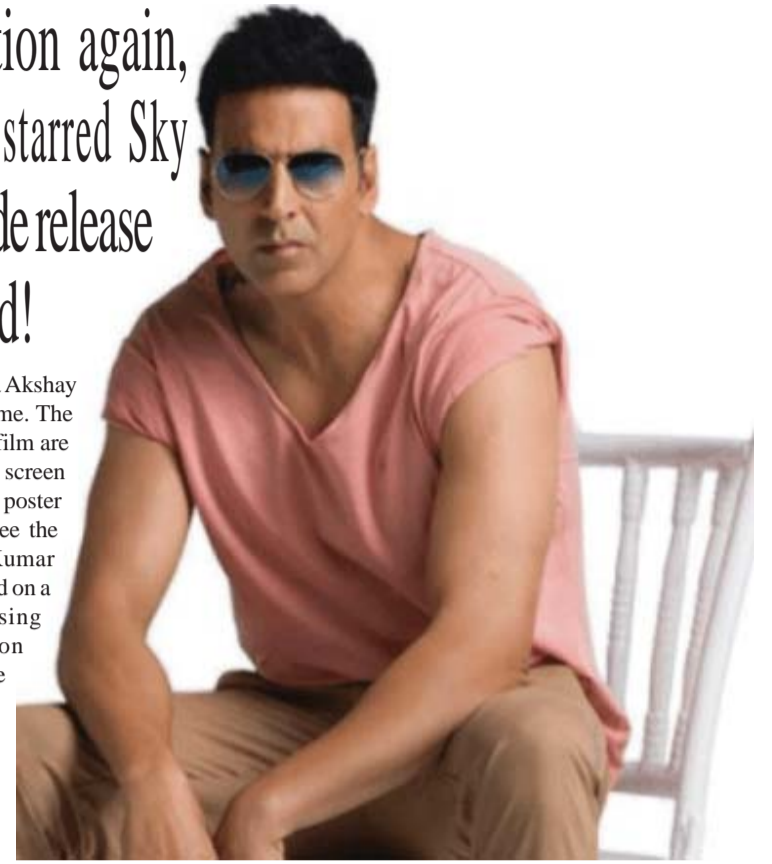
Ram Charan Stuns All with rugged, rustic look in Peddi, Netizens see Allu Arjun, Yash!

On 40th birthday of the Oscar fame RRR star Ram Charan, the makers revealed his upcoming film's title and first-look posters. The release has set a hysteric wave of excitement among the star's massive fanbase. The fans are euphoric over his raw, rustic and rugged look in the new movie, and they have declared it as another blockbuster loading. The Buchi Babu Sana helmed upcoming Ram Charan movie RC 16 is now titled as Peddi. After the poor performance of Rams Charan's last flick Game Changer, the versatile actor has geared up to make a bounce back on the big screen with his 16th film. The first-look posters show Ram Charan in a fierce and rugged avatar. He sports messy hair, an untamed beard, a nose ring, and an intense gaze. In one poster, he wears a striped red outfit and smokes a cigar, exuding raw energy. The second poster features him gripping an old cricket bat, appearing fierce, standing against a floodlit rustic stadium. Sharing the posters, Buchi Babu Sana wrote, "Happy Birthday my Dear @AlwaysRamCharan Sir.. In one word, you are Gold Sir. Tqq for everything Sir."The actor has posted the Peddi first on his instagram with a caption A FIGHT FOR IDENTITY!!Peddi also features Shiva Rajkumar, Janhvi Kapoor, Jagapathi Babu, and Divyendu Sharma. Buchi Babu Sana has written the film, while Mythri Movie Makers and Sukumar Writings are presenting it under the Vriddhi Cinemas banner. Venkata Satish Kilaru is producing the project, with AR Rahman composing the music. The crew also includes cinematographer R Rathnavelu, production designer Avinash Kolla, and editor Navin Nooli. VY Praveen Kumar serves as the executive producer. Filming is set to begin soon.Ram Charan's previous film Game Changer underperformed at the box office despite high expectations. The film, co-starring Kiara Advani, was released in cinemas on January 10. Though it failed to impress in theatres, it is now streaming on Prime Video in Telugu, with Tamil and Kannada dubs available.Previously, on Janhvi Kapoor's 28th birthday (March 6), Buchi Babu Sana shared her first-look poster from Peddi on X (formerly Twitter). The director also wished the actress a happy birthday. In the poster, Janhvi Kapoor is smiling from ear to ear.



Khiladi in action again, Akshay Kumar starred Sky Force worldwide release date announced!

Bhubaneswar: Seeda Saada Akshay Akshay... is back in the game. The Khiladi star and Maddock film are preparing to rock the silver screen with Sky Force.As per the poster released by the makers (See the poster below), Akshay Kumar starred film Sky Force based on a true story will be releasing worldwide in cinemas on January 25.The makers have also announced launching of the trailer of the film on Jan 5 (Sunday). In the film, Akshay Kumar plays the role of an Air Force officer.According to reports, the movie was first conceived in June 2022, and the official announcement of the film was made in 2023. The film is about India's first and deadliest airstrike during the Indo-Pakistani air war of 1965. The shooting of the film was completed in April 2024, and the release date of Sky Force was actually slated on October 2, 2024. But it was postponed. Take a glance at the Oct 2 release date shared by none other than Akshay Kumar.Finally, the film's release date has been announced on Jan 25, and the date shows the makers are looking to go on an overdrive patriotic fervor of Republic day to take the film collections to a soaring height.The film brings on to the screen India's retaliatory attack on Sargodha Air base in Pakistan in the 1965 Indo-Pak War. The air attack is being described a India's first and deadliest.In addition to Akshay Kumar, the film also see Saar Ali Khan, Nimrit Kaur, debutant Veer, and Sharad Kelkar in pivotal roles. Sandeep Kewlani and Abhishek Kapur directed the film, while Dinesh Vijan, Amar Kaushik, and Jyoti Deshpande have produced the film..



DDLJ statue unveiling in London delayed amid rising India-Pakistan tensions



1 Fans of the beloved Bollywood classic Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (DDLJ), starring Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol, will have to wait a little longer to see their favorite characters, Raj and Simran, honored in bronze at London's Leicester Square.The statue unveiling—originally set for this spring to celebrate the film's 30th anniversary—has been postponed due to escalating tensions between India and Pakistan following a deadly terror attack in Pahalgam in April. According to Yash Raj Films (YRF), the delay was a necessary precaution in light of recent developments.The Heart of London Business Alliance confirmed that the statue will eventually become part of the popular "Scenes in the Square" movie trail, joining other legendary cinematic tributes. The bronze sculpture will capture the iconic pose of Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol from DDLJ, a film that has left an enduring mark on Indian cinema.Released in 1995, Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge is a romantic drama directed by Aditya Chopra and produced by Yash Chopra. It tells the story of Raj and Simran, two young Indians who fall in love while traveling through Europe. Despite the cultural and familial obstacles they face, the film highlights themes of love, tradition, and the significance of family.Shot across India, London, and Switzerland, DDLJ became the highest-grossing Indian film of its year and one of the most successful in history. Its legacy continues to influence generations of moviegoers worldwide.

Pushpa 2 The Rule's Kissik Hindi song not runaway hit like Jhoome Jo Pathan; Song a record smashing hit in South India



Nine days to go for Pushpa 2 The Rule to hit the silver screen. The Allu Arjun starred movie is ruling the air now. In the popular IMDb trending ratings, the Pushpa 2 is ruling at an unprecedented rate of 62.9%. The rating had reached 64.9%, prior to the release of the most awaited item song Kissik. After the release of song preview at a mega event in Chennai, the popular ratings on Tuesday are quoted lower. Is this down rating is due to mixed reviews on the much awaited song Kissik?The lyrics of Kissik (Hindi) is written by Raqueeb Alam and the music is given by Rockstar DSP. Voice to the Hindi version is lent by Lothika & Sublahshini. Most of the music lovers have given a thumb down to the lyrics, especially when it faces comparison with Pushpa 's Oo Ontava (or Oo Oo Bolega..). Comments by many viewers were that the Kissik lyrics has no substance vis-à-vis the Oo Ontava (or Bolega).

SPORTS

PV Sindhu Confirms Semifinal Spot At Australian Open

Sydney: World No. 10 PV Sindhu booked her place in the semifinals of the Australian Open currently underway at the Quaycentre in Sydney with a dominant victory over Chinese Taipei's Chen Su Yu.In a match lasting just 27 minutes, the third-seeded Indian controlled both games from the beginning to seal a 21-6, 21-9 victory. The result marks Sindhu's second semifinal appearance of the season, having previously reached the last four at the Malaysia Open 2026.An interesting semifinal awaits Sindhu as the two-time Olympic medallist takes on top seed and three-time world champion Akane Yamaguchi. The clash will be the 29th meeting between the two, with Sindhu holding a 15-13 advantage in their head-to-head record. However, the Japanese has won four of their last five encounters. The result was Sindhu's second semifinal appearance in eight BWF World Tour events this season, offering a timely confidence boost after an inconsistent run on the circuit. The good run of young Indian Tanvi Sharma came to an end in the quarterfinals as she was outclassed by Japan's Akane



Yamaguchi, whose solid defence and pinpoint accuracy were too difficult to counter.Tanvi's journey to the quarter-finals may have ended in disappointment but she produced a series of solid displays and a few major upsets that underlined her burgeoning promise and marked another important step in the career of one of India's brightest b a d m i n t o n prospects.Yamaguchi advanced to the semis with a 21-14, 21-14 victory over India's Tanvi Sharma in 32 minutes.In men's doubles, the Indian pair of Hariharan Amsakarunan and MR Arjun were forced to retire during the second game against opponents from Chinese Taipei.Earlier, Sindhu, World Junior Championships runner-up Tanvi Sharma, and the men's

FIFA WC 2026: Mexico Ignite World Cup Dream As Quinones And Jimenez Down South Africa In Fiery Opener

New Delhi,12/6: The roar inside Estadio Azteca had been building for months. When the moment finally arrived, Mexico delivered exactly what a nation had hoped for — a winning start to the 2026 FIFA World Cup.In front of a packed home crowd, El Tri defeated South Africa 2-0 in a dramatic tournament opener that featured history-making goals, red-card chaos, and the unmistakable sense that Mexico's World Cup journey could be something special.The hosts wasted little time imposing themselves on the contest. Mexico controlled possession and repeatedly stretched South Africa's defense. Their pressure was rewarded when Julian Quinones etched his name into World Cup folklore, scoring the first goal of the tournament and sending the stadium into delirium.Quinones was the game's standout performer, constantly troubling the South African back line with his pace and movement. The forward nearly doubled his tally before halftime, but the visitors survived the scare and reached the break trailing by just a single goal.Any hopes of a South African comeback were severely damaged shortly after the restart.With Mexico

threatening to break clear, Yaya Sithole hauled down Brian Gutierrez as the midfielder raced through on goal. The referee wasted little time in producing a straight red card, reducing Bafana Bafana to ten men and shifting momentum even further toward the hosts.Mexico sensed the opportunity and tightened their grip on proceedings. The breakthrough that effectively sealed victory arrived through one of the nation's most experienced stars. Veteran striker Raul Jimenez showed his trademark composure in front of goal, finishing clinically to double Mexico's advantage and ignite celebrations throughout the stadium.South Africa's afternoon then descended into frustration and indiscipline. Themba Zwane was dismissed for violent conduct, leaving his side with only nine players and virtually ending any realistic chance of a late revival. Deep into stoppage time, Mexico defender Cesar Montes was shown a red card for a reckless challenge, ensuring that the World Cup's opening match ended with only 19 players remaining on the pitch. While the dismissal slightly dampened the hosts' celebrations, it could not overshadow what had otherwise been a memorable evening.