

# Dumani Mail

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



## PM Modi Condolences Deaths, Announces Ex Gratia

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday expressed grief over the loss of lives in a major fire at a coaching centre in Uttar Pradesh's capital, Lucknow, and announced ex gratia for the victims. "Anguished by the loss of lives in a fire mishap in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. My condolences to the bereaved families. May the injured recover at the earliest," he said in a post on X. The Prime Minister also announced financial assistance for the victims' families. "Rescue operations are underway and authorities are providing all possible assistance. An ex gratia of Rs 2 lakh from the PMNRF will be given to the next of kin of each deceased. The injured will be given Rs 50,000," he added. Defence Minister and Lucknow MP Rajnath Singh also offered condolences to the kin of those who died in the incident. "The incident of a fire breaking out at a coaching centre in Lucknow's Aliganj area is heart-wrenching. My condolences are with all those families who have lost their loved ones in this tragedy. At the same time, I pray for the swift recovery of all the injured," he said in a post on X.



## Fourteen Killed in Lucknow Coaching Centre Fire

Lucknow: At least 14 persons were killed in a major fire that broke out in a three-storey building in the Purania area of Aliganj here on Monday, UP Deputy Chief Minister Brajesh Pathak said. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who was in Aligarh, cut short his visit to return to Lucknow. He expressed deep condolences to the bereaved families. In a post on X, Pathak said: "We have received the extremely distressing news of a massive fire breaking out at a coaching centre located in Purania (Sector D), Lucknow. The injured are being admitted to hospitals for treatment. Necessary instructions have been issued to the officials for the proper treatment of the injured and for every possible assistance. A team of specialist doctors, along with six ambulances, is present at the incident site. I am personally heading to the incident site. I pray to God that all the injured recover their health soon." The



deceased are said to be in the age group of 20 to 24 years. The incident triggered panic and raised fears that casualties may rise further. The blaze erupted in a coaching centre operating inside the building, rapidly filling the entire premises with thick smoke and sparking chaos among

students and others present. In a desperate bid to escape, some individuals jumped down from the upper floors and the terrace, sustaining serious injuries. Eyewitnesses said smoke was first noticed billowing out of the building in the afternoon, and within a

short span, the fire spread rapidly, engulfing the entire structure. With exit routes blocked by flames and smoke, panic-stricken students rushed towards windows and the rooftop. Some even leapt to the ground to save their lives. Several teams of the fire brigade, police

and administration rushed to the spot. Senior officials, including the District Magistrate and Police Commissioner, were present at the site supervising the rescue and relief operations. Rescue teams are continuing efforts to reach people trapped inside the building. With the assistance of local residents, evacuation is being carried out through the rooftop of a nearby building. Firefighters are also attempting to break through the walls of the coaching centre to gain access and rescue those trapped. Officials said several injured persons have been admitted to different hospitals. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained. "The loss of lives in the fire accident in Lucknow is extremely tragic and heart-rending. My condolences are with the bereaved families. I pray to Lord Shri Ram that the departed souls attain peace and the injured recover swiftly," CM Adityanath said in a post on X.

## UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer Announces Resignation

London: Keir Starmer on Monday announced that he is stepping down as the British Prime Minister and leader of the governing Labour Party. In a statement outside 10 Downing Street, Starmer stated that he will however remain in post as Prime Minister until a new Labour leader is chosen in the coming weeks. "The question my party is asking now is whether I am best placed to lead us into the next general election. I have heard the answer of my parliamentary party to that question, and I accept that answer with good grace. Every decision I've taken has been about putting the country I love first. That is why I will resign as leader of the Labour party. I have spoken to His Majesty the King this morning to inform him of my decision," said Starmer. After having led the Labour party to a massive election win in July 2024, the first in 14 years,



Starmer has been facing criticism for the policies adopted by his government. Starmer, however, said on Monday that he aimed to change Britain for the better and to build a fairer country with dignity and respect, where everyone is seen, everyone is valued, wealth and opportunity for all, not just the privileged few. "A page in our country's history turned after years of disappointment and despair, the

chance to change the lives of millions of people for the better. That's what I came into politics for. The journey to that point was not easy. Six years ago, I inherited a Labour party that was politically, financially and morally bankrupt. "I was told time and time again that my party was finished, that we were consigned to history, that a majority at the general election, let alone a landslide majority, was

impossible. We proved those people wrong because we changed our party, ripping out the poison of antisemitism, restoring trust on the economy, defence and national security, and becoming a party that once again stood proudly with God against our national flag," he said on Monday. Starmer "has come up hard against the reality that the support isn't there", the Observer reported over the weekend. "The truth is, everyone knows this is no longer a sustainable proposition. There's a sadness to it all, of course, but sometimes there's just an inevitability in politics and as Boris Johnson said: 'When the herd moves, it moves'," it mentioned. It is anticipated that Andy Burnham could replace Starmer as the country's next PM with the number of MPs supporting him for the Labour leadership having increased after his victory in the Makerfield by-election last week.

## NEET Re-Exam Crackdown: 30 Arrested in Bihar Solver Gang

NEWDELHI: Police arrested 30 people, including nine impersonators, during the NEET UG 2026 re-exam in Lakhisarai, Bihar, exposing a suspected solver gang operating across multiple states. The arrests involved MBBS students, medical interns, and biometric agency staff, raising serious concerns about systemic loopholes despite unprecedented security measures. The crackdown unfolded at Kendriya Vidyalaya, KRK High School, and Hasanpur School, where impersonators were caught in the act. Senior district officials monitored the operation, and raids followed based on interrogation leads. Several accused belong to reputed



institutions such as PMCH, ANMMCH, BHU, AIIMS Raebareli, and Delhi colleges. Police identified Arpit Raj, previously questioned in the 2024 NEET paper leak case, as a principal organiser. The inclusion of biometric staff among those arrested points to collusion that bypassed identity checks. Interrogations revealed

deals of 20 lakh per candidate, with solvers receiving 250,000-70,000 in advance. Investigators believe the racket spans multiple districts and states, involving intermediaries who arranged payments and proxy placements. The scale suggests a well-organised criminal network exploiting vulnerabilities in public entrance exams.

## India Becomes World's Top Ship Recycling Nation In 2025 With 35.4 Pc Market Share: Ministry

New Delhi: India has emerged as the world's leading ship recycling nation in 2025, capturing 35.4 per cent market share of global ship recycling in 2025 up from 30.1 per cent in prior year, according to the latest report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Ship recycling in India rose significantly to 2.99 million gross tons (GT) in 2025, up nearly 60 per cent from 1.86 million GT in 2024, an official statement said. With this achievement, the target set under Maritime India Vision (MIV) 2030 to become the world's leading ship recycling nation has been achieved well ahead of schedule, the statement from Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways said. This achievement reflects the impact of maritime policy reforms and ease-of-doing-business initiatives undertaken by the government under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "India's emergence as the world's top ship recycling nation reflects the success of sustained policy reforms, industry efforts and adherence to international environmental and safety standards," said Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways



(MoPSW), Sarbananda Sonowal. The Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) found that over 16,000 vessels are expected to be recycled globally over the next decade. With a current market share of 35.4 per cent, India is well-positioned to recycle approximately 500 to 600 vessels annually while continuing to expand its ship recycling capacity. The ministry cited several maritime initiatives including ease of doing business measures as reasons for the achievement. The government enacted the Recycling of Ships Act, 2019, to develop a ship recycling ecosystem aligned with the Hong Kong

International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships (HKC). The government has provided financial assistance of Rs 53.5 crore to support the modernisation of ship recycling yards, helping 115 facilities become HKC-compliant. MoPSW launched the Ship-breaking Credit Note Scheme, under which ship owners receive a credit note equivalent to 40 per cent of the scrap value of a recycled ship and the government is pursuing the inclusion of Indian ship recycling yards in the European Union's approved list of recycling facilities.

## 54 Injured, 18 Missing After Explosion At Qatar's Ras Laffan Gas Facility

Doha: An explosion ripped through Qatar's key natural gas export infrastructure injuring at least 54 people while 18 others remain missing, according to official reports. The blast occurred in the Ras Laffan industrial area on Sunday night, one of the world's most important energy hubs, during ongoing efforts to resume operations at the facility following earlier disruptions linked to regional conflict. The incident triggered a major fire at the Barzan gas supply facility, prompting emergency response teams to rush to the site. State energy giant QatarEnergy confirmed the incident, saying operations were underway to restart parts of the export terminal when the explosion took place. On Sunday night, that work sparked an explosion and fire at the Barzan gas supply facility, according to the company. The scale of damage remains unclear, but Qatar's Interior Ministry later confirmed significantly higher casualty figures than initially reported. Authorities said at least 54 people were injured in the explosion, while search operations were ongoing for 18 missing workers hours after the incident.

## FM Sitharaman Holds Series Of High-Level Meetings With Banking, Market And Defence Leaders



New Delhi: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday held a series of high-level meetings with key representatives from the financial, payments, commodity markets and defence sectors, reflecting the government's continued engagement with stakeholders across critical segments of the economy and national institutions. Neelkanth Mishra, Executive Director at the World Bank, called on the Finance Minister to discuss issues of mutual interest, the finance minister said on social media platform X. The meeting comes at a time when India continues to engage closely with multilateral institutions on economic growth, development financing and global

economic challenges. In another meeting, Dilip Asbe, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), met the Finance Minister. The interaction is seen as significant given India's rapid expansion in digital payments and the growing global recognition of the country's payment infrastructure. The Finance Minister also met a delegation from the Commodity & Capital Market Participants Association of India (CCPAI). The discussions are understood to have focused on issues concerning commodity and capital markets and the broader financial ecosystem. Separately, Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, Chief of the Naval Staff of the Indian Navy, called

on FM Sitharaman. The meeting highlighted the continued coordination between the finance and defence establishments on matters concerning national priorities. Meanwhile, last week, the finance minister inaugurated the Jowai-Nantiang-Kdiap-Khanduli (JNKK) Road in Meghalaya's West Jaintia Hills district and interacted with students, sports persons and local residents, highlighting the Centre's commitment to strengthening infrastructure and creating opportunities for youth in the Northeast. According to the official statement, the road project, built with funding support from the New Development Bank at an estimated cost of more than Rs 59 crore, was inaugurated at a function held at the Wahiajer Football Stadium.

### DVF Personnel Seize Heavy Weapons from Maoists



Boipariguda, 22/6, (DMS): After a long lull, it appears that Maoist activity is persisting to some extent in the Vapariaguda area. Police have seized weapons and other Maoist materials from the locality, and reports suggest that residents of the block are now gripped by fear following this incident. Security forces seized heavy weapons and explosives belonging to Maoists in the Badlipahad forest, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Boipariguda police station in Koraput district. Koraput SP Rohit Barma shared this information during a press conference at the local police headquarters. The DVF launched

an operation on Monday morning after receiving intelligence regarding the presence of Maoists. During the raid, they seized an INSAS rifle, six country-made guns, a Claymore mine weighing approximately 18 kg, one 10 kg tin-bomb IED, six 4 kg tin-bomb IEDs, Maoist kit bags, literature, medicines, and food supplies. SP Rohit Barma stated that the Special Operation Group (SOG), DVF, and BSF are jointly conducting combing operations in the area. Security forces are keeping a close watch on Maoist movements, and security arrangements in the region have been tightened.

### Dist. level Inter National Yoga day



Jagatsinghpur, 22/6(DMS) :District level International yoga day celebrated at Multi purpose Indoor Stadium, Jagatsinghpur. Local MLA cum District Planning Committee Chairman Amarendra Das joined as Chief guest and address the gathering. In his address MLA said that, as per proposal of Honourable Prime Minister of India 21 June

celebrated as Inter National Yoga day all over world from 2015 June 21 st. Jagatsinghpur ADM, Sub- Collector, Municipality Executive Officer, Sports Officer and other officials were present. Many students from School & Collage, Employees and civilians were present. Two no. of Yoga Guru present there and yoga practice continued.

### Minister Sampad Swain attended Yoga season at Paradip sea beach



Paradip, 21/6(DMS):- On the occasion of International Day of Yoga -2026, a yoga practice program was organized by the Paradip Municipality on Sunday at Biju Maidan field near the sea beach. Organized under the supervision of Municipal Chairperson Basant Biswal, the program was attended by local MLA and State Minister for Industries, Skill Development and Technical Education Sampad

Chandra Swain, who performed yoga and explained the benefits of yoga and practiced yoga with public. The program, based on the theme 'Yoga for Healthy Ageing', which was attended by Paradip Additional District Magistrate Niranjana Behera, Additional Superintendent of Police Ajinkya Baburao Mane, Municipal Executive Officer Abhishek Panda, Paradip College principal Dr. Sasmita Satapathy and others.

### ICG observed International Day of Yoga 2026 at Paradip Headquarter

Paradip 21/6, (DMS) - On the occasion of International Day of Yoga 2026, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) District Headquarters (Odisha), organised a series of yoga sessions from 10 to 21 June 2026. The programme engaged fishing communities, DSC personnel, school & college students, and representatives from various government & non-government agencies. Aimed at raising awareness of the physical and mental benefits of yoga, the initiative followed this year's theme, Yoga for Healthy Ageing. The main event culminated with approximately above 250 ICG personnel and their families in Paradip participating enthusiastically in meditation, breathing exercises, and demonstrations of yoga asanas. Qualified instructors introduced the common Yoga Protocol, demonstrated age-appropriate practices, and briefed participants on adapting yoga for lifelong wellness. Commander Coast Guard (Odisha) thanked all attendees for their participation, highlighted yoga's role in promoting mental and physical well-being, and encouraged the integration of regular Yoga practice into daily life. The programme also included short presentations on the cultural heritage of yoga and targeted outreach to vulnerable groups to ensure inclusive participation across the local populace.



### Dr. Kshitish Ranjan Mohanty Elected President of Orthopaedic Surgeons' Association

Khordha--21/6-(DMS): In a moment of immense pride for Odisha and the nation, senior orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Kshitish Ranjan Mohanty has been elected as the President of a prestigious orthopaedic surgeons' association in England. His appointment is being hailed as a remarkable achievement for the medical fraternity and a significant milestone for Indian doctors on the international stage.



Dr. Mohanty completed his medical education at M.K.C.G. Medical College, Berhampur, before pursuing higher studies and advanced surgical training in England. Through years of dedication, professional excellence, and contributions to the field of orthopaedic surgery, he has earned widespread recognition in the international medical community. As President of the association, Dr. Mohanty will serve until 2028. During his tenure, he will lead the organization and preside over the prestigious conference of orthopaedic surgeons scheduled to be held in England in 2028. The event is expected to bring together leading orthopaedic surgeons, researchers, and healthcare experts from across the world to discuss advancements and innovations in surgical science. Dr. Mohanty is the eldest son of Maj. Kshirod Prasad Mohanty, former Vice-Chancellor of North Odisha University. He is also a distinguished alumnus of Pranath Autonomous College, Khordha, making his achievement a matter of pride not only for his family but also for his alma mater and the people of Khordha.

Dr. Mohanty has become the first Indian in the last two decades to be elected to this prestigious position. His elevation to the post reflects the growing global recognition of Indian medical professionals and their contributions to healthcare and surgical excellence. The news has been welcomed with enthusiasm by the medical community, academic circles, and residents of Khordha. Many have described his achievement as an inspiration for young doctors and medical students aspiring to excel on the global stage. Dr. Mohanty's success stands as a testament to perseverance, professional dedication, and academic excellence, bringing honor to Odisha and enhancing India's reputation in the international medical arena.

### Road Divider delay Sparks Public anger at Khariar Road

NUAPADA/KHARIAR ROAD, 22/6, (DMS): Prolonged delay in the widening of road and construction of a divider on National Highway-353 at Khariar Road has triggered widespread resentment among residents and commuters. Locals have alleged that the slow pace of work, coupled with administrative indifference, has caused inconvenience and raised concerns over the execution of the project. Residents blamed the contractor and concerned officials for the delay, alleging a lack of transparency and accountability in the implementation of the project. As per Government guidelines, display boards containing details such as the project name, estimated cost, commencement & completion dates, contractor's name and contact number and details of the Executive Engineer for lodging complaints must be installed at



the work sites. However, locals alleged that the contractor has failed to install such information boards at the project site even several months after commencement of work. According to National Highways department officials, the project commenced on September 29, 2025 and scheduled for completion by March 21, 2027. The estimated cost of the project is Rs. 47.15

crore, while the agreement value stands at Rs.21.86 crore, reportedly around 33 per cent lower than the estimated cost. Former NH SDO Sapan Kumar Behera had stated on February 2 that road-widening work would begin in the first week of March. The proposed road is to have a total width of 76 feet, including covered drains on both sides and streetlight poles. A central

divider with lighting infrastructure is also part of the plan. However, residents pointed out that encroachment along the stretch have not yet been removed, resulting in further delays in the widening work. Although construction of drains on both sides of the road has begun in available vacant spaces, allegations of irregularities in execution have also surfaced. Departmental officials said that the 3-km stretch from Gayatri Mandir to Navjyoti School is to be widened and provide with a divider. The demand for a divider on this busy road has been pending for several years owing to increasing traffic and safety concerns. When contacted, present NH SDO Kailash Chandra Dash admitted that the road-widening project had been delayed. Due to certain reasons, the work has not progressed as planned, he said.

### Training Held on Functioning of Panchayat-Level Child Welfare and Protection Committees "Child Welfare and Protection is Our Primary Responsibility"

Sambalpur, 21/06(DMS): Ensuring the safety and welfare of children is not only a primary responsibility of the government but also a collective duty of parents, guardians and community members. The Odisha Government's Mission Vatsalya guidelines have given special importance to village-level Child Welfare and Protection Committees to create a safe and secure environment for children. In this regard, a series of training programmes on the functioning and responsibilities of Panchayat-level Child Welfare and Protection Committees were organised at Dudhinanali, Dholpada and Kansar Panchayats under Tileibani block of Deogarh district. With the support of the District Child Protection Unit, the voluntary organisation C-D (CD) conducted the training programme. Programme Officer Sansar Bag provided the introductory information, while Dr. Rajaram Shadangi, trainer and member of



Sambalpur Child Welfare Committee, imparted detailed training to the participants. During the training, discussions were held on the background and objectives of village-level Child Welfare and Protection Committees, formation process, roles and responsibilities, meeting procedures, monitoring mechanisms, role of child representatives, preparation of

action plans, necessary interventions, child protection practices, accountability systems, filling of formats and presentation of committee meetings. Ward members, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers and committee members were trained on effective implementation of child protection measures at the grassroots level. The programme

was coordinated by cluster coordinators Bhagyadhar Manhira and Tapan Kumar Pradhan, along with Child Rights Manager Ashok Nayak, Monalisa Sahu, Yogeshwari Patra and Indira Nayak. The initiative aimed to strengthen community participation and improve child protection mechanisms at the Panchayat level.

### Yoga Beyond Caste, Religion, Language and Age:- Law Minister

Khordha-- 21/6, (DMS)- Emphasizing the universal importance of yoga, Odisha's Law, Works and Excise Minister, Prithviraj Harichandan, said that yoga should transcend barriers of caste, religion, language, gender and age and become an integral part of daily life for every individual. He stated that yoga not only keeps the body healthy but also promotes mental peace and positive thinking. The Minister was addressing the district-level celebration of International Yoga Day 2026, organized jointly by the Khordha District Administration, the Sports and Youth Services Department, and the Yoga Mahotsav Committee at the Biju Patnaik Indoor Stadium



on Sunday. The stadium witnessed an enthusiastic gathering of yoga enthusiasts from different walks of life. Hundreds of students, youth, senior citizens, government officials, social workers and media

representatives participated in the event and performed various yoga practices together. The programme commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp. Addressing the gathering as the chief guest, Minister

Harichandan highlighted the growing challenges of stress and lifestyle-related disorders in modern society. He said yoga offers a simple, natural and effective solution for maintaining physical and mental well-being. Regular practice of yoga and pranayama strengthens immunity, improves concentration and helps maintain emotional balance. He urged people to dedicate some time every day to yoga for a healthier and more disciplined life. MLA, Khordha Prasanta Prashant Kumar Jagdev, described yoga as "the best medicine." He said yoga is not merely a means to keep the body fit but also a pathway to spiritual growth.

### Public Hearing Held for Expansion of Kodigamali Bauxite Mine

Rayagada, 21/6: A public hearing was held at Ashok Kalyan Mandap in Rayagada on Saturday regarding the proposal to expand the annual production capacity of the Kodigamali Bauxite Mine from 3.6 million tonnes to 6 million tonnes. The Kodigamali Bauxite Mine is located in areas covering Lakshampur block of Koraput district and Kashiipur block of Rayagada district. The public hearing was organised to collect the views, suggestions and concerns of people from the project-affected areas before the proposed expansion is taken forward. Rayagada Additional District Magistrate Nihar Ranjan Kahar, Ashok Bhoi from the Regional Office of the Odisha State Pollution Control Board, officials of the concerned departments and representatives of the project authorities were present during the hearing. Around 600 to 700



people from Bankamamba and Dupadipi panchayats under Kashiipur block, which are among the areas affected by the Kodigamali project, participated in the public hearing. A large number of local residents reportedly expressed their support for the proposed

expansion of the mine. During the hearing, local residents placed their views and demands before the administration and project authorities. They stated that the expansion of the bauxite mine could create more employment opportunities for local youth and contribute to the development of

the region. The participants also demanded priority in employment for local people, improvement of roads, drinking water facilities, healthcare services, education and other basic infrastructure in the affected villages. They further sought skill development and

training programmes for local youth so that they can benefit from employment opportunities generated by the project. Several residents also stressed the need for adequate environmental protection measures during mining operations. They urged the authorities to ensure effective control of dust pollution, protection of water sources and proper implementation of welfare and development initiatives in the affected areas. All the views, demands and grievances raised during the public hearing were recorded in writing. The entire proceedings of the hearing were also videographed. Additional District Magistrate Nihar Ranjan Kahar informed that the observations, suggestions and reports collected during the public hearing would be compiled and forwarded to the State Government for further necessary action.

# District-Level Orientation and Awareness Workshop Held Towards a Child Labour-Free Odisha

Khordha : In a significant step towards ensuring a safe future for children and building a child labour-free odisha, the khordha district administration, in collaboration with the labour department, organized a district-level orientation and awareness workshop. The programme was aimed at creating awareness about the provisions of the child and adolescent labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, strengthening its implementation, and promoting collective action against child labour. The workshop was held at the Jayee Rajguru Conference Hall in the Collectorate premises and was chaired by Additional District Magistrate (Administration) Pratap Chandra Beura. Senior officials from the state and district administration,

representatives from various government departments, labour organizations, social activists, and members of voluntary organizations participated in the event and discussed strategies for the eradication of child labour. Addressing the gathering, speakers emphasized that a "Child Labour-Free Odisha is our collective commitment." They highlighted the importance of ensuring every child's right to education and bringing children into the mainstream educational system. The participants stressed that eliminating child labour is not merely a legal obligation but also a moral and social responsibility of every citizen. Among those present were District Labour Officer Prabhakar Biswal, Divisional Labour Commissioner Ajaya Kumar



Pradhan, Joint Labour Commissioner Pranab Kumar Patra, State Resource Officer Dr. Bhaktabandhu Acharya and Deputy Collector (Emergency) Sritapa Mishra. The speakers noted that child labour remains a serious social concern that deprives children of their childhood, education, and opportunities for a better future. The officials reiterated that employing children below the age of 14 years in any

occupation or process is a punishable offence under the law. Similarly, engaging adolescents between 15 and 18 years of age in hazardous occupations or industries is strictly prohibited. Citizens were urged to report any incidents of child labour to the nearest Labour Office, Police Station, District Child Protection Officer, District Administration, Child Helpline 1098, or the toll-free Labour Assistance Number

1800-34567-03. In his address, ADM Pratap Chandra Beura said that children are the future of the nation and that providing them with access to education, healthcare, and protection is essential for building a prosperous society. He emphasized that coordinated efforts by government departments, social organizations, and the public are necessary to achieve the vision of a child

labour-free Odisha. Assistant Labour Officer, Bhubaneswar, Kaliputra Kuldeep Prasad delivered a detailed presentation on the provisions of the Child and Adolescent Labour Act, 1986. He explained the legal consequences and penalties applicable to individuals and institutions found employing children illegally. State Resource Officer Dr. Bhaktabandhu Acharya addressed various queries raised by participants and shared valuable insights on government initiatives and programmes aimed at preventing child labour and protecting children's rights. He underscored the importance of community participation and awareness in achieving long-term success in child labour eradication efforts. The workshop was attended by

Additional District Education Officer Bijaya Kumar Behera, District Social Welfare Officer Kusum Kumari Praharaj, District Child Protection Officer Banishree Pattnaik, District Information and Public Relations Officer Laxman Kumar Behera, along with officials from different departments, NGO representatives, labour leaders, and social workers. Prior to the workshop, a awareness rally against child labour was taken out from the Collectorate premises. The rally passed through Ambedkar Marg and Palla Chhak, spreading awareness among the public about the harmful effects of child labour and the importance of education for every child. To further strengthen public outreach, an awareness mobile van

carrying messages on child labour eradication and school enrolment was flagged off by ADM Pratap Chandra Beura. The van will travel across the district to educate communities about child rights and the legal provisions against child labour. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Assistant Labour Officer, Balugaon, Soumyaranjan Kar.

The workshop reaffirmed the district administration's strong commitment to protecting children's rights, promoting education, and eliminating child labour. Participants expressed confidence that sustained awareness, effective enforcement of laws, and collective social responsibility would help realize the dream of a Child Labour-Free Odisha in the near future.

## International Yoga Day Message: "Equanimity is Yoga"

Puri : Marking International Yoga Day, a yoga demonstration programme was organised at the premises of SAI Smart School, Nagapatna, under the joint aegis of Yoga Bharat, the Indo Amateur Go Association, and the Cycle Polo Federation of India.

Senior advocate and National Vice-President of the Indo Amateur Go Association and Cycle Polo

Federation of India, Binay Nrusingha Mahapatra, attended the event as the chief guest. Among the distinguished guests were physician Dr. Deeptismita Ray, journalist Laxminarayan Pattnaik, law college sports coach Raj Kishore Mohanty, SAI Smart School Vice-Principal Priyadarshini Pani, and Roja Priyadarshini, head of a pharmacy college.

Addressing the

gathering, the speakers highlighted the significance of yoga in achieving physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Referring to the Bhagavad Gita, they said the concept of "Samatva" (equanimity) occupies a central place in the philosophy of yoga, adding that "equanimity itself is yoga".

The speakers noted that while there is no definitive written record regarding the

origin of yoga, it is widely believed to have originated in India. They also referred to the ancient Yoga Sutras authored by sage Patanjali over 2,000 years ago, describing them as a comprehensive guide to controlling the mind, regulating thoughts and fostering spiritual growth.

Yoga postures and practices, they said, help strengthen the connection between knowledge,

consciousness and the inner self through meditation and self-discipline. They further observed that yoga has been found beneficial in managing lifestyle-related ailments such as diabetes and hypertension, besides aiding recovery from physical injuries and chronic pain.

The programme was coordinated by Amar Kumar Das and Santosh Behera.



## Teachers' Orientation Programme Held at Paradip Bethany Convent School

Paradip, (DMS):- Bethany Convent School of Paradip organized a one-day Teachers' Orientation Programme on June 20, 2026, in the school auditorium. The programme was held from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., centered on the theme of "Classroom Management" and aimed at enhancing the professional competencies of teachers. The programme commenced with a warm welcome to the dignitaries and participants. The ceremonial lighting of the lamp was led by the Resource Person, Mr. Ashok Kumar Patnaik, Counselling Psychologist, along with Rev Fr Nihar Ranjan Parichha, Manager, Rev. Fr. Sunil Lakra, Principal, Sr Anu Jyoti, Vice Principal and Mrs. Moni, Secretary of the Teachers' Cabinet. This was followed by a prayer song, invoking God's blessings for the



fruitful conduct of the programme.

The resource person was formally introduced and felicitated by the Manager and the Principal. Addressing the gathering, Rev. Fr. Sunil Lakra, Principal highlighted the significance of continuous learning and professional development for educators in an ever-evolving educational landscape.

Under his able leadership, the orientation programme was thoughtfully organized to provide teachers with a

meaningful platform for professional growth, skill enhancement, and the exchange of innovative teaching practices. His vision and commitment to academic excellence created an environment conducive to learning, reflection, and collaboration among the faculty members.

The highlight of the programme was the enriching orientation session conducted by Mr. Ashok Kumar Patnaik. Drawing from his vast experience as a Counselling

Psychologist, he shared valuable insights on effective classroom management, positive discipline, student motivation, emotional well-being, and fostering healthy teacher-student relationships. Through practical examples and interactive discussions, he equipped teachers with strategies to create a positive and productive classroom environment.

The session was highly engaging and encouraged teachers to reflect on their classroom practices while

exploring new approaches to address contemporary educational challenges. Participants appreciated the relevance and practicality of the ideas shared during the programme.

The event concluded with a heartfelt Vote of Thanks proposed by Mrs. Moni, Secretary of the Teachers' Cabinet. She expressed sincere gratitude to the Resource person, Management, Principal and all the teachers for their active participation and valuable contributions, which made the programme a grand success. The orientation programme proved to be an enriching and inspiring experience, reaffirming Bethany Convent School's commitment to nurturing competent educators and promoting excellence in teaching and learning.

## Hon'ble President of India to dedicate Railway Projects worth over Rs.732 crore to the Nation at Rairangpur on 20th June 2026

- Dedication of Jakhapura – Jajpur Keonjhar Road – Baitarani Road Multi-tracking Project
- Dedication of Hindol Road – Meramandali Multi-tracking Project
- Projects to provide major boost to train handling capacity, industrial logistics and regional connectivity in Odisha

Bhubaneswar : In a major boost to Railway infrastructure, operational efficiency and connectivity, Hon'ble President of India on 20th June 2026 will dedicate two important multi-tracking railway projects worth over Rs.732 crore to the Nation at Rairangpur in the august presence of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

The two projects developed under East Coast Railway will significantly enhance line capacity, reduce congestion and facilitate smoother movement of passenger as well as freight trains. These projects will strengthen the railway backbone of Odisha and support the State's growing industrial and economic activities.

The Jakhapura – Jajpur Keonjhar Road – Baitarani Road Multi-tracking Project

completed at a cost of Rs.323 crore over a length of 19 KM has been developed as part of the larger Bhadrak – Nergundi Multi-tracking Project. This project will enhance capacity on the heavily loaded Howrah–Chennai main line, reduce congestion, improve punctuality and ensure faster movement of passenger and freight trains.

The project will also facilitate seamless transportation of coal and other bulk commodities, providing stronger logistical support to nearby ports, industries and commercial centres, thereby contributing to the economic development of the region.

Similarly, the Hindol Road – Meramandali Multi-tracking Project completed at a cost of Rs.409 crore over a length of 27 KM forms part of the important Budhapank

– Salegaon Multi-tracking Project. The project will significantly increase train handling capacity, remove operational bottlenecks and support smooth movement of coal, steel, power-sector inputs and other industrial commodities.

The additional capacity created through these projects will enable operation of more passenger and freight trains, improve connectivity, strengthen industrial logistics and contribute significantly to the overall growth and development of Odisha.

These capacity enhancement projects reflect the Government of India's continued commitment towards creating modern, efficient and future-ready railway infrastructure. The projects will go a long way in strengthening the vision of Viksit Odisha and Viksit Bharat.

## Major Crackdown on Fake Pilgrim Facilitators in Srimandir Premises; 11 Arrested

Puri: In a major operation against fraudulent activities targeting devotees, Puri police have arrested 11 persons posing as "Yatri Gumastas" (pilgrim facilitators) in and around the Srimandir premises over the past five days.

Thousands of devotees visit the revered Shri Jagannath Temple every day. According to police, some anti-social elements were exploiting pilgrims by falsely claiming they could arrange special or expedited darshan in exchange for money.

Acting on credible intelligence, police from Singhadwar Police Station launched a special surveillance drive in the

temple area. Personnel in plain clothes were deployed to monitor suspicious individuals and gather evidence.

During the operation, five alleged fake facilitators were arrested on June 18 under Singhadwar Police Station Case No. 149/26 and later produced before a court. On June 19, three more accused were arrested in connection with Case No. 151/26 for allegedly collecting money from devotees on the pretext of arranging special darshan.

Police said that a total of 11 fake "Yatri Gumastas" have been arrested in the last five days. The action was based on CCTV footage,



intelligence inputs and field investigations.

The arrested persons include Shankar Biswal, Arun Patra, Babuni Mahapatra, Sarbeswar Raut, Ranjit Samantaray, Vikram Pradhan,

Ajay Kumar Jena and Umakanta Padhi, among others.

Police seized ₹2,620 in cash and three mobile phones from the accused. Investigators suspect that

more individuals may be linked to the racket, and further investigation is underway.

Advisory for Devotees Puri police have urged devotees not to fall prey to anyone offering special darshan, quick entry or other temple-related services in exchange for money. Pilgrims have been advised to immediately report such individuals to the nearest police personnel, the Singhadwar Police Station or the Puri Police Control Room.

Police reiterated their commitment to ensuring the safety, convenience and smooth darshan experience of all devotees visiting the temple.

## Brushstrokes of Well-Being: 7th-Grade Student Depicts the Power of Yoga for Healthy Ageing

Bhubaneswar : On the eve of International Yoga Day, Shantanu Shantiswarup, a seventh-grade student of Saraswati Shishu Vidya Mandir Bhitangi Bhubaneswar, has captured everyone's attention with a beautiful painting created through his colorful brushstrokes. The artwork is thoughtfully based on the specific theme, "Yoga for Healthy Ageing". The painting vividly portrays an elderly woman effortlessly performing a yoga posture, sending a powerful message of vitality and energy even in

*The surrounding elements of the painting highlight the close relationship between humans and nature, featuring green vegetables essential for a healthy body, as well as components symbolizing the protection of the brain and the spine. Additionally,*

old age. Through this artistic creation, Shantanu has flawlessly depicted four core pillars of life: vitality, knowledge, balance, and universal connection.

The surrounding elements of the painting highlight the close

relationship between humans and nature, featuring green vegetables essential for a healthy body, as well as components symbolizing the protection of the brain and the spine. Additionally, a scene showing a family practicing yoga together serves as an inspiration for society to adopt a healthier lifestyle. This unique artwork is expected to be highly successful in generating widespread awareness about the immense benefits of yoga across society.

## INDIA Bloc

THE Monday meeting of the INDIA bloc was intended to project Opposition unity. Instead, it highlighted the challenges of holding together a coalition of parties with competing regional interests and political ambitions. The alliance faces the tough task of proving that it can offer a credible alternative to the BJP-led NDA. The meeting's decisions - including holding consultations more frequently, jointly raising concerns over the SIR of electoral rolls, seeking Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan's resignation over examination controversies and coordinating parliamentary strategy - reflect an effort to remain politically relevant. However, these issues alone cannot sustain a national coalition.

The bloc's central weakness is that it remains united largely by opposition to the BJP rather than by a shared governing vision. While criticism of the ruling party can bring diverse groups together, voters eventually seek answers on employment, inflation, agricultural distress, economic growth and federal relations. On these issues, the alliance has yet to articulate a coherent common programme. Its internal contradictions are equally apparent. In West Bengal, the Congress and the Trinamool Congress are rivals. In Punjab, the Congress and the AAP compete fiercely. In Kerala, the Congress-led UDF and the CPI(M)-led LDF are political adversaries. Such state-level contests inevitably complicate national cooperation.

While the presence of Mamata Banerjee and Akhilesh Yadav lent weight to the gathering, the absence of the DMK and AAP underscored the difficulties of maintaining cohesion in a coalition of diverse interests. Yet the coalition should not be written off. It played a significant role in preventing a BJP landslide in 2024 and remains an important platform for opposition coordination. If it hopes to endure, it must move beyond symbolism and develop a clear policy agenda. Without greater cohesion and a shared vision, the alliance risks being taken seriously by the electorate.

## Border Smuggling

THE arrest of 54 minors over the past 14 months for their involvement in cross-border drug and arms smuggling in Punjab is acutely worrying. It calls for a multi-pronged intervention aimed at addressing the entire gamut of issues plaguing the border districts. The blueprint of piecemeal measures and lopsided development denotes a lack of seriousness in catering to the needs of an area that is literally the first line of defence. A sense of urgency in effecting a transformative change in the lives of border residents has been missing. The consequences have been alarming. Just recently, two minors were caught by the Amritsar police with Pakistan-origin pistols and heroin. Villages near the border in Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Ferozepur and Fazilka districts have emerged as prime targets for recruitment. Families battling poverty and unemployment are being systematically exploited.

Intelligence inputs have consistently warned of Pakistani traffickers instructing Indian accomplices to recruit teenagers for drug and arms smuggling. One, because they have no criminal record and are thus off the radar of security agencies. Two, they cannot be punished harshly under the Juvenile Justice Act. Scores of youngsters have fallen in the trap. Many have been taken in by social media images glorifying weapons. Several operate as pickup agents for consignments dropped by drones.

Ramping up vigilance alone is not the solution. The Central and state governments must be seen as actively working to erase the border residents' perception that they have been left out of the India story.

*The bloc's central weakness is that it remains united largely by opposition to the BJP rather than by a shared governing vision. While criticism of the ruling party can bring diverse groups together, voters eventually seek answers on employment, inflation, agricultural distress, economic growth and federal relations. On these issues, the alliance has yet to articulate a coherent common programme. Its internal contradictions are equally apparent. In West Bengal, the Congress and the Trinamool Congress are rivals. In Punjab, the Congress and the AAP compete fiercely. In Kerala, the Congress-led UDF and the CPI(M)-led LDF are political adversaries. Such state-level contests inevitably complicate national cooperation.*

Subash Chandra Misra

When my friend was sick, he visited a doctor and started taking the medicines prescribed by the doctor. He also took a course of Ayurvedic herbal medicines as a back up on the advice of his neighbour. In our country every neighbor or friend is eager to give free medical advice and people are willing to listen. Therefore all the form of medicines like Ayurveda, Homoeopathy and Unani along with Allopathy get a fair trial during ailments of people. India has an ancient history of Ayurvedic medicines being practised by the Rishis and vaidyas. Even ancient Indian physicians like Charaka and Sushruta were known to be doing surgery in those days to cure ailments. Today in addition to allopathic medicines which came to India with the advent of western science, other forms of medicine like Homoeopathy, Ayurveda, Unani and Naturopathy are practiced in parallel.

The global pharmaceutical market is quite large with a size of \$ 1.7-2.0 trillion and a growth rate of 6-8% per annum due to rising percentage of ageing population, growth in prevalence of chronic diseases like diabetes, cancer and cardiac problems, sedentary lifestyle, urbanization and changing dietary pattern and consequent demand for weight loss medicines. The Indian pharmaceutical market is of the size of \$ 50-60 billion and growing at an annual rate of 10%. Slightly less than 50% of the medicines produced in India are consumed domestically and the rest are exported. Side by side the alternate medicine market is also growing equally well due to rising disposable income, increased awareness, and government initiatives supporting alternative

*The global Unani medicine market was valued at approximately USD 1.5 billion in 2021 and is projected to reach USD 3.1 billion by 2028, growing at a rate of around 10%. The market is driven by rising interest in traditional, holistic health, particularly in South Asia and the Middle East, with increased demand for immunity-boosting products.*

medicines.

The homoeopathy as a stream of alternate medicine was brought to India in the beginning of the nineteenth century by German missionaries or travellers and it gained popularity after Dr. John Martin Honigberger, a disciple of Dr. Samuel Hahnemann treated Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839. This stream of medicines has a market size of Rs.10,000 crore in India (\$ 1.2 bn) and it is growing fast at a rate of about 20% per annum. The global market size of homoeopathy is about \$ 15 bn. Ayurvedic medicines have captured a market of Rs.3.6 lakh crore (about \$ 43 bn) with a growth rate of 15-20% and a huge domestic consumption base. Some of the large Ayurvedic medicine producers are Patanjali, Dabur, Zandu Care and Himalaya Wellness. Dabur has a legacy of more than 100 years and it is reported to be making about 1000 products while Patanjali which is relatively new makes about 3000 products. Himalaya wellness is reported to be exporting its products to 100 countries across the globe. Some of the other specialized brands in Ayurvedic products are Sri Sri Tattwa, Hamdard, Vicco Laboratories. Since India has been the land of yoga and yogis for thousands of years who practiced ayurveda for their well being, people have strong faith on these medicines and therefore the domestic market is thriving and growing. Most top Ayurveda players now adhere to WHO-GMP, ISO, and

Ayush certifications to ensure international safety and standard.

Unani is a recognized, state-supported traditional medical system in India, fully integrated into the national healthcare system under the Ministry of Ayush. Derived from ancient Greek and Greco-Arab traditions, it focuses on holistic healing through diet, lifestyle, and natural drugs. India is a global leader in Unani, with over 57 medical colleges, thousands of practitioners and research led by the Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine. The global Unani medicine market was valued at approximately USD 1.5 billion in 2021 and is projected to reach USD 3.1 billion by 2028, growing at a rate of around 10%. The market is driven by rising interest in traditional, holistic health, particularly in South Asia and the Middle East, with increased demand for immunity-boosting products.

The alternate medicines are recognised and promoted by the Government of India. The Government has been making effort for developing education, research and propagation of semi-scientific traditional medicine and alternative medicine in India. In 1995, the Department of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy was first established under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. This was renamed as

the Department of Ayush and made into an official ministry by the Central government in 2014. In order to persuade the Ayurvedic medicine manufacturers to upgrade to global standards, the ministry has introduced two financial assistance schemes- one for the domestic quality and the other for international markets. For the 2026-27 fiscal year, the Government of India has provided funding for the Ayurvedic and other alternate medicines by allocating ₹4,408.93 crore to support infrastructure, research, and global market expansion. The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences allocated ₹524.05 crore to drive clinical validation and drug standardization. The All India Institute of Ayurveda provides advanced education and clinical research and the National Medicinal Plants Board supports cultivation and supply chain of raw materials. The government also runs some schemes for capacity building, research & Innovation in Ayurveda. Proposal for creation of three new research institutes modeled after AIIMS, funding to upgrade the WHO Global Traditional Medicine centre at Jamnagar and insurance for Ayurvedic treatment are some of the steps taken by the government to support alternate medicines.

The global alternative medicine market is rapidly expanding, with estimates for 2025 around \$ 220 billion, and it is growing at a CAGR of 20-25% driven by rising demand for holistic health. The market includes herbal medicine, acupuncture, and traditional therapies, with Europe holding the largest market share of 30%.

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

## Opportunities for a 'Ready to Rise' Generation

Madhusudan Mishra

As India marches confidently toward its vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047, one question deserves urgent national attention: What is the greatest obstacle standing between India and its aspirations? Contrary to popular perception, the answer is not a shortage of talent. India possesses one of the largest reservoirs of human potential in the world. The real challenge is the shortage of opportunities that can transform talent into achievement and aspiration into accomplishment.

Every year, millions of young Indians dream of becoming doctors, engineers, scientists, entrepreneurs, teachers, administrators, and innovators. They spend years preparing for competitive examinations, often sacrificing comfort, leisure, and financial security in pursuit of their goals. Yet, for many of these hardworking and capable students, success is determined not by merit alone but by the limited availability of educational opportunities. The number of aspirants continues to grow exponentially, while the capacity of quality institutions struggles to keep pace with this unprecedented demand.

This mismatch between aspiration and access has become one of the defining challenges of modern India. The nation celebrates its demographic dividend, but a demographic burden if young people are denied pathways to education, skills, and meaningful employment. The future of India will depend not merely on identifying talent but on nurturing it at scale.

The prevailing narrative often revolves around competition. Higher cut-offs, tougher examinations, and lower acceptance rates are frequently viewed as indicators of excellence. However, excessive competition should not be mistaken for educational success.

The answer, therefore, lies not in making opportunities scarcer but in making them more abundant. India requires a massive expansion of educational capacity across all levels. More schools, more colleges, more universities, more medical institutions, more research centres, and more skill-development academies are essential if the country is to meet the aspirations of its young population. The objective should not simply be to produce degree holders but to create knowledgeable, skilled, innovative, and socially responsible citizens.

The National Education Policy 2020 has already provided a visionary framework for educational transformation. Its emphasis

*A particularly important aspect of this transformation is the encouragement of educational entrepreneurship. Throughout history, visionary individuals and organizations have played a crucial role in establishing institutions that have shaped societies and advanced knowledge. India should actively encourage responsible and quality-driven educational entrepreneurs who can establish institutions capable of delivering excellence at scale. Regulatory frameworks must ensure accountability and academic standards while also promoting innovation and growth. Excessive restrictions often discourage investment and experimentation, whereas a balanced approach can stimulate educational development without compromising quality.*

on multidisciplinary learning, flexibility, innovation, and increased enrolment reflects an understanding of the challenges ahead. Yet, policies alone cannot achieve results. They must be supported by sustained investment, institutional reforms, and a collective commitment to educational expansion. The scale of India's ambitions demands an equally ambitious expansion of its educational ecosystem.

A particularly important aspect of this transformation is the encouragement of educational entrepreneurship. Throughout history, visionary individuals and organizations have played a crucial role in establishing institutions that have shaped societies and advanced knowledge. India should actively encourage responsible and quality-driven educational entrepreneurs who can establish institutions capable of delivering excellence at scale. Regulatory frameworks must ensure accountability and academic standards while also promoting innovation and growth. Excessive restrictions often discourage investment and experimentation, whereas a balanced approach can stimulate educational development without compromising quality.

Technology offers another powerful avenue for expanding educational access. Digital learning platforms, virtual

classrooms, artificial intelligence, online laboratories, and blended learning models have the potential to democratize education on an unprecedented scale. Students living in remote villages can today access educational content that was once available only in major urban centres. Technology can bridge geographical barriers, reduce

costs, and provide flexible learning opportunities. However, technology should be viewed as an enabler rather than a substitute for quality institutions. Human mentorship, practical exposure, research opportunities, and campus experiences remain indispensable components of holistic education.

The challenge of educational access is particularly acute in rural and underserved regions. If India seeks inclusive growth, educational opportunities must reach every district, every town, and every village. Excellence cannot remain concentrated in a handful of metropolitan centres. True national development requires the democratization of quality education.

Equally important is the alignment of education with employability and innovation. The rapidly evolving global economy demands new skills and competencies. Universities and colleges must move beyond traditional teaching models and actively engage with industry,

research organizations, and emerging technologies. Curricula should be regularly updated to reflect changing realities. Students must be equipped not only with academic knowledge but also with critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, entrepreneurial mindsets, and digital literacy. Education should prepare individuals for jobs that exist today while empowering them to create opportunities for tomorrow.

Research and innovation must also become central pillars of India's educational strategy. Nations that lead the world in technology, science, and economic growth are invariably those that invest heavily in research ecosystems. Universities should be encouraged to become centres of discovery, experimentation, and knowledge creation. Greater collaboration between academia, industry, and government can accelerate innovation and contribute to national development. A knowledge economy cannot flourish without strong institutions that generate original ideas and solutions.

The economic argument for educational expansion is equally compelling. Every investment in education generates long-term social and economic returns. Educated citizens contribute to productivity, innovation, healthcare, governance, and social stability. They create enterprises, generate employment, and strengthen democratic institutions. Education is not merely a social sector expenditure; it is one of the most strategic investments a nation can make in its future.

As India looks ahead to 2047, the centenary year of its independence, the country must adopt a broader vision of educational success. The measure of progress should not be how many students are turned away from institutions but how many are empowered to learn, grow, and contribute. A developed India will not emerge from a system that celebrates scarcity. It will emerge from a society that creates opportunities on an unprecedented scale.

The nation's greatest strength lies in its people. Their dreams, aspirations, and talents constitute India's most valuable resource. By expanding educational opportunities, encouraging innovation, strengthening institutions, and investing boldly in human development, India can unlock the full potential of its youth. The future of the nation depends not on how many doors remain closed, but on how many new doors are opened for the generations waiting to enter. That is the true pathway to a prosperous, inclusive, and developed India.

(The author is a retired IAS)

# India's Space Economy Projected To Reach \$40-45 Billion Over Next Decade

New Delhi, 21/6: India's space economy is projected to grow five-fold from the current \$8 billion to \$40-45 billion over the next decade, driven by policy reforms, rising private sector participation and growing commercialisation of space technologies, an official fact-sheet said on Sunday.

The fact-sheet highlighted that India currently accounts for about 2-3 per cent of the global space economy, with the country's share targeted to rise to 8 per cent by 2030. The rapid growth is being supported by a series of structural reforms undertaken in recent years, including the opening up of the space sector to private players, the establishment of the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe), and the creation of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) to commercialise technologies developed by the Indian Space



Research Organisation (ISRO). According to the government, India has witnessed a sharp rise in private participation in the space sector. From having just one registered space startup in 2014, the country now has more than 400 space startups as of February 2026. In addition, investment in Indian space startups has crossed \$500 million, with nearly \$150 million attracted in 2025 alone. The

government has introduced several measures to encourage investment and innovation, including liberalised foreign direct investment norms, a Rs 1,000 crore venture capital fund, a Rs 500 crore technology adoption fund and startup support schemes. Moreover, commercial activity in the sector has gathered momentum. NSIL's revenues rose from Rs 321.77 crore in FY22 to

Rs 3,246.09 crore in FY25, reflecting growing demand for Indian space technologies and services. The government has highlighted India's expanding global footprint in space, noting that the country has launched 399 foreign satellites since 2014 and signed more than 300 space cooperation agreements with 61 countries and five multilateral organisations. India's space ambitions are being backed by a robust pipeline of missions, including the Gaganyaan human spaceflight programme, the Bharatiya Antariksh Station, the Venus Orbiter Mission and future lunar exploration projects. India's space programme is evolving from a scientific endeavour into a major engine of economic growth, innovation and technological self-reliance, while strengthening the country's position among the world's leading spacefaring nations, according to the factsheet.

# Tushar Mehta Reappointed Solicitor General For Another Three-Year Term

New Delhi, 21/6: The Centre has approved the re-appointment of Tushar Mehta as Solicitor General of India for a further term of three years with effect from July 1, 2026, or until further orders, whichever is earlier. According to an order issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) cleared the proposal for Mehta's continuation as the country's second-highest law officer. "The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the re-appointment of Shri Tushar Mehta as Solicitor General of India for a further term of three years with effect from 01.07.2026 or until further orders, whichever is earlier," the order stated. Mehta was appointed as Solicitor General in October 2018 after serving as an Additional Solicitor General. The Centre subsequently re-appointed him for a three-year term with effect from July 1, 2020, and again in 2023. With the latest extension, Mehta completes around eight years



as Solicitor General and is set to complete 11 years in the post by the end of the fresh tenure, making him one of the longest-serving law officers in the country's history. As Solicitor General, Mehta has represented the Union government in several high-profile constitutional, policy and criminal matters before the Supreme Court and various High Courts. The ACC also approved the re-appointment of five Additional Solicitors General (ASGs) for the Supreme Court for a further term of three years. Those

re-appointed are Vikramjit Banerjee and K.M. Nataraj with effect from July 1, 2026, while S.V. Raju, N. Venkataraman, and Aishwarya Bhati have been re-appointed with effect from June 30, 2026. In a separate decision, the ACC approved the re-appointment of Chetan Sharma as Additional Solicitor General for the Delhi High Court for a further period of six months with effect from July 1, 2026, or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

# NEET-UG re-examination concludes, candidates describe paper moderate to tough

New Delhi, 21/6: As the NEET-UG re-examination concluded on Sunday, several candidates described overall paper as moderate in difficulty. In New Delhi, a candidate said the Physics section was comparatively tougher and more time-consuming than in the previous exam. "The exam was quite moderate. Physics was quite lengthy, a little bit tougher than last time. Biology was good and Chemistry was moderate," the candidate told ANI. Another candidate said, "It was a little harder than last time. It was my first attempt, I will get around 500 marks. The arrangements inside were fine." Sharing their experience, another candidate from Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir said, "The paper was very good. My preparation was very good, only Physics was a little difficult. Otherwise, it was good overall. Overall, it was a good experience." Meanwhile, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, candidate Tarun said the examination was more challenging than the previous attempt. "I did well but let's see. The exam was tougher than last time," he said. A candidate from Jharkhand, Ranchi said, "The exam was easy to moderate... Biology was easier, chemistry was moderate, and physics was tougher than the last time...". Approximately over 22 lakh students appeared for the NEET-UG 2026 re-examination held today, across the country, following the cancellation of the initial May 3 exam due to a question paper leak. The entry for the exam centres followed a strict process with metal detectors in place. To ensure a secure and efficient examination process, the National Testing Agency (NTA) implemented comprehensive security and surveillance measures across the exam rooms. The rooms were equipped with CCTV cameras that were being monitored. Jammers provided by ECIL and BEL were also deployed. The NTA had stationed two invigilators in every room, with over ten functionaries present at each centre.

# India To Host BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting On June 25-26

New Delhi, 21/6: India will host the 11th BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting on June 25-26 in Gurugram, on the outskirts of the national capital, under its BRICS Chairship 2026, according to an official statement issued on Sunday. The meeting will bring together Energy Ministers and senior officials from all BRICS member countries to advance cooperation on energy security, sustainability, and innovation. India's BRICS Chairship in 2026 is guided by the overarching theme "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability (BRICS)". Within the Energy Track, India has adopted the theme of "Energy for All", reflecting the shared commitment of BRICS nations to ensuring universal energy access. BRICS today comprises Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates, which together account for nearly half



of the world's population and around 40 per cent of global GDP. The BRICS Energy Ministers' Meeting comes at a time when countries across the world are working to balance energy security, affordability, and sustainability while addressing the challenges of climate change, technological transformation, and growing energy demand. The priorities of the BRICS Energy Agenda resonate strongly with India's own sustainable development pathway, focusing on meeting its growing energy

demand while enhancing energy security and energy access, strengthening grid resilience, diversifying supply sources, and expanding the share of clean energy in its energy mix. India's Presidency has structured the BRICS Energy Agenda around three broad priorities, which include energy security and sustainability; energy access and equity; and technology and innovation. As the world's third-largest producer and consumer of electricity, and one of the fastest-growing major economies, India

views secure, affordable and sustainable energy as a cornerstone of its Viksit Bharat 2047 vision. The meeting will provide India with an opportunity to showcase its significant progress in building a sustainable and future-ready energy system. Over the past decade, India has expanded its solar power capacity by more than 50 times, deployed over 60 million smart meters, and set an ambitious target of achieving 410 GWh of energy storage capacity by 2032. India has also undertaken significant reforms to strengthen its power transmission and distribution infrastructure. The country has expanded its national transmission network to facilitate the large-scale integration of renewable energy and has accelerated the development of Green Energy Corridors. Besides, the country has made notable strides in the biofuels sector, including achieving 20 per cent ethanol blending and the recent rollout of E85 fuel, a high-ethanol

blend containing 80-85 per cent ethanol. At the global level, India has emerged as a leading advocate for clean energy cooperation through pioneering initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance and the Global Biofuels Alliance, reinforcing its role in advancing an inclusive and sustainable energy future. As Chair, India will also seek to advance the priorities of the Global South while promoting practical cooperation on energy security, resilient supply chains, innovation and sustainable development. In an increasingly uncertain global energy environment, stronger cooperation among BRICS countries assumes particular significance. The energy ministers' meeting is expected to further strengthen BRICS cooperation on energy security, innovation and sustainable development, while advancing practical collaboration towards secure, affordable, sustainable and future-ready energy systems, the statement added.

# Dharmendra Pradhan Helps Bengal Girl With Broken Ribs Appear In NEET UG Re-Exam

New Delhi, 21/6: In a heartwarming gesture, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday helped a critically injured NEET UG aspirant appear for the examination in Kolkata with special arrangements — a move that drew appreciation from the candidate's family. Shrishti Dubey appeared for the examination at Binodini Girls High School in Dhakuria, Kolkata, in a separate room with medical support and a standby ambulance at the examination centre following Pradhan's intervention, an official said. As she began writing the examination, Pradhan called Shrishti's father and inquired about his daughter's condition and progress. Shreeram Shiwji Dubey, a primary school teacher, thanked the Union Minister for his assistance. "It is all because of you that my daughter is giving the exam," he said, expressing his gratitude. The student's mother



also thanked the Minister for coming to her daughter's aid after she met with an accident on June 14. "We had given up hope that she would ever be able to give the exam. The doctors encouraged us to submit a special application seeking permission for her to appear in the exam in hospital attire and with medical attachments," she said. Pradhan

expressed hope that Shrishti would perform well and make her parents proud by becoming a doctor. "I will try and meet you when I come to Kolkata," Pradhan told Dubey over the phone. Earlier, in his request to Pradhan, the student's father said: "Sir, my daughter Shrishti Dubey (Roll No. 460xxxxxxx) is supposed to appear for the NEET examination

on June 21, 2026, at Binodini Girls High School, Dhakuria, Centre Code: 4608306." "She underwent a major road traffic accident on June 14, where nine of her ribs were broken and she suffered severe lung injuries. She underwent major vascular surgery and was under artificial ventilation. She has now been extubated and is in a state of recovery. She is determined to appear for the NEET examination and needs your support," Dubey said. "Sir, ILS Hospital will provide the necessary medical support, including a doctor, paramedics and other required arrangements. I request you to please allow my daughter to sit for the examination," he said. "It will be a great help if you inform the centre to provide her with a seating space, a chair and a table on the ground floor, as she will be in hospital attire, and to allow her to carry necessary medical attachments such as a chest drain," he added.

# Parliamentary Panel To Meet Soon To Discuss Economic Situation

New Delhi, 21/6: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance will be meeting soon to discuss the evolving economic situation in the country amid the uncertainties due to the West Asia crisis. Committee Chairman Bhartruhari Mahtab said: "Despite the serious headwinds, India's economy is emerging in a better way. There are certain very good indicators where household savings also increased in comparison to last year." However, the challenge is that private investment is not picking up, even though government investment is increasing to spur the economic growth rate. This challenge has to be addressed, he added. The committee has decided to meet again towards the third week of this month and will also prepare a report with recommendations to the government. According to a Lok Sabha bulletin, the Standing Committee on Finance has chosen "Evolving Economic Conditions in the Country" as an additional subject for detailed examination during the year 2025-26. Parliamentary committees select subjects that they have up to take up for discussion shortly after they are constituted. But they have the freedom to select additional subjects, keeping in mind evolving circumstances. Meanwhile, the minutes of the RBI's monetary policy committee meeting released on Friday show that



India has been able to withstand the disruptions of the West Asia crisis because of the strong fundamentals of the economy. MPC member Nagesh Kumar said: "The Indian economy entered the West Asia crisis with much stronger macroeconomic fundamentals than most previous economic crises (including the global financial crisis, the taper tantrum, or Covid-19). Before the conflict started at the end of February, the Indian economy was enjoying a 'goldilocks moment' of robust growth and very benign inflation." Emphasis on fiscal consolidation over the past years has helped in bringing down the fiscal deficit from 6.5 per cent of GDP in 2022-23 steadily to 4.4 per cent by 2025-26. This provides some fiscal space to address the challenges posed by the West Asia crisis, including through supporting economic

growth by sustaining and even enhancing public investment to mitigate any weaknesses in private consumption due to rising costs and to absorb rising subsidies for absorbing the high crude prices. The minutes further state that reservoirs holding above 20 per cent higher water levels than the 10-year average could help to mitigate the possible shortfalls in the monsoon. In any case, over time, Indian agriculture has tended to be less affected by monsoon fluctuations with growing resilience. However, the RBI said the inflation outlook remains vulnerable to prolonged supply-chain disruptions arising from the conflict in West Asia and uncertainty over the spatial and temporal distribution of the southwest monsoon. MPC member Prof. Ram Singh stated: "RBI's analysis indicates a clear relationship between energy prices and domestic inflation:

# Yoga Offers Path To Wellness Amid Demanding Work Schedules: CJI Surya Kant

New Delhi, 21/6: Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant on Sunday said yoga offers a timeless framework to achieve harmony between the mind, body, and spirit and can play a crucial role in helping individuals cope with stress and demanding professional responsibilities. Addressing participants at the celebration of the 12th International Day of Yoga held at the Administrative Building Complex of the Supreme Court, the CJI described yoga as an intrinsic part of India's

civilisational heritage and emphasised its relevance in modern workplaces. "We are truly celebrating an intrinsic piece of Indian heritage. For centuries, our civilisational wisdom has emphasised that true wellness is never just about physical fitness. It is about a harmonious alignment between the mind, the body, and the spirit. Yoga is the practical vehicle for that philosophy, offering a timeless framework to find stillness in an otherwise chaotic world," he said. Highlighting the

demanding nature of work within the judiciary, CJI Surya Kant said the pressures associated with supporting the administration of justice often affect both mental clarity and physical vitality. "In our daily lives within the registry, the demands are relentless. We deal with high volumes of work, tight deadlines, and the constant pressure that comes with supporting the administration of justice. This environment inevitably takes a toll on our mental clarity and physical vitality," he said.

## 'UK PM Starmer May Possibly Resign On Monday'

London,21/6: UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer is expected to resign on Monday and is reportedly preparing to present a timetable for an orderly departure from Downing Street, British media reports said. Starmer, who has long insisted he would fight any challenge to his leadership, now recognises his position is untenable after speaking with his government ministers, party funders, and trade union leaders over the past two days, the Observer reported. Starmer "has come up hard against the reality that the support isn't there", the daily cited a source as telling it. "The truth is, everyone knows this is no longer a sustainable proposition. There's a sadness to it all, of course, but sometimes there's just an inevitability in politics and as Boris Johnson said: 'When the herd moves, it moves'." The number of MPs supporting rival Andy Burnham for the Labour leadership has increased after his triumphant victory in the Makerfield by-election last week, Italian news agency Adnkronos reported. Earlier in the morning,



British Trade Secretary Peter Kyle told Sky News that Starmer was spending the weekend "reflecting on the political realities" he faces. Speaking on behalf of the government, Kyle refused to offer guidance on the Prime Minister's plans or what he himself would suggest to him. Asked if Starmer truly intended to resign on Monday,

Kyle replied that he had no reason to believe so, adding that the Labour leader would reflect on "what it means to put the country first at a time like this". During the interview, Kyle did not dismiss the idea that a change in Downing Street was imminent after Burnham's victory. Stating that he had spoken at length with Starmer on Friday, Kyle declared that he

was "certain" that the Prime Minister had had "conversations with a very wide range of people, including myself, and that he is working very hard this weekend". "I believe he is taking time to reflect on the political realities, challenges, and opportunities he faces. I think that's what people expect him to do at this time."

## Western Countries Embrace Yoga Ahead Of International Day Of Yoga

Ottawa,21/6: Yoga enthusiasts across several Western countries on Saturday practised Yoga in large groups ahead of International Day of Yoga (IDY). In Canada's Toronto, an enthusiastic gathering of government representatives, diplomatic corps, yoga practitioners, wellness organisations, and community leaders participated in a Yoga session against the historic backdrop of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. "Addressing the vibrant gathering, Consul General of India emphasised Yoga's unique power to transcend cultural, linguistic, and national boundaries, bringing people together in a shared pursuit of well-being and reaffirming its timeless relevance as a universal path to health, harmony, and inner balance. Celebrating this year's theme — 'Yoga for Healthy Ageing', a beautifully synchronised yoga session served as a powerful celebration of community, connection, and collective well-being," Consul General of India



in Toronto said on social media platform X. In Brazil, a curated yoga session was led by the Ambassador of India to Brazil, Dinesh Bhatia, "at the majestic Foz do Iguacu waterfalls in Brazil, one of the natural wonders of the world, as a prelude to IDY2026," the Consul General of India in Sao Paulo said on X. Denmark Yoga Forening (DYF)/Denmark Yoga Team in Aarhus organised the International Day of Yoga (IDY) celebrations in Dokk1, Aarhus. Ambassador Manish Prabhat read out the letter from

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed to Denmark Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, written on the occasion of IDY 2026. "Ambassador also addressed the participants and highlighted the Theme of IDY 2026 'Yoga for Healthy Ageing', bringing to the fore the benefits of yoga, especially for maximising health in added years of life. Around 100 Yoga lovers were present and learned the techniques of Yoga for use in daily life," the Embassy of India in Copenhagen wrote on X.

## Switzerland Welcomes Arrival Of Iranian Delegation For Talks With US

Geneva,21/6: An Iranian delegation landed in Switzerland late Saturday for talks with the United States at the Burgenstock resort to halt the conflict in the Middle East. "We welcome the arrival of the Iranian delegation in Switzerland," the Swiss foreign ministry said on X, adding that the Iranian delegation is on its way to the Burgenstock resort as part of the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the United States and Iran. Meanwhile, according to Iran's state-run IRIB TV, the Iranian negotiating delegation, codenamed "Minab 168," has arrived in Switzerland, Xinhua news agency reported. Earlier Saturday, Switzerland said that it continues to provide a "discreet and reliable setting" to facilitate talks at the Burgenstock resort on the implementation of the MoU between the United States and Iran. The initial negotiations on the implementation of the interim peace deal between the two sides were scheduled for Friday but were later postponed. Meanwhile, US Vice President JD Vance departed for Switzerland, expressing hope that upcoming



talks with Iran would advance negotiations on Tehran's nuclear programme and help preserve a fragile ceasefire in Lebanon, even as renewed violence in the region threatened broader diplomatic efforts. Speaking to reporters before boarding his aircraft at Joint Base Andrews, Vance said his understanding was that Iranian negotiators had already arrived in Switzerland and that discussions would likely continue for several days. "I think we're going to hopefully make progress on the nuclear issue, make progress on the Lebanon ceasefire issue. Those are the two big things that I think we're to be focused on.

I'm sure the Iranians are going to have issues they'd like to discuss as well," Vance said. The Vice President and Second Lady Usha Vance departed at 4:19 p.m. Eastern Time aboard a Gulfstream C-37, a smaller aircraft than the one typically used for vice-presidential travel. A spokesman said the aircraft was used because it was available more quickly than the Vice President's usual plane. The Switzerland talks are expected to take place near Lucerne and come after a delayed start to the diplomatic process. According to Vance, technical negotiators from multiple parties were already on the ground ahead of the meetings.

## Vance Heads To Switzerland For Iran Talks

Washington,21/6: US Vice President JD Vance departed for Switzerland, expressing hope that upcoming talks with Iran would advance negotiations on Tehran's nuclear programme and help preserve a fragile ceasefire in Lebanon, even as renewed violence in the region threatened broader diplomatic efforts. Speaking to reporters before boarding his aircraft at Joint Base Andrews, Vance said his understanding was that Iranian negotiators had already arrived in Switzerland and that discussions would likely continue for several days. "I think we're going to hopefully make progress on the nuclear issue, make progress on the Lebanon ceasefire issue. Those are the two big things that I think we're to be focused on. I'm sure the Iranians are going to have issues they'd like to discuss as well," Vance said. The Vice President and Second Lady Usha Vance departed at 4:19 p.m. Eastern Time aboard a Gulfstream C-37, a smaller aircraft than the one typically used for vice-presidential travel. A spokesman



said the aircraft was used because it was available more quickly than the Vice President's usual plane. The Switzerland talks are expected to take place near Lucerne and come after a delayed start to the diplomatic process. According to Vance, technical negotiators from multiple parties were already on the ground ahead of the meetings. "Look, we'll have a couple days of talks to try to get this thing kicked off the right way. There's a lot to discuss, but we're going to get through it all," he said. The Vice President indicated that one of his primary objectives would be establishing the framework for future

negotiations. "I think number one, just getting things set up in the right way, and getting the actual structure and negotiation in place," he said. "I can only be there for a day or two." Questions about continuing clashes in Lebanon featured prominently during the exchange with reporters. Fighting between Israel and Hezbollah has repeatedly threatened diplomatic momentum in recent weeks and remains a major concern for Washington as it seeks broader regional stability. Vance sought to project cautious optimism. "Despite the headlines, things are actually getting better there, and things are

slowing down a little bit," he said. He credited Secretary of State Marco Rubio and the broader diplomatic team with managing the situation while acknowledging the difficulty of maintaining a ceasefire. "It's going to be something we're just going to have to continuously manage to ensure that you know Israel and Lebanon are both safe and secure. That's fundamentally the goal of this, to make the whole region safe and secure," Vance said. Describing the cycle of violence, he added: "The big problem is that you have somebody will shoot and then somebody will respond, and you kind of have a chicken and egg problem where you've just got to stop the shooting for long enough to get the ceasefire to keep hold, that's what we're going to try to do." The talks in Switzerland are expected to focus on technical and political issues related to the US-Iran diplomatic track, with Lebanon's ceasefire situation emerging as a parallel challenge. Vance said both matters would be central to the discussions.

## Bolivian President Declares State Of Emergency To Restore Road Traffic

La Paz,21/6: Bolivian President Rodrigo Paz announced early Saturday the implementation of a state of emergency aimed at restoring road traffic across the country after weeks of nationwide blockades related to protests. Since early May, road blockades in several parts of Bolivia have disrupted the transportation of fuel, food and medical supplies, causing shortages in some cities and dealing a heavy blow to economic activity, Xinhua news agency reported. In a message posted on social media, Paz said Bolivians could no longer remain "hostages" to road blockades that prevent people from working, studying, receiving medical care, obtaining essential goods and supporting their families. "This state of emergency is not intended to take away normality, but to restore it," the president said. Paz also stressed that the government's doors would remain open to all those willing to engage in good-faith dialogue. "Meanwhile, Bolivia needs to recover its roads, guarantee supplies and return to

normality," he said. On Thursday, the Bolivian government signed an agreement with the trade union federation Bolivian Workers' Central, a key participant in the protest movement, committing both sides to address pending demands through dialogue. The agreement has been viewed as an important step toward resolving the country's social unrest, which has lasted for about 50 days. However, some farmers and indigenous groups continue to maintain road blockades, and transportation networks across the country have yet to fully return to normal. The protests were initially launched by the trade union group, farmer organisations, and indigenous groups over issues including fuel shortages and rising living costs. Earlier this month, President Paz enacted a new law regulating states of emergency, as continuous protests and road blockades have led to disruptions in supplies, transport and the economy. Law 1740 allows the president to declare a state of emergency

through a supreme decree in situations involving threats to state security, external threats, internal unrest or natural disasters. The decree must be sent to the Plurinational Legislative Assembly, Bolivia's national legislature, which has 72 hours to rule on it. Speaking at the government headquarters in La Paz, Paz said the law is aimed at protecting the majority of Bolivians, defending the constitutional order and restoring economic normality. The president said dialogue would remain the main tool of his government, but warned groups he described as violent and linked to "narcoterrorism" that the state would act firmly under the law. The 27-article law regulates states of emergency under Bolivia's Constitution, guarantees fundamental rights during their implementation and defines the roles of the police, armed forces and prosecutors. Paz said the measure has institutional backing and was approved by a qualified majority in the Plurinational Legislative Assembly.

## US Vice President JD Vance Reaches Switzerland to Navigate Tense Iran Peace Negotiations

US ,21/6: US Vice President JD Vance reached Switzerland to start critical peace negotiations with Iranian delegates. Both nations want to stabilize the Middle East following months of intense conflict. Geopolitically, these rare face-to-face discussions represent a major shift in diplomacy between Washington and Tehran after decades of severed formal relations. Uncertainty surrounds a crucial global shipping route right now. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps declared they closed the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday. They blamed alleged Israeli offenses in Lebanon and broken American promises for this decision. American military officials quickly rejected the Iranian claim. Central Command reported that 55 merchant ships safely transported over 17 million



barrels of oil through the passage that same day. American forces pledged to keep commercial traffic flowing freely. Securing an interim agreement relies heavily on maintaining peace in Lebanon. Recent reports show ongoing

violence despite a new truce brokered by Pakistan. Israeli airstrikes reportedly killed 20 people shortly after the pause in fighting officially started. Israel claims it acted defensively against incoming Hezbollah

projectiles. Hezbollah leaders firmly insist they will block Israeli military movements inside Lebanese territory. Domestic pressure continues mounting on Israeli leadership, as surveys show many citizens doubt the war achieved its primary goals. Officials from both sides are meeting in Burgenstock to resolve these deep conflicts. Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf leads the Iranian group, bringing foreign minister Abbas Araqchi and central bank experts. Vance guides the American team alongside special envoy Steve Witkoff. Before his flight, Vance expressed confidence that the current agreements would survive. He expects the teams will make noticeable progress on nuclear disputes and regional stability over the next few days.

## Iran Closes Strait Of Hormuz Again, Cites MoU Violation By US And Israel

Tehran,21/6: Iran on Saturday announced the closure of the Strait of Hormuz once again, citing alleged violations of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by the US and Israel, local media reported. Just days after announcing an agreement lifting naval blockades, Iran's top joint military command, ?Khatam al-Anbiya Central ?Headquarters, said the closure comes in response to the

"explicit breach" of the first clause of the post-war MoU by the US and Israel and "ongoing violations" of the ceasefire in southern Lebanon, Iran's semi-official ?Mehr ?news agency reported. The headquarters said that in light of the US' clear breach of its commitments regarding the first article of the MoU on ending the war and Israel's attacks in Lebanon, it is announcing that the Strait of Hormuz

will be closed to vessel traffic. The MoU between Iran and the US was signed on June 18 by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and US President Donald Trump through a simultaneous digital process without an in-person ceremony. "The agreement's first article provides for the immediate and permanent termination of military operations between Iran, the US, and their respective allies across all fronts,

including Lebanon, and commits the parties to refrain from future military action or threats of force," the report by Mehr noted. Iran on Friday introduced new regulations for vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz, requiring ships to register in advance and obtain permits and insurance before entering one of the world's most critical energy shipping routes, after the earlier reopening of the waterway under a US-Iran agreement.

## India, US To Hold Trade Talks This Week To Finalise Interim Pact: Piyush Goyal

New Delhi, 21/6: India and the United States will hold ministerial-level trade talks this week as both countries seek to finalise the framework for the first phase of the proposed bilateral trade agreement (BTA) ahead of a key tariff deadline next month, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal said on Sunday. US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer is scheduled to arrive here for a two-day visit, during which he will hold discussions with Goyal. The minister told reporters, "For the US trade deal talks, tomorrow my counterpart is coming to Delhi." However, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal had recently said that the discussions between the two ministers are expected to focus on giving final touches to the framework agreement while also advancing talks on the broader bilateral trade pact. Earlier this month, Goyal had said that India and the US were moving towards closing all the open issues in the interim trade agreement and expressed confidence that the first phase of the BTA could be concluded by the middle of next month. The upcoming talks assume



significance as the 10 per cent temporary tariff imposed by the US on all its trading partners is scheduled to expire on July 24. The temporary tariff, announced by the US administration in February, is levied over and above the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) duty rates. Once the 150-day period ends, Washington is expected to put in place a revised tariff regime. The meeting comes after chief negotiator-level discussions

between the two countries were held in the national capital from June 2 to June 4 to advance negotiations on the proposed pact. Moreover, the negotiations are taking place amid ongoing investigations by the Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) under Section 301 of the US Trade Act of 1974 against several countries, including India, on issues related to excess industrial capacity and labour practices in global supply chains. In June, the

USTR proposed imposing additional tariffs on imports from several countries, including India, over concerns related to forced labour in supply chains. The proposal is currently under consultation and has not been finalised. The ministerial engagement this week is expected to provide fresh momentum to trade negotiations and help both sides move closer to concluding the first tranche of the proposed agreement.

## BHEL, Coal India investing Rs 25,000 crore in Odisha coal gasification project

Jharsuguda, 21/6: Union Coal and Mines Minister G Kishan Reddy on Saturday said Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) and Coal India Limited (CIL) are jointly investing Rs 25,000 crore in a coal gasification project in Odisha, marking a major step towards expanding the use of coal beyond conventional power generation. Speaking to reporters in Jharsuguda during an event attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Droupadi Murmu, the Minister said the initiative would open new opportunities in fertiliser production while creating jobs in the region. "Today, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the President Droupadi Murmu have ushered in a new chapter for Odisha's coal sector. Moving beyond the traditional use of coal, new avenues will now open up through coal gasification," Reddy said. Highlighting the scale of investment, the Minister said, "Today, BHEL and Coal India Limited are jointly investing Rs 25,000 crore in this initiative." He said the project is expected to



strengthen downstream industrial activity in the state and generate employment opportunities. "This will facilitate fertiliser production and create employment opportunities for local people, proving highly beneficial for Odisha," Reddy added. The Minister also underlined the Centre's broader push towards coal gasification as part of efforts to diversify coal utilisation and reduce import dependence in sectors such as fertilisers and chemicals. "The Central Government is providing Rs 46,000

crore for coal gasification," he said. Coal gasification converts coal into synthesis gas, or syngas, which can be used to produce chemicals, fertilisers, synthetic fuels and other industrial products. The technology is seen as a way to enhance the value of India's vast coal reserves while supporting industrial development. The Centre has been promoting coal gasification projects to encourage cleaner and more efficient utilisation of domestic coal resources and reduce reliance on imported feedstock for key industries.

## RBI expected to hold repo at 5.25% as geopolitical uncertainty eases, will watch food and fuel pass-through: BofA Securities

New Delhi, 21/6: The Reserve Bank of India is expected to maintain its wait-and-watch stance and keep the repo rate at 5.25 per cent in coming meetings as the US-Iran peace agreement reduces geopolitical uncertainty, while it monitors food and fuel price pass-through before acting, BofA Securities said in a note on the June MPC minutes. BofA Securities said the uncertainty clouding the outlook has eased since the June meeting following the conclusion of the US-Iran peace agreement. This gives the MPC more room to stay data-dependent rather than react to volatile energy prices. RBI Governor Malhotra highlighted that inflation risks have risen due to food and fuel shocks, but with underlying inflation still contained, a wait-and-watch stance remains appropriate. The brokerage expects the RBI to continue tracking monsoon outcomes and crude trends before considering any change in policy direction. BofA Securities noted the RBI unanimously maintained



the repo rate at 5.25 per cent and retained its neutral policy stance amid a volatile geopolitical backdrop. The central bank also lowered its FY27 growth forecast by 30bps to 6.6 per cent YoY while raising its inflation projection by 50bps to 5.1 per cent, citing weather-related risks. "The minutes showed unanimous recognition of the volatile economic backdrop and rising inflation risks. However, members noted that underlying

inflation has remained contained, with no immediate concerns on second-round effects, making status quo on policy action and a data-dependent approach an appropriate course of action," BofA Securities said. Internal members leaned toward caution on premature tightening. Gupta viewed the rise in inflation largely as a supply-side phenomenon driven by energy and imported cost pressures, arguing against a premature policy response.

Indranil Bhattacharyya noted that wholesale price pressures have increased, but the transmission to consumer inflation remains incomplete, warranting a cautious and data-dependent approach. External members echoed the growth-support view. Singh acknowledged the worsening inflation outlook due to external shocks but stressed the need to support growth given still-benign core inflation. Saugata Bhattacharyya flagged concern that elevated crude prices could fuel second-round inflationary pressures and further dampen growth, though he did not see a case for immediate tightening. Nagesh Kumar emphasised that while the West Asia conflict complicated the growth-inflation trade-off, India's strong macroeconomic fundamentals and policy buffers leave it well-positioned to withstand the shock, voting for the status quo. BofA Securities' dove-hawk meter for June showed the MPC in a neutral, moderately dovish-to-neutral zone with no shift toward hawkishness from April.

## India Likely to Have 1.1 Billion 5G Subscriptions by End of 2031

New Delhi, 21/6: India is expected to have more than 1.1 billion 5G subscriptions by the end of 2031, reaching approximately 81 per cent subscription penetration, a report said Tuesday. The report from Ericsson said 5G adoption in India continues to grow rapidly, driven by the availability of affordable 5G-enabled smartphones and devices, expanded network coverage across almost all districts, and the increasing rollout of 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) services. The number of commercial differentiated connectivity service offerings based on 5G SA network slicing from CSPs continues to grow globally. 5G subscriptions in India reached 430 million at the end of 2025, accounting for 35 per cent of



smartphone, with average monthly usage already at 37 GB and expected to nearly double to 70 GB by 2031. "India's rapidly growing 5G adoption based on enhanced mobile broadband and 5G FWA is transforming consumer experiences. The robust and secure 5G infrastructure in the country is driving inclusion, governance, and innovation at

scale and is serving as a powerful foundation for Digital India," said Nitin Bansal, Managing Director, Ericsson India. A service provider in India recently launched differentiated connectivity services based on network slicing for its postpaid 5G customers, signaling the evolution of advanced 5G use cases in the market. Global 5G mobile subscriptions passed the three billion mark during Q1 2026, while 5G Standalone (SA) network slicing commercial offerings from communications service providers continue to grow significantly. Uplink traffic is growing faster than downlink for most service providers, driven by smartphone communication and collaboration apps, the sharing of user-generated content, and cloud storage.

Mumbai, 21/6: Tata Motors on Thursday announced that it will increase prices across its commercial vehicle portfolio by up to 2.5 per cent with effect from July 1, 2026, citing rising commodity prices and higher input costs. The company said the price revision is being undertaken to partially offset the impact of increased production expenses. The extent of the hike will vary depending on the model and variant. "Tata Motors today announced a price increase of up to 2.5 per cent across its commercial vehicle range, effective July 1, 2026," the company said in a statement. According to the automaker, the increase is necessitated by continued pressure from rising commodity prices and other input costs affecting the commercial vehicle

## Tata Motors to hike commercial vehicle prices by up to 2.5% from July 1

industry. Tata Motors is India's largest manufacturer of commercial vehicles and one of the country's leading automotive companies. The company has a presence across a wide range of segments, including trucks, buses, pick-ups and utility vehicles. Part of the USD 180 billion Tata Group, Tata Motors has more than eight decades of experience in commercial mobility and is known for its portfolio of trucks and buses catering to diverse transportation needs. The company said its advanced powertrains, connected vehicle technologies and intelligent fleet solutions support applications ranging from last-mile delivery and logistics to public transportation. The company operates in India and South Korea and has a global footprint spanning Africa, the Middle East,

Latin America, Southeast Asia and SAARC countries. The latest price hike announcement comes amid persistent cost pressures faced by automobile manufacturers, particularly from fluctuations in raw material and commodity prices. At the time of filing this report Tata Motors shares were trading at Rs 403 per share. Part of the USD 180 billion Tata Group, Tata Motors is India's largest and a globally renowned manufacturer of utility vehicles, pick-ups, trucks, and buses. With over eight decades of leadership in commercial mobility, the company is known for its innovation, reliability, and performance. The company operates in India and South Korea, with a global presence across Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and SAARC countries.

for Men", "Hair Serum for Men" are very high. With 12 beauty products bought every second on the platform, demand continues to grow. Beauty on Flipkart Minutes has grown 5x over the past year, ranking among the top three performing categories on the service. At the fest, Flipkart unveiled its Annual Beauty Trends Report 2.0 developed with Quantum Consumer Solutions, mapping a shift toward premium and science-backed skincare and growing experimentation with global trends. The platform's consumer-first interface, aided by Virtual Try-On and Live Video Commerce, is supporting discovery and personalisation. Sakait Chaudhary, Senior Vice President, Head of Softlines, Grocery and Marketplace,

## Gen Z, non-metro India drive 50 pc growth in Flipkart Beauty; Glam Up Fest 2026 highlights emerging trends

New Delhi, 21/6: Gen Z consumers and shoppers from Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities are driving rapid growth in India's beauty market, with Flipkart's Beauty and Personal Care category recording 50 per cent year-on-year growth, the company said in a press release. The company said GenZ now drives nearly 60 per cent of all beauty purchases on the platform, while shoppers from non-metro cities are increasingly shaping trends and purchase decisions. "Two in three beauty searches on Flipkart originate from non-metro cities such as Cuttack, Bardhaman, Gorakhpur, Kottayam, Guntur, Jamnagar, Sangli among several others," the release noted. The fourth edition of Glam Up Fest brought together 100+ leading beauty brands and 6,000+ creators, influencers, and celebrities under the theme 'Beauty for Every Moment'. The category's growth spans multiple segments. Flipkart said premium beauty has grown over 60% year-on-year, perfumes over 45%, and men's grooming has emerged as the standout category, up 65% as consumers incorporate skincare, grooming, and wellness into everyday routines. Searches for "Sunscreen for Men", "Facewash



Flipkart, said, "The beauty category in India is being shaped by GenZ consumers who are more informed, trend-conscious, and have made beauty into a daily ritual. At the same time, we are seeing strong momentum from shoppers across Bharat, where demand is expanding well beyond traditional categories into premium, specialised, and globally inspired products." Flipkart also launched its Global Luxe Beauty Store, unveiled by Janhvi Kapoor, offering 100+ international brands, including Calvin Klein, Gucci, Eucerin, Medicube, CeraVe, Beauty of Joseon, and SKIN1004. The on-ground fest will be followed by Flipkart's in-app Glam Up Sale from June 19-27, 2026, with limited-time offers and new launches.

for Men", "Hair Serum for Men" are very high. With 12 beauty products bought every second on the platform, demand continues to grow. Beauty on Flipkart Minutes has grown 5x over the past year, ranking among the top three performing categories on the service. At the fest, Flipkart unveiled its Annual Beauty Trends Report 2.0 developed with Quantum Consumer Solutions, mapping a shift toward premium and science-backed skincare and growing experimentation with global trends. The platform's consumer-first interface, aided by Virtual Try-On and Live Video Commerce, is supporting discovery and personalisation. Sakait Chaudhary, Senior Vice President, Head of Softlines, Grocery and Marketplace,



## Vikram Bhatt announces next instalment in 1920 horror franchise, titled '1920: Cold Winter'

Mumbai, June 20: Filmmaker Vikram Bhatt is set to direct the next instalment of the 1920 franchise titled '1920: Cold Winter.' '1920 Cold Winter' will be produced by Anand Pandit and is written and directed by Vikram Bhatt. It is co-produced by Roopa Pandit and Rahul V Dubey. Vikram Bhatt shared the first look poster of the movie on his Instagram handle. While sharing the poster, he wrote, "The Anand Pandit-Vikram Bhatt partnership continues its winning streak. Following the massive success of 1920, the duo is already creating buzz with Haunted 3D: Echoes of the Past and is now all set to bring audiences 1920: Cold Winter, the next chilling chapter in the iconic franchise."

The first instalment of the franchise was released in 2008. It was written and directed by Vikram Bhatt. Set in the year 1920, the film starred Rajneesh Duggal and Adah Sharma as a married couple who moved into a haunted manor where the wife got possessed by an evil spirit. The sequel to the film was released in 2012, which was titled '1920: The Evil Returns'. It starred Aftab Shivdasani, Tia Bajpai, Vidya Malvade and Sharad Kelkar. It was directed by Bhushan Patel. Meanwhile, Vikram Bhatt's recent directorial was titled 'Haunted 3D'. It starred Mimoh Chakraborty, Chetna Pande, Shruti Prakash, Gaurav Bajpai, Praneet Bhatt and Hemant Pandey. The film was produced by Anand Pandit and Rakesh Juneja, with co-producers Roopa Pandit, Dilip Jaiswal, Rahul V Dubey, Manish Bhushan Mishra and Sanjay Singh. It is presented in association with Promoedge Media Company Pvt Ltd and will be distributed worldwide by Anand Pandit Motion Pictures. The film hit theatres on June 12, 2026.



## Samay Raina announces India's Got Latent Season 2; to stream on Netflix, YouTube

The much-awaited Samay Raina's comedy show 'India's Got Latent' is finally returning with its second season, but with a twist. The comedian announced that the second season of the show will stream on Netflix and YouTube as well. After gaining immense popularity in season one, the fans of Samay Raina have been eagerly waiting for the next instalment of the show. Originating from YouTube, Samay's show is set to debut on Netflix. In the

announcement video, Samay Raina, along with his friend Balraj Singh, shared that the episodes of the second season will stream on Netflix and YouTube simultaneously without a difference in duration. As per the video, the show is expected to be unfiltered. Netflix shared the announcement on their Instagram handle. Content creator Ashish Chanchlani also took a humorous dig at the announcement by recalling the controversy regarding the show's first season. In the comment section, Chanchlani requested the inclusion of a disclaimer from Samay to fight the upcoming probable legal battles easily. "Is baar disclaimer daal dena please case ladne mein easy hota hai (Please put disclaimer this time please. It helps in fighting cases)" wrote Ashish Chanchlani. Meanwhile, Samay Raina recently made a strong comeback after more than a year away from the public eye following the 'India's Got Latent' controversy, with his latest comedy special achieving a major global milestone online. Raina released his debut stand-up special titled 'Still Alive' on YouTube, which crossed 53.4 million views. According to a release, it has emerged as the most-watched full-length stand-up comedy special in the world from a single upload. With this achievement, Raina has reportedly become the first comedian to hold the record for the highest-viewed stand-up special globally on a single video platform upload. 'Still Alive' also marks Raina's first official stand-up special. In the 1-hour and 21-minute-long performance, he speaks candidly about the 'India's Got Latent' controversy, his one-year break from public appearances, personal and financial struggles, childhood bullying, his Kashmiri Pandit identity, mental health and the support he received from fans and close friends.

## SPORTS

### Kohli To Undergo Fitness Test Ahead Of England Odis Selection, Hardik Begins Light Training

New Delhi, 20/6: Virat Kohli is set to undergo a fitness assessment at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence ahead of the Ajit Agarkar-led selection committee convening to select India's squad for the upcoming ODI series in England, to be played from July 14-19 in Birmingham, Cardiff and Lord's. It is understood that the selectors will meet in the coming week to decide the squad. Chief selector Agarkar was seen in Sri Lanka keeping an eye on India 'A' team playing the 50-over tri-series. Kohli missed the ongoing ODI series against Afghanistan due to a hamstring injury sustained in the IPL 2026 final in Ahmedabad, where he hit a match-winning 75 not out for Royal Challengers Bengaluru. Since then, Kohli has been doing rehab while being in London. "It has emerged that Kohli is expected to report to the BCCI CoE for his fitness assessment and clearance very soon. It can happen anytime after his One8 brand does its first-ever Global Premiere event in Yashobhoomi, New Delhi, on Sunday. If all goes well, then Kohli can be included for ODIs against England," said a source



tracking the development to IANS on Saturday. Seam-bowling all-rounder Hardik Pandya, meanwhile, has resumed light training at the CoE facility in Bengaluru as he works his way back to full fitness after a late leg niggle kept him out of ODIs against Afghanistan. Pandya was at the CoE since June 2 to get

fitness clearance after a back niggle saw him miss a couple of games for Mumbai Indians in IPL 2026. It is understood that Pandya has resumed light training at the CoE 4-5 days back, after taking a week's break. "The intensity of his training will increase slowly in the next two days. His medical report will be submitted to the BCCI through

the CoE medical team and on that basis, the selectors will probably take a call on his availability for ODIs in England. "Basically, it's upto the selectors and team management to decide - like will they wait for him to be fully match fit or not take him to England so that he builds up full fitness needed to play an ODI game," added the source.

### 3rd ODI: Prasidh, Harsh, Nitish Return For India As Afghanistan Elect To Bat First

Chennai: India have included Prasidh Krishna, Harsh Dubey and Nitish Kumar Reddy in their playing eleven as Afghanistan won the toss and elected to bat first in the third and final ODI at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Saturday. India have already taken a 2-0 lead in the three-game series after a massive 170-run win in Lucknow. Another win in Chennai will hand them a 3-0 series sweep. Afghanistan captain Hashmatullah Shahidi said they have four changes, with Mohammad Nabi, Azmatullah Omarzai, Zia Ur Rahman Sharifi and Fareed Ahmad Malik coming



in. "We want to bat first today. It's always hot in India in this month. Wicket also looks good.

It's dry and hard. Hopefully we have a good start in the batting. In last two games we missed some

areas and didn't play the way we have played in the past. Hopefully we recover today and have good partnerships and bowl in the right areas," he said. For India, with Prasidh, Harsh and Nitish returning, Arshdeep Singh, Kuldeep Yadav and KL Rahul sit out of the match. Nitish had missed the clash in Lucknow due to soreness in left thigh and now returns in Chennai, with Ishan Kishan set to take up keeping duties. "Looks like a very good wicket. Would've batted first as well. Was pretty hot in the last match and it's going to be no different here.

## Grammy Adds New Categories To Its Awards Line-Up



Los Angeles: The Grammy Awards have added 5 new categories after deliberation with its members. The organising committee updates rules and adds to their categories in response to proposals from the members every year. The next show, taking place on February 7, 2027, will see 5 new categories, including in the Latin, Asian Pop and R&B genres, and several key updates, including the Best New Artist and Best album categories, reports 'Variety'. The latter two moves are the most far-reaching, as they see the maximum number of times an artist may be submitted increased from three to four; and the "threshold of new recordings required on an eligible album is lowered from 75% to

66% to reduce the exclusion of entries that are widely recognized throughout the music industry as new albums". As per 'Variety', Best new artist is traditionally the most controversial award, inevitably, as the concept of who considers the artist to be new is always a judgement call, and this year will see multiple artists getting an unexpected fourth shot at being nominated, including Ella Langley, who was reportedly submitted in three past years, but whose Hot 100 No. 1 single "Choosin' Texas" and the album "Dandelion" have led her star to rise dramatically. Likewise, as the concept of what constitutes a new album has changed, some that featured, say, four new songs but included

remixes or live versions of previously released songs inspired the 75% threshold, but apparently that was determined to be excessively high. In a related move that extends recognition for songwriters, contributors to winning albums in most genre album categories will now receive Grammy statuettes and Achievement Certificates, which producers and engineers already receive. Songwriters and Composers of new material on the winning albums in most genre album Categories will now receive Grammy statuettes and Achievement Certificates in parity with the recognition currently afforded to Producers and Engineers in those categories.